

COLFAX COBBLESTONES

COLFAX AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING TIME IN COLFAX

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CAHS HERITAGE MUSEUM

99 Railroad Street, in the Depot
Open Daily: 10:00 to 3:00
CAHS members receive 10% discount in the Gift Shop.

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

Museum help is always welcome, encouraged, and really needed.
Contact Helen Wayland at 530-346-8599, or stop by the Museum.

PROGRAM IDEAS

Members we need your help!
Do you have an idea for a program? A passion for history you would like to share? Would you like to put on a program? If so, please contact Walt or Bonnie Wilson at 530-878-6640, or email them at bonwally@hotmail.com



See us on the Web at www.ColfaxHistory.org

HOMER R. ELDRIDGE

The Early Years

Editor's Note: Homer and his wife, Zella, moved to Colfax for the first time in 1962. They bought land overlooking what is now Rollins Reservoir on Barb Wire Lane, a name Homer gave it. Homer built a house on the land which they moved into in 1964. From their house they could watch the construction of Rollins Dam. That was their first residence in Colfax – Homer last lived on Culver Street. They were very active in the Colfax United Methodist Church. In 1995 Homer celebrated his 100th birthday in the Church Hall, that he had helped build. **And now, Homer's story!**

I was born January 28, 1895, in West Lafayette, Indiana. As I remember the story my aunt told, Dad had the doctor come and when I was born the doctor told them that I wouldn't live because I was too premature and there was no use trying to save my life. However, my aunt put some cotton in a shoe box and put me in the box near the heating stove and fed me with a medicine dropper. When Mother went to having more pain they didn't know what was wrong so Dad ran out and yelled at the doctor who had already started down the road with his buggy. Dad asked him to come back because his wife was having a lot more pain. So the doctor came back and then my twin brother, Percy, was born. My mother didn't even know she was going to have twins.

When we were about four years old we moved out on what we called the little farm. My granddad had 40 acres near St. Lawrence, Indiana, and Mother, of course, wasn't well acquainted with people there. One

morning a neighbor woman came over to see her while us two boys were still upstairs playing around. There were just outdoor toilets then, so we had a little chamberpot up in our bedroom. We had a big heating stove in the corner of the living room. I can still see it; it was pretty to watch the coal burning in there through the isinglass. They had a register above the stove that they could open and shut so the heat could go up and heat the rooms upstairs. Anyway, in our romping around, we tipped that chamberpot over and it ran down through the register all over the hot stove. We didn't know what to do but knew we were in trouble. We came downstairs a little later and Mother was crying and the woman had left.

There were still lots of Indians around then and they used to buy Dad's lump-jaw cattle for \$5 a head. After the Indians bought these steers they would get on their horses and chase them across the prairie and finally shoot them, to remind them of the hunting of the buffalo. They had a lot of fun doing that. When they killed these steers they cut the meat up in thin slices, big sheets of it. It looked like big red bandanna handkerchiefs. They would hang them over pole racks that they had built to let them dry. That's the only way they had of preserving their beef in those days.

The Indians usually camped in a grove of trees across the road and a little way south of where we lived. I remember one time when we had an awfully cold rain and one of the Indians, an old, old man, who was camping down there, came by one day and just walked right in the kitchen door without knocking. He got a chair and got in back of the



Percy and Homer

cook stove where it was warm and sat down and went to sleep. Poor Mother, she was scared to death. When I think back about it, the poor old guy had just needed to get somewhere to warm up.

My brother and I used to go swimming over in the creek on a neighbor's place west of where we lived. One day the water holes were more full than usual and when we were in there swimming I stepped off into deep water. I was fighting around and I'd already gone down a couple of times when all of a sudden I hit a rock or stump and gave myself a big lurch up. It happened to be that I was headed towards the bank and when I came back down I hit bottom and waded out. Neither one of us knew how to swim!

There was a grove of trees in the shape of an L across the north and west sides of our house. Dad had a cornfield out there and the geese

(continued on page 4)

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



summer vacations.

The society is continuing to improve our archives. We have acquired an archive database and are learning how to process our records. This has not been an easy task as there are many details and processes to learn and discover. Volunteers are starting to catalog and organize the items in the archives as well as at the museum. One of our goals is to have the archives available to the

Summer is fast upon us, and many of us are planning gardens and

public. The computerization of our records will enable us to provide a more accessible historical resource to the community.

Your continued participation as a member of the Society is critical to the continuation and growth of the Society. We will start our spring membership drive soon so please be sure to renew your membership and discuss with your friends our museum and the various activities of the Society. We have new financial responsibilities due to our larger archives room at the Sierra Vista Community Center. Any additional donations to help cover

this increased expense will be welcomed.

Thank you for your interest and participation in society projects and activities. If you have any ideas how we can be of service to the community and our local businesses, please let us know. Contact Bonnie Wilson (530-878-6640, email: bonwally@hotmail.com) with your ideas for program presentations.

Swend L. Miller
President,
Colfax Area Historical Society
(530-346-6960)



RECIPE FROM THE PAST

Eel Soup¹

*Afoot and lighthearted,
I take to the open road,
Healthy,
free the world before me,
The long brown path before me,
Leading me wherever I choose.
~ Walt Whitman*



ARTICLES AND PHOTOS

Dear Readers,

We need your help with articles and/or photos for the Cobblestones. Several members have recently supplied me with outlines of articles, accompanying photos, or references to where I could find photos and additional information, for items they wanted to have included in the next Cobblestones. This has worked out very well.

I am hoping that this simplified approach will encourage more of

3 lb. whole eels
3 qt. boiling water
1/4 ounce thyme
1/8 ounce black pepper

5 oz. Butter, divided
1/4 ounce fresh savory
1/2 ounce parsley

2 onions, halved
1/4 ounce lemon
1/8 ounce allspice
Flour

Put two ounces of butter in a saucepan, a couple of onions cut once, and stew them until lightly browned. Remove the onions and put into the pan, cut in pieces, three pounds of unskinned eels, shake them over the fire a few minutes, then add three quarts of boiling water. When boils [again], remove the scum; add a quarter of an ounce of green, not dried, summer-savory, the same of lemon, thyme, twice as much parsley, two drachms each of allspice and black pepper; cover close, and boil gently for two hours, then strain it through a fine sieve; put in a stew-pan three ounces of butter, melt it, and stir in flour, until it thickens considerably, and add the soup gradually to it, stirring constantly. If the spices are not relished, omit them; cooks should always be governed by the tastes of the family. Put the soup in a stew-pan and add nice bits of eel, fried brown in butter, ten minutes before pouring it in the tureen.

¹ *Civil War Cooking: The Housekeepers Encyclopedia, 1861*

you to suggest articles for the Cobblestones. To send outlines, articles or photos you can email them to melcouch57@peoplepc.com (subject line "Cobblestones"), snail

mail me at 113 Mink Creek Drive, Colfax, 95713, or drop items off at the Museum and call me at 346-2394. Thank you!

(continued from page 2)

used to come down in the fall and raid his cornfield. We knew some had landed out there one day and my brother and I decided we would go and get us a goose to eat. So we took the old shotgun, unbeknownst to Dad, of course, and went sneaking down between the rows of corn out to where we felt sure the geese were. All of a sudden a flock of geese came flying up out of the cornfield right over our heads. I got all excited and pulled the hammer back on the gun and was going to try to shoot one when a coyote came down the same row of corn that we were in, jumping up and trying to grab a goose that was trying to get airborne. The gun went off, pretty nearly blowing my foot off, it was so close to it. I'm telling you, that was too much excitement for me. I didn't get a goose, but it pretty nearly got my goose though.

We lived in St. Lawrence several years and then Dad got itchy feet and decided to go homestead. He heard about open land up in North Dakota where there was no railroad yet and he wanted to go up there. After we got to Mott, North Dakota my dad got a job at Barth's Store in the grocery department so he had a job to keep us going while we were trying to live on the homestead. Whenever Dad got smoked salmon in the store he would leave it out with a knife so people could cut off what they wanted to buy. There



Homestead House Dad Built

was a man who would always come in and trim the edges off and eat them. Dad got tired of him doing that so he rubbed some croton oil on the salmon. Dad had seen him do it so many times that he knew just where to put it. The man came in, cut off the edges and ate them. The croton oil worked and his sister called Dad and said, "Don't sell that salmon to anyone, it's poison". The man never helped himself to the salmon after that.

We lived three miles from the school in town and would have to walk if we didn't get a ride. A man by the name of Stone, a lawyer, lived a mile east of us and we would walk over there on purpose because we knew what time he went to work and he would pick us up. It was the first automobile we ever rode in and I remember our first ride, our heads were in the clouds and we felt so elated over it.

They finally built a school house up on the hill just south of our house and then we could easily walk to school. They used that country school or a long time. Just a few families around there, homesteaders, went to it. We went to high school in Mott, North Dakota but we still had to walk most of the time. Part of the time we we had a bicycle and a horse to ride.

While I was still in high school Dad bought the Riverside Studio from a Norwegian by the name of C. C. Oleson. It was a photographic studio where I had been working after school without pay to learn the trade. Mr. Oleson got me thinking about how good the money was and that it was such a good trade, and he wanted me to buy it. I told him I didn't have any money. So Oleson talked Dad into buying it. Dad thought I was going to keep

going to high school but I didn't, I dropped out.

After I took over the studio I built a top on a spring wagon I had; it looked like those old time medicine wagons. I had it so I could work out in the countryside, make the proofs right there, show them to the people, and take their orders. Then I went on back to make the pictures



Homer's Homemade Photo Wagon

at the studio and delivered them later. I'd just go to a home and say, "Come on, get everybody on the porch". You didn't even have to talk too much to sell them. I'd get them on the porch in a group and take their pictures and then go out to the wagon and make the proofs. I nearly always got orders. If I didn't, I sold them the proofs and that paid for the cost.

(to be continued in a future issue)

This article, and those to follow in future issues, consists of excerpts, some abridged, from the book, "The Life and Times of H. R. Eldridge", as told to Myrtle Richards, Tom Eldridge and Carolee Eldredge." The article, and much of the book, are in the first-person as it is based on a number of interviews the authors had with their father/father-in-law, Homer Eldridge. Myrtle (Eldridge) Richards (Tom's sister) typed (on a typewriter), composed and published the book. Thanks to CAHS member Tom, and to his wife, Carolee, for photos and notes concerning Homer's life, and to Mickey Fletcher for lending me her copy of the book.

NEW MEMBERS***Welcome!!!*****BOARD MEETINGS**

- June 19, 2014
- October 11, 2014

All Board Meetings are on Thursdays at 10 am in the Depot.

GENERAL MEETINGS

- May 17, 2014
- July 26, 2014 – Ice Cream Social

PVT. JAMES HARVEY WILCOX
A Veteran of the Mexican War
by Nilda Duffek



**James H. Wilcox
Headstone**

First, a word about the Mexican War¹ (1846-1848), not to be confused with the Spanish-American War of 1898. By 1845 our country was yet to extend coast-to

coast, which many leaders believed to be our "Manifest Destiny." The nation of Mexico controlled all the territory we now call California as well as five other states and parts of four more. A conflict arose between Mexico and our growing Republic.



Area Ceded to the U.S. by Mexico - 1848

The Mexican War started on April 24, 1846 and cost the U.S. over 13,000 lives. It ended by the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848 and the establishment of most of the current borders between US and Mexico².

James Harvey Wilcox was born on April 15, 1829 in Trumbull County, Ohio. His parents were Nathan B. Wilcox, born in 1806 in New York, and Samantha, born 1805 in Massachusetts. James was the oldest of nine children. By 1845 the Wilcox family had moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, where Nathan and his sons were farmers and shoemakers.

At age 18, James mustered into the Army at Fort Smith in Fayetteville and joined Captain Stephen B. Emhart's Mounted Infantry. This company served at Meir, Mexico and on the Rio Grande, mainly guarding supply wagons. According to military records, James was disabled by a bullet hitting his forehead while he was escorting mail. He was mustered-out at Camargo, Mexico on June 23, 1848 and returned to the family farm in Arkansas.

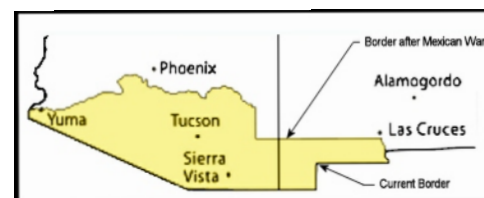
James married Sarah E. Ebelyen on February 23, 1861 and soon

after came to Northern California. James was a member of the Grass Valley Union Guard and briefly served as Superintendent of the Empire Mine Company. By 1865 the couple lived in Colfax and had a son, David Benjamin Sherman Wilcox. A daughter, Hattie Shirlene, arrived on November 22, 1870.

Sarah died in February 15, 1883 and is buried at the Colfax Cemetery, next to James who died on September 21, 1906. James is one of two Mexican War veterans who are known to be interred in our Cemetery.



**Sarah E. Wilcox
Headstone**



Gadsden Purchase - 1853

1 Mexican War, also called Mexican-American War and, in Spanish, Guerra de 1847, or Guerra de Estados Unidos a Mexico ("War of the United States Against Mexico") resulted in the Mexico ceding to the United

States, for \$15M and our assumption of all Mexican debt owed to U.S. Citizens, all the territory then included in the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, together with south-

2 The current border between Mexico and Arizona and western New Mexico, was not

established until 1853 when the Gadsden Purchase took place (see map above, right).

western Colorado and small parts of Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma (see map above, left).

Photos by Ed Duffek
Maps courtesy of Wikipedia

MEMORIAL GIVING TO CAHS

Colfax Area Historical Society
welcomes gifts and memorials
in honor or in memory of
loved ones and friends. To
make a gift please include
your check with the form on
the right and mail to:

Colfax Area Historical Society
Attention:
Memorials Secretary
P O Box 185
Colfax, CA 95713-0185

Gift in Honor or in Memory

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Address: _____

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Amount: _____



HUBLEY COLLECTION PHOTOS



GIFTS

In Honor/ Memory Of

Undirected
Linda Garcia

Donors

Gold Country Lionesses
Audrey Meyers



FORMER MAYOR PASSES



Warren Wallace Wegner passed away on March 13, 2014. Born in Beloit, Wisconsin on March 28, 1928 to Wallace Carl Wegner and Lois Anna Cora (Ellis) Wegner, he was blessed with a long and active life.

Raised in Beloit, Warren enjoyed church activities, Soap Box Derbies and was a member of the ROTC in high school. He graduated from Beloit High School in 1947.

He married Helen June (Lockery) of Beloit, who also was a member of the class of 1947, just before entering the U.S. Army. As a sergeant, he served as a forward

observer for the artillery during the Korean War. Upon discharge, he became a journeyman wood patternmaker and he and June relocated to Whittier, California.

In the late 1960's, Warren joined the State of California as an administrator in the Industrial Relations Department, overseeing various apprenticeship programs.

Again relocating, this time to Northern California, they have lived in Colfax for the past 25 years. Warren continued his busy life and in retirement served as Mayor of Colfax and was past president of the Lions Club.

A graveside service was held on March 24, 2014 at Colfax Cemetery.

Information for this article was from an obituary in the Beloit Daily News

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 buildings of historical interest in the Colfax area and catalog such markers in an orderly 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
Locations will be announced.

Board of Directors: 4/year
Located in the Depot at
99 Railroad Avenue, Colfax

* New Rates

Membership and Annual Dues:

Regular (single) Member :	\$20.00*
Family (including children):	\$25.00
Junior (not included in Family):	\$ 5.00
Business (includes ad)	\$35.00*
Non-profit Organizations	\$35.00*

Additional contributions are always welcome.

Dues apply to the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30, and are tax-deductible. Members receive a membership card, quarterly issues of the Colfax Cobbles, and a 10% discount at the Gift Shop in the Museum.

Make checks payable to: Colfax Area Historical Society. Please send check with your name, address, phone, email address, membership class, and amount enclosed to: CAHS, P.O. Box 185, Colfax, CA 95713, or go to the Museum to sign up.

SPRING MEETING

Our next meeting will be at the Depot on Saturday, May 17th at 7:00 pm. Our speaker will be Chris Bierwagen. Many of us have

enjoyed eating Bierwagen's fruit offerings.

Chris will speak on the historic pear industry in and around

Chicago Park. Importantly, he will show his father's old slides, which are illustrative of that industry



OAK STREET GANG

The Oak Street Gang of Colfax circa 1932. This photo, provided by Jay MacIntyre, shows Jay's Dad and his Dad's brothers and buddies. His Dad and his brothers were living on Oak Street at the time and

his Grandmother took a picture of them. Pictured from left are; Jack Blasé, Jack MacIntyre, Sealy, Jim MacIntyre, Tommy Jefferson, Niel MacIntyre, Jack Hutchinson, Victor Albonico and Bruno Albonico.

FUN LINKS & INFORMATION

Donner Pass Historical Rendezvous:

www.DonnerSummitHistoricalSociety.org

Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society: www.psrhs.org

Leave a Legacy: www.snial.org

Sierra Nevada Virtual Museum: www.sierranavadavirtualmuseum.com

Historic Hwy 49 Photos: www.HistoricHwy49.com

Gold Rush Stories:

http://nevada-outback-gems.com/gold_rush_tales/california_gold_rush1.htm

See us on the Web at www.ColfaxHistory.org



Do you have any stories or photos you would like to share?

Please email them to the editor at:
melcouch57@peoplepc.com

Subject line: Cobbles



COLFAX AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 185
Colfax, CA 95713

Visit Our Museum
Located in the Depot
99 Railroad Street
530-346-8599
10am – 3pm Daily



SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

American Legion Colfax Post 192 P.O. Box 311 Colfax, CA 95713	Teri Andrews-Murch Realtor w/Lyon Real Estate 1900 Grass Valley Hwy Suite 100, Auburn Direct: 530-798-0215 tandrewsmurch@golyon.com www.FoothillsHotProperties.com	Colfax Dental Center 120 Whitcomb Avenue P.O. Box 1080 Colfax, CA 95713 346-6244	Colfax Elementary School District P.O. Box 1080 Colfax, CA 95713 530-346-6244
Colfax Garden Club P.O. Box 1801 Colfax, CA 95713 346-8561 forgivenami@cablewave.com	Kurtis H. Fox, M.D., Inc. P.O. Box 1199 Colfax, CA 95713 346-2281	Grace Hubley Foundation 24820 Ben Taylor Road Colfax, CA 95713 530-863-3698 info@gracehubleyfoundation.org	Pick-A-Flick Video P.O. Box 29 (6 N. Main Street) Colfax, Ca 95713 530-346-8808
Placer County Historical Society P.O. Box 5643 Auburn, CA 95604	Sierra Business Service James and Barbara Kelly 520-D So. Auburn Street Colfax, CA 95713 346-2455 barbkelly@foothill.net	Sierra Vista Community Center P.O. Box 88 (55 School Street) Colfax 530-346-8726	VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 2003 P.O. Box 1213 Colfax, CA 95713 (Pres.) 636-4242