



TRUCKEE DONNER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

What is this???? see p. 2



Founded July 24, 1968 and
designated a 501(c)(3) in July 1971

Truckee-Donner Historical Society
P.O. Box 893
Truckee, CA 96160
530-582-0893
www.truckeehistory.org

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

SEPTEMBER 2016 ISSUE 3

It has been a busy summer for us. We have kept the Old Jail Museum open on Truckee Thursdays, and on Saturdays and Sundays. The Villager Nursery donated over 80 plants for our garden which we planted and unfortunately, we lost a few but the others are doing well.

The Town began work on our new driveway and patio addition this August. If all goes well, we will also have electricity in the garden after this remodel. We had families of birds in our new birdhouses and the fauna is very happy this year with the garden being able to be watered.

Our Annual Membership Dinner will be September 20, 2016 at Marty's Café, downtown Truckee. All members of the board have agreed to remain in their positions again this year. My Big Thank You to all of them for being as dedicated as they are.

Unfortunately, there was minor vandalism inside and outside the jail but it has been removed. There was also vandalism on the outside of the Research Cabin. A very nice gentleman from Tahoe Donner reported it and kindly painted over the graffiti on the cabin. Thank you Mystery Man.

We have been working hand in hand with the Railroad Society to see if there is public interest in developing a combined History-Railroad Museum. We have ideas for the Old Jail Museum if a new Museum does come to fruition. We want to convert the back into a jail scenario and highlight our law enforcement history; it will remain open as a law museum.

Members of the Research Committee were invited to assist a Graduate Student from University of Reno on his field site at Boca. It was a very enlightening adventure to learn what has

to be done at an archaeological site prior to any digging.

Once again we will finish the year in a very strong financial position and I have to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for your continued support, financially and physically. We could not maintain the level of effort we offer without all your help.

The Research Team has been kept very busy all summer with numerous donations and cataloging the artifacts that have surfaced during the Brickelltown Streetscape project. We are also assisting the Friends of the Vets Hall and Truckee Donner Parks and Recreation to develop the Military Museum in the Foyer of the Veterans Memorial Building. We will be putting military items on display under temporary loan to the Friends to fill out their exhibits.

All in all, it has been a wonderful summer! Stay safe and keep History Alive!

Respectfully, Chaun Mortier, President

Remember too that the Old Jail Museum is a Blue Star Museum. For more details, please see this link, or <http://bit.ly/2bmiTqZ>.

CALENDAR

Events will be posted online
at our website at this link

<http://www.truckeehistory.org/tdhs-calendar-of-events.html>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- * Thank you to Summer Docents at the Old Jail - p. 2
- * Jail Rail - p. 3
- * Donner Memorial New Images - pp. 3, 7
- * The Tamarack Wreck - pp. 4-5
- * Assumption - The Saints Come Marching In - pp. 6-7

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Truckee Donner Historical Society ("TDHS") Board meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2:30 p.m. at the Joseph Research Library at 10115 Donner Trail Road, Truckee. Board meetings are open to the public.

TDHS does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information in these articles.

TDHS retains the right to republish submitted material. Please contact TDHS for permission to use any content in this publication.

Notice to Members

In 2015, the TDHS Board of Directors approved a change in membership renewal to reflect the Society's bi-annual renewal schedule - January or July. For specific details, please visit our website.

In case you were wondering just WHERE the image (**WHERE'S THIS?**) was taken that we included in our last newsletter, no one submitted any "guesses" as to where this image was taken so we'll tell you.

We believe the image was taken along the Truckee to Tahoe railroad circa 1915, probably somewhere near what is now the entrance to Alpine Meadows. If you have more information about this image, please do contact us.



QR CODE or the squirley-looking black & white icon on the front page

Some of you may be familiar with these strange looking icons. The black & white crosshatched icon on the front page represents our new website at truckeehistory.org. If you have a "smart" phone or iPad with a 'QR Reader,' all you need do is scan your device OVER the icon and you should be directed to our website. And what would you use this for? On any printed material, you could 'scan any QR code' and be taken to their website immediately. In our case, you can go immediately to our truckeehistory.org website and see the **Calendar** for upcoming events.

A HUGE THANK YOU GOES TO OUR SUMMER DOCENTS FOR THE OLD JAIL MUSEUM

Summer is almost over and Labor Day is now behind us, but we would be remiss if we did not extend a HUGE thank you to our docent volunteers who spent countless hours introducing visitors to our Old Jail. The Jail will soon be closed again for the usual seasonal closure, but we could not have had it open on the weekends, holidays and Truckee Thursdays without our core docent group under the able leadership of Docent Master Karl Pape. Under his tutelage, we have amazing volunteers who spent hours sharing Truckee History. We couldn't do this without you!

Please get involved with your Truckee-Donner Historical Society (TDHS). The only way we can offer programs and events is if YOU, as a volunteer, step up and get involved. TDHS is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) organization so any and all donations are gratefully appreciated and tax deductible. Our mailing address is Truckee-Donner Historical Society, P.O. Box 893, Truckee, CA 96160.

JAIL RAIL

By Dennis M. Beeghly

A docent from the California State Railroad Museum visiting our Truckee jail noticed a piece of rail which is an integral part of the structure. In fact, the rail holds up the ceilings. He identified the letters "PRM CO 75" embossed on one of the rail pieces. Chaun Mortier immediately contacted Dennis Beeghly and asked if he knew what the initials meant. Dennis knew instantly that they stood for "Pacific Rolling Mill."

Pacific Rolling Mill Company was also known as Pacific Rolling Mills. It was one of the west's first iron and steel producing foundries. Its legacy lasted well into the 1950s and 1960s with its products used in the construction of ships, buildings, railroads, and other landmarks.

It is not surprising that rails found in the jail were probably purchased or given to the town of Truckee when building the jail in 1875. Investors in the PRM company included Board of Director D.O. Mills, and stockholders, including Leland Stanford. The company was originally located at the foot of Potrero Point and later moved to 17th & Mississippi Streets in San Francisco.

When you see these rails in the jail, please be reminded of the tremendous labor and toil which forged our great town of Truckee and the State of California.

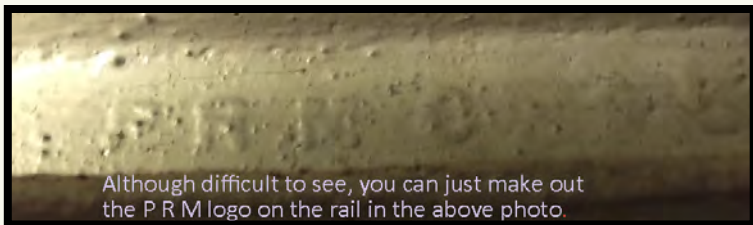
References:

Maslin, Marshall, *A Romance of Steel in California*, Judson Pacific-Murphy Corporation, 1946

<http://savethehill.com/corovan.html>

http://www.potreroarchives.com/Archives/Art_%26_Industry_1.html

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Rolling_Mill_Company



Although difficult to see, you can just make out the P R M logo on the rail in the above photo.

Photo taken in Old Jail Museum of PRM Rail.

Photo courtesy of Karl Pape

The Editor recently received a Press Release from the Sierra State Parks Foundation announcing an assessment of the physical state of the 98 year old Pioneer Donner Memorial. See this link, or <http://bit.ly/2bvlTTz>.

Due to ever-increasing costs in printing and mailing, commencing in 2017 TDHS will no longer be mailing out our quarterly newsletter ECHOES FROM THE PAST. To receive our ECHOES newsletter in the future, please look for the latest edition which will be posted on our website at this link (<http://www.truckeehistory.org/newsletters-and-search-tools.html>) and, as a TDHS member, you will get an email advising you of this availability.

DONNER MEMORIAL - NEW IMAGES

By Heidi Sproat

Our readers may recall in our last issue of ECHOES that among Photographer John Corbett's collection, there was an image showing the 1968 Rededication of the Donner Memorial at Donner Memorial State Park in celebration of 50 years since the unveiling of the monument. Link, p. 6, or <http://bit.ly/2bETcWp>.

Serendipitously, on June 15, several of our volunteer researchers visited the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation at the former McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento to be introduced to their massive collection. During that visit, there were several photographs that the staff made available for us and surprisingly, none of us had seen them before. The images relate to the Donner Memorial original dedication. With licensed permission, we are pleased to share these images with you.

The images were donated by Alma F. Woodruff.



Courtesy of California State Parks, 2016

Note that the Donner Memorial is draped in a white cover, but the date of the image is listed as 1910. If one reads through Nona McGlashan's book, *Give Me A Mountain Meadow*, it may help to explain the delay in the time between the Memorial's completion and the actual dedication some eight (8) years later. (301-67-2)

See additional note at left

THE TAMARACK WRECK

By Dennis M. Beeghly

Tamarack was located at Milepost 247 on the Sacramento Division over Donner Summit in March of 1888. The Mileposts were changed to reflect the distance from San Francisco at 4th Street via Antioch, California, on June 1, 1887. The Mile Post at Cisco Station was 243. There are two tunnels between Cisco and Tamarack. Tunnel 3 is 269' in length and Tunnel 4 is 86' in length. The gradient between these stations is 1.935%. This amounts to a heavy uphill grade eastbound and a steep descent westbound. Tamarack station sits on a high curve overlooking the Yuba River to its North and a granite rock wall to its South. The terrain between Tamarack and Cisco is some of the most rugged on the Sacramento Division between Blue Canyon and Summit. The snow sheds covered the tracks continuously between Blue Canyon and Tunnel 13, which includes the area between Tamarack and Cisco stations.

In the early afternoon of March 19, 1888, a horrific collision occurred between the stations of Cisco and Tamarack, between a special eastbound freight train and No. 6, a scheduled westbound freight. Each freight train had two locomotives. All four locomotives were badly damaged, as were the freight cars. The snow sheds were also damaged by the wreck and fell upon the locomotives and wrecked freight cars. Unlike today's enormously long trains, trains during this period were small, only between 6 to 10 cars, cars averaging 30' in length.

Conductor Clark was in charge of westbound train No. 6; John Pickens was the engineer of engine Number 156 on No. 6, and was severely injured. B.F. Wooley, the engineer on the rear locomotive, was seriously scalded and injured. Conductor Black was in charge of the special eastbound train and Engineer Truxano was badly cut about his head.

Also missing in the debris of the accident were Brakeman William H. McMasters, Brakeman Congreve, Fireman George E. Hoops and Fireman Molin. Which trains they were on is unknown. Another Fireman,

Martin, was also missing. All were later found dead.

As soon as news came in over the telegraph to division Headquarters in Sacramento, Sacramento Division Superintendent J. B. Wright assembled the wrecking crew. Using a special train, they picked up Dr. Huntington in Sacramento from the Railroad Hospital along with physicians from Truckee and a doctor from Colfax. The wrecking crew, doctors, and officials immediately departed for the scene of the accident and arrived there at 10:00 p.m. On arrival they found four engines disabled, approximately ten cars destroyed and 80' of snow shed destroyed.

Engineers John Pickens, B.F. Wooley, and Truxano, who were all severely injured, were placed in Dr. Huntington's car and transported back down "the hill" to the hospital at Sacramento. The remains of the other dead men were taken to Auburn to be shown to a jury of inquiry and then turned over to family and friends.

The *San Francisco Call* reported that General Superintendent A. N. Towne instructed Superintendent J. B. Wright of the Sacramento Division to conduct a "rigorous inquiry" into the cause of the "disastrous collision in the snow sheds of the Sacramento Division."

The accident was not cleared until early the next morning on March 20.

It was believed that regular freight train No. 6 westbound left Tamarack on time. The special eastbound freight conductor had train orders to go to Tamarack if he could do so before the regular freight No. 6 westbound was scheduled to depart Tamarack. Because the conductor is in charge of the train, it was suspected the conductor of the special eastbound freight looked at his watch at Cisco and thought he could make the time allowed to Tamarack, a distance of four miles. By the time he looked at his watch again, it was obviously too late, and a head on collision occurred!

Surprisingly, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on Monday, April 16, 1888 the following: "The Coroner's jury in the case of the collision at Tamarack station, on the Central Pacific, found Conductor Clark and Wooley and Pickens, the two engineers of this [westbound] train,

Echoes From The Past Newsletter

guilty of criminal carelessness." This would indicate the conductor and Engineers on westbound train No. 6 overlooked their orders and proceeded downgrade to their fate. The telegraph operators at Tamarack and Cisco are not mentioned, nor is the dispatcher at Sacramento.

The track between Cisco and Tamarack was an operating nightmare. If you look at a photograph taken in the 1950s, near where the accident occurred, you can see the sheer granite rocks which would create terrible slide conditions in winter. Even today, this area can cause many headaches for railroad officials in the winter.

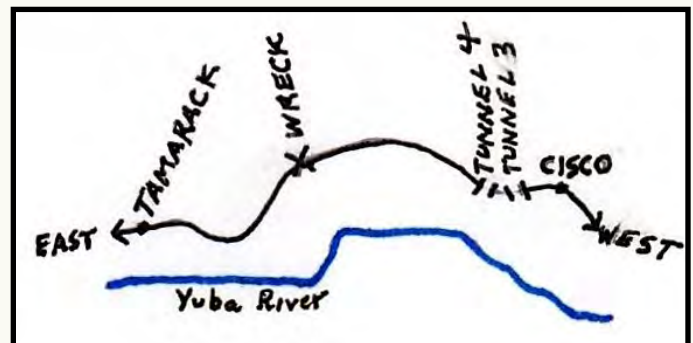
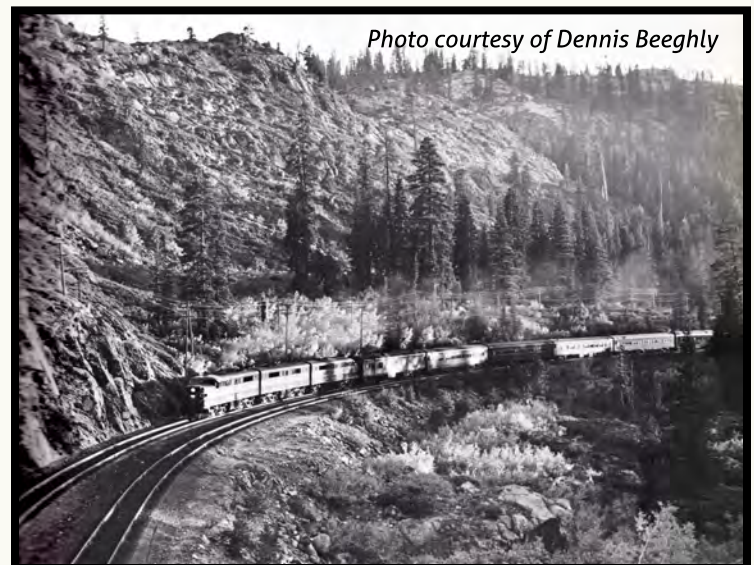
Railroading through the snow sheds was also noted by an early conductor as "railroading in a barn." This was a tough breed of cigar-chomping, tobacco-chewing, no-nonsense, profane-talking railroaders. Early dispatchers in Sacramento found it difficult to run trains through this single track in the 1880s between Cisco and Tamarack. The reason was the four-mile distance. Both Cisco and Tamarack could hold trains in their respective sidings if necessary. T. R. Jones, Superintendent of the Sacramento Division 1904-1907, wrote in the September 1920 *Southern Pacific Bulletin*:

Side tracks like telegraph offices were few and far between, compared to what exists today on the Sacramento Division. One cause of delay and annoyance to trains was the Cisco siding, then the only one between Emigrant Gap and Tamarack. It held only twenty-two of the company's thirty-foot freight cars, two engines and a caboose. Occasionally, on account of freight trains having foreign cars of different and longer lengths in their trains the dispatchers would be taken by surprise and the trains meeting there would not clear. They were compelled to saw by, this would cause a delay, consuming a lot of time and causing a lot of profanity. (Note: A 'saw by' is a complicated switching move to get two trains by one another on a siding going opposite directions when one train is too long.)

But the running time on the four-mile stretch of track between Cisco and Tamarack for trains going both east

and west by train order could result in delays for many reasons: heavy tonnage, wood burning locomotives, snow sheds, fires, and heavy snow just to name a few. The end result could have been orders that were misread or overlooked leading to careless decisions with time which caused disastrous results like the Tamarack wreck on March 19, 1888.

It would not be until 1905-1906 that a controlled block system called the Staff System, would be installed with block signals which was supposed to be fool proof to prevent such accidents in the snow sheds. To this day though, running trains over "the hill" on the Sacramento Division is a very serious job, not be taken lightly!



NOTE: The map above corresponds with the direction of the train in the above photo.

To better understand where this area is, see this link to view an 1880 Map of Nevada County published by Hartwell. In the right right of the map, just below the black horizontal line, look for the T.17.N.R.13.E block and you will see Cisco and Tamerack (sic) Station.

References for this Tamarack Wreck article are posted on our website at this link, or <http://bit.ly/2dxBLoZ>, in Supplemental Content for September 2016 ECHOES issue.

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PARISH - TRUCKEE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Part 2 of 2: The Saints Come Marching In By Katie Holley

Part of the mission of Truckee-Donner Historical Society is to discover, procure and preserve what may relate to ecclesiastical history of the town of Truckee. In that vein, we submit the following information about several of the stained glass windows that were built into one of the locations of Assumption Church. These stained glass windows are now in the vestibule of the current church location at Alder Drive in Truckee.

The Saints Come Marching In. Upon entering the little mountain church of Assumption Parish, worshipers see images in stained glass of Jesus Christ, his Blessed Mother Mary, and several saints – all offering an oasis from the temporal world and a glimpse of what awaits the faithful in heaven. Stained glass windows have been an integral part of Catholic architecture for generations, built into the permanency of the Church. They transform light, reflect visual imagery, convey the depth of faith, and provide another mode of teaching God's message.

The stained glass windows in the church help to tell the story not only of the faith of the people, but also of the people themselves and their roles in the town. The saints honored in the seven stained glass windows of Assumption Church, and the donors and individuals memorialized in the windows, reflect the heritage and Catholic faith of those pioneer families who worshiped there. The Catholic faith teaches that the human and spiritual experience is enriched when individuals follow the example of the saints, holy men and women who lived lives of heroic virtue.

The window honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus was given by the Finnegan family to memorialize their parents, Francis and Jane Finnegan. Their daughter Margaret was married to Philip Kearney, whose family owned a chicken ranch in Truckee.

The window of the namesake of the parish, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was sponsored by Elsie Brougher, the adopted daughter of H.C. and Elsie

Brougher. Young Elsie later married Carl A. Bechdolt, Jr., whose grandparents purchased the Tahoe Inn in Tahoe City in 1923, and whose father, Carl Senior, owned the Tahoe City Golf Course. The Bechdolt Family donated the window honoring St. Joseph.

Victor and Margaret Theresa (Donelin) Hindmarsh donated the window to honor St. Therese of Lisieux. Margaret Theresa had three siblings, at least one of whom was baptized at Assumption Parish in Truckee.

Mary Ellen "Mae" O'Connor Mattos sponsored a window honoring St. Patrick (see p. 7 photo) in memory of her father, Maurice O'Connor. Mae and her husband Joe Mattos donated the window of St. Anthony (see p. 7 photo) – who was Portuguese, not Italian as many people erroneously believe.

In 1954 an additional window was needed for the new wing on the church. Vivien Summerfield sponsored a window honoring Pope St. Pius X, a newly canonized papal saint who had done much to educate the faithful – and perhaps to convert peoples' hearts – and to memorialize her husband, Solon E. Summerfield.

The Last Move. The permanent church for Assumption had yet another move in store. An ever-increasing visitor population in the last decades of the Twentieth Century made the tiny 1890-sized church inadequate for weekend and holiday crowds. A new site was identified on Alder Drive, across the street to the north from Alder Creek Middle School, about 2 miles from the previous church location.

The new Assumption Parish complex of church, offices, meeting rooms, and rectory was completed in the summer of 2011. The dedication of the new church occurred on August 7, 2011, 142 years later almost to the day of the first mass celebrated in the original church standing next to the railroad roundhouse. Bishop Jaime Soto of the Diocese of Sacramento presided, along with the pastor at the time, Fr. Matt Blank, and eight former pastors of the parish.

The stained glass windows have pride of place in their new home. Deemed too fragile to serve as exterior windows, the stained glass panels are above the entry doors between the vestibule and the worship area.

Stained Glass - continued from p. 6

Morning light passes through clerestory windows in the meeting rooms and illuminates the images of the saints. The Catholic community of Assumption Parish in Truckee experienced many moves in its history, but throughout has been accompanied by saints and the prayers of all the faithful.

To the right, we showcase two of Assumption's stained glass windows with a little bit of history about the donors. More information is posted on our website about these windows in a brochure that was prepared for the celebration of the dedication of the new church on Alder Drive in 2011. The brochure is now available at this link, Supplemental Content for ECHOES newsletter, Sept. 2016 issue, or <http://bit.ly/2bWFGiy>.

In Memory of
Maurice O'Connor



Born in Ireland in 1865, Maurice O'Connor immigrated to the United States with his brother in 1884 and worked for 5 years as a construction contractor for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. He married Kate (?) and settled in Sparks, Nevada where he owned and operated the Silver Dollar Saloon for many years. He was described as "a prominent citizen of Sparks" in the Nevada State Journal and had a dynamic relationship with Sparks city government.

O'Connor died at age 68 in Reno in 1934 and was survived by his wife and two daughters. His funeral took place in Sparks and he is buried in Our Lady of Sorrows Cemetery in Reno. The window dedicated to St. Patrick in his memory was commissioned by his daughter, Mary Ellen ("Mae") O'Connor Mattos.

Donated by
Mr. and Mrs. Mattos

Joe and Mary Ellen ("Mae") Mattos were Truckee residents from the time of their marriage in 1917 until 1962. Joe had been born in Niles, Calif., in 1893 to Portuguese immigrant parents. Mae had been born in Ireland on St. Patrick's Day in 1895, to Maurice and Kate O'Connor. Joe owned and operated the Mattos Ice and Beverage Company from 1914 until 1952; Mae worked as the business's bookkeeper. They had one daughter, Rose.

Joe also owned the Sierra Dray Line and the Union Ice Company ice house. Joe was active in local civic affairs; he served as the first president of the Truckee Rotary Club beginning in 1939. In 1942, he became part of the committee in charge of the Truckee Sanitation District, and he was a member of the Elks Lodge. Joe died in October 1962, just four months after moving back to Niles. He was survived by his wife,



Mae, his daughter, Rose, and his grandson, Joe Miller, of Reno. He is buried at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, Hayward. Mae died in Reno in 1983.

Photos courtesy of Katie Holley.
For larger images, see this link, or <http://bit.ly/2c7av1c>.

301-67-4



301-67-1

Courtesy of California State Parks, 2016

The photographs above were taken at the June 1918 Donner Memorial Dedication. Of particular note however, is the handwritten note on the back of the bottom image: "ANECDOTE: Donor tells that Martha 'Patty' Reed, on left, and donor's great-grandmother, Frances Donner, next to 'Patty' Reed, stand facing away from each other in this photo because 'Patty' Reed claims it was the 'Reed Party' where Frances piqued, retorted that it was the 'Donner Party' and nothing else!" (301-67-1 back)



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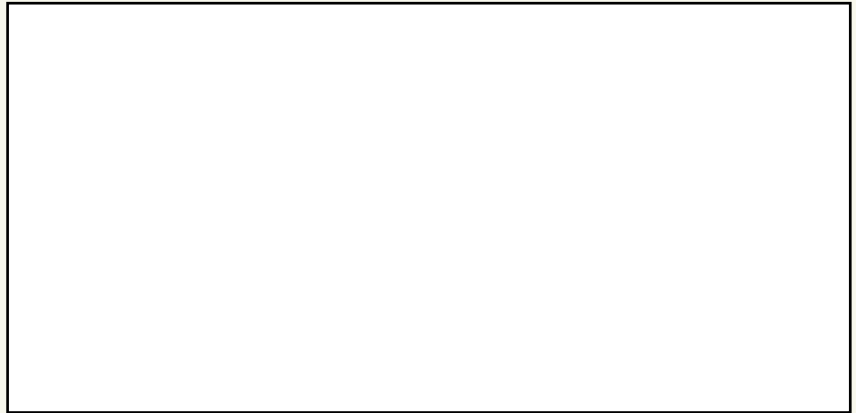
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Contact me on ways I can volunteer Are you willing to docent at the Old Jail Museum? Yes / No

Areas of Special Interest and/or Comments/Suggestions: