

President's Message



Gloria Beverage

'Tis the season for giving thanks.

Kudos to the volunteers who work tirelessly throughout the year welcoming visitors to the museum as well as to those who assist the families holding celebrations at Old St. Mary's. A special thank you to the volunteers who show historic sites to Rocklin elementary school third graders during their class field trips.

I also want to give a shout out to the volunteers who gave countless hours this year to organize and plan the special events we hosted.

Our first Heritage Street Faire on Front Street was an outstanding success, which can be summed up in the observation of one attendee. "This is so great. I'm sorry I didn't get to it before." Really? This attendee had the impression we had been hosting this event for years. Goes to show you that our volunteers are doing something right. Planning is underway for our second faire, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Front Street on May 2, 2026. Please join us.

October 25 saw a rainy but fun day as the membership committee—RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks, Bonnie Ruhkala Neumann, Shirley Corral Espley, and Cyndy Trumbo Godfrey—hosted the Rocklin Homecoming Reunion at Johnson Springview Park. It was great to see so many smiles and hugs and hear the stories from people lucky to grow up in Rocklin.

On Nov. 1, we held our Day of the Dead Cemetery Tour, a "resurrected" version of an event hosted by the Society several years ago. Volunteers, stationed at gravesites throughout the Rocklin Cemetery, portrayed historic figures -- telling their stories to our guests as a way of bringing history to life. Tickets sold out within two weeks of posting the event, which was a fundraiser for the Secret Garden.

Once again, we participated in this summer's Heritage Trail event, which

[\(See PRESIDENT on page 5\)](#)

Quarry Quarterly

ROCKLIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Visit our website:



Our History Our Heritage Our Community

November, 2025

The saving of a piece of history

By Linda Wampler, based on notes and input provided by the Quarry Office Committee

At the recent October board meeting, a five-member committee presented a compelling case for restoring the historic Quarry Office building and transforming it into a museum dedicated to Rocklin's granite industry. The committee—

RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks, Bonnie Ruhkala Neumann, David Baker, Jacob

Gambol, and Patsy Patterson—outlined the building's significance, the project's scope, and its alignment with the Society's long-term goals., the board unanimously

voted to approve \$70,000 for phase one of the project.

Bonnie Ruhkala Neumann opened the presentation with a reflection on the Society's preservation efforts dating back to 2012, when the Rocklin Heritage Commission was formed under Gene Johnson's leadership. Although the original quarry shed could not be saved, the smaller office building



The office building saved from demolition



The quarry office in its early years

[\(See QUARRY BUILDING, pg 2\)](#)

A garden grows: Secret Garden nearly complete

By Gloria Beverage

Jennie's Garden has been planted.

After more than a year of planning, the Secret Garden behind the Rocklin Library has been completed. A grand celebration for the garden created in honor of Rocklin's first librarian will be held in the spring.

Last year longtime Rocklin Historical Society member Doug Osella approached the Rocklin Historical Society with his vision of creating a small public garden to honor his aunt and uncle, Jennie and Arvo Minkinen.

Jennie opened Placer County's first branch library in Rocklin in 1943 with an inventory of 38 books. As the city's librarian for 29 years, she served generations of

readers – from kids to parents to grandparents. She also supervised elections and served on the Placer County Grand Jury.

Her husband was a member of the City Council for 24 years, including 8 terms as mayor. He was an avid gardener with a large rose garden on the property.

While several sites were considered, the City of Rocklin and the Placer County Library administration eventually agreed to let the Historical Society develop the garden in the "secret" area behind the Rocklin Library. It can be accessed by following the path on the right as you face the entrance to the library.

The unique handmade granite curbing bordering the pathway was donated by

[\(See GARDEN on page 5\)](#)

(QUARRY BUILDING, cont. from pg.1)

was preserved and relocated by the City of Rocklin in 2017. “It’s been patiently waiting for a new life,” Neumann said. “And 2025 is the year we begin that journey.”

RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks emphasized the building’s historical importance, noting that it originated from the Capitol Quarry and stands as “our last remnant of the old quarry history that started in 1864 and included 60 working quarries in our Rocklin area.” She added, “This building also qualifies on its own merit as a historic building that has been here for 120 years.”

David Baker provided context for the Quarry Office project within the Society’s broader initiatives. He highlighted three major efforts the society has taken on:

1. Surfacing Machine Display – Historic equipment installed at Quarry Adventures with interpretive signage. *(Status: Completed)*

2. Secret Garden – A tribute to Jennie Minkkinen, Rocklin’s first Placer County Librarian, featuring handmade granite curbing and a flower garden behind the Rocklin Library. *(Status: Nearly Completed)*

3. Quarry Office Building Preservation

The City has designated Front Street as the future site. The Society’s board has approved initial funding for design, relocation, and foundation work. *(Status: Initiation Phase)*

Jacob Gambol presented the financial breakdown for the Quarry Office project, detailing anticipated costs and funding strategies. He concluded by stating that the cost of the move would be \$70,000.

Patsy Patterson added to the presentation by describing the building’s future role as a museum space for school tours, public visits, and Historical Society meetings. “This building has a story to tell,” she said, “just as Old St. Mary’s Chapel continues to do today. What better way to serve our community’s history than by saving one of our last historical buildings?”

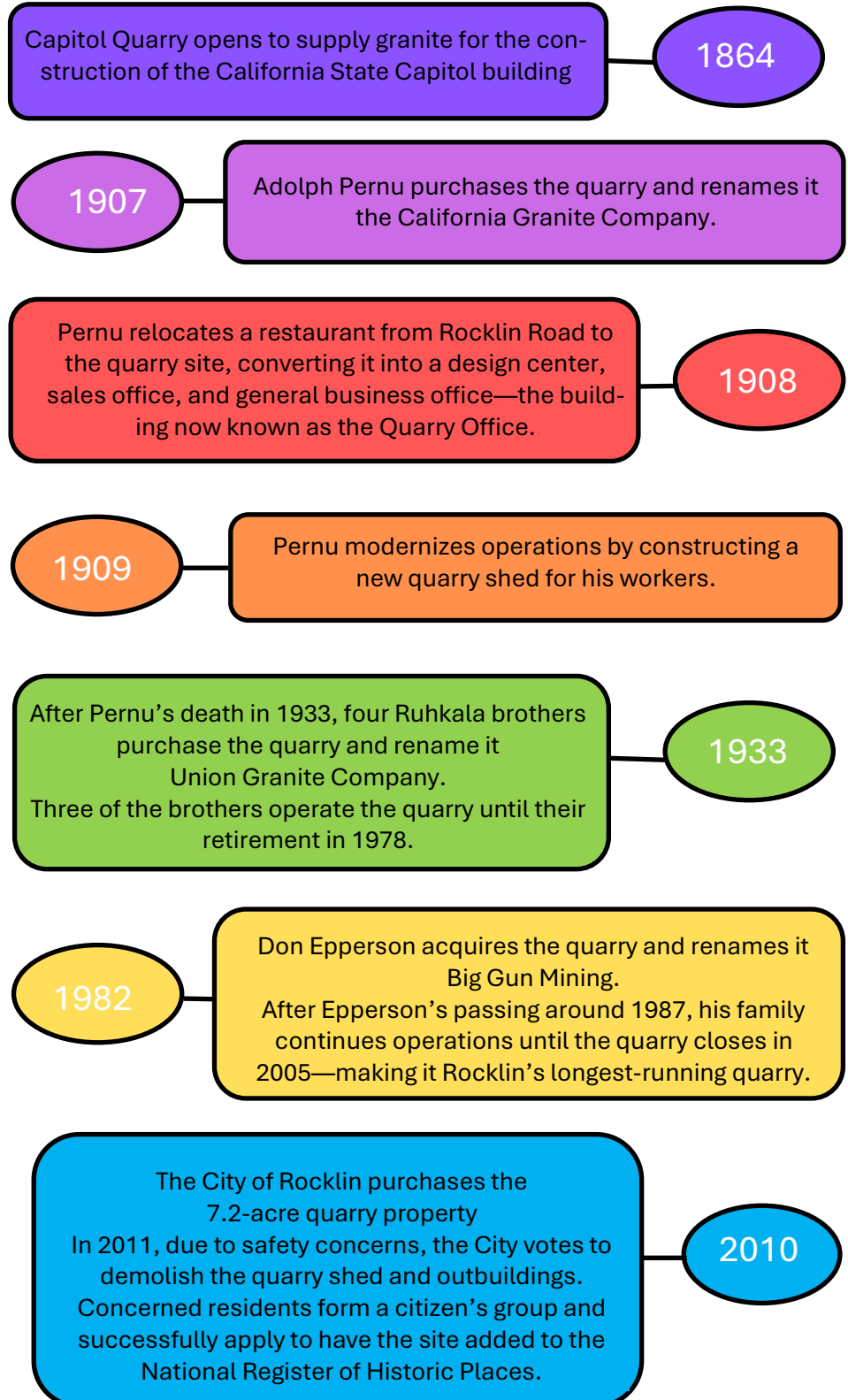
The committee proposed a multi-faceted approach to support the project, including partnerships with nonprofits, grant writing, community outreach, and public fundraising. The Quarry Office, once restored, will help complete the museum’s “Rocks, Rails, and Ranches” theme—bringing Rocklin’s granite legacy to life for generations to come.

The Quarry Office building—soon to be restored by the Rocklin Historical Society—originated at the Capitol Quarry on Pacific Street. The adjacent timeline traces the evolution of the site and its role in shaping Rocklin’s granite legacy.

[\(Return to pg.1\)](#)

Capitol Quarry Timeline: The Legacy of Rocklin’s Longest-Operating Granite Site

By RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks



Rocklin women shine at the Sacramento Archives Crawl

By Sharalee Cartier

In celebration of National Archives Month, the Rocklin Historical Society (RHS) participated in the Sacramento’s Annual Archives Crawl on October 4, 2025.

The day was warm and sunny welcoming over 500 people to visit four iconic buildings throughout Sacramento including: the California State Library, the State Archives, the Sacramento Room at the downtown library, and the Center for Sacramento History where they were free to browse the creative displays from local libraries, archives, museums and historical societies from Placer and Sacramento County.

The Rocklin Historical Society’s exhibit could be viewed at the State Archives located at 1020 O Street. The theme was The Women of Rocklin which included a variety of textiles, jewelry, beaded bags, lace, photographs and written histories of women taken from RHS’s recent exhibit on women. Two custom wooden puzzles depicting Rocklin were set up allowing the



young and old alike to piece together. Some even raced one another to see who could finish first. Representing the museum for the day was, Sharalee Cartier, Susan Brooking and Will Conover who took turns walking around to view the displays and schmooze with fellow participants.

The day offered an important reminder of the power of archives to connect communities through shared stories, and the Rocklin Historical Society was proud to showcase the lives of several of Rocklin’s historic women—one puzzle piece, artifact, and conversation at a time.

The Still Standing Guard Project releases second book

By Gloria Beverage

“Still Standing Guard: Telling Our Stories,” a collection of oral histories, has been published by Sierra College Press. This is the second collection to commemorate the World War II Japanese American experience, including lessons about the

necessity of protecting and upholding the Constitutional rights of all U.S. citizens. The first volume, “Standing Guard,” was published in 2003 and is no longer in print.

“By focusing on history as it played out in the foothill communities where ethnic Japanese were tightly woven into the fabric of the agricultural region, their recollections bring a distinctive perspective to the broader story and experiences of more than 120,000 ethnic Japanese living in the U.S. during the first half of the 20th Century,” according to the editors of this volume.

This edition includes stories of “The Protectors,” the neighbors, friends and fruit shed corporations who watched over the property and possessions of those who were sent away.

The narratives in “Still Standing Guard” were written by 18 different volunteer writers who drew primarily from the interviews

and transcripts conducted by Sierra College students in 2003 that were not included in the first volume.

The Standing Guard Project was started 20 years ago as a teaching tool utilized by Lynn Medeiros and Debra Sutphen for their Historical Reasoning course. Randy Snook’s Documentary Photography students captured photos of the interviewees.

The book can be purchased at Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble.com, Books-A-Million and IndieBound. Cost is \$80.



Sasaki’s North Star Ranch in Rocklin

Hot Cars, Cool History, and one special Packard



By Linda Wampler

Rocklin's 32nd annual Hot Chili & Cool Cars event drew more than 200 classic vehicles to the streets this year, each with its own story. But one that stood out—Gene Johnson's 1941 Packard 110 Club Coupe—a car that's been in his family for nearly 70 years and earned top honors in the "Under Construction" category.

According to Chamber of Commerce CEO Robin Trimble, "This special category celebrates works-in-progress: vehicles that may lack a finished paint job, interior, or engine bay, but showcase the heart and grit of restoration." Gene's Packard, towed to the show behind a U-Haul truck, fit the bill perfectly. "It was going to be there whether it was ambulatory or not," Gene said with a grin. "That was on my bucket list."

A Restoration Years in the Making

Gene's connection to the car began in high school, when he installed turn signals for Mrs. Allen, the Packard's second owner and his neighbor. After her passing, Gene's father purchased her estate—and the car came with it. "We've had it ever since," Gene recalled. "Close to 70 years."

The restoration began 60 years ago with a new muffler, but life and other projects intervened. It wasn't until Gene and his wife Margaret saw a similar Packard at a Bay Area car show 40 years ago that the spark reignited. "It was the same model, the same two-toned poly coat," he said. "We got excited, and started replacing components—the gas tank, the radiator, but didn't finish the job."

The Packard remained mostly in storage—even surviving a round of downsizing when Gene sold a Porsche and a Model A, but couldn't part with the Packard. "It didn't

The Rocklin Historical Society once again brought local heritage to this year's Hot Chili and Cool Cars event, continuing a long tradition of community engagement.

With a booth themed "Early Rocklin Businesses," visitors were treated to a glimpse into the businesses that shaped the town—from quarries and general stores to saloons and mid-20th century Pacific Street restaurants.

Event co-chairs

Shirley Espley and RoyceAnn Burks led the setup, with invaluable support from David Baker. RoyceAnn, Shirley, David and Susan Brooking staffed the booth, and Ronna Davis curated the chapel table, adding a thoughtful touch to the display. The ever-reliable Fix-It Crew lent their hands as needed, and museum volunteers played a vital role throughout the day.

The booth not only showcased Rocklin's past—it sparked conversations, memories, and new interest in preserving local history through RHS memberships.



Co-chair RoyceAnn Burks explains the benefits of membership to an interested visitor



sell," he said. "So it stayed."

This past year, Gene spent about four months getting the car running again. "We had pretty good luck," he said. "But the engine still won't go—that's why it's in the 'under construction' category." Friends from the Fix-it team including John Gambol and Chris Haws helped with the restoration. George Salgado even helped install the radiator. Another friend offered some excellent advice about the exterior. "Don't paint it!" he said. But he did tell Gene about one thing to use "to shine up the chrome: SOS Pads!" Gene was very pleased with the outcome.

A Quiet Victory

Gene didn't realize winners were expected to appear at the podium when awards were announced. "I didn't go," he said. "I didn't know

The Legacy of the 1941 Packard 110

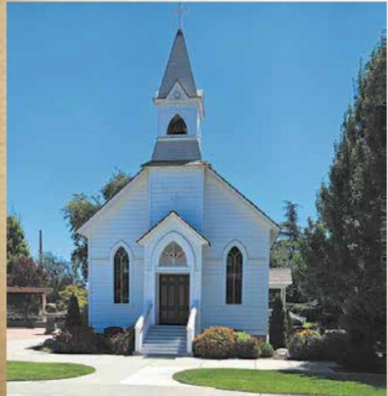
Model: 1941 Packard 110 Special (aka 1900 or Junior), Club Coupe
Engine: 6-cylinder, 245 cubic inch, 105 horsepower
Transmission: 3-speed column shift
Weight: 3,200 lbs
Paint: Packard Poly "metallic" finish
Original Price: \$795–\$1,100


Packard introduced the 110 series to enter the entry-level market without compromising quality. Recommended by Consumer Reports in 1941 as the best value among affordable cars, the 110 carried the Packard name—unlike Cadillac and Lincoln, which used Chevrolet and Ford for their lower-tier offerings. This lack of brand distinction, some say, contributed to Packard's decline and eventual closure in 1958.

until Robin [Trimble] brought it over a week later." Still, the recognition meant a lot—especially for a car that few people even recognize. "One guy, who knew what it was stopped by and said, 'I'm so happy you brought a Packard!'"

Gene hopes to return next year—and maybe drive the car to the show under its own power. "From my standpoint," he said, "it's one of the most beautiful cars Packard made."

Thank you
for naming
**Old St. Mary's Chapel the
Best Wedding Venue in Rocklin.**







WINNER

ROCKLIN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Making and Preserving Memories Since 1999

Old St. Mary's
Built in 1883, the chapel served the Catholic community for **100 years**. Since its relocation on Front Street in 2005, the building has become a popular site for weddings, celebrations of life and other events.
Thank you for naming Old St. Mary's Placer Herald's 2025 Best Wedding Venue.
To schedule an event, visit oldstmaryschapelofrocklin.com



rocklinhistorical.org
916-624-3464



How We Met

By Patsy Pattison

Being a part of a couple's wedding planning is an honor and experience beyond expectation. I love the stories of how they got to this day and just how they met. Two of these stories will forever stay with me.



One gentleman shared with me that he stopped by a local pub for a quick drink after work. When he saw the bartender, he was starstruck! Love at first sight! He hung around longer than he planned. Because he wanted more time with her, he got a part time job as a night custodian at that bar. So he is the custodian and she is the bartender. Their relationship grew over time.

The best part of this story is that she wasn't only a bartender, but had another successful career as a research scientist. She just needed some extra cash. He also wasn't only a custodian, but also had a successful career as a physicist.

It took awhile for the truth to come out. But it did and here they were, preparing for their wedding day.

Another couple, very much in love and happy to finally be together, shared their story. She was from Ukraine. He was from Russia. They found a way to meet and work their way here, now to finally get married.

It is a joy to be a part of such a happy time in these couple's lives, all happening at Old St. Mary's Chapel!

(GARDEN cont. from pg. 1)

Osella. It was originally used in the High Street garden of quarryman Victor Wickman, Jennie's father. A granite bench for the garden was donated by Rocklin's third grade students through their annual coin drive.

In addition to the Rocklin Historical Society, major support for the project was provided by the Wickman family, the City of Rocklin, the Placer County Friends of the Library, South Placer Rotary Club and Sally Huseby as well as donations from the community..

Holt Landscaping, Inc. from Loomis was hired to do the landscaping, while Everest Concrete, Inc., of El Dorado Hills created a ramp and curbing to make the area ADA accessible.

(Return to pg. 1)



A few finishing touches are all that are needed to bring this project to a close: installation of the granite bench, donated by third graders through their field trip coin drives, and an arbor upon which two intertwining trumpet vines—yellow and lavender— will welcome visitors with a splash of color and the playful spirit of the children who helped make it grow.

(PRESIDENT cont. from pg 1)

encourages residents to visit Placer County Museums. In addition to showing off the museum during our designated day, we offered a granite splitting demonstration. We have already agreed to participate in next summer's Heritage Trail.

Through Sierra College's OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) Program, we hosted a tour of Rocklin's historic sites in October. Docents, stationed at various

sites throughout downtown, shared stories of Rocklin's heritage. Since OLLI is open to anyone age 55 and over, the majority of the guests were surprised to discover that Rocklin is more than what they see going down Pacific Street or Rocklin Road.

Finally, many thanks to the volunteers who organized the creation of The Secret Garden behind Rocklin's library. The garden was created in honor of Placer County's first librarian in Rocklin, Jennie Wickman Minkinen and her husband,

Arvo, who served on the City Council for 24 years. While the majority of the work on the garden was completed at the end of October, a few finishing touches are needed. A grand celebration will be held in early Spring.

This year's successes are directly related to the energy and enthusiasm of our volunteers. And I am so thankful for them. When you're at one of our events, please join me in letting them know how much they are appreciated. *(Return to pg.1)*

Rocklin Homecoming Reunion Celebrates Lifelong Bonds

By Linda Wampler

Rocklin's Homecoming Reunion, held on October 25, 2026, at Johnson Springview Park, brought together more than 125 attendees for a day of reconnection and nostalgia. Despite a little rain, the pavilion's roof kept spirits high and the gathering dry. RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks, one of the organizers reflected, "It turned out really well even though it was a little rainy, but the roof over the top of the pavilion saved us."

Organized by the Rocklin Historical Society's Membership Committee—Bonnie Ruhkala Neumann, Shirley Corral Espley, Cyndy Trumbo Godfrey, and RoyceAnn—the event welcomed long-time Rocklin residents, Rocklin Elementary School classmates, and members of the Historical Society. Guests brought their own lunches and lawn chairs, settling in for heartfelt conversations and laughter.

The best-attended 8th grade graduation classes were 1963, 1964, 1965, and 1967, with ages ranging from 63 to 83. Jennie Navarro, the oldest attendee, was warmly recognized. Bonnie noted, "It was especially nice to see Dan and Liz Bunz there!" Shirley added, "I think the attendance at the reunion was a testimony to how we all cherish having had the oppor-

tunity to grow up in Rocklin. There's still that bond."

RoyceAnn and Bonnie concurred. They also noted that part of the difference between growing up in small town Rocklin and today was the single K-8 school. "There's a big difference between the school systems now and then. Ours was kindergarten through 8th, and had greater connection." Lasting bonds were more easily created. Gloria Beverage, representing the Historical Society, called the event special, simply enjoying watching the smiles, hugs, and laughter.

Although the weather prevented photo displays, the joy of seeing familiar faces made up for it—many attendees were thrilled to reconnect with people they hadn't seen in years.

Everyone agreed it was a fantastic event and are looking forward to the next one. "Once a Rocklin nite, always a Rocklin nite..."



Above left: David Baker and Gloria Beverage looking for members to join RHS while the crowd of over 100 start to gather; Above right: Liz and Dan Bunz taking a break from their work on their lavender farm; Below: Jennie Navarro, our oldest attendee, sharing a laugh with RoyceAnn and Bob Holihan



Organizers Bonnie Ruhkala Neumann, RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks, Cyndy Trumbo Godfrey and Shirley Corral Espley





Rocklin Historical Society's
Holiday Party @ Springview Park

Rocklin Community Center - 5480 5th Street
Monday Evening - December 15, 2025 - 6:00-8:30 p.m.
Bring an appetizer or sweet to share.

Please RSVP by 12/10
rsvp2rhs@gmail.com





Day of the Dead Tour brings history to life at Rocklin Cemetery

The Day of the Dead Cemetery Tour, held on November 1, provided a look at 14 historic lives from Rocklin's early days. Guided by Brenda Kokotan and Linda Wampler, the two sold-out sessions brought interested patrons face-to-face with Rocklin's rich and enlightening past. There is a saying that golf is a "good walk spoiled." Well, we can say that the RHS cemetery tour was a good walk enriched.

Photos by Holly Clark

Clark's Corner



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

- 1 JoAnn Takemoto as Asa Sasaki
- 2 Nancy Lohse as Mary Quinn
- 3 Cyndy Godfrey as Jennie Minkkinen
- 4 Bill Neumann as Anders Wickman
- 5 Eric Herlow as George Willard
- 6 Kent Dazey as W. Dana Perkins
- 7 Nancy Ustaszewski as Annie Beasmore
- 8 Carole Durbin as Minnie Allen
- 9 Smokey Basset as J. Parker Whitney

- 10 Susan Brooking as Annie Morys Matson
- 11 Joanne Ruhkala Lawson as Eva Ruhkala (standing) with Diane Ruhkala Bell as oldest child Mirium and Kathleen Williams Edwards as youngest child Margo
- 12 Jim Hammes as U.S. (Ulide) Holmes and Hank Lohse as Marshall Sam Renaldi
- 13 Shirley Corral Espley as Marcelina Alva



8



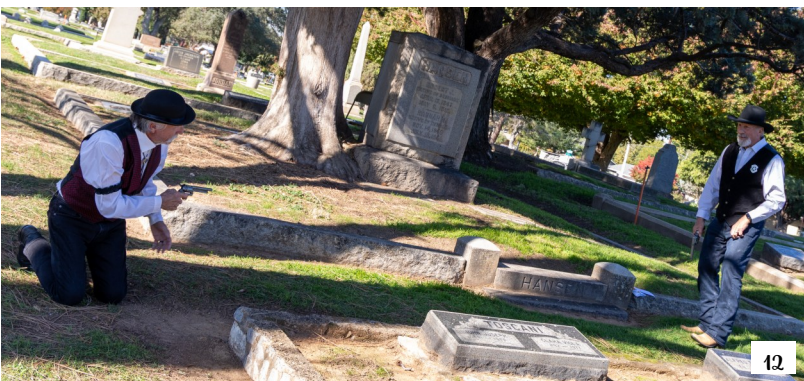
9



10



11



12



13

Murder, Mayhem & Mystery

A look at Auburn's popular cemetery tour

By Linda Wampler

On Monday evening, October 20, 2025, the past came alive at Old St. Mary's Chapel for the latest Speaker Series presentation, blending education, entertainment, and a touch of theatrical flair. Hosted by Carol Cramer—Placer County Museum Docent and Auburn City Historian—the program explored the origins and enduring appeal of Auburn's Annual Cemetery Tour, a tradition that began in 2013.

Cramer's engaging presentation traced how the tour's unique format—featuring costumed reenactors portraying real individuals buried in the Old Auburn Cemetery—has become a powerful way to connect audiences with local history. In fact, this year over 900 people visited the event!

The presentation included two veteran actors from the Auburn tour. Brad Weisberg stepped into the boots of *Rattlesnake Dick*, the notorious Gold Rush-era outlaw whose real name was Richard Barter. Born in Quebec in 1833, Barter came to California seeking fortune but turned to crime after

failed mining ventures. He gained infamy for a daring 1856 gold heist near Nevada City, where his gang stole \$80,000 in bullion—half of which was never recovered. Barter met a violent end in Auburn in 1859 after a shootout with lawmen, cementing his legend in Placer County lore.

Lynn Tubbe portrayed Mary Crutcher, wife of Deputy Sheriff William M. Crutcher, a prominent figure in Auburn's mid-19th century civic life. William and Mary owned and operated Auburn's early water works system, which they purchased in 1864. Coincidentally, William is also noted for his involvement in the fatal pursuit of the outlaw Rattlesnake Dick.

Audience members were moved by the performances and the historical insights shared throughout the evening. Carol Cramer's blend of humor, research, and reverence for Auburn's past made the presentation both informative and meaningful. As Carol noted afterward, "We really enjoyed our evening. Fantastic audience."

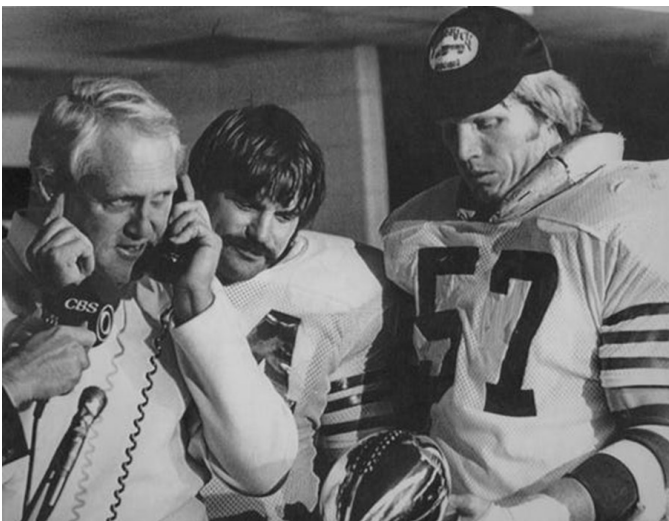
With refreshments served and stories shared, the event was a reminder of how history—especially



Carol Cramer, Brad Weisburg and Lynn Tubbe entertained and educated the audience with their engaging presentation

when told through the voices of those who lived it—can foster connection, curiosity, and community pride.

Thanks to organizer Patsy Pattison for continuing to provide interesting and varied presentations for our Speaker Series!



Coach Bill Walsh takes a congratulatory call from President Ronald Reagan while Jack "Hacksaw" Reynolds and Dan Bunz admire the newly-won Vince Lombardy trophy.

A Look back at a magical time is still here

It's football season, and what better time to celebrate the Magical 17 – those unforgettable summers the San Francisco 49ers trained at Sierra College? Our exhibit, *Rocklin at Play, Sports and Recreation Through the Years* includes a look at the 49ers during their time here and our local linebacker Dan Bunz's crucial role in the team's victory in Super Bowl XVI, where he made a famous goal-line tackle known as "The Stop" against the Cincinnati Bengals.

From 1981 to 1997, Rocklin served as the team's seasonal home base—a period that coincided with the 49ers' golden era, during which they clinched all four of their Super Bowl victories (XVI, XIX, XXIII, and XXIV). Locals recall glimpses of legends like Joe Montana and Jerry Rice honing their skills on Rocklin turf, while the community rallied around the excitement of championship-caliber football in its own backyard. This exhibit honors not only the 49ers' historic run but also Rocklin's enduring spirit of recreation, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout the years.

If you haven't had a chance to take a deep dive into the stories behind the team's time in Rocklin, now is your time before it closes!

New Speaker presentation announced for November 17

The Nisenan, Miwok, and Maidu: Keepers of the Foothills

Long before gold seekers and settlers arrived, the rolling hills, rivers, and oak valleys of California sang with the voices of the Nisenan, Miwok, and Maidu peoples. Their stories are woven into the land itself—told in the rustle of tule reeds, the rhythm of acorn pounding, and the steady flow of the American and Feather Rivers.

Join us on Sunday, November 17th at 4pm for a special presentation by Yasmine Acuña, a Youth Support Specialist with Sierra Native Alliance. Her presentation invites you to journey through time, hearing how these three neighboring tribes lived in balance with the land, built thriving communities, and continue to keep their languages, traditions, and stories alive today.

Yasmine Acuña, 23, has worked with Native youth ages 5–18 for the past year, helping create spaces where young people can learn, laugh, and grow together. Through weekly youth groups and peer mentoring, Yasmine supports youth in building confidence, staying connected to culture, and finding their voices. She is an enrolled member of the El Dorado Band of Miwok Indians and a descendent of the Konkow Valley Band of Maidu Indians and is passionate about giving back to the communities that shaped her.



Traditional housing of the Nisenan, Miwok and Maidu

This presentation, held at Old St. Mary's Chapel, is free and refreshments will be served. Come listen, learn, and honor the enduring spirit of the first people of the Sierra foothills.



Doug Bonetti Delivers Captivating Civil War Presentation



By Linda Wampler

On August 24, 2025, history enthusiasts gathered at Old St. Mary's Chapel for a memorable presentation by Civil War lecturer Doug Bonetti, whose engaging style and rare artifacts brought new life to familiar chapters of American history.

Bonetti, a retired Procter & Gamble executive and longtime Civil War researcher, shared little-known facts about

President Abraham Lincoln and the war that defined his presidency. His talk was both informative and entertaining, weaving together political insight, battlefield realities, and personal stories from the era.

A California native who grew up in King City, Bonetti has spent over a decade lecturing on Civil War history—nine years with the Renaissance Society at Sacramento State and, beginning in 2023, with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Sierra College. His return to OLLI in Spring 2026 will mark his fourth year with the program, where he continues to explore the war's many names and narratives, from the War of Northern Aggression to “that little unpleasantness.”

One of the evening's highlights was Bonetti's display of two rare historical items from his personal collection: an original presidential pardon issued by Abraham Lincoln during his first term, and a Civil War-era sword. The pardon, a tangible reminder of Lincoln's reputation for

mercy and clemency, sparked particular interest among attendees. Lincoln issued dozens of pardons during the war, often in response to appeals from families or recommendations from military and legal officials.

In addition to the artifacts, Bonetti introduced the audience to a valuable resource for genealogical research: the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System (civilwarsoldiersandsailors.com), a free database maintained by the National Park Service. The site allows users to search for ancestors who served in the Union or Confederate forces, offering a gateway into personal connections with Civil War history.

The presentation was warmly received, with attendees praising Bonetti's depth of knowledge and engaging delivery. His visit marked a strong return for the speaker series at Old St. Mary's Chapel, leaving the audience both enlightened and inspired to explore their own ties to the past.



Spotlight on.... Will Probus: Student, Scholar, Volunteer

By Linda Wampler

On a sunny Saturday in July, Will Probus stepped into the Rocklin History Museum for the first time, having toured several other museums in the region. He was greeted by longtime docents David Baker and Susan Brooking, whose warm welcome left a lasting impression. “I was intrigued by the museum’s displays,” Will recalled. “David and Susan were very welcoming, and I decided to get involved.”

Soon after, Will became a member and began training as a docent, volunteering once a month and steadily increasing his involvement. “I’ve been learning a lot and really enjoy interacting with visitors,” he said.

Will quickly impressed the museum team with his personable nature and thoughtful questions. David Baker described him as “highly motivated and bright, with a genuine interest in history and a good understanding of computer technology.” Susan Brooking added, “My first impression of Will was of a quiet young man. Then his curiosity surfaced regarding any subject we talked about at the museum.” She noted how he soon began contributing insights and historical tidbits to conversations with visitors, enriching the experience for all.

“In a discussion of the Whitney family genealogy,” Susan continued, “Will mentioned that he had little knowledge of his family history. This has become

an ongoing quest to find his family history, and the parallels we all share in making history in ways big and small.”

Will also assisted with the Archive Crawl, helping set up and tear down the museum’s display. He took time to explore other presentations during the event and especially appreciated the women’s history exhibit curated by our archivist, Sharalee Cartier.

A junior at Rocklin High School, Will is deeply committed to academics. He’s currently enrolled in three AP classes—Language, U.S. History, and Biology—and five weighted courses, including Art III (drawing). “I just like academia,” he said with a smile.

“History is my favorite subject, and I’m taking every advanced class my school offers.” He plans to pursue anthropology in college, a field that blends his love of history, science, and culture. Outside the classroom, he enjoys reading and hiking—especially exploring Lake Clementine.

His civic engagement extends beyond the museum. Will is active in the Academic Decathlon and Freedom Forward, a national nonprofit that promotes civic education and leadership among youth. This year, he and three classmates competed in the Constitution Bowl, where Rocklin High School placed second in the high school division out of 25 teams. This spring, Will will be taking a trip to Philadelphia, where he’ll stay at the organization’s Valley Forge campus and receive a full



tour of the city’s historic sites. “It will be my first time out of California—except for Reno,” he said. “Sometimes it all feels a little daunting, but I just head straight forward and do it.”

Will also volunteers at The Salt Mine, a local food closet and thrift store, with a goal of completing 150 hours of service by senior year to qualify for the National Honor Society.

Whether he’s guiding museum visitors, studying for AP exams, or packing food boxes, Will Probus exemplifies the spirit of engaged learning and community service. We’re proud to have him as part of the Rocklin History Museum family.

Wednesdays on Front— time for a mid-week break

Front Street is the place to be on Wednesdays! This gem of Rocklin is beautiful for a fall walk and visit!



- Visit the Open House Old St. Mary’s Chapel between 5-7. Learn about this historic building and find out about renting the quaint building property (which includes the marshal’s office in the firehouse and the patio) for weddings, memorials, meetings, receptions. It has also been used as a backdrop for a variety of videos!

- Looking for a special reception venue? Arrange a Wednesday tour of Cante Ao Vino, in the historic granite Barudoni building right across the street. www.canteaovinhowinery.com/

- Let your creativity shine at Make Create Wednesdays at Clarks Corner.
- Enjoy a leisurely walk through the community orchard, honoring the agricultural contributions to the growth of Rocklin
- Include in your walk the roundhouse rose garden across Rocklin Rd. and informative plaques placed throughout Heritage Park



**MAKE CREATE
WEDNESDAYS
AT CLARKS CORNER**

OPEN STUDIO | 4-8 PM
\$5 PER HOUR PER PERSON
(space is limited, supplies not included)

**FREE PORTRAIT
SESSION
5-7 PM**
(PHOTOS FOR PURCHASE ONLINE)

YOUR COMMUNITY ART SPACE

Nov. 12th, 19th & Dec. 3rd, 10th, 17th

A Brisk Walk Through Rocklin History

OLLI Field Trip brings the past to life

By Linda Wampler

It was an overcast, brisk fall day—October 22—when Gloria Beverage, president of the Rocklin Historical Society and lead organizer of the event, looked skyward and wondered, “What do we do if it rains?” As it turned out, no plan B was needed. The clouds held, the breeze stayed gentle, and the weather proved perfect for a “Walk Through Rocklin History,” the Society’s second annual field trip in partnership with OLLI.

OLLI, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Sierra College, offers non-credit courses, lectures, and activities for adults aged 50 and older. It’s designed for those who love to learn, explore new ideas, and connect with others in a relaxed, engaging environment.

Modeled after the Historical Society’s school field trip offered free to all third graders, the OLLI version adds an extra stop and concludes with a shared lunch. This year’s sold-out tour welcomed the group of lifelong learners eager to explore Rocklin’s rich past.

The journey began at Quarry Park Adventures, where presenters Bonnie Neumann and RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks shared the story of the Capitol Quarry and its role in supplying granite for the California State Capitol. RoyceAnn emphasized the significance of the Quarry Office building, calling it “our last remnant of the old quarry history that started in 1864.”

Across the street at the Rocklin History

Museum, docents Susan Brooking, Cyndy Godfrey, and Shirley Espley guided guests through exhibits that showcased Rocklin’s immigrant families, fraternal organizations, and early industries. Visitors lingered over photos, artifacts, and stories that brought the town’s heritage to life.

At Heritage Park, Linda Wampler introduced the group to the site of Rocklin’s original roundhouse, built for the transcontinental railroad, explaining how the railroad shaped the town’s growth and economy. The tour then continued to Old St. Mary’s Chapel and the adjacent Firehouse, where Nancy Lohse and Nancy Ustzewski offered insights into Rocklin’s busy and ultimately incendiary Front Street history.

The day concluded on the chapel’s patio with a boxed lunch and the distribution of a full-color booklet titled *Historic Sites of Rocklin*, featuring not only the stops on the tour but several other landmarks worth exploring. OLLI member Diane Kalinisan praised the experience: “The presentations and information provided were fantastic and extremely informative. Your booklet is the best developed tour product I have seen in a long, long time. It’s been great reading it and being able to visualize what I saw during the tour.”

As the group dispersed—some with new friendships, others with fresh curiosity—it was clear that Rocklin’s history had not only



Bonnie Ruhkala Neumann and RoyceAnn Ruhkala Burks tells the story of the Capitol Quarry, now Quarry Park Adventures



Nancy Lohse tells the tragic history of Rocklin’s fires followed by the uplifting recounting of the saving of Old St. Mary’s Chapel

been preserved, but shared with joy and purpose. The day’s success was a testament to the dedication of the presenters and the enduring power of community storytelling.



Susan Brooking regales the audience with stories of quarry life and the new Roundhouse model (split with a Rocklin and Roseville side) created by members of the Roseville Roundhouse Model Railroad Association

Renaldi's Final Stand: *The Marshal and the Saloon Keeper*

By Hank Lohse

My name is Sam Renaldi but you can call me Sam. I was born in Rocklin in 1888. That made me 5 years old when Rocklin became a city. And I died in 1914 just 2 months before the "Great Fire" that leveled most of the city on Front Street.

The early 1900s had not been kind to Rocklin. First the railroad moved to Roseville in 1908 and then the fire in 1914. Not to mention a severe downturn in the quarry business. That left Rocklin with a population under 500.

Well, it all started in June 1913 when I became the marshal of the city of Rocklin. George Willard had just stepped down from town marshal but stayed on the force as a constable.

Things went fairly smoothly until January 1914. With six or so saloons in a town of 500, you knew that sooner or later something was going to "blow up." It was a constant battle of putting out small fires before they had a chance to get out of hand.

In February 1914, things started to escalate into a major problem. U.S. Holmes was testing the resolve of the city council and thereby the town marshal (ME). He did not want to follow the law and often kept his saloon open past midnight. He was also running an establishment that did not follow the rules and laws for proper sanitation.

Then on February 19th Holmes, after three days of drinking, brutally assaulted and mistreated his waitress and cleaner, Ella. She ran from his saloon and vowed to never come back.

Of course this sent Holmes over the edge. After more drinking he went looking for Ella at her elderly father's house. Once word got back to me, I, along with George Willard and his son Alfred went to investigate.

As we approached the house, we could hear shouting and cussing. Alfred cautiously approached the front door and, finding it unlocked, slowly opened the squeaky door. The house went silent. Holmes told Ella to check who was there. As she approached the half-open door, Alfred was able to grab Ella by the arm and quickly pulled her from the house onto the front porch. Ella quickly ran down the stairs and disappeared into the night. Holmes had gone out the back and was nowhere to be found.

We all retreated to the Blackwell and Hendrickson livery stable on the corner of Rocklin Road and Pacific Street close to Holmes's saloon to plot our next move. People were wandering in and out. Fearing that Holmes could show up at any minute and the chance that innocent bystanders could get caught in a crossfire, I ordered everyone to leave the area and go home. Some left but some remained behind waiting to see if Holmes would show up.

Suddenly Holmes stumbled into the livery. He looked horrible! It's amazing what 3 full days of drinking and no food or sleep can do to a man. He wobbled to the center of an open area of the livery.

Two men that were close to the front door quietly slipped out leaving the 4 of us—Me, George, Alfred and Holmes. Everyone was pretty sure that something was going to happen, and it was not going to be good.

I quickly evaluated the situation and came up with two possible outcomes:

1. Holmes was so out of it he would pass out on his feet and slowly hit the floor.
2. And this most likely, he would go for his gun and start blasting away. Yep—2 was definitely the right answer here. If we could only disarm him before he got to that point of no return.

George was in front of me and Alfred was to my right. I didn't want to be in a position that left George in the line of fire. George began slowly shuffling toward Holmes with the hope he could get close enough to grab him and wrestle him to the floor. I, at the same time, was sliding to my left with my right hand on my gun, ready to draw and fire. Holmes's eyes kept darting between George and me as he was unsure what was happening.

Suddenly, both George and I moved at the same time, startling Holmes. He reached for his gun in his top right pants pocket.

Alfred ducked behind one of the empty stalls and George stood his ground. But Holmes only had his eyes for me. We both drew and shot at the same time. Holmes was stunned and almost dropped his gun but managed to shoot a second round into the floor. I continued firing at Holmes till my gun was empty.

I had been shot only once, and Holmes had 4 bullets in him. Both of us were in



Marshal Sam Renaldi aka Hank Lohse sneaking up on U.S. Holmes

bad shape. I had been shot in my lower abdomen. I felt like I had a grenade going off in my stomach. Holmes was on the floor and not moving. I passed out.

Later I found out that George and Alfred had taken me to Dr. Fletcher's house (now the Rocklin Museum). He worked on me most of the night. I heard him talking to George and saying that it was the worst gunshot wound he had ever seen. He had to repair 17 holes in my intestine. He said I had a slight chance to make it if I could get past the first couple of days.

Holmes's mother, a Mrs. Watts of Sacramento, was notified of the shootout. She engaged a doctor and automobile, and Holmes was taken to Sister's Hospital in Sacramento that night. He died late morning February 20, 1914.

I was taken by early morning train to White Hospital in Sacramento where I died at 11 PM on February 20, 1914, at the young age of 26.

After my death, the City of Rocklin paid my mother \$1515 that was paid out at a rate of \$27.36 per month for 51 months. They were also required to pay all my medical expenses.

I was honored to be memorialized at the Police Officer's Memorial in Sacramento located at 10th Street and Capitol Avenue.

And it was an honor to serve Rocklin.

The Real Sam Renaldi

