

# COLFAX COBBLESTONES

March 2019

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## Collecting and Trading Historical Token Coins from the Colfax Area

### March 30, 2019 Meeting and Program

Rodger Hisken will display and explain the history of metal and wooden tokens that were issued in the Colfax area

Our next guest speaker will be **Rodger Hisken**, who will display, explain, and answer questions about his collection of metal and wooden trade tokens (also known as token coins) that were issued and used in the Colfax area. Sometimes called “merchant tokens,” they were used to encourage repeat business by giving a customer a token that could only be redeemed with the merchant or business.

Rodger will explain the history of tokens, illustrating his presentation with tokens from his personal collection and stories about the detective work involved in collecting and identifying them. Rodger will also answer questions.

**Saturday, March 30, 2019, 7 p.m.**

Colfax Passenger Depot  
99 Railroad Street, Colfax

If you have tokens, we invite you to bring them to the meeting to show to the group and discuss with Rodger.

Rodger will have tokens from his personal collection on display. Before the meeting, and after his presentation, you will be able to view the collection and talk to Rodger. He will also have some of his reference books on display and can help you find out more about tokens you bring to the meeting.

At the meeting, we will provide a handout about how to learn more about collecting tokens.

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



Front and back of a 10c token for a drink at the Hotel Marvin, Colfax, California, year unknown. Photos by rojah96 on the Token Catalog web site, <http://tokencatalog.com>.

# Some of the Businesses in Colfax that Used Tokens

## And some history about tokens

A business in Colfax might have had only 100 tokens created. The tokens would be given to customers, and when they were redeemed, the business would give them out again to other customers. Total circulation would never surpass the 100 tokens that were created.



Front and back of a 5¢ token good in trade in the Butler & Son Drug Store, Colfax, California, year unknown. The drug store was located on N. Main St. Photos by rojah96 on the Token Catalog web site, tokencatalog.com

In Colfax, some of the local businesses and organizations that gave or used tokens were:

- Butler & Son Drug Store (which was located next to the present Colfax Market)
- Cortopassi & Son
- Cushen's Cigar Store
- D and M Market
- Dingus McGee's
- Gillen Hotel
- Hotel Marvin
- Parrott's Country Store
- Petri & Lucchesi
- Shady Glen Inn
- The Masonic Lodge

Tokens are coins but they are not legal tender coins, meaning they are not issued by a government authority and cannot be freely exchanged for goods other than those provided by the merchant or business that issued the token.

They are more varied in their shapes, sizes, images, wording, and overall design than government-issued coins.

Tokens usually display the name of the merchant or business that issued it and either the value of the token or information about its redemption value.

They are usually made either of cheaper metals than government-issued coins or of non-metal materials such as plastic.

During World War II, the Office of Price Administration (OPA) issued small vulcanized fiber tokens that were used to make change when people used their

ration coupons. Vulcanized fiber is a plastic made from cellulose.

Two billion of the OPA tokens were issued. After the war, many of them were destroyed, but some are still available as collectibles.

Some tokens are issued by groups that use them to commemorate or recognize accomplishments, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

According to *Collectors Weekly*, "beginning in the mid-19th century, fraternal orders such as the Masons, Odd Fellows, Eagles, and Elks issued tokens that could be presented as proof of membership in the order (these are known as 'mark pennies'), as souvenirs, and for gambling." See "Fraternal and Masonic Tokens," <https://www.collectorsweekly.com/us-coins/fraternal-tokens>, for information about the symbolism used on the tokens.

Tokens are also issued as souvenirs of locations and events.

Subway systems and game arcades still use tokens on a large scale. For the businesses, they provide several advantages: tokens can only be spent in the arcade or subway, theft is reduced because tokens aren't as attractive as quarters or currency, tokens can be given to customers without giving them something they could spend elsewhere, and tokens are less likely to jam coin slots than coins are.

# Volunteers Needed at the Museum and the Chamber of Commerce



Working together in the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce office are newly-elected president of the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce, Tim Ryan, and Swend Miller, Director of the CAHS Archives and a volunteer in the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's office is located inside the Colfax Passenger Depot, next to the Colfax Heritage Museum.

The **Colfax Heritage Museum** and the **Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce** share the Colfax Passenger Depot at 99 Railroad St., Colfax, California. The building also contains public restrooms and a public meeting room where visitors can wait for their trains and buses. Both the Museum and the Chamber sell snacks, drinks, books, and local souvenirs. The Depot provides travelers with a comfortable place to wait, where they can relax and also learn about Colfax's history and businesses.

**Both the museum and the Chamber need additional volunteers.** Are you able to volunteer one day a week in either the Colfax Heritage Museum or the Chamber of Commerce? You'll meet hundreds of interesting people (including local residents who enjoy coming into the Chamber and Museum). If you volunteer, you'll be trained so that you're comfortable answering questions and helping the public.

**As a volunteer at the museum,** you will be called a docent, because you will have opportunities to explain local history to visitors and answer questions. If interested, please call the museum at **(530) 346-8599**, send email to **museum.colfax@gmail.com**, or visit the museum and talk to the current docents or Museum Director. More infor-

mation about the museum is available online at **www.colfaxhistory.org**.

**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.

The Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce serves Colfax, Dutch Flat, Alta, and Gold Run. As a volunteer, you'll meet local residents, local business owners and other members of the Chamber. You'll learn more about the community and become involved in helping to encourage and develop the local community and economy. If interested, call the Chamber at **(530) 346-8888**, send email to **colfaxareachamber@gmail.com** or visit the Chamber to talk to the volunteers and Chamber of Commerce officers. More information about the Chamber is available online at **www.colfaxchamber.com**.

The Colfax Heritage Museum and the Colfax Area 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. Monday-Friday.

## How to contact us

**Call us:** (530) 346-8599

**Send us an email:** museum.colfax@gmail.com

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

**Drop in at the museum:** The Colfax Heritage Museum is physically located at 99 Railroad St, Colfax CA 95713

## Web Site and Facebook Page

Our web site is at [colfaxhistory.org](http://colfaxhistory.org). It has information about the Society and the Museum, including resources for historical and genealogical research. We have updated the web site to make it easier to read on phones and tablets.

Our Facebook page, [facebook.com/colfaxmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/colfaxmuseum), focuses on news and events about the Historical Society and the Museum.

## When You Join, How is the Money Used?

Membership dues and all money raised help us accomplish the following goals:

- Maintain the Colfax Heritage Museum in the Colfax Passenger Depot building, in Colfax.
- Maintain historical archives in a rented room at the Sierra Vista Community Center.
- Manage a growing collection of archival artifacts and make these available for research.
- Preserve and protect a collection of 10,000 glass negatives taken by Grace Hubley Jones, a successful commercial photographer of this area.
- Collect and catalog photographs of early Colfax families since the 1850s.
- Research and compile the history of early buildings in Colfax, with commemorative bronze plaques placed on buildings along Main Street.
- Recognize and register three historical areas (Colfax Passenger Depot, Freight Depot, and the Cape Horn Overlook) as Historical Landmarks with the California State Preservation Commission.
- Research the history of various personalities in Colfax, such as Robert Fowler (aviator) and Pat Jones (journalist), and dedicate monuments to them.

- Develop a file system to assist persons searching for information on people and history of Colfax and the surrounding area; start a collection of oral family histories on tape.
- Display archival and historical materials at public events.
- Publish and sell historical publications related to Colfax and other nearby communities.

## Museum and Archives

The Colfax Area Historical Society (CAHS) and the Colfax Heritage Museum (CHM) preserve the local history of Colfax, California, the surrounding area, and the railroads, by collecting stories, photographs, and artifacts about the people and buildings in this part of the Sierra foothills.

The CAHS and CHM have an Archives Room that is currently open to the public by appointment. The Museum and the Archives collections include **physical items**, such as Chinese ceramics and baskets, period clothing from 1800 to 1940, and local WWII memorabilia, **historical books and other literature, maps and pictures** of the Colfax area and of many of the railroads, and **the Grace Hubley Jones Photographic Collection**.

To schedule an appointment please call the Colfax Heritage Museum at (530) 346-8599.

## CAHS Officers

**President:** Jay MacIntyre

**Vice President:** Dirk Gifford

**Treasurer:** Barbara Kelly

**Recording Secretary:** Joann Geist

**Membership Chair:** Chris Miller

**Corresponding Secretary:** Not currently filled

**Archives Director:** Swend Miller

**Museum Director:** Chris Miller

**Member-At-Large:** Roger Staab

**Colfax Cobblestones Editor:** Dirk Gifford

**Webmaster:** Dirk Gifford

# Local Businesses and Organizations That Support CAHS

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

## Join the Colfax Area Historical Society

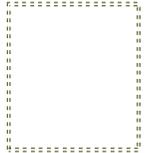
We invite you to join the CAHS and support the work of the Society, which includes the Colfax Heritage Museum. You will receive the *Colfax Cobblestones* newsletter four times a year by mail.

Each issue includes articles and photos about local history. Memberships are for one year, from July–June. **Memberships begin on July 1 and end on June 30 of the following year.**

<p>To join the Colfax Area Historical Society, fill out this form and mail it with a check to: <b>CAHS, PO Box 185, Colfax, CA 95713.</b></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"/> <b>\$20 Individual membership</b> (one person)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$25 Family membership</b> (including children)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$35 Business or Non-Profit Organization membership</b> (includes an ad in each issue of <i>Colfax Cobblestones</i>)</p>
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One of the current displays in the Colfax Heritage Museum, located in the Colfax Passenger Depot, Colfax, California.



**The Colfax Area Historical Society**

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