



AMADOR COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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SUMMER 2013 NEWSLETTER - AMADOR COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY P.O. BOX 761, JACKSON, CA 95642, (209) 257-1485

The Detert, Amador County Fair

From "Logan's Alley Vol V"

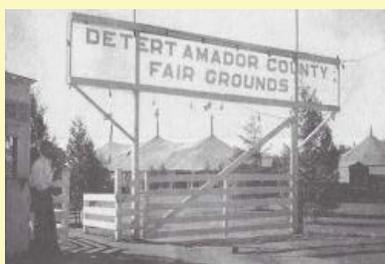
Was the October, 1938 "Amador County Fair" the first in county annals? If the reader's memory were long, he/she would know that in writings elsewhere this scribe revealed fairs in the 1860s and again from the 1880s. So the first Plymouth county fair" was a reincarnation of sorts. But differences there were. The first fairs in 1861 and 1862, while the civil war raged "in the states", were sponsored by the Amador County Agricultural Society and hosted by lone City, the market town for the fecund lone and Jackson Valleys. Its fairs featured mostly the agricultural bounty from those valleys.

After those fairs, over a quarter century would elapse before Amadorians had a fair again. In 1887 they created the 26th District Agricultural Association, including Amador and Calaveras, with the fair again in lone. Later, that district included Amador and Sacramento and the fair moved to Sacramento. Thus, Amador lost its county fair if not its agricultural district.

Afterwards, seemingly various civic or ethnic celebrations compensated for the loss but surely Amadorians periodically pined into the depression years over their fair. But not until 1937 did hopes rise in Plymouth to replace it. Maybe the city and its progressive citizens had looked elsewhere in the county and saw the annual lone and Italian

picnics, the Sutter Creek Boosters Gold Rush Days, and lesser, diverse activities in Jackson and Volcano. If they can do it, why can't we? Plymouth boosters also probably sought a little recognition for the northerly, mostly part of the county, Willow Springs, Plymouth, Fiddletown, Shenandoah Valley. If we need single out anyone, select Plymouth's druggist, Harold Colburn, whom five voters later honored by electing him their supervisor more than once.

Statutes, by August, 1937, allowed a district agricultural association to be formed with the signatures of 50 or more people. An item in that year's August 26 issue of the Ledger announced that Plymouth area residents had done just that, "unanimously" voting to form a county-wide association known as the 26th Agricultural District and beckoned citizens from all its towns to a Plymouth meeting that night to consider it. In his column, As We Think About It, Babe Garbarini, the paper's editor, also drew attention to the fair idea and the meeting.



The sign and background tents of the first modern-day county fair in 1938.

That fair convocation took place "in the Plymouth Hotel" with Colburn as temporary chair. The Plymouth people were proposing an annual "agricultural and mining exposition" and sought county-wide support. At that late August meeting, where at least some of the money would come from: the state per-mutual betting pot which was then funding up to 46 fair agricultural associations statewide. District attorney Allen Martin stated an "lone consensus" supported the idea. So did California Senator and Jacksonian A.L. Pierovich, Alex Ross of the Argonaut Mine, and L.A. Norman, Jr., president of the Sutter Creek Boosters. If others coveted the fair for their cities, no such idea reached the newspaper. Meetings seemed to lack the acrimony and envy expressed in 1887 when county leaders debated where to put the county fair before settling on lone.

Next a committee was named to select the eight directors of the new fair board. Eventually selected and appointed by Governor Frank Merriam were Colburn, director and president, A. J. Dickson and Martin Lubenko, all of Plymouth; S. J. Bonneau, Jackson; I. P. Ostrom and L. A. Wheeler, Fiddletown; and G. C. Winter and I. P. Yager, lone. Plymouth merchant G. Roos served as treasurer and Mrs. Ruth Cooper, Secretary.

With hopes for a '37 fair gone, the Plymouth folk and others concentrated on a 1938 start, though neither date or site had yet been chosen. After a few months, those decisions were made, too. While the Ledger news columns betrayed no competitor for the fair site, old-timer' memories may differ. After all, not all news saw print. Nonetheless, at a meeting on March 24, 1938, directors elected Colburn president, and opted to hold a 3-day October fair. Where? Either on a site the association owned, or one they could lease for 40 years. Otherwise, any substantial investment would be too risky. Without those guarantees, a fair would have to be held with temporary facilities in case it had to be relocated.

If association directors had concerns about where their part of the seed money would come, the Plymouth Progressive Club agreed to take some of the responsibility. By May '38, the fair directors learned or announced that the Detert estate property west of town, the site of the old Plymouth baseball field, was available. Later, they selected the first fair's dates, October 7-9 (Friday through Sunday).

In September, 1938 directors finally announced they had signed a lease with the Detert estate. That left them but a month to prepare the old baseball diamond for a fair. They hired Vicini Brothers' earth-moving



The Detert monument, in the fair's early days. Left fair president Harold Colburn and Jack Rick.

equipment to level the property and fashion a U-shaped horse show stadium and banked earth to build the seating on.

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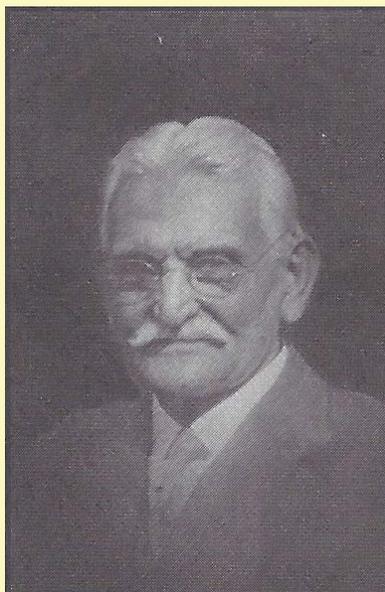
They also hired a 20-man crew supervised by Chris Andreason to build some smaller buildings and fencing. With 60,000 feet of lumber, the crew erected three horse barns, and barn space for dairy and beef cattle, for sheep, swine and goats, other small buildings, and seating for 1,500 at the arena.

The main exhibit buildings? With little time and less money, the crew erected "two large tents near the entrance to house agricultural, floricultural and community booths". In a main rear exhibit tent were 60 box stalls for horses, 288 feet of corrals for beef stock, 120 feet of dairy barns, 240 feet of pens for sheep and hogs, 280 feet of poultry benching.

Lo, Vicini's blades and Andreason's crew met the deadline! Amador County was ready for its first county fair. And the 26th District Agricultural Association was reborn. A photo taken at the first modern county fair, October, 1938,

shows a large wooden, entrance sign or marquee; a booth selling 20 cent adult and 10 cent child tickets; a few young pines; and a large tent, held up by three center poles, flags aflutter atop each.

The fair's name? The "Detert Amador County Fair"! Yes, it memorialized a late mining mogul whose estate leased the abandoned baseball field to the 26th District Agricultural Association. A matching tribute now would be a detailed historical sketch or even short biography about William Ferdinand Detert. This writer and others before him have collectively failed to record his longevity as a mining superintendent and entrepreneur, and, in his gentle re-tirement, generous gifts to this county. (More can be read in Logan's Alley, Vol V).



*William Ferdinand Detert, legendary
Amador benefactor*

Volunteer's Needed

We are looking for volunteers to assist us at the newly opened County Museum, Mine Model, and Office at 148 Main Street. Our hours for operation are 11am to 3pm on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Ione Depot Project

At over 125 years old, the historic Ione Depot is finally getting prepared for a move. This building was constructed by the Central Pacific Railroad in 1876 in conjunction with the construction of the Ione Branch from Galt to Ione. The building was donated to the City of Ione a few years ago. It currently sits on Union Pacific property which limits the City's ability to preserve and use this wonderful old building. A City owned lot at the corner of W. Marlette and Mill St. is the proposed site for the saving of this old structure.



Ione Depot, Ione California

The Mayor of Ione has assumed the lead for this project and has asked those of us who are interested in preserving and protecting our historic icons for help.

Join us in saving one of Amador County's Historic Structures.

*If you have questions, call Gary Reinoehl, 209-295-5589
or email Dan Epperson, Mayor of Ione at
d_epperson@sbcglobal.net.*

AMADOR COUNTY MUSEUM

This 15-room classic Greek Revival dwelling, was the home of Armstead C. Brown, one of Jackson's earliest settlers. The Museum features a fascinating array of artifacts and items from the county's early days. Collections include a Gold History Exhibit, fashions of the past, a Native American collection, a Chinese American collection, and much more.



ACHS Director's Danna Saunders, and Thornton Consolo

You may contact Judy Jebian at (209) 257-0332, or call our office at (209) 257-1485.

Board Meetings are at 148 Main St on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 3:00 pm if anyone would like to attend.

MUSEUM AND MINE MODEL NOW OPEN

Friday, Saturday, Sunday
11am to 3pm

225 CHURCH STREET, JACKSON

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LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

The Living History Program continues to collect oral histories from Amador County residents. Started in January of 2013, this sub-committee of the Amador Historical Society is working hard to retain the memories of life in Amador County for future generations and historians to learn from and to enjoy. Anyone interested in participating in this project is encouraged to contact Keith Sweet at 209-419-3770 for more information. The committee meets the first Monday of every month at 10:45 am at Hein and Co. Books in Jackson.

Interviewees are generally asked to tell about their families history and how they came to live in the county. They are given an opportunity to speak on subjects that they feel might be interesting to the listener. All interviews are then posted to www.amadorhistoricalsociety.org but only after the interviewee has had a chance to review and approve or change their interview. All forms and recording equipment are available at Hein and Co. and anyone who wishes to record a friend or family member is encouraged to first contact Keith and then get started. It really is that easy!

A short listing of interviews that are currently on our website at amadorcountyhistoricalsociety.org

Jackie Mosher - Live Interview
Joan DalPorto - Live Interview
Lumber Mill Workers - Live Interview
Marie and John Solaja - Live Interview
Marylin Jones - Live Interview
Dan Sinclair - Live Interview
Phyllis Swensen - Live Interview
Rosemary Fields and the Monteverde Store - Live Interview
Roy Oneto - Live Interview

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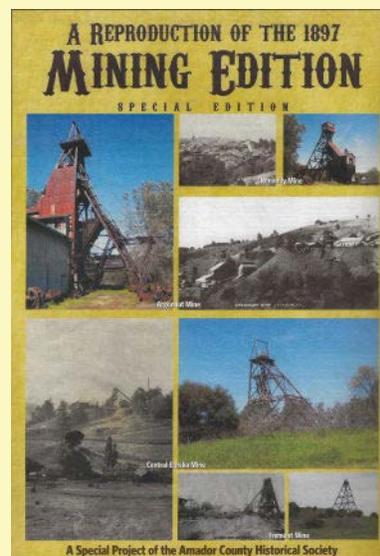
THE ZEILA MINE

1897 MINING EDITION - SPECIAL EDITION

The Zeila mine is one of the oldest and largest producers of gold bullion in the county. It is located at the southern end of Jackson, and has been the main-stay and one of the important factors in the support of the town for many years. It employs about 100 men.

Since the advent of Supt. W. F. Detert's management in 1880, the mine has been placed on a dividend-paying basis, but prior to that date the expenses were greater than the output. The Zeila Mining Company was incorporated in 1873, and among the present officers are: W. F. Detert, superintendent and general manager, and Thos. O. Heydenfeldt, secretary. The mine has its complete plant in its 40-stamp mill, chlorination works, air compressors, blacksmith shop, office building, sawmill, and other accessories, for economical mining and milling.

The incline shaft is down over 940 feet, with levels driven at every 100 feet from the 240 to 940-foot stations. The ore is low grade, but it is a continuous ore body fully 30 feet wide, extending in depth and length as far as the explorations have been extended. The half level, from the 1,015 station, will furnish the ore for the next run of the mill. The repairs to the incline will be completed by June 1, when the operations will be resumed under full force. The project of sinking a new shaft is being considered, as it will increase the general utility of the mine.



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\$2.00 PER COPY

ABOUT THE AMADOR COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Gary Reinoehl
Danna Saunders
Keith Sweet
Grant Vogel

The Amador County Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the research and preservation of Amador County and history.

The organization brings together people from diverse backgrounds to work towards these goals. We invite all interested persons to attend our monthly meetings and encourage your suggestions and active participation in the ACHS events.

We also welcome guest articles pertaining to Amador County for our publications. If you have any questions regarding AHCS please contact the office at (209) 257-1485.