

of the
Tuolumne County
Historical Society
Sonora, California

Museum Hours:

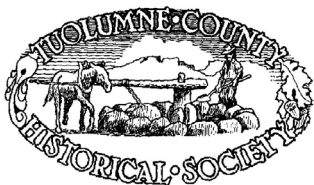
Tues. & Thurs. (10-4)
Wed. (1-4)
Fri. & Sat. (10-3:30)

History Research Center:

Tues.—Fri. (10-4)

Welcome New Members:

Maggie Bevier
Red Willems



Letter from the President

Fellow Members,

This time of the year is always marked by a wide variety of festivals and events coinciding with the arrival of spring weather. For the next three months, in addition to our regular activities, the TCHS will be participating in one event per month.

On April 17, we will have a table at the annual Volunteer Fair held at the Fairgrounds.

On May 3rd and 4th, we will staff a booth at the Cinco de Mayo celebration in Columbia. This will be the third year that we've participated in this event with an appropriate historical display along with membership and volunteer applications. TCHS books and *Chispa* back issues about Mexican-American history and Cinco de Mayo in Tuolumne County will be available for purchase.

Then on June 7, we have reserved a double-wide space at the El Campo de Sonora celebration held at Courthouse Square in downtown Sonora. Before Sonora became a town, the area along Woods Creek and its tributaries was known as El Campo de Sonora, named after the state of Sonora in Mexico, from which many of the new California residents hailed. The city of Sonora became incorporated in 1850, after California was admitted to the Union as the thirty-first state. This year is the 175th anniversary of Sonora as a city (and CA as a state!), and our display will reflect that history.

We hope a good number of our members will attend one or more of these events and stop by to visit your Society's booth.

Chuck Holland

Metal Detectorist Extraordinaire

May 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Tuolumne County Library, Greenley Rd.

At age twenty-seven, Jerry Culver bought his first metal detector. He taught himself to use it to find jewelry and coins on the Monterey Peninsula beaches. Upon moving to Sacramento he began hunting for coins and relics in the Mother Lode. Jerry has become a legend among his peers.

People who are serious about relic hunting with a metal detector generally know what they are looking for and where to find it. They unearth more than just jewelry, coins, and relics. They pick up history as they go—the earth becomes their time capsule. Frequently, Jerry researches the artifacts he finds and donates them to the property owners and museums. A meticulous record keeper, Jerry documents and photographs every find. He has amassed twenty-five photo albums throughout his fifty-plus years of detecting.



Jerry Culver finds artifacts throughout the Mother Lode.



Tuolumne County Museum, TP443

According to Edith T. Morgan, this photo is of Columbia on Memorial Day. The Women's Relief Corps is in the lead, with the Grand Army of the Republic in the rear. The two-story IOOF building at the corner of State and Broadway can be seen on the right side.

On Memorial Day there was always a parade. All the school children marched and some took part in the exercises. Columbia has the only Grand Army veterans plot in the county. About the first of May, Captain James McFee, a Civil War veteran, would make his annual trip to the old Columbia Grammar School to ask the Principal, Will Napoleon, if the children could take part in the Memorial Day devotional exercises.

About two weeks prior to the parade, we would practice marching in the lower part of the school yard, learning to march and open ranks. There would be the singing of songs, reciting the Gettysburg Address and also suitable poems we learned. When Decoration or Memorial Day arrived, every child carrying a bouquet would meet at the lower end of town at the Fallon Hotel. Those not present would be marked absent on their school report.

The parade would form with the boys or young men carrying the flags, then came the drums, followed by the school children escorted by their teachers. Then came the Grand Army Veterans, the Civil War and Spanish-American veterans, the organizations and the townspeople.

We marched to the gate at the cemetery. The school children opened ranks and the Grand Army soldiers marched through. The ranks were then closed and all proceeded to the Grand Army plot, where the services were held. An organ had been moved from the school and the school children scattered their flowers over the graves of the soldiers.

After the benediction by the Minister, the children took their places in the line of march and again at the cemetery gates opened ranks in respect and admiration for the Grand Army veterans who led the parade back to Columbia.

It was always an inspiring and beautiful ceremony. With the thinning of the ranks of veterans from the wars, including World War I, Memorial Day is still observed each year with exercises held in the Veterans plot in the Columbia cemetery. They still march from the town to the cemetery proudly carrying the flags, followed by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and a few school children. American Legion Posts and Veterans of Foreign Wars are there, too. There is not always a large gathering, but the veterans of today are very loyal in paying tribute and homage to their comrades.

Memorial Day ceremonies are still held on Memorial Day at the GAR plot in the Columbia Cemetery, at 11:00 a.m.

Memorial Day in Columbia

By Sherrin Grout

Memorial Day, often called Decoration Day, was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by General John Logan, a commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). It was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. After World War I, it was changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war.

About the observances in Columbia, Will Napoleon, Principal of Columbia Elementary School from 1909 to 1912, remembered the following:

Museum Corner

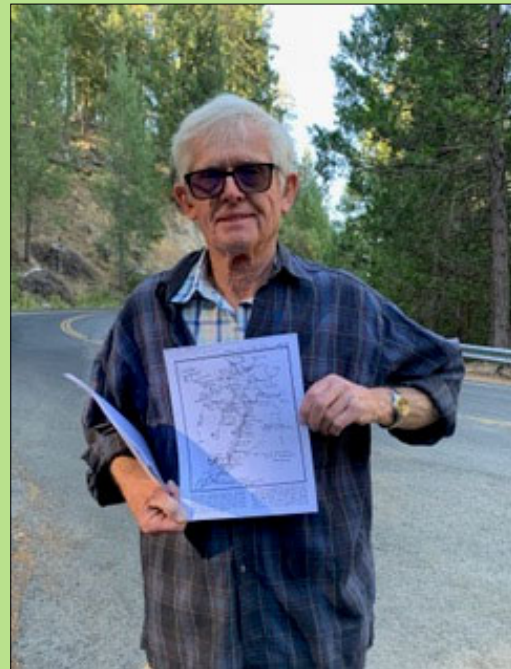
Hike with Ross Carkeet

Sat., June 7, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Hike limited to 20—TCHS Members Only

Join Ross Carkeet on Saturday, June 7, for an informative and invigorating hike along the historic Sugar Pine Railroad Grade, between Beardsley Reservoir Dam and the historic Spring Gap Tram and powerhouse. The hike is six miles roundtrip on the almost level 1-2 percent railroad grade and affords attractive views of the Middle Fork Stanislaus River and showy springtime blossoms. Interesting points along the route include passage through the steep granitic slopes of the “peeled onion” portion of the railroad grade, a well-preserved steam donkey engine used in early 1900’s logging, and the intact inclined tramway track, installed to provide early 1900’s access to the Spring Gap Powerhouse and caretaker’s cabin.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking area on the south side of Beardsley Dam, and bring a lunch, water, sun lotion, cap, sturdy hiking shoes, and a cool-weather wrap. Carpooling is recommended and hikers can return to their cars at any time if desired. **Register by calling the Tuolumne County Museum at 209-532-4227.**



Ross Carkeet was a part-time summer naturalist with the Stanislaus NF during the 1980s-90s.

New Board Member - Erika Lawson

Erika Rae Lawson has always been a history buff. In each place she called home, she would dive into the history, spanning from the indigenous Native American culture of the San Joaquin Valley to the Barbary Coast Plague that gripped the Bay Area in the early 1900s. As a journalism major, her two passions of history and news converged when she served as the Website Editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, which was made famous by the historical headliner, William Randolph Hearst.

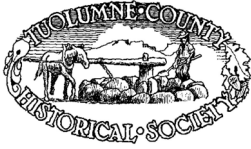
So, moving to a place with a rich historical backdrop like Tuolumne County has been a “dream come true.” Two months after her family’s August 2024 arrival, she found herself wandering into the Museum in hopes of donating an old Victorian dollhouse. Later that day, she left as a member of the TCHS and a Museum volunteer. The dollhouse also inspired a “chispa” that led to the new, interactive Children’s Corner in the Museum.

And now we’re happy to introduce Erika as our newest TCHS Board Member. She is excited to leverage her background in journalism, corporate communications, and community engagement to help increase TCHS membership and bring more visitors to the Museum.

Welcome, Erika!



The new exhibit, Children’s Corner, was inspired by Erika’s dollhouse donation. The desk was from the old Columbia Elementary School.



TUOLUMNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
158 Bradford Street
SONORA, CA 95370-4920

Non-Profit Organization
U S POSTAGE PAID
Permit #15
Sonora, California

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Mission of the Tuolumne County Historical Society shall be to discover, collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge about the history of Tuolumne County and the State of California.

The *Historian* is published several times a year by the Tuolumne County Historical Society, 158 Bradford St., Sonora, CA 95370-4920 for the benefit of the membership. There is no charge for the *Historian*. (In compliance with Public Law 103-123, 39 U.S.C. 3656 subsection [j].)

Tuolumne County Museum & History Research Center
158 Bradford Street, Sonora, CA 95370
Museum: 209-532-1317
History Research Center: 209-532-4227
<http://tchistory.org>, info@tchistory.org

Change in address or contact information?

Contact Linda Emerson—memberships@tchistory.org

Note: Kathy Boone and Linda Emerson have switched TCHS Board positions. Kudos to Kathy “Cookie” for all her

TCHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chuck Holland—President
Open—1st & 2nd Vice President
Cheri Holmes—Treasurer
Betty Sparagna—Recording Secretary
Linda Emerson—Membership Secretary

DIRECTORS

Kathy Boone
Linda Crocker
Sandy Fisher
Mike Ghiorso
Erika Lawson
Mercedes Tune

MUSEUM BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Allan Bryant, Chair
Tina Gordon
Winnie LoVine
Mike Macon
Ruth Pedro
Betty Sparagna

HRC Coordinator—Brad Fisher
coordinator.tcmuseum@gmail.com

Research—Rob Gordon
research.tcmuseum@gmail.com



Joan Rutty

Condolences

Condolences to the family of Joan Rutty, who passed away on March 15, 2025. Joan was a genealogical and research librarian at the Tuolumne County Library until she retired in 2010. At that time, Joan and her husband, Mike Rutty, became dedicated volunteers at the History Research Center. In 2019, they moved to Texas to be near family.