

MUSEUM

Butte County Historical Society Museum
1749 Spencer Avenue (at Baldwin)
Oroville, CA
530.533.9418



Open: Fridays from 9 am to noon and Saturdays from
11 am to 3 pm
and by appointment

The Butte County Historical Society Museum opened at its current location on January 23, 2000. It tells the stories of the lives of people in Butte County from the early mining days to the present time. The idea for a museum began in 1956 with the founding of the Society. After many years of collecting, writing down histories and saving a few significant buildings, we finally purchased this site. We wish to thank all the volunteers and supporters who made the acquisition and remodeling of the building possible, as well as those who donate time and money to collecting, preserving and displaying our history for all to enjoy.

Let's take a tour around some of the museum exhibits to view places where many of the stories happened.

We begin our tour with a display of an assay office that includes the gold scales from the Oroville branch of Bank of America. These were in use to weigh gold for purchase as recently as the 1960's.

Lee Pharmacy was an early-day pharmacy that, from 1884 to 1994, was in business on Broadway in downtown Chico. Currently it is the site of a Starbuck's coffee house.

Dentistry has been practiced in Butte County since the early days when the local barber often cut hair and pulled teeth. This display illustrates a "Modern Office" of the early 1940's.

The Post Office was very important to early settlers keeping them in touch with relatives back east. It also determined names for many places to prevent duplication. Oroville was originally named "Ophir" but was changed to avoid confusion with an existing Ophir community.

Our Leisure Room replicates the living room of the Ehmann Home utilizing many objects from the Society's collection. Today the Ehmann home serves as the Society's Headquarters. It is available for rent for meetings or special occasions, such as a wedding or reception.

Erle Stanley Gardner was a "local boy who made good." The display highlights some of his colorful life.

Back in the 1940's Hollywood came to Chico to film "Robin Hood" starring Errol Flynn. For a brief time Bidwell Park became Sherwood Forest and local residents became extras. We are fortunate to have some interesting pieces from this event and a short behind-the-scenes movie.

As "civilization" took over, the native residents were forced from their traditional homes and some took refuge in the hills around the valley. Ishi was considered the last of these "wild Indians" when he was discovered near Oroville in 1911. This display tells a bit of his story using the original door of the jail cell where he was kept until taken to the University of California in San Francisco.

Freda Ehmann presided over the company bearing her name and she was instrumental in developing the olive industry by creating new varieties and types of processing. You can punch in at the office time clock with a souvenir timecard.

The Paul Wood Theater features a variety of films on the area's history for your viewing. A list is posted and you can ask a docent to start your selection.

We hope you come visit us soon. To learn about the unique items in our Museum Store, [click here](#).