

COLFAX COBBLESTONES

March 2018

Issue 30.1

museum.colfax@gmail.com

www.colfaxhistory.org

www.facebook.com/colfaxmuseum

(530) 346-8599

The Colfax Women Who Rode to the 1934 Chicago World's Fair by Motorcycle



In September 1934, two young women from Colfax, California, rode by motorcycle to the Chicago World's Fair. Miss Mary MacIntyre, age 21 (standing), and Miss Edith Wolfsen, age 23 (seated) rode together on Edith's Harley-Davidson motorcycle. All photos of Mary MacIntyre and Edith Wolfsen in this issue were supplied by Mary's nephew Jay MacIntyre.

Chicago's "Century of Progress World's Fair" in 1933-34 attracted two Colfax women, who rode there by motorcycle in September 1934, two months before the Fair closed. The World's Fair first ran from May-

November 1933, but it was so popular that it reopened in 1934, also from May-November. In September 1934, Mary MacIntyre and Edith Wolfsen left Colfax and rode to Chicago on Edith's Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

According to a September 7, 1934 story in the *Colfax Record and Sentinel*, they expected to make the trip in four days. In an oral history interview after the trip, Mary described the trip and some of their adventures. The following is from the transcript of Mary MacIntyre's interview, lightly edited for continuity and clarity. Except where noted, everything is in Mary's words.

Mary MacIntyre:

Edith Wolfesen was a local person and her parents ran a TB hospital out on Highway 174. In fact that wealthy lady that died not long ago owned property above her. Her name was Eileen Mitchell. She and her husband eventually built that mansion. Their family lived on another piece of property that had a rest home on it. Everybody had rest homes or hospitals.

Edith was a beautician and a Seventh-day Adventist. She didn't work on Saturday. I loved to go dancing Saturday night. She was a couple of years older than I was. She loved motorcycles and loved that kind of a life and I didn't particularly. Sis's cousin had a motorcycle and used to take us riding. So, we had that in common.

I had come in to do a permanent on a three-year-old. This poor child, in those days, those heavy old metal things. Anyway, Edith was getting ready to go with a friend to Chicago to the World's Fair, but Edith was in tears, because this friend of hers couldn't go.

So Edith said, why don't you go? I told her I didn't have any money to spend on that. But I had \$100 bucks, and I went to the World's Fair in Chicago.



Edith Wolfesen and Mary MacIntyre, September 1934, during a stop on their trip to the 1934 Chicago World's Fair.

We had more fun going back there than we did at the World's Fair. The World's Fair wasn't that interesting for some reason. There were a lot of fancy lights. We went to see the Field Museum. It was right within walking distance of the World's Fair. We went to this department store that is still there. I think it was Marshall Field's. I was wearing my brother's clothes and Edith was a little

better dressed than I was. We had no way of doing laundry, and we were parading around in this store.

Editor: the interviewer asked Mary where they slept.

Oh, in motels. Once we slept in wet clothes because we were rained on all day in one of the Midwestern states. When we first left, we spent the night at the first town

after you get out of Reno, maybe Fallon. I was so lonely. The motel was out in the boonies. The lights went off when it got dark. There was just a short time that they had power. I was so lonely; I can't remember ever being so lonely.

But we went on then to see Salt Lake.

Editor: In Salt Lake City, Edith and Mary had a motorcycle problem that required repairs. Mary and Edith met a couple who were also traveling by motorcycle. The couple helped Mary and Edith find a motel. In the morning, someone helped Edith and Mary get the motorcycle to a garage for repairs. After lunch, the motorcycle was ready, and Mary and Edith continued to Chicago.

You couldn't ask for nicer people. When we came back to the motel, the guy and his wife had gone off on a motorcycle trip. The motel manager was there and said he had been watching for us.

Editor: On the night before they arrived in Chicago, when they stopped for the evening, Mary and Edith met some local youth who invited them to a party.

She carried a gun always, my friend did.

We came into this nice motel and had our dinner and these guys were all standing around a brand new motorcycle. This guy, he was a big guy, said, "We're having a party out here." We said we'd go as long as "you bring us home because we have to be in Chicago tomorrow."

So, they picked us up and took us to a house for the party. I didn't realize then that in the Midwest it was as bad as it was. I had never seen as old and decrepit a house as this one was. It was full of young people and they were lying on the floor drinking. I said I wasn't going to stay there, let's get out of this place.

When Edith went back and told the guy we were going to go, he said he wasn't going to go. I said to Edith, "Well, I think you ought to make a believer out of him." So she took her gun and got right up close to his ribs and she said, "I think this piece of steel will change your mind in a hurry." Man, he got us out of there so fast. We laughed about that for weeks.

I came home with pennies in my pocket. That was probably the most fun I had in a long time. My mother wouldn't speak to me for a whole week.

Pat Jones' Histories of Local Towns (continued)

Local historian Pat Jones (May 5, 1921–July 28, 1997) was the author of *The Colfax Connection: A History of Colfax*, *Chicago Park Connection*, and other books.

Her writing included short histories about dozens of local towns, from Alta to Virginiatown. The November 2017 issue of the *Colfax Cobbles* contained her short histories of Alta through Colfax. This issue contains her histories of Damascus through Iowa Hill. We will continue to print her town stories in future issues of the *Cobbles*.

Pat Jones was the news editor of *The Colfax Record* from the 1960s through the '80s. She published articles in both national magazines and local publications. A monument and plaque honoring her contributions is located at 25 Church St., Colfax.

Damascus

Damascus, located on a mountainside overlooking the junction of Blue Canyon with the North Fork of the American River and the gorge of Humbug Canyon, was founded in 1852 by Dr. D. W. Strong. It was known as Strong's Diggins before a post office was established. Here the famous "black channel" was struck which produced a wealth of gold. Nothing remains at the site.

Deadwood

Deadwood was once a thriving mining town seven miles east of Michigan Bluff. It was reached only by pack train. In 1860 its population was 175, but by 1873 it had dwindled to 17. It was originally called Main Diggins. After it was founded in 1852, some hydraulic mining was done, but that gave way to tunneling and drifting operations. It is a ghost town.

Dutch Flat

Dutch Flat was founded in 1851 by Charles and Joseph Dornbach on the flat now occupied by the former Dutch Flat School, which is now the community center. The brothers were German, called Deutsch, which was Americanized to Dutch, thus the name.

It was gold that caused the rapid growth of population in the area. Through a system of ditches and flumes, the waters of the Bear, American, and South Yuba rivers were diverted to make hydraulic mining profitable.

When the Sawyer Act of 1884 put an end to this method of mining, the lumber business increased to fill the void in the economy.

The Methodist Church was completed in 1861. The school was built in 1898 and the caboose that stands on the grounds of the community center was once used on the Towle Brothers' narrow gauge railroad that hauled lumber from widespread mills in Placer and Nevada counties to the town of Towle and on to the transcontinental rails at Alta.

Editor's note: Dutch Flat is home to the Golden Drift Museum (shown below), which focuses on the history of Gold Run, Dutch Flat, Alta, Towle, and Baxter. It is also home of the Golden Drift Historical Society. Both the museum and the society are named after a gold mining company from the 1900s.



The Golden Drift Museum, 32820 Main Street, Dutch Flat, California.

Emigrant Gap

Emigrant Gap got its name from the gap in the ridge where emigrants lowered their wagons on ropes to the floor of the Bear Valley. It was a railroad and lumbering town with several large mills in operation. In 1882 the population was 137.

It has the last one-room school in Placer County. During prohibition the Emigrant Gap Hotel was a popular watering hole, with the added attractions of gambling and girls.

The town, with its country store, continued to draw tourists off old Highway 40 until the 1950s, when Interstate 80 was built across the crown of the hill, leaving the town below the view of travelers, out of sight and ignored.

The final blow to the town came in 1968 when the SP cut back on maintenance crews in the area. A few boarded-up buildings remain today on the town site. The school is still used.

Foresthill

The first settlement at Foresthill was created in the fall of 1850 by M. Fannan, James Fannan, and R. S. Johnson, who established a trading post, then a hotel. At that time it was called Forest House. A rich deposit of gold was discovered at the head of Jenny Lind canyon by accident during a heavy storm in the winter of 1852-53. When the owners of a nearby claim went out to access the storm damage, they discovered that a large hill had slid down, covering their diggings and tools. But when they walked over the mass of fallen dirt, they discovered chunks of gold. The claim gave them rich rewards.

News of this discovery brought other miners. In 1857 Forest House and land around it was purchased by J. W. Phillips. He laid out the town and began selling lots. In addition to mining, a profitable lumber business was operating there as early as 1861.

The present hotel and restaurant in Foresthill is of recent vintage, but the building across the street is old, once housing the businesses of J. W. Garrison and others.

Gold Run

Gold Run was known as Mountain Springs in another location, at the base of Cold Springs Mountain. In 1854 the Mountain Springs Post Office was established. O. W. Hollenbeck is credited with being the one that laid out Gold Run in its later location. When the Gold Run Post Office was established in 1862, he was the postmaster. The town was famed for its hydraulic mines, which from 1865-1878 shipped \$6,125,000 in gold. Five large water ditches served the mines in the area.

In the 1870s and early '80s it was an important town. The main street was unusually wide and closely filled with businesses, including nine saloons, a bank, an express office, a livery-stable and the usual stores, butcher and barber shops. There were three hotels and a joint IOOF-Masonic Hall.

Four side streets were built up with residences. Its Nob Hill section on the west side of the railroad was where the finer residences were built. The cemetery and two schools were also there.

The case of the People (in this instance, the valley farmers who were sick of the problems caused by all the debris that was choking the rivers and forcing them out of their banks) and the Gold Run Ditch and Mining Company was closely watched by hydraulic miners all over the foothills. The judgement in a Sacramento Superior Court in June of 1882 permanently enjoined the miners from depositing debris in the American River. Judge Lorenzo Sawyer's decision in 1884, extending the ban to all rivers, was the final blow. It is claimed that Placer County's assessment rolls fell off \$2,000,000 after the hydraulic mines ceased operating. Testimony from the Gold Run Ditch and Mining Company trial fills 45 large volumes in the state library.

The only historical monument at the old town site is the Pioneer Union Church, which was built in 1875. According to local legend, the church was built following the funeral of a young girl. When the body was brought to town it was storming and the grave was not ready. The casket was taken to the general store, which doubled

as the undertaking parlor and saloon. Drunken rowdies made themselves so offensive that decent miners were offended. They got together late that summer and built the church. Circuit riders once preached in it. In 1930 the church was almost demolished, but was saved by local attorney James Stewart and a local woman. In the 1950s, Interstate 80 split all that remained of the picturesque little town, and the church was moved to where it stands today.

Iowa Hill

Within a five-mile radius of Iowa Hill, numerous mining camps flourished in the 1850s and '60s. All vanished, leaving the present community the lone survivor.

Gold was first discovered at the Kennedy claim, later called the Jamison, in 1853. A fire in 1857 burned all the buildings from Temperance Hall to McCall and Company's Brewery. The town was immediately rebuilt. Another fire in 1922 destroyed most of the town, but by then there was no reason to rebuild.

By 1880 an estimated 20 million dollars in gold had been produced by Iowa Hill mines. The picturesque little town is well worth the breath-taking ride from Colfax, or from Foresthill. Tourists are advised to check in Foresthill before driving over the latter road, as it is sometimes in terrible condition.

All that remains at Iowa Hill are two pioneer cemeteries, the front wall of a brick store that was built in 1853 and burned in 1968, an old Wells Fargo vault and some old homes.

It now has a small permanent population and vacation homes. The approach to town on the Colfax road is over a narrow ridge, left when hydraulic operators blasted away the mountain close to the road on either side.

Editor's Note: Robin Yonash has written three books about the Iowa Hill Divide. They are available to purchase at the Colfax Area Heritage Museum and from Amazon.com:

- *Schools of the Iowa Hill Divide.*
The Iowa Hill Divide, Volume 1.
- *Towns and People of the Iowa Hill Divide.*
The Iowa Hill Divide, Volume 2.
- *Gold and Fire: A History of the Iowa Hill Divide.*
The Iowa Hill Divide, Volume 3

March 10, 2018, Meeting and Program

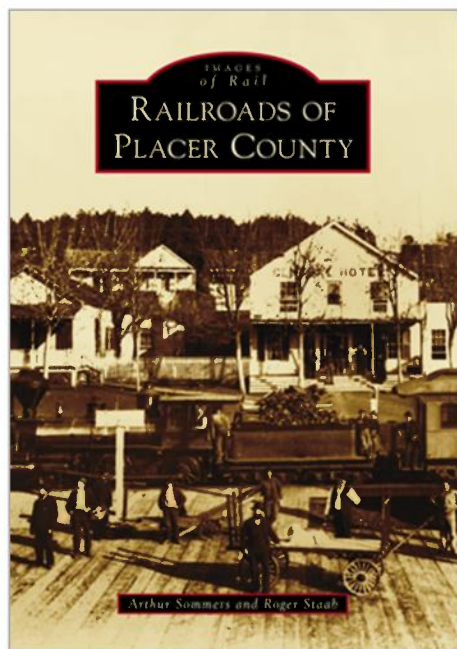
We will have two speakers and presentations at our next program. Both presentations will be by local authors with recently published books. Our speakers will discuss the history of the railroads in Placer County and the history of ranches and agriculture in Nevada County.

Saturday, March 10, 2018, 7 p.m.

Colfax Passenger Depot
99 Railroad Street, Colfax

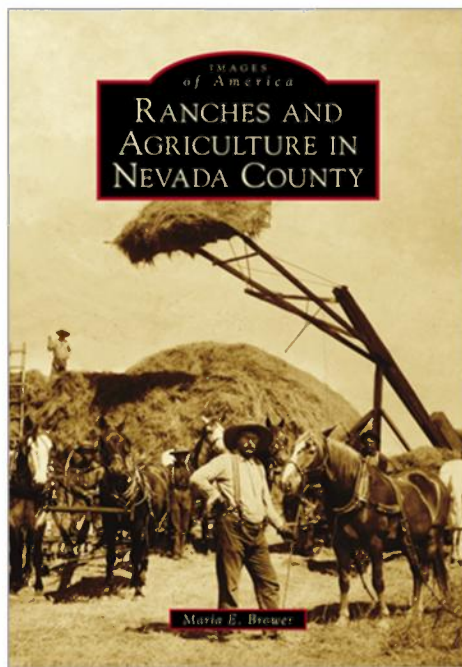
Roger Staab and his co-author Art Sommers recently published *Railroads of Placer County*. Roger is the editor of the Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society's newsletter.

Their book is a brief history about some of Placer County's railroads. Roger's presentation will include a slideshow about some of the 14 different railroads that have been operated in Placer County at different times.



Maria E. Brower is the author of three books in the Images of America series: *Nevada City*, *Gold Rush Towns of Nevada County*, and her

most recent book, *Ranches and Agriculture in Nevada County*.



Maria is the former manager of the Doris Foley Library for Historical Research in Nevada City. She also serves on the board of the Nevada County Historical Society, edits its quarterly bulletin, and was the founder of the Nevada County Genealogical Society.

There is no charge to attend. The meeting is open to all CAHS members and to the public. Visitors and guests are welcome.

Come early to enjoy refreshments and visit with everyone before the meeting starts. As always, we will be in the Meeting Room of the Colfax Passenger Depot, 99 Railroad Street, Colfax, California.

Do You Have Historical Photos of the Colfax Area?

If you have photographs that you are willing to share through the Colfax Area Historical Society, you can either mail a copy to Dirk Gifford at the Colfax Area Heritage

Museum, PO Box 185, Colfax CA 95713 or email digital copies to Dirk at dirkgifford@gmail.com. If you mail photos to Dirk, he will mail them back to you after he scans them.

Please provide as much information about each photo as possible, such as the names of the people shown in the photo, names and other details about the buildings and streets, when the photo was taken, and who took it. If you don't know all of these details, just provide the information you do have.

CAHS Officers

President: Jay MacIntyre

Vice President: Swend Miller

Treasurer: Barbara Kelly

Recording Secretary: Joann Geist

Membership Chair: Chris Miller

Corresponding Secretary: Lynda Couchman

Archives Director: Swend Miller

Museum Director: Rachel Christian

Member-At-Large: Bonnie Wilson

Member-At-Large: Walt Wilson

Member-At-Large: Gayle McClain

Cobblestones Editors: Dirk Gifford, Mel Couchman

Webmaster: Dirk Gifford

The *Colfax Cobblestones* newsletter is published quarterly by the Colfax Area Historical Society. A subscription is part of your membership. Membership information is on page 7.

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.

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.

The Museum and the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce are both located in the Colfax Passenger Depot, located in the former Colfax Amtrak passenger depot at 99 Railroad St., Colfax, CA. CAHS works with the 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.

<p>American Legion Colfax Post 192</p> <p>P.O. Box 311 Colfax, CA 95713</p>	<p>Colfax Dental Center</p> <p>120 Whitcomb Avenue Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-6244</p>	<p>Colfax Garden Club</p> <p>P.O. Box 1801 Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-6215</p>
<p>Grace Hubley Foundation</p> <p>24820 Ben Taylor Colfax, CA 95713</p> <p>www.gracehubleyfoundation.org</p>	<p>Kurtis H. Fox, M.D., Inc.</p> <p>101 Grass Valley St. Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-2281</p>	<p>Sierra Business Services</p> <p>520 South Auburn St, # D Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-2455 barbkelly@foothill.net</p>
<p>Sierra Vista Community Center</p> <p>55 School Street Colfax, CA 95713 (530) 346-8726 svcc@colfaxnet.org</p>	<p>Teri Andrews-Murch, Realtor</p> <p>Lyon Real Estate 1900 Grass Valley Hwy, Auburn CA (530) 798-0215 www.FoothillsHotProperties.com</p>	<p>VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 2003</p> <p>P.O. Box 1213 Colfax, CA 95713 President: (530) 636-4242</p>

Join the Colfax Area Historical Society

We invite you to join the CAHS and support the work of the Society. You will receive the *Colfax Cobblestones* four times a year by mail. Each issue includes articles and photos about local history. Memberships are for one

year, from July – June. 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.

<p>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.</p> <p>Your subscription will begin with the next quarterly issue.</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ ZIP _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual membership (one person)</p> <p>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 begins July 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family membership (including children)</p> <p>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 begins July 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Business or Non-Profit Organization (includes an ad in each issue of <i>Colfax Cobblestones</i>)</p> <p>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 begins July 1</p>
--	--

Inside this issue

This issue has the story of two young Colfax women, Mary MacIntyre and Edith Wolsen, who rode to the 1934 Chicago World's Fair on Edith's Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

The photo to the right is from the front page of the September 7, 1934 issue of the *Colfax Record and Sentinel*.

Docents and Volunteers Needed at the Museum and Chamber of Commerce

Are you interested in volunteering one day a week in either the Colfax Area Heritage Museum or the Chamber of Commerce?

Docents at the Museum answer local history questions and greet visitors and travelers. If interested, please call the museum at (530) 346-8599 or visit the museum and talk to the docents or Museum Director.

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

The Museum and the Chamber of Commerce are both located in the Colfax Passenger Depot, 99 Railroad St., Colfax, California. Their hours are 10 a.m.-3 p.m. daily.



The Colfax Area Historical Society

PO Box 185

Colfax CA 95713

Phone: (530) 346-8599

Email: museum.colfax@gmail.com

USPS mail: Mail for both the Colfax Area Heritage Museum and the Colfax Area Historical Society is received at PO Box 185, Colfax, CA 95713.

Museum location: The Colfax Area Heritage Museum is physically located at 99 Railroad St, Colfax CA 95713