



A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE GOLD-MINING HISTORY OF JOHNSVILLE, CALIFORNIA

The Inaugural Self-Guided Walking Tour of Johnsville

BY BRUCE MACGREGOR

The Johnsville Historical Society (JHS) tried something new for this year's Gold Discovery Days event held over two days in July: the creation of a self-guided walking tour of select Johnsville homes, businesses and landmarks. Visitors, who arrived either by horse-drawn wagon or on foot, were treated to nine colorful posters over a half-mile course of Johnsville that offered historical highlights of buildings such as the Iron Door restaurant, firehouse, Johnsville Hotel, several historic homes, and St. John's of the Mountains Catholic Church, the new home to JHS. An accompanying map and brochure directed people to the sites.

In taking on this project, JHS was fulfilling an important part of its mission: providing the public with Johnsville's history. JHS board members reached out to Johnsville property owners to secure their permission to place a poster near their home or business and everyone welcomed the idea. Some even offered their own historical stories and photos that can be used for additional posters in the future.

While the Gold Discovery Days event only lasted for two days, nearly 200 visitors participated in the walking tour. Most of those visitors were families with school-age children, which gave JHS the idea to add posters to the collection next year with content written for kids paired with related hands-on activities for families held in the church. We'll share more details in the Spring/Summer 2025 edition of the JHS newsletter.

Editor's Note: JHS thanks board member Bruce MacGregor for developing the concept of the Johnsville walking tour and designing and writing the content on the posters. The tour also would not have been possible without the generous assistance of board members Kathy Osher, Katie Agnew, and Mitch Olson, as well as volunteers Kathy and Mark O'Neil, Colleen McKeown, and Joe Anderson.



This past July, Johnsville's annual Gold Discovery Days event offered visitors the opportunity to see nine historical posters on a self-guided walking tour of Johnsville. Poster locations included the Johnsville Historical Society Museum at the church (above) and the Johnsville Firehouse built in 1908 (below).



EXPANDING THE JOHNSVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ONLINE COLLECTION

BY MITCHELL OLSON

In the Spring/Summer 2024 Johnsville Historical Society (JHS) newsletter, we shared the news we were finally—after many decades of volunteer fundraising and document-preservation efforts—able to post a sizable portion of our historic collection of photographs online. You can view those photos on the California Revealed website: californiarevealed.org/group/286697. This past summer we submitted another application to California Revealed requesting they expand our online collection with the Cheney Letters.

These historically significant letters were written from 1891 to 1904 by William Cheney, general manager of the Tombstone Mining Company in Philadelphia, to his son Samuel Cheney, superintendent of the Jamison Mine in Johnsville, one of California's top-producing gold mines.

We will learn in early 2025 whether our latest submission will be accepted into California Revealed's highly curated online historical collection. (A sampling of our online photographic collection is featured below.)

As we await their decision, we continue to work on uploading hundreds of pages of JHS records dating from our founding in 1984 to the present time. The goal is to safely preserve all our historical pictures, postcards, letters, and other documents and continue adding to the online collection so they will be publicly accessible to all at no cost.



Johnsville in the winter of 1906 (above) and in 1908 (right top and bottom).



WE HAVE A NEW FACEBOOK PAGE!

Follow us at [Johnsville Historical Society - JHS](#). (Make sure you go to the new Facebook page labeled with "JHS" at the end.)



TAVERN TALK

History buff and Bay Area teacher Jason Foreman coordinated the Tavern Talk event at the inimitable Mohawk Tavern in Graeagle, a favorite local watering hole attracting bikers and hikers alike for decades. On September 28, the Johnsville Historical Society (JHS) hosted a walk down Plumas County's memory lane by swapping stories about the history of Johnsville and the surrounding area with Foreman, a descendant of the Sobrero family, which first made its home in Johnsville in the early 20th century, and Tom Sharrard, owner of the Mohawk Tavern and a local favorite known for his wild stories from the gold-mining era.

About 70 locals and out-of-towners hoisted a beer while tales were shared about the area's vivid history. The fundraiser benefited the Johnsville Historical Society.



The Mohawk Tavern in Graeagle, California, was built in 1862 as a Wells Fargo stagecoach stop with overnight lodgings. Today, it's a bar and gathering point for locals.



DAVID DAUN, 1938–2023

David Daun helped establish the Johnsville Historical Society (JHS) and led efforts to restore St. John's Church during his decades of living in Johnsville. The JHS board of directors recently honored his contributions by hanging his portrait inside the church, which serves as the JHS headquarters and a historical museum. An article in the Fall/Winter 2023 JHS newsletter featured highlights of his life, including the following passage:

With great joy and love, David resided in Johnsville with his wife, Jane, and daughter, Annie, and his extended family of town residents for more than 40 years. He spent a lifetime re-creating memories of his early life on the farm. He was an excellent cook, an avid baker of desserts, a printmaker, an artist, a historian, a gardener, a builder, a loving husband and father, a generous neighbor, and a kind friend to all.

Portrait of David Daun by JHS Board Member
Bruce MacGregor

SUPPORT JHS AND HELP US GO GREEN

The nonprofit Johnsville Historical Society (JHS) could not continue to preserve its fragile and extensive Gold Rush-era collection, as well as the Johnsville church and surrounding trees, without your help. Your JHS membership and renewal fees are our primary source of income. We would like to lower our newsletter expenses by greatly reducing the number of printed copies we need to mail to members, as printing and postage costs have soared. To help us with this effort, please write your email address on your membership check so we can email the newsletter to you instead of sending it through the mail. Emailed newsletters also include live links to pertinent web pages.

Donations are also welcome any time of the year!

Annual membership fees:

\$25 Individual	\$150 Business
\$50 Family	\$250 Founder
\$100 Patron	

Please send a check made out to JHS, along with your name and email address, to:

Johnsville Historical Society
P.O. Box 1458
Graeagle, California 96103

And for the upcoming holidays, consider the gift of a JHS membership. Just include the gift recipient's name and email address along with a check to JHS.

Questions? Email us at johnsvillegold@gmail.com.

JHS is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation and all gifts and donations are tax deductible. Thank you. We greatly appreciate your support.



JOHNSVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEMBERS

Kathy Osher, President

Katie Agnew, Board Member

Rebecca Forée, Board Member

Molly Hallenberger, Secretary

Bruce MacGregor, Board Member

Mitchell Olson, Board Member

Kathy O'Neil, Treasurer

Newsletter design by Wes Breazell

Editor, Rebecca Forée



Members of the Mitchell and Dolly families stand outside the Mitchell home on Church Avenue in Johnsville, circa 1902.

