

# COLFAX COBBLESTONES

The quarterly newsletter of the Colfax Area Historical Society & Colfax Area Heritage Museum



This is the vintage doll house on display in the Colfax Area Heritage Museum.

## Stroll through History in the Colfax Area Heritage Museum

The vintage doll house displayed in the Colfax Area Historical Museum has many admirers.

"I wish I had this," a seven-year-old girl said on a recent Saturday morning. "It would be fun to play with." She looked into the windows, and then on the open side of the house she examined each floor and room. She pointed out the child's bedroom on the third floor, where there was a tiny dollhouse for the doll that lived in that room. The girl thought it was wonderful.

The museum's exhibits include thousands of items from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are displays of home and kitchen items, tools, telephones, vintage typewriters, medical equipment, pharmaceutical supplies, saloon paraphernalia, and local Indian history. Railroad history includes displays about the role that Chinese laborers played in building the railroad.

Visiting the museum can feel like entering an antique shop where everything on display is authentic and is of real historical interest.

Each item has been donated, collected, and selected over years by generous givers and dedicated volunteers to provide insight into local history.

The museum also sells copies of books by local authors, railroad memorabilia and toys, and a selection of drinks and snacks.





A pharmacist figurine oversees the display cabinets full of pharmaceutical history.



A portly and worldly-looking gentleman container oversees the Saloon collection in the Colfax Area Heritage Museum.

## September 17 Meeting and Program with speaker Ralph Gibson

Ralph Gibson, Museum Administrator for Placer County Museums, will speak to the Colfax Area Historical Society at its September 17, 2016, meeting at 7 p.m. He will speak about the progress of the new Dewitt History Museum in Auburn.

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**Saturday, Sept. 17, 2016, 7 p.m.**

Colfax Passenger Depot  
99 Railroad Street, Colfax

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There is no charge. This meeting is open to all CAHS members and to the public. Visitors and guests are welcome. Refreshments will be provided. Bring a friend!

Placer County Museums operates six museums and is preparing a seventh:

- Placer County Museum, Auburn, located in the historic courthouse.
- Bernhard Museum, Auburn. 19<sup>th</sup> century history.
- Gold Rush Museum, Auburn. Under construction, but open weekends.

- Griffith Quarry, Penryn. Granite quarry exhibits, interactive geology exhibit, history of the Penryn-Loomis basin.

- Forest Hill Divide Museum, Foresthill. Mining, geology, Native Americans, timber, and home life exhibits focusing on the history of the Foresthill area.

- Golden Drift Museum, Dutch Flat. Dedicated to the history of the area, including Gold Run, Dutch Flat, Alta, Towle and Baxter.

The seventh museum will be the Dewitt, located in the former Army and State Mental Hospitals in Auburn.



Ralph Gibson, Museums Administrator

## Steve Hunter Identified the Mystery Tool as a Track Chisel

In the May issue, we posted a photo of an 8-inch tool that had been donated to the CAHS Archives.

Steve Hunter, a long-time member of the CAHS who has lived in Colfax for more than forty years, has identified the tool as a track chisel:



"The item shown in the last Cobblestones is in fact an old railroad tool. It falls into the category of railroad mauls and more specifically it is a track chisel. It was used to score the old rails.

"Once the rails were scored they were placed over a pile of ties such that the scored mark was

centered over the ties and the ends of the rails were pushed down to make a clean (so to speak) break at the desired spot. The rail could also be hit with the blunt heavier end to cause it to separate.

"It was a common tool used in the rail and mining industry before cutting touches and abrasive cutters came into use. I believe a company in Ohio made many of these forged tools."

Steve wrote that he has "always been interested in local history, particularly railroad, mining, and early skiing. I tend to be fascinated by the old support tools that helped these industries develop and have researched many of them. I am now retired after 30 years as a Sierra College professor." He is a fourth-generation California and a descendent of a mining family.



## Colfax's Shadow Art Tour

Download the new guide to Colfax's Shadow Art



"Shadows Past" on S. Auburn St., Colfax. Photo courtesy of the Grace Hubley Foundation.

Walking around downtown Colfax, you may have noticed the Shadow Art painted on walls of buildings and retaining walls. These murals were created by Jim Bowers and Foxey McCleary. The "Shadows Past" mural shown here is located on S. Auburn St.

The Grace Hubley Foundation has funded a guide to all of the murals, which is a PDF file that you can

download and print or view on any device that displays PDF files. The guide can be downloaded from the CAHS web site, at [http://colfaxhistory.org/localHistory/ColfaxShadowArtTour\\_52716.pdf](http://colfaxhistory.org/localHistory/ColfaxShadowArtTour_52716.pdf)

This guide includes photos of all seven murals and a walking guide to their locations. It also includes biographies and photos of the artists.

## Docents and Volunteers Needed at Colfax Museum and Chamber of Commerce

The Colfax Area Heritage Museum and Chamber office are both located in the Colfax Passenger Depot. Both need your help as volunteers.

**The Museum.** More docents are urgently needed in order to keep the museum open seven days a week.

Docents at the Museum answer local history questions, make the museum available to the public seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and greet visitors and travelers. If interested, please call the museum at (530) 346-8599 or drop in and talk to the volunteers on duty.

**The Chamber of Commerce.** The Chamber also needs volunteers to answer questions about the Colfax Area and its businesses, provide information about train and bus schedules, and help passengers enjoy their stop in Colfax. Drop in for more information about volunteering.

## Presidents of the CAHS

By Myrtle Findley

*Editor's note: Several years ago, Myrtle Findley, a founder of the Colfax Area Historical Museum and a former president of the Colfax Area Historical Society, wrote a series of articles about the presidents of the CAHS. In this issue, we continue with her series, including her chronological list of the past presidents of the CAHS.*

In a past issue we ended with the installation of Dr. Verne (Dave) Wilt, who was installed in an elaborate ceremony by outgoing President Gertrude Paul.

However, most issues of the *Cobblestones* did not record who was CAHS President at the time, and this made it difficult to do this study.

Each news article and page had to be carefully scanned to find evidence. Some years of the *Cobblestones* went by without this information. The following is what this writer believes is the correct list of CAHS Presidents.

What a surprise it was to this writer when she discovered her name listed as being president twice! I did not remember that.

Years	President
1985–1987	Penny Owens
1987–1989	Gertrude Paul
1989–1990	Dr. Verne (Dave) Wilt
1990–1991	Dr. Verne (Dave) Wilt, who was replaced by Gertrude Paul before his term ended, because of health problems
1991–1992	Gertrude Paul
1992–1995	Jim Standley
1995–1997	Gertrude Paul
1997–1999	Myrtle B. Findley
1999–2003	Jim Flynn
2003–2006	Charlie Gray
2006–2008	Myrtle B. Findley
2008–2009	George Lay
2009–2011	Jim Flynn

2011–2012	Janet Lee
2012–2016	Swend Miller
2016–2017	Come to the September 17 meeting and find out!

### The CAHS Scrapbook

What is to be remembered is recorded in the old CAHS scrapbook. There are pages of records where Gertrude and Myrtle worked together to have all those markers installed on Main Street and a couple of other places.

There are newspaper stories of a remarkable Fashion Show that was held while Gertrude was president.

The old scrap book should be out once in a while for new members to browse. Why not start a new one for future “old members”?

## The CAHS Archives Are Open by Appointment

The Archives Room is open to the public by appointment, each Tuesday from 9 a.m.–12 noon. To schedule an appointment, please call the Colfax Area Historical Museum before your visit, at (530) 346-8599.

The archives include historical objects, books and reference materials, and photographs, including:

- Chinese ceramics and baskets
- Period clothing from 1800 to 1940
- WWII memorabilia: Uniforms, helmet, shells, and an album with pictures of Camp Placer
- Books and other literature for historical reference
- Cemetery records from 1851 to 1984
- Grace Hubley Jones Photographic Collection: 10,000 glass plate negatives from the early 1900's
- Maps & pictures from 1870 to 1999 of Colfax area and of many of the railroads

The Archives Room is located at 55 School Street, Colfax, in the Sierra Vista Community Center.

# Local Businesses and Organizations That Support CAHS

The Colfax Area Historical Society (CAHS) and the Colfax Area Heritage Museum appreciate the support and services that local businesses provide.

CAHS works with the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce to promote interest and support in the Colfax

area. The Chamber of Commerce has been serving Colfax, Dutch Flat, Alta, and Gold run since 1951.

The Colfax Area Heritage Museum and the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce are both located in the Colfax Passenger Depot, located in the former Colfax Amtrak passen-

ger depot at 99 Railroad St., Colfax, CA.

The following local businesses and organizations are members of the CAHS, and we appreciate their support. We invite you to support them and other local organizations and businesses.

<p><b>American Legion Colfax Post 192</b> P.O. Box 311 Colfax, CA 95713</p>	<p><b>Colfax Dental Center</b> 120 Whitcomb Avenue Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-6244</p>	<p><b>Colfax Elementary School District</b> 24825 Ben Taylor Road Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-6244</p>
<p><b>Colfax Garden Club</b> P.O. Box 1801 Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-6215</p>	<p><b>Fair Oaks Historical Society</b> P.O. Box 2044 Fair Oaks, CA 95828</p>	<p><b>Forest Hill Divide Historical Society</b> P.O. Box 646 Forest Hill, CA 95631</p>
<p><b>Kurtis H. Fox, M.D., Inc.</b> P.O. Box 1199 101 Grass Valley St., Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-2281</p>	<p><b>Gold Country Lioness Club</b> P.O. Box 1852 Colfax, CA 95713</p>	<p><b>Golden Drift Historical Society</b> P.O. Box 253 Dutch Flat, CA 95714</p>
<p><b>Grace Hubley Foundation</b> 24820 Ben Taylor Colfax, CA 95713 <a href="http://www.gracehubleyfoundation.org">www.gracehubleyfoundation.org</a></p>	<p><b>Teri Andrews-Murch, Realtor</b> Lyon Real Estate 1900 Grass Valley Hwy, Auburn CA (530) 798-0215 <a href="http://www.FoothillsHotProperties.com">www.FoothillsHotProperties.com</a></p>	<p><b>Pick-A-Flick Video &amp; Gift Shop</b> P.O. Box 29 6 N. Main Street, Colfax, Ca 95713 (530) 346-8808</p>
<p><b>Placer County Historical Society</b> P.O. Box 5643 Auburn, CA 95604</p>	<p><b>Sierra Business Services James and Barbara Kelly</b> 520 S. Auburn St, # D Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-2455 <a href="mailto:barbkelly@foothill.net">barbkelly@foothill.net</a></p>	<p><b>Sierra Vista Community Center</b> P.O. Box 57 55 School Street, Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-8726 <a href="mailto:svcc@colfaxnet.org">svcc@colfaxnet.org</a></p>
<p><b>VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 2003</b> P.O. Box 1213 Colfax, CA 95713 President: (530) 636-4242</p>	<p><i>Join the Colfax Area Historical Society</i></p>	<p><i>We will put the name of your business here!</i></p>



## Join the Colfax Area Historical Society

We invite you to join the CAHS and support the work of the Society. Receive the *Colfax Cobblestones* four times a year by mail.

Each issue includes articles and photos about local history, CAHS news, reports about presentations at membership meetings, and news of upcoming meetings.

Memberships are for one year, from July – June. Three kinds of membership are currently offered.

Memberships begin on July 1. However, if you join CAHS between October 1 and March 31, your membership will be prorated as explained on the form.

### CAHS Web Site

Visit the CAHS web site at <http://www.colfaxhistory.org>. It contains news and information about the CAHS Museum and Archives, a calendar of meetings, and local history.

To join the Colfax Area Historical Society, fill out this form and mail it with a check to: **CAHS, PO Box 185, Colfax, CA 95713.**

Your subscription will begin with the next quarterly issue.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

#### **r \$20 Individual membership (one person)**

If you join between Oct. 1–Dec. 31, prorated membership is \$15

If you join between Jan. 1–Mar. 31, prorated membership is \$10

If you join April 1–June 30, membership is \$20 and will begin July 1

#### **r \$25 Family membership (including children)**

If you join between Oct. 1–Dec. 31, prorated membership is \$19

If you join between Jan. 1–Mar. 31, prorated membership is \$13

If you join April 1–June 30, membership is \$25 and will begin July 1

#### **r \$35 Business or Non-Profit Organization**

(includes an ad in each issue of *Colfax Cobblestones*)

If you join between Oct. 1–Dec. 31, prorated membership is \$27

If you join between Jan. 1–Mar. 31, prorated membership is \$18

If you join April 1–June 30, membership is \$35 and will begin July 1

### Would You Like to Submit Photos, Articles, or Stories?

- Does your family have interesting stories about people in the area?
- Would you like to write about a local town or the history of the railroad in the Colfax area?
- Do you have stories about the area's history of mining?
- Do you have historical photos that you would like to share?

### Current CAHS Officers

**President:** Swend Miller

**Vice President:** Bonnie Wilson

**Treasurer:** Barbara Kelly

**Recording Secretary:** Joanne Geist

**Membership Chair:** Florence  
"Chris" Miller

**Corresponding Secretary:** Lynda  
Couchman

**Archive Director:** Tom Passanisi

**Museum Director:** Florence  
"Chris" Miller

**Cobblestones Editor:** Dirk Gifford

**Webmaster:** Dirk Gifford

**Member at Large:** Walt Wilson

**Member at Large:** Jay Macintyre

### How to Contact Us

To submit an article or photos for either the newsletter, web site, or both, contact Dirk Gifford at [dirkgifford@gmail.com](mailto:dirkgifford@gmail.com) or at (925) 783-9664.

## Now in the Museum

Caps and other items from the Knights of Pythias are one of the exhibits at the Colfax Area Historical Museum.

The Knights of Pythias are a fraternal order, similar in purpose to the Free Masons and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

According to Wikipedia, notable Knights of Pythias included Louis Armstrong, the jazz trumpeter and singer;

Hugo Black, U. S. Supreme Court Justice; U. S. Presidents Warren G. Harding, William McKinley, and Franklin D. Roosevelt; U. S. Vice Presidents Hubert H. Humphrey and Nelson A. Rockefeller; and Lew Wallace, author of *Ben-Hur*.



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## The Colfax Area Historical Society

PO Box 185

Colfax CA 95713