

Rescue Historical Society

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Issue

The Newsletter

Editor: Francis "Carp" Carpenter

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"What Kids did in Rescue"

by Barbara (Veerkamp) Coulson

This is not Rescue history in the sense of the 1800's or the pioneers of that era, but Rescue history nevertheless. It is an account of "what kids did" in Rescue in the mid' 40's to mid 50's. We did not have all the bells and whistles kids have today, but we used what was available in our surroundings. The events recorded here are pretty representative of the choices most of the Rescue kids had. These things are written in collaboration with and honor of my lifelong friend Margie Carpenter Weber, because we experienced them together. Our friendship has endured for the past 69 years! This article is dedicated to Margie!



The "buddies:" Margie (Carpenter) Weber, left, and Barbara (Veerkamp) Coulson, right.

THE BIG ROCK

High on a hill overlooking the Rescue area is a huge granite boulder which we called the Big Rock. The trail to it takes off just across Deer Valley Road from the Rose Spring Literary Society Hall. A few minutes of hiking brought us to it. We could see most of "metropolitan Rescue" from our lofty point—even to the top of the hill where the Sunrise House used to stand. In late afternoon, we could see the High School bus top that rise. The challenge was to gallop down the trail and beat the bus to the Rescue store.

GOING UNDER THE BRIDGE

We spent a lot of time at "the bridge"—that crosses the [White Oak] creek where Deer Valley Road begins. The cement footings under it left a ledge just wide enough to inch our way along. We were just tall enough to reach up and grasp the "I" beams that supported the bridge. The challenge was to make our way across without falling in. The edge on the west side was much more narrow. If you could navigate the west side without a spill, you were "good!" Neither of us ever fell in!

Memories

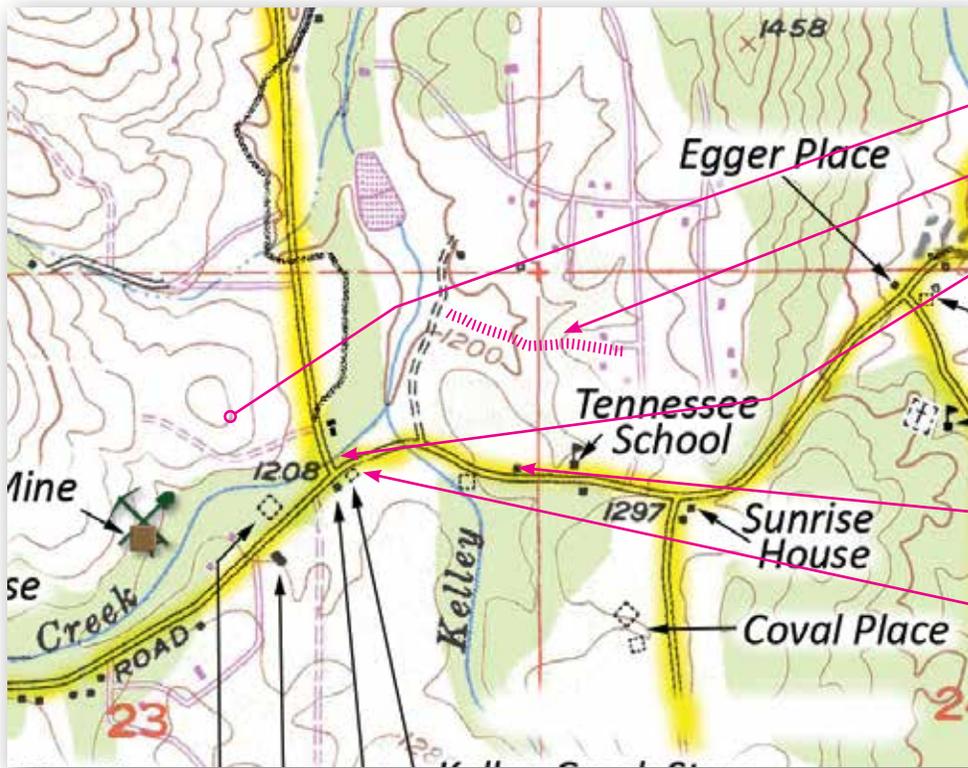
"In about 1945, I met "Margie" Carpenter. We had just moved into the area. It didn't take long before we became buddies. Our friendship and bond began then and it has become stronger as the years past."

"After a recent conversation with her, I decided it was time to write down some of our many memories of growing up in Rescue."

Barb



The White Oak Creek bridge in "downtown" Rescue. See the ledge and "I" beam?



- Big Rock
- Skinner snow hill
- White Oak Creek Bridge
- Veerkamp home
- Carpenter home

THE SCOOTER

On same occasion in Barb's young life, her parents gifted her with a shiny red scooter. The riding platform was long enough for two sets of small feet. I can't tell you how many times we rode together down the hill, taking turns at being the one in front to steer. We rode the little red scooter until the tires finally split from sheer exhaustion!

CREEKS

The creeks in Rescue were a big part of our recreation. In the spring after the stonn runoffs were done and the creeks ran lower and clear, we spent much time playing in the water. There were pollywogs to catch and carry home in coffee cans, to watch them turn into little frogs. We watched the red salamanders (waterdogs, to us) and ran away from the little black and yellow water snakes. In the summer, we often went to the "Fishers" swimming hole. Somehow, the teenagers ("Carp" [Margie's older brother] and friends) were willing to take us "little kids" along. I (Barb) hadn't learned to swim yet, and got out

into the too-deep water. I was heading down for the third time—Keith Hodgkins saw my trouble, swam to me and pulled me to safety. Yes!!! The same Keith who at Tennessee School, used to terrorize the girls by chasing them on his bicycle, with all the grace and light of a Sherman tank! He delighted to see them running away screaming! In the winter, a really cold spell could freeze the creeks over. There was a good sized pool just below the "Deer Valley" bridge. Margie and I would go there and slide around on the ice. It must have been strong enough—we never fell in.



Barbara (left) and "Margie" swimming in Fischers swimming hole in Weber Creek.



Tennessee School, 1944-45. Left to right, **Back row:** Bill Carpenter, Bob Nichols, Mary Ester Nichols, Anna O'Brien, Katherine O'Brien and Florence (Starbuck) (Lynch) Pratt (teacher). **Front row:** Keith Hodgkin (circle) and Mary Carpenter with Shirley Smith standing in front of her.

BICYCLES

Bicycles played a huge role in our lives. Margie taught me how to ride. We practiced in the road in front of the Rescue Store. After a few spills, I got the hang of it, and felt the thrill of mobile freedom. My dad bought me a used bike, \$15. It was yellow and as basic a bike as possible: frame, handlebars, seat and pedals. But, oh, the joy! Margie and I went everywhere on our bikes. Bike picnics were a favorite. A banana, a tuna sandwich and a jug of Kool-Aid was a feast. We had a "safety plan", if we ever felt in danger: we would ditch our bikes and "hide" in the roadside ditch. I don't know how we figured our deserted bikes would not be seen to give us away, but we never saw anyone but neighbors we knew--we never had to put our plan into action! Not only bicycles, we used to roller skate in the middle of Green Valley and Deer Valley Roads. It was safe to do so then—it would be unthinkable now. Sometimes we opted to just go walking-along the roads or in the fields or woods, just exploring, and taking pictures. Occasionally on these treks we'd find a digger pine cone full of nuts--we'd crack and eat them on the spot—sweet and delicious!

RAINBOOTS

Rescue never had any "town amenities" such as cement water ducts and storm drains—just roadside ditches. Well! What a perfect place to use your new red rain boots. We walked up and down those watery

ditches countless times in our rain boots—sheer delight!

THE SLED

Rescue doesn't generally get a lot of snow, but one morning we woke up to a winter-wonderland. Barb's dad, (Quincy) went right out to his shop and started building a sled: a piece of board, a few slats, a piece of metal sheathing for the front, and a pull rope. He waxed the bottom with some paraffin. We took our new treasure to the top of Mrs. Skinner's hill and slid down time after time. Every time there was snow in Rescue after that, out came that wonderful sled.

WILDFLOWERS

Springtime in Rescue is such a beautiful time, all green and blooming. Picking wildflower bouquets for our moms was a favorite thing. We knew just where to find the buttercups, the "johnny-jump-ups," and the wild Easter lilies, and a bit later, the Indian paintbrushes. We tried preserving some of them by dipping them in melted wax, but that never seemed to really work.



PAPER DOLLS AND CATALOGS

On days when we chose not to be outside, playing paper dolls was a favorite activity. Our moms would always give us the expired Sears or Montgomery Wards catalogs. We would find the dresses that "fit the shape" of our various dolls, cut them out and add them to that doll's "wardrobe." Other times we would just page through and take turns "picking" the dresses we liked. Meanwhile, our moms might be busy sewing us a dress (on their treadle Singers) from the latest printed feed sack fabric, that had contained chicken feed.



HORSEBACK RIDING

I was horse crazy—Margie was not. My cousin Ann Marden took me riding whenever she could. A new friend came into our lives about the 5th or 6th grade level: Bunny Hollister Wing. She and I often rode her horses, Bucky and Papoose, out to a hill overlooking Highway 50, and watched the cars go by. Margie and I only rode together in planting or harvest season—her father and brothers used draft horses to work their fields. If we got there about quitting time, we'd be boosted up onto the backs of the big gentle horses and ride home. When I couldn't ride a real horse, I rode many miles on my tree-limb horse: a long limb sticking straight out from a live-oak tree in our yard. It had a dip in the middle like the curve of a horse's back. I wrapped a rope there, tied loops for stirrups, and joyfully bounced along on my go-nowhere horse. We did, however, I have a playhouse under that same tree, later replaced by a tent my dad gave me for Christmas. Margie's playhouse was behind her house, just outside the kitchen window.

SMALL PLEASURES

The carpenters had a Jersey milk cow—named Buttercup, as I recall. Sometimes Margie would bring up a pint of whipping cream, and my mom would make cream puffs. She'd send some puffs down to the Carpenters, so all shared the treats. It was an understanding between us that when either family would make ice cream or cut a watermelon, the other was automatically invited. Now and then, Margie would tell me, "We're going to open a can of orange juice tonight. Come have some with us." The availability of juice we take for granted today was a rare treat back then. A simple can of juice became a family event!

SINGING

My mother loved singing and music. She had a book full of old-timey cowboy songs, and she taught us to sing all the ones she knew, which was most of them. We'd get out that old book and sing our way through, with Mom joining in when she could. Then, of course, there was our 4-H group, which went Christmas caroling every year, in the back of Mr. Dunning's truck. This included all the community kids and we so enjoyed doing this with all our friends.

GOING TO UNCLE FRED'S

Margie's dad had an old truck—it was old even then. When her parents decided to go visit Uncle Fred—her mom's brother, they usually picked me up to go along. We'd stand up behind the cab, wind blowing our hair, talking and laughing all the way there and back. A real no-no in today's traffic structure, but it sure was fun then. I don't think Margie's dad ever drove over 30 M.P.H.



This is the truck that Barbara and Margie rode in on their trips to Uncle Fred's. Fred Luneman was Marie's mother's brother; he lived on Luneman Road. The Carpenter truck was a 1927 Starr. Here it is loaded with hay on its way to the Carpenter barn located next to the Rescue Store.

DANCES AND OVERNIGHTS

Rescue used to host regular community dances—with a live band, yet! They were held upstairs at the RSLs Hall, and well attended. Everybody came—including the kids. Margie usually invited me, and often 1 or 2 other to spend what was left of the night after the dance. If you can imagine 3 or 4 girls in the bottom bunk of bunk beds—squirming, giggling, competing for space—we loved it! Her older sister Mary had the luxury of the top bunk all to herself. Margie and I often traded off spending the night. In the summertime we usually slept outside, usually joined by several cats. We'd drift off to sleep with the sounds of baseball coming through the open window, as Margie's father listened to the Sacramento Solons.

THE FIRST TELEVISION

I remember vividly—and I'm sure Margie does too, the very first time I ever saw television. All of Rescue was abuzz that Fred Wessles (an older gentleman, native of Germany) had purchased a television. His place was on what is now Ponderosa Road, and was somewhat of a park. There were some ponds and nice groves of trees. We had



a 4-H event—a picnic, I think. Mid-afternoon, we were called into Fred’s living room, where we sat mostly on the floor. Magic moment! Fred turned on—THE BOX! We were stunned and mesmerized as PICTURES appeared on the glass. Pictures coming through the air?? And appearing in THE BOX??? How could that be?

GOING TO THE MOVIES

This was always a treat. Before the “drive-in” out on Highway 50, my folks would go to the theater in Folsom, and Margie often went with us. One night we decided—foolishly—to go. It was in the middle of about the worst lightning and thunder storm I have ever seen. Our car, an old Hudson Terraplane, was about half temperamental. Shortly past the intersection of Deer and Green Valley roads, we drove into a low place in the road, and it had flooded. Of course, the car died. My dad hiked back through that awful storm for about a mile, to where his sister Elsie lived, to get someone to rescue (play on words!) us. Meanwhile, my mom, ever resourceful, tried to keep us entertained so we wouldn’t be scared. She began making up silly two-line rhymes and we joined in with our own. We were all laughing too hard to be scared. I don’t think my dad found much to laugh about that night. After that, we picked our movie nights more carefully!

GOING TO TOWN

We always savored a trip to Placerville, and were very fond of the Coronet and Ben Franklin five and dimes. “Town” was Main Street. Every store served a family or community need: the furniture store, shoe store, fabric shop, bank, dress shop, utility office, theater, men’s shop, stationary and book shop, shoe repair, jewelry and etc. But much has changed. The last time I walked down Main Street in Placerville, every other shop had become an antique shop. It had morphed from being a family service town into a tourist “destination” town. This more a statement of fact than a complaint—we just like to remember it the way it was!

OUR FIRST JOBS

As we grew into our 7th and 8th grade years, we were asked by neighbors to babysit. We were paid the princely sum of 50 cents per hour, and felt enormously wealthy. Deposit bottles were another source of income: enough 2, 3, or 5¢ bottles would soon become a dollar.

SCHOOL

We enjoyed our time at school, and learned a lot. Schoolwork was done with paper and pencil. Penmanship was practiced every day. It was the “dip the point in the ink well” type of practice. Reports were written out in longhand. Typewriters? Who had one?! Computers? That term didn’t even exist then. Cursive writing is no longer taught in schools today. Hey! You still have to know how to sign your name. I recently wrote something in cursive for my Sunday school kids. They ALL said, “*I can’t read that.*” This saddens my schoolteacher heart!

ON A MORE SOCIAL LEVEL

Most kids in Rescue took part in 4-H and the Juvenile Grange. We learned parliamentary procedure, to function as a group with common goals, and the



The Tennessee School probably in about 1946. Barbara Veerkamp is on the porch. The Veerkamps lived right next door to the school, and Barbara’s mother was the janitor.

responsibility of choosing and completing our various projects, 4-H brought “Roundup” each spring. Our projects were judged. If not a blue ribbon effort, we learned what would make it better next time. We would plan and build a booth for the El Dorado County Fair. The girls were always excited to model their sewing projects at the 4-H Fashion Show. A real highlight was the 4-H summer camp, on Peavine Ridge, above Riverton. There was the BEST swimming hole I’ve ever seen. There was fishing, nature hikes, volleyball, campfire sings, campfire cooking, and sleeping under the stars.

ONE SHOT DEALS

There are two one-time events that stand out in my memories. When Margie and I were about 6 or 7, wonder of wonders! A circus came to town! My parents took both of us, and it was super exciting! The most jaw-dropping of all was the lad, in pink tights-the trapeze artist. We were mesmerized and knew definitely that's what we both wanted to do with the rest of our lives! That enthusiasm lasted maybe 2 or 3 weeks, and then we both came back to earth and went on with our childhood form of reality. Maybe it's called "forgot about."

The other event was an excursion to Sacramento. Our teacher (for 3rd, 4th grade) was a middle aged English lady, Mrs. Greiner. We loved her! She took a special interest in the two of us. Shortly after school was out: in June. She took us on a trip to Sacramento. We went to Sutter's Fort, the Sacramento Zoo, the Rosemont Grill for-lunch, and then on to shop at Hale's Department Store. We beheld there a never before

seen wonder: the escalators! How amazing! We rode them up and down, from floor to floor, over and over. My father had given me two silver dollars to spend. I don't remember all I spent my money on, but for 50 cents I bought a gift for my mother: a blue plastic thread holder, which I now have in my own sewing room, and which I treasure greatly. After we wore out the escalators, our teacher took us to the movie to see "**The Adventures of Robin Hood**," with Errol Flynn. When I see .it on T.V., I relive our whole trip to Sacramento. It was two tired, happy, and excited girls she brought home that night.

CONCLUSION

So ends our ramblings about "**What Kids did in Rescue**." We didn't have a lot of economic advantages; we used what we had, and were grateful for the small pleasures. My Aunt Elsie Marden taught me early on: "If you don't have what you need, use what you have." And that pretty well describes the growing up years of Margie, Barbara, and the kids in Rescue!

Carp's Corner

In this issue of our newsletter the feature article was written by Barbara (Veerkamp) Coulson who lives in Roman, Montana. She and my sister Margie got together and discussed the article. Margie lives in Pittsburg, Calif. Barbara and Margie went to school together and are about the same age. The school of their youth was located on Green Valley Road, north side. It was the 2nd. building west of Ponderosa Road. It burnt in the 1950's. Today a house sets on the old school site.

In reality Barbara lived next door to the school. She was raised in the old Mc Beath home which was located on Green Valley Road. There is a picture of the house in our book. There were no other girls of this age group in the immediate area. One needs to think of Rescue as a very quiet place with very little road traffic and very few homes or people. Kids could walk the road with complete safety. (hard to believe) We were allowed to play baseball on Green Valley Road at the Deer Valley intersection in the evening. Deer Valley Road was still dirt, no asphalt. Many times we were not disturbed by auto traffic.

If my memory serves me correctly, I believe occasionally the girls would roller skate on Green

Valley Road. There was no other place around. Margie had two older brothers and an older sister.

The story went like this and I quote, "*Take your baby sister with you*", this, per our mother. Mom was the youngest of 15 children and she understood. Barbara had only her baby sister and therefore no one to play with. School I believe was something the girls looked forward to. When they started to school it was still a one room school. As I remember, no running water and out door toilets. Still I imagine only one teacher. Today I do not believe our children get a better education, however it is quite different and greatly changed. This is my belief not so much from watching my kids in school but as from observing my grand kids in school. There were 5 grandchildren and they all attend local schools at one time or another. I believe that your grandchildren and great grandchildren are more fun than your own children.

In conclusion, on the subject of schools, we had some great teachers. I know that I did. **Thank You All !**



President's Report

We hope to be busy this year with various projects. One of the more exciting projects is the reconstruction of the Skinner Winery at the intersection of Green Valley Road and Cameron Drive.

Skinner Winery update - I don't know if you noticed the new grape vines at the Skinner Winery. They are 110 year old Mission grapes. Mike Skinner says, "Back in those days Mission was the predominant grape varietal grown in California, but has since virtually disappeared. James Skinner grew Mission and used the grapes to make Angelica back in the day, which we will do as well."

Angelica wine is an historic sweet fortified wine usually from California made typically from the Mission grape. It is often served as a dessert wine.

Jim also stated, "The building is winding its way through the planning stages...We had hoped to get it done this year, but at the rate we are going, who knows."

Cemetery Clean-up day - We have scheduled the clean-up for Saturday, March 17th. Those interested in helping, let's meet at the Rose Hall at 10 a.m. Depending on how many show up will dictate what we do. Call me at (530) 676-7401 and let me know if you will be there.

Find a Grave project - Carol Damerval, has offered to help Linda Van Gundy and Rodi Lee in checking and updating information that can be found on www.findagrave.com.



Home Page update - In the coming months we hope to show you some new things on the homepage. Say tuned, we think you will like them.

Officer's position open - Joyce Green is having to give up her role as Vice President for personal reasons; she will be missed! Anyone interested in filling her shoes? Let me know if you are.

Bus Tour - We hope to conduct another bus tour of the Rescue area this fall. We will change the route to show off other historical areas in Rescue.



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Rose Springs Literary Society Hall
Constructed in 1896



Rescue Historical Society, Inc.
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Important Notices:

- **March 14, 2015, Saturday** – The Rescue Historical Society will hold a business meeting in the Rose Springs Literary Society Hall, starting at 10:00 am.
- **March 21, 2015, Saturday** – The Rescue Historical Society cemetery clean up day. Meet at the Rose Springs Literary Society Hall, starting at 10:00 am.

Visit our homepage :

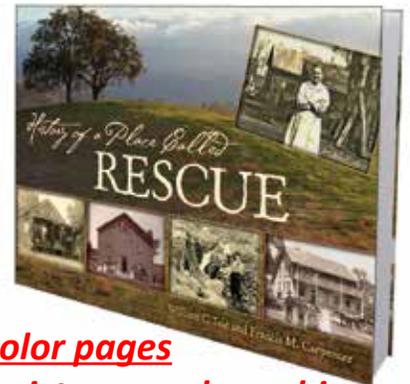


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