



*The Cobblestones of Historic Events
Pave the passing Years' Pathway*

C O L F A X
A R E A H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y

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WINTER PHOTO GALLERY

*"Across time and
miles we find a
connection to our
past"*



Blue Canyon

Sent to us by E.L. Wall, Helsinki, Finland
See His Colfax Story on page 3



Bill Lidster & Sister

In Front of Colfax Elementary See Story page 4



Colfax Shotgun House

Photo by Nilda Duffek
See Story page 4

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MUSEUM UPDATE

CAHS Heritage Museum
99 Railroad Street
Open: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Daily

CAHS members receive 10%
discount in the Gift Shop

Visitor Count

2007 - 5068

2008 - 8624

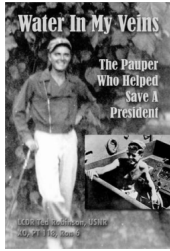
2009 - 9084

We have an average of
700 visitors a month!

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

Museum help is always welcome, and encouraged
Contact Helen Wayland, or
stop by the Museum
We need you!
Contact Helen Wayland

FEBRUARY PROGRAM: PT 109 & JFK



**Saturday
February 20th
10am
Veterans
Memorial Hall
Colfax**

The Colfax Area Historical Society is very pleased to announce the guest speaker for Saturday, February 20th will be a US Navy officer and PT boat commander who served in the same flotilla with John Fitzgerald Kennedy, our 35th President of the United States.

As most know, the late president Kennedy commanded Patrol/Torpedo Boat # 109 (PT-109) which was lost in valiant action against the Japanese Navy in the Blacket Straits in early August, 1943 when a

Japanese Destroyer sliced her in half.

As the late Paul Harvey said, "here's the rest of the story" as told by retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Theodore Robinson.

LCDR Robinson, commander of PT-118 who became a close friend to "Jack" Kennedy when they were room mates on the island of Tulagi and recovering from wounds.

Attend this presentation and you'll get the true story, not something dreamed up by a "wannabe" historian. This

is your chance to meet a legendary American hero who lived the hell of the Pacific.

LCDR Robinson has written a book about his experiences "Water in My Veins, The Pauper Who Helped Save a President" Which will be available for purchase at the program.

Please join us for the February 2010 presentation that will be held in the Colfax Veterans Hall, Saturday, February 20 at 10:00 A.M., refreshments served.

*The scent of
ginger &
cinnamon wafting
through the air
brings a rush of
memories of warm
winter days sitting
in Grandma's
Kitchen*

RECIPE FROM THE PAST

Baked Indian Pudding (mid-1800s)

Into 2 qts scalded milk stir 1 1/2 cups of Indian meal (yellow corn meal), 1TBL ground ginger, 1/2 tsp salt. Let stand 20 minutes. Add 1 cup molasses, 2 beaten eggs, a piece of butter the size of a common walnut (1TBL). Bake 2 hours in a buttered pan in slow to moderate oven

(325°). If you have no eggs, do this: just as you put the pudding in the oven, stir in 1 gill (1/2cup) of cold water, which will produce the same effect as eggs.- Mrs. A.W.D.

Recipe from:
Grandma in the Kitchen
Helen Lyon Adamson

** This is still a common dessert in New England, you can add cinnamon too and serve warm with vanilla ice cream-*

Teri



CALL FOR ARTICLES

Dear Members, We need your help with articles or photographs for Cobblestones.

Please send articles or photographs to our editor Teri Murch at teri@LiveInColfax.com Include "Cobblestones" in subject field.

Articles can be in the most basic of text files. If you do not have email, please ask someone to type it into an electronic format for you and send it to Teri via email. A basic .txt file is preferred.

Photographs should be at

highest resolution for best print quality. Teri can scan them if you leave them at the museum and call her at 530-798-0215.

Next deadline for articles is March 8, 2010.

Thank-you

www.ColfaxHistory.org



TALES FROM THE PAST AS TOLD BY E.L. WALL

During World War II, the Southern Pacific Railroad hired women and high school kids to do track work. I went to work on the section gang in 1944 at Colfax along with several other high school kids. There were no women on this gang. I worked weekends during school and one summer.

The majority of the men were Mexican Americans and Mexican Nationals. The Foreman's name was Jack Perry and the Asst Foreman was Juan Seliz. All these men were hard workers and they taught me how to pace myself so I could last all day at hard labor.

Colfax back in the forties was a railroad town and steam was still going strong. It also had a few fruit packing sheds. The pear industry was big then but during the fifties a blight hit the surrounding orchards and killed most of the fruit trees. Colfax had a round house that had about 8 stalls for engine repair. This round house was mainly used to maintain helper engines for trains going over Donner Pass. When freight trains came out of Roseville Yard headed for Truckee, there was one cab forward in front and a cab forward near the rear of the train. When the train got to Colfax a helper engine was added to the head end. The grades between Colfax and Donner would be over 3%.

In those days, everything was done by hand. We drove spikes with spike mauls, carried rail with rail tongs, pulled spikes with claw bars, tamped cross ties with picks that had a broad end on one end and a sharp end on the other end, (the W.P. used tamping bars), shoveled bal-

last with ballast forks, drilled bolt holes in rails with a two handled track drill and used a 3ft. long open ended wrench for tightening or loosening track bolts.

Working on the track is a dangerous place to work. In those days hard hats weren't used. I thought the only people that wore hard hats were miners. It was very easy to mash a finger or foot especially when changing a rail. When using a pick or spike maul you had to be careful not to hit the man working next to you. No one was hurt while I was there.

When we changed out old cross ties and put in new ones and since we were under age. it was considered a days work if we changed out four ties. The older men had to change out eight ties. Occasionally we would change out a broken rail. All rail, then, was 39 ft long except today most mainline rail is welded together. Rail size is designated by weight per 3 ft for example 85#, 100#, 115#, 119#, 132#, and 136#. Most mainline rail around Colfax at that time was 115# rail if I remember correctly. When a rail needed to be changed out, we would lift a rail out of the stock pile next to the tool house and jockey it over to the nearest track where we had a push car. With six to eight men with rail tongs. we would lift one rail up and push the push car under it. Then, we would pick up the other end and slide it onto the push car. The push car was then towed to where the rail need to be changed out. The rail was the rolled off onto the ground. The old rail was removed and the new one put in.

During the war, the S.P. took out a lot of

sidings and spur tracks that weren't needed any more and all the steel was sold for scrap. One time, a work train was organized with a crane, flat car for rail, a gondola car for tie plates, spikes, anti-creepers and angle bars and bolts. We all loaded up our tools and boarded the train and headed for Cape Horn, the next siding east of Colfax. At Cape Horn there was a siding between the two main lines about a mile long. The siding was to be removed. The crane was used to pick up the entire track, ties and all, to about waist high. We, then, would use sledge hammers to knock the ties away from Spikes and tie plates. After all the ties were knocked off, we proceeded to take all the angle bars of and generally dismantle everything. For the next few days we loaded all the scrap into the gondola with the help of the crane. After using the sledge hammers my wrists got very weak and I could hardly lift anything the next day. So I pretty well faked it until my wrists got better.

Anyway, when pay day came along it all seemed worth it. My pay rate then was \$0.62 per hr. Can't beat that.

E.L. Wall

Retired Signal Engineer U.P.

Do you have any stories you would like to share?

Please email them to the editor:

Teri@LiveInColfax.com

Subject line: Cobblestones

BITS & PIECES

Call for Colfax Photos

Please share your history gems.

2010 is the Colfax City Centennial and CAHS is collecting pictures for a City of Colfax Anthology -100 Years of Incorporation. Please let us know if you have something that could be a part of this effort (we can scan what you have, our place or yours). Stop by the Museum or leave a message with your contact information at 402-9935.



More Photos from the 2009 Railroad

Days can be found at:

www.LiveInColfax.com

Go to Events Page

Then click on Visual Tour Link

2010 CAHS Program Dates

Saturday February 20

Exhibit of Interest at:
The California Railroad Museum
THE RAIL SPLITTER AND THE
RAILROADS: Lincoln, the Union
and the Golden State
May 9, 2009 - Feb 15 2010
www.csrnf.org



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT... SHOTGUN HOUSES?

If your answer is "not a thing" and you are an architect at heart, then you are in for a treat. Think back to the years between 1865 and 1930s and realize that our country was in a depression and in great need of simple, inexpensive housing. Many shotgun houses were built then (mostly in the South and Midwest) but can be found almost anywhere in the country. Many have been preserved and restored, as well as recently embellished with more modern features.

A simple shotgun is a house no wider than 12 feet and arranged with the rooms in a row without hallways and with only one door in the front and one in the back wall. See sketch. The roof was usually a long pitched construction and the house may have been raised on stilts depending on location. The early ones did not have windows on the side walls for privacy. There was usually no front yard, with

the front steps meeting the sidewalk.

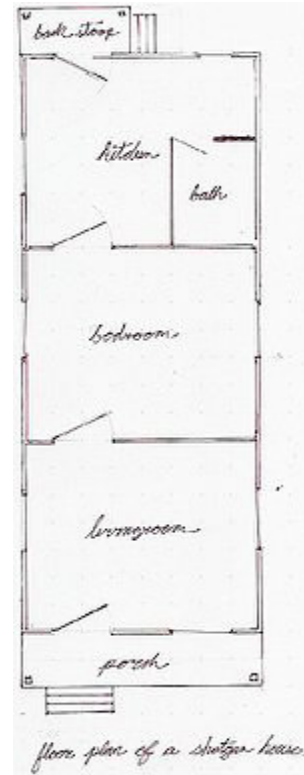
According to Wikipedia® (and other sources) the name could be derived from the story that you could fire a shotgun from the front door and out the back door without hitting a wall. There are other explanations as well. Just the same, variations of these basic houses are still being built in poor communities.

If you have never seen a shotgun house before, you may notice a typical example in our very own town. Just take a stroll down Depot Street to the corner of Pleasant Street and you will see it. This home was once owned by the Mc Cleary family.

For other examples of shotgun houses and more information visit: http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Shotgun_House.html

Article by:

Nilda Z. Duffek, CAHS Member



MY COLFAX MEMORIES BY BILL LIDSTER

Getting to Know Me

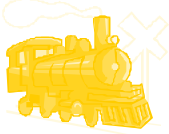
My wife and I heard a story on TV. About something that happened in Auburn, CA. and I said to her that I knew where that was because I lived in Colfax when I was a child for a short period. With that I showed her on our atlas how close to Auburn I had lived. I then did a Google search on the internet for Colfax, CA. and found the Colfax Cobblestones. I read your April

2009 issue and your request for short stories to share with your readership. I have a lot of memories of Colfax and though we did not live there for more than one year a lot happened, and I remember all of them well.

I was born in Chicago, IL. In 1941 and had a fairly normal childhood going to school, going to the movies and playing in the Streets and Alley's of our city. I lived very near downtown Chicago, only a few blocks from Lake Michigan, we did

not have what other people had such as a lot of trees, grass etc. However we did have the Natural History Museum, Lincoln Park Zoo, as well as the Chicago stockyards and lots of freight trains, passenger trains, also the El trains that ran over our heads throughout the city. And the expressways for cars and trucks were just coming in to being. One day at the end of the fourth grade when school was about to be over for summer

Cont pg 5



CAHS MEMBERSHIP JOIN US!

Objectives:

To support and promote educational and research activities and interest in the history of the Colfax area; to promote and establish a local museum; to work with other Historical Societies and local groups; to discover, collect and make accessible to the public historical facts and objects; to mark places and building of historical interest in the Colfax area and cata-

log such markers in an or-

derly manner; to register historical landmarks and buildings' to accept gifts and donations from the public and other organizations and to raise funds to accomplish all the above.

Meetings:

General Meetings: 4/year

Executive Board: 4/year

Location: 99 Railroad Ave

Membership and Annual Dues:

Regular (single) Member : \$10.00

Family (including children: \$15.00

Junior (not included in Family: \$ 5.00

Business (includes ad in *Cobblestones*) \$25.00

Non-profit Organizations \$25.00

Additional contributions are always welcome
Dues apply to fiscal year, July 1 to June 30 and are tax-deductible. Members receive a membership card and *Cobblestones*.

Make checks payable to: Colfax Area Historical Society
Send with your name, address, phone #, email address and amount enclosed to : POB 185, Colfax, Ca 95713

Lidster cont from pg 4:

vacation, I came home from school and my mother told me, my sister, and my brother that we were going to move away from Chicago and go west to California. My mother was always what we called Star Struck and all of us kids were named after Actors, such as My middle name is Lamont, named after Lamont Cranston who portrayed the Shadow on the old Radio shows, that was one of my favorite shows for me when I was young as I could pretend that I was the Shadow and scare other people with the low voice and theatrics that the His Character Portrayed. When I heard that we were going to move I wasn't very happy but with the anticipation of seeing cowboys and Indians on the way as well as wild horses that we could ride, well who could resist that, my brother Ronald didn't want to leave Chicago, However he did finally come to Colfax (that same summer). His travel was by train, which was an adventure of its own.

Learning about Mountains & Small Towns

My mother wasn't a very good driver as I remember, because she didn't have to drive at all in Chicago. Everywhere anyone wanted to go; public transportation was available to take you. All I can remember is that when the big moment came to move, my uncle Del came to the house and packed up everything we owned and

moved it to a storage building. We stayed a few nights with my grandparents while my mother went shopping for a car. She bought a 1939 Plymouth with a split window for the rear (Two window panes with a center bar) Wow, what a tank that was however it was now ours, so with some drivers training we were on our way to California.

When we got close to the edge of our city limits I saw something that was almost the most beautiful thing I had seen, I saw many homes in a row with grass and trees instead of cement, steel girders and lots of building materials. Chicago was exploding with new buildings for the growth of the city. One thing that we did have in Chicago though was horse drawn wagons for milk, juice, ice, and rag collections.

We were on our way and nothing more that I remember stood out in my mind until we got within eyes view of Pike's Peak and I have to tell you that was the most thrilling moment of my life until we started to drive up to the top and almost slide off to the side, luckily there was construction so there were lots of equipment to help us back in the line of traffic. The most tragic thing I learned about the mountains was when the semi tractors would have an accident and fall off or roll down the mountain side and the sure death that was awaiting them.

You have to understand that coming from Chicago where you could roll a penny for a city block because it was so flat; this experience was a frighten-

ing one. The next excitement came when my sister and I saw our first wild horse and I was ready for that because in my suitcase was a rope that I had brought with me for just such an incident. I rolled the window on the drivers side open and thru the coiled end of the rope out the window and low and behold I caught a wild horse so I pulled the rope back towards me and when I couldn't pull anymore I screamed at my mother that I caught a wild horse, she said okay and kept on driving. I told her to slow down but she didn't until we needed gas for the car. My sister Cheryl was as excited as I was so she helped me hold on to the rope that was hooked on to our horse. When my mother stopped the car at the gas station I couldn't wait to see our horse, so I threw open the door, jumped out of the car ran to the back of the car and seen that I had lassoed the rear bumper, what a letdown, but it has been a good memory for most of my life.

In Chicago we had lots of tall buildings and lots of very large factories plus the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, But nothing to compare to the size of the Rocky Mountains so this way very exciting to me. When we finally got to Colfax, that was a disappointment to me, because where was the rest of the town, I mean you could walk the whole length of town in just a few minutes and I did many times out of boredom the first few days when we knew nobody and summer was just beginning...

To be continued next issue

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
WWW.COLFAXHISTORY.ORG

COLFAX AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mailing Address:
PO Box 185
Colfax, CA 95713

Visit our Museum Located in
the Depot
99 Railroad Street

10am—3pm Daily



SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BUSINESS MEMBERS

Bakbraken Acres P.O. Box 193 Chicago Park, CA 95713 530-272-5257	Mike Basich Painting 23850 Spring Valley Road Colfax, CA 95713 346-2466	Colfax Market Main Street P.O. Box 717 Colfax, CA 95713 346-7029	Winner Chevrolet 1624 South Canyon Way P.O. Box 1867 Colfax, CA 95713 346-8313	VFW Ladies Aux. Post 2003 P.O. Box 1213 Colfax, CA 95713 (Pres.) 636-4242	Ann Maurine Frink 309 S. Auburn Street P.O. Box 182 Colfax, CA 95713 320-0160 annmarifri@aol.com
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