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## FOURTH CROSSING DEDICATION

Our Society joined the State of California, last week, to dedicate an historical monument at the little community of Fourth Crossing, about halfway between San Andreas and Angels Camp, on Highway 49. On the monument is mounted a bronze plaque bearing the following inscription:

### FOURTH CROSSING

Located on the Stockton-Murphys road at the fourth crossing of the Calaveras River, this early mining settlement, once called Foremans, was famous in the 1850's for its rich placer ores. Later, it became an important stage and freighting depot and served the southern mines until after the turn of the century.

California Registered Historical Landmark No. 258.

Plaque placed by the California State Park Commission in cooperation with the Calaveras County Historical Society, October 23, 1965.

The Society's committee, composed of Kenneth Castro, William Wells, Harold Pittenger, Paul Lewis, and Coke Wood, made the arrangements required for developing and wording the inscription, registering the site, building the monument, and setting up the dedication program. California is one of the leading states in preserving knowledge of historical sites and marking them on the ground. We take pride in playing an active part in this worthwhile project, and one that will be appreciated, we are sure, by generations to come.

Coke Wood, in his **CALAVERAS PROSPECT** column, "Tales of Old Calaveras," recently reprinted an interesting historical sketch of Fourth Crossing by Harry T. Fee, the California poet. This article was originally published in the **Stockton Record**, on Saturday, June 25, 1932. Judge J. A. Smith's short history of Fourth Crossing appeared in **Las Calaveras** in October, 1962. The "Memorial" history of Calaveras and adjoining counties (1892) contains excellent biographies of John B. Reddick and Joseph H. Wells, well-known residents of this place. From these and other sources, Mr. and Mrs. Castro have written the informal history that appears on the following pages.



MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH H. WELLS

Six year old Mary Alice Reddick came west in 1854 with her family from Ohio by way of the Isthmus. They settled in '58 at Fourth Crossing, when her father, William Reddick, acquired the hotel and adjoining property. In 1867 Mary Alice was married to Joseph Harold Wells of Mokelumne Hill. Mr. Wells, also a native of Ohio, had crossed the plains to California and Calaveras County in 1859. He was a schoolteacher and administrator by profession, but in 1888 moved to Fourth Crossing to take over the hotel and ranch from his father-in-law. In addition to keeping the hotel and post office, he ran cattle and raised fruit. Joseph Wells continued for a number of years as the proprietor of the hotel until ill health required that he turn the establishment over to his son, Charles R. Wells. The latter continued in residence at the ranch up to 1925. The property, a few years later, was sold. This photograph, taken in the early 1900's, was loaned by grandson William W. Wells.

## A HISTORY OF FOURTH CROSSING

By Kenneth M. and Doris M. Castro

Fourth Crossing, one of the early mining camps of the Mother Lode, today is a ghost town. It is located on Highway 49 between San Andreas and Altaville, on the north bank of San Antonio Creek, a branch of the Calaveras River.

All that the traveller can see today is the old hotel, separated into two parts, with one part moved some hundred feet distant; one of the old barns; the original bridge, and the road approaching the old hotel. To the north is a graveyard. The rough surface of the earth shows there was extensive placer and lode mining in the area. Occasional bits of china or other utensils are found to the west of the main community, where the Chinese settlement was located. A Mexican settlement was located at Campo Nuevo, to the southwest. The area today is used as a grazing area for cattle and sheep.

If one were to view Fourth Crossing from the eyes of the traveller as it appeared one hundred years ago, in 1865, one would suddenly come over a hill (there are hills on both the north and south approaches) and see a rather large community spread before him. The stage stop was at the hotel, a large building prominently located on the main road. There were large barns close by, at one time three barns which would hold one hundred horses. Fourth Crossing was one of the principal camps for changing the teams that worked in freighting, hauling supplies to the mines and the people throughout the area of the southern mines. Numerous shops sprang up to meet the needs of the many miners who lived and worked in the area.

Fourth Crossing was one of the first areas surveyed in Calaveras County. Following is a copy of the "Field Notes of two tracts of land at the fourth crossing of the Calaveras River made for Beritzhoff, Forman (sic) & Morgan, August 10, 1851":

1. Beginning at a stake at edge of river, whence a rock is distant 10 yards in line of first side, and runing (sic) N 56° W 30 ch.<sup>2</sup> to a rock and post, whence a pine tree bears S 32½° W 73 yds. thence S 34° W 20 ch. to a post thence S 56° E 30 ch. to a stake in edge of river, thence N 34° E 20 ch. along river back to place of beginning, containing 60 acres more or less.
2. Beginning at an oak tree, blazed, at edge of river and runing (sic) thence along the river S 34° W 16 chs. to post and rock at river edge. Thence S 77° E 16 chs. to a large oak, blazed, thence N 41° E 8 chs. to a stake whence a small black oak is distant 129 links in line of 3d side thence N 41½° W. 16.1 ch. to place of beginning containing 18 acres more or less.

"I do hereby certify that the preceding field notes and following plat are correct descriptions of land in Calaveras County, Cal. surveyed for and claimed by A. C. Beritzhoff, Forman (sic) & Morgan.

"Sept. 1st, 1851 Jno. C. Reid, Surveyor"

The plat is recorded with the field notes.

On Oct. 26, 1852, Alexander C. Beritzhoff filed a land claim for these 78 acres plus 22 unsurveyed acres adjoining the first parcel on the west. In his claim, Beritzhoff deposed "that he now occupies and for a long time has occupied and settled upon 100 acres of the public lands

... for the purpose of cultivating or grazing the same."<sup>3</sup>

On Feb. 8, 1854, Beritzhoff sold his interest in the 100 acres to William L. Dudley for \$6500.<sup>4</sup>

On Sept. 29, 1858, W. L. Dudley sold the 100 acres back to Beritzhoff for \$5000, "the whole premises being known so and called Foreman's Upper Ranch," "also all that certain Bridge across the Calaveras river at the fourth crossing of the same at the premises aforesaid with the franchise and all rights and privileges appertaining to the same."<sup>5</sup> This is the first official reference found to the bridge.

On Nov. 1, 1858, Samuel Forman (sic) and his wife Ada, and A. C. Beritzhoff and his wife Martha, all of San Joaquin County, sold the 100 acres to William Reddick and his son-in-law John Hill for \$5000, "being the same premises on which stands the hotel formerly kept by the aforesaid A. C. Beritzhoff . . . and now kept by Charles P. Dudley," and the bridge.<sup>6</sup>

On March 21, 1860, John Hill and his wife Eliza, of Butte, Amador County, sold their undivided one-half interest in the land and bridge to William Reddick for \$1000.<sup>7</sup>

The sale of Fourth Crossing to William Reddick had decisive effects on the future importance of the area. There have been few men in the history of California's gold rush so well experienced as William Reddick to run a stage and freighting stop and serve the miners.

William Reddick, a native of Virginia, had made three trips across the country, fitting out and furnishing emigrants. He brought the first company across in 1849. Returning by water, he brought another company across in 1851, and a third company in 1853. He brought his own family in 1854, via Panama (making the Atlantic voyage in the North Star, and the Pacific in the Golden Gate.) He located near Angels Camp, and mined until 1858, when he purchased Fourth Crossing. He remained there until he passed away at the age of 84 years.<sup>8</sup>

Soon after acquiring Fourth Crossing, William Reddick built a new hotel. The following article appeared in the **San Andreas Independent** on June 20, 1861:

"New Hotel at Fourth Crossing — We learn that Mr. William Reddick, proprietor of the place known as Forman's, or Fourth Crossing, contemplates erecting a new and commodious hotel this summer."

William Reddick gave his property to his sons in May 1884, 51/100ths of an undivided interest to John B. and 49/100ths to Frank M. The property remained in the Reddick family and their descendants for approximately 80 years, until it was purchased in the 1930's by the Ponte family, the present owners.

Gold mining and transportation were the principal reasons for Fourth Crossing.

Fourth Crossing was located on the Mother Lode, the name given originally to the great dominant veins of gold-bearing quartz that extend for about 70 miles in a fairly straight line from Mariposa north to Plymouth. It is not recorded just when gold was discovered here by the Americans, but probably by mid-1848. The entire Calaveras County had been fairly well explored by the end of 1848.

It is said that placer mining was very productive in the area in the 1850's, and when the placers were exhausted, the miners turned to lode mining.

The first quartz claim was filed by J. H. Bachman on

Sept. 13, 1857. Three days later, on September 16, 1857, L. Emanuel filed a claim on Pluto Lode, and E. Manuel filed on French Ranch Lode. Five days later claims were filed on Comstock & Paul Lode by Bean, Freeman et al, by P. A. Bordwell, and by A. C. Beritzhoff. P. A. Bordwell and Moses Thorpe filed on Van Bueren & Kneedler Lead, and H. E. Thorpe filed on the Ross Bordwell Lode.<sup>9</sup>

Approximately 170 claims were filed in Foreman's Mining District by the end of 1878. Claims were filed on Skinner Lode; Ross and Bordwell Lead; Gilman Lead; Dickens Lode; Look to the East Lode; Mammoth Lode; Swenson Lode; Kirby Lode; Blue Lode; New Lode (by one of the writer's ancestors); Cameres Lode; Laurence Lode, and others.

There are no Chinese names listed in the "Index to Locations of Mining Claims" for Foreman's Mining District. It is said there were probably about 600 Chinese in the settlement at one time.

None of the mines has been worked for many years. Names which are still remembered locally are Bachman, Demerest<sup>10</sup>, Thorpe, and Union mines, but their exact location is known to only a few.

Transportation was next in importance to mining. The trail that connected the southern mines passed through Fourth Crossing. The first reference to the beginning of a stage road through this area is the article which appeared in *Alta California* on Dec. 20, 1851, as follows:

"New stage route. Another direct line of communication with the southern mining region has been opened. . . (to) Mokelumne Hill, heretofore inaccessible except for pack mules and pedestrians. . . The road is to be extended through to Sonora, and in a very short time the rich and populous counties of Tuolumne and Calaveras will be the means of contributing greatly to our prosperity. . ."

This road today is known as Highway 49, the Golden Chain Highway.

The road from Stockton came into Valley Springs, on to San Andreas, where it turned and went past the St. Andrew's Catholic Church, on to Kentucky House where the Calaveras Cement Plant is now located, to Alabama House which was a stage stop, passing the old Thorpe mine, and reaching Fourth Crossing.

"Bancroft's Map of the Pacific States," compiled by Wm. H. Knight, and published in 1864, shows the principal road at that time ran from Fourth Crossing, east to Murphys, and south to Columbia and Sonora. No road was shown from Fourth Crossing to Angels Camp. It is said that from early days there was a fork from the main road a short distance south of Fourth Crossing, leading to Angels Camp and Carson Hill. (Later the road to Angels Camp became more travelled. When the legislative bill was passed in 1921, calling for the construction of a state highway which today is Highway 49, the highway passed through Mokelumne Hill, San Andreas, Fourth Crossing, Angels Camp, the Carson Hill area, and Melones.)

Fourth Crossing was a principal stage and freighting stop. William Wells of Railroad Flat, a descendant of the Reddick family who was born and grew up at Fourth Crossing, says that at one time there were three large barns for 100 horses. His grandfather, Joseph Wells, built the large dance hall which was the center of social

activity for many years. He remembers the gardens and the orchards which his family had at Fourth Crossing.

The original toll bridge, built by Forman and known through the years as "Reddick's Bridge," solidly constructed of limestone and rock, is still standing. William Reddick sold it in Jan. 1888 to Calaveras County for \$1200, and it became a free bridge. The old structure was replaced by a bridge about 100 yards upstream when the highway from San Andreas to Angels Camp was realigned around 1930.

Fourth Crossing had an early school. George Frioux, later justice of the peace in Stockton, taught there for many years. His grandfather settled at Dry Creek, near Fourth Crossing, in 1851, and George's mother attended school at Fourth Crossing as a little girl.

The first justice court in Calaveras County was at Fourth Crossing, and Judge Bachman was the first justice of the peace.<sup>11</sup>

A post office was established June 2, 1855, and discontinued May 8, 1888. A second post office was established Feb. 15, 1892, and discontinued Nov. 30, 1925. Alexander C. Beritzhoff was the first postmaster and served from June 2, 1855, to Dec. 31, 1858. He was followed by John Hill on Dec. 31, 1858; Charles P. Dudley on Apr. 18, 1860; William Reddick on May 3, 1860, and Frank Reddick on July 29, 1884. When the second post office was established, Joseph Wells and Charles Wells were postmasters.

The cemetery is now overgrown with thistles, most of the mounds are gone, and the ground worn down. Only one weather-worn wooden marker still stands, in a small area enclosed by a delapidated picket fence. It reads: Frances J. Walker, b. Jan. 17, 1861, d. Oct. 27, 1864. Francis I. Walker, b. July 30, 1853, d. Dec. 19, 1869."

Until recently there was a marble tombstone, size 3 ft. x 18 in., which read: "H. T. Toon, d. Oct. 9, 1879, age 43 yrs. 7 mos., native of Ky. 'Dear Wife, farewell, I go to dwell with Jesus Christ on high and to sing praises to my King to all eternity.'" A carved tree, similar to the weeping willow, was on top of the stone.<sup>12</sup>

Miss Effie Johnston, who grew up near here, said there are about forty graves in the graveyard. The graves of Joseph Hill and Mrs. Joseph Hill (parents of Mary Hill) are on top of the knoll, once inside a picket fence. There was also a grave with the name Bachman.<sup>13</sup>

The famous duel between Jeff Gatewood and Dr. Gooding was fought at "Moonlight Flat" near the old Darnell place, reportedly in 1859. Jeff Gatewood was an attorney at San Andreas, and Dr. Gooding also resided there. Reportedly, differences over the slavery question at the time made enemies of the two, words led to blows, and finally a duel with pistols was the outcome. Dr. Gooding was killed. Gatewood later moved to the southern part of the state.

The history of an area is always affected by the people who live there. Names connected with Fourth Crossing were A. C. Beritzhoff and S. Forman; Dudleys; Barney Loomis, who located a claim on Aug. 16, 1853, in Nassau Valley just south of Foreman's Ranch; Jacob H. Bachman; John Bund; Walkers; Toons; Darnell; Cottles; William Wallace; Douglas; Thorpes; D. D. Demarest, and Reddicks, Hills, and Wells.

William Reddick was born Jan. 3, 1807. He married

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The Calaveras County Historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Grange Hall in San Andreas—except for dinner meetings which are held each quarter at different places in the county.

## EDITORIAL

All too often we hear of personal collections of photographs, scrapbooks, letters and other manuscript material that have been needlessly destroyed. Sometimes this has been done by well-intentioned relatives, believing that these things are worthless. Often house-cleaners or new owners or tenants have "burned the junk" found in a house.

These relics may have great value to the local historical society, the museum, or to researchers interested in the history of an area or of a special topic. Some antiquarians and hobbyists have built up wonderful collections, largely from such humble sources. Eventually most of these furnish great help for others interested in the subject.

As members of a local historical group, we should persuade those we know who possess items worthy of preservation to provide that they be saved, and left in charge of a responsible relative or bequeathed to an appropriate organization. Old photographs, especially, should be carefully identified with the location, date, names and other information. The rare practice of working up "Ancestor" books should be encouraged. Containing pictures of the various forebears, their families and homes, and brief histories of their lives, they furnish descendants with fascinating glimpses into that part of the past that belongs to them. But this can be done only by one who has the essential knowledge and pictures.

Our current society project, compiling this type of information on the older families of the county, is one

## A History of Fourth Crossing

(Continued From Preceding Page)

Elizabeth Songer on Dec. 17, 1828. They had twelve children, only four of whom lived to be grown: Eliza Ann, born Sept. 5, 1833, and married John Hill; John Burke, born April 9, 1845, and married Mary Louisa Coulter (he was Lieutenant Governor of California at the time of his death); Mary Alice, born Sept. 17, 1848, and married Joseph Harold Wells; and Frank Mussey, born Aug. 28, 1854, and married Alice May Burnham.

There are many descendants of the families from Fourth Crossing living in Calaveras and nearby counties. None remain at Fourth Crossing, a ghost town.

- 1 Calaveras County Records, **Book Miscellaneous 1852**, p. 52.
- 2 A chain is 100 links, 4 rods, or 792 inches.
- 3 **Book Miscellaneous 1852**, p. 186.
- 4 *Ibid*, pp. 186-87.
- 5 Calaveras County Records, **Book D of Deeds**, p. 84.
- 6 *Ibid*, p. 252.
- 7 *Ibid*, p. 261.
- 8 **A Memorial and Biographical History of the Counties of Merced, Stanislaus, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa, California**, p. 353. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1892.
- 9 Calaveras County Records, **Foreman's Mining District**, pp. 1-6.
- 10 It is interesting to note, since the California State Historical Landmarks Committee recently approved a plaque for Camp Salvation, dedicated Oct. 3, 1965, that Demerest probably came through Camp Salvation. He is reported to have experienced many hardships and privations. Camp Salvation existed for ten weeks, Sept. 23-Dec. 1, 1849, and is credited with saving the lives of an incalculable number of the thousands of gold seekers who made the dreaded jornada across the Colorado Desert and into San Diego.
- 11 "**Las Calaveras**," Oct. 1962, article by Judge J. A. Smith.
- 12 Reported by Mrs. Hattie Hertzig, San Andreas, Calif.
- 13 Reported by Miss Johnston, who several years ago accompanied Mrs. Hertzig and Mr. and Mrs. Percy Hunt of Double Springs, Calif., to the area.

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The preceding article was researched and written by Mr. and Mrs. Castro, and submitted to "**Las Calaveras**" on the occasion of the Fourth Crossing dedication. We are grateful for such papers as this, and would like to have more, for there are many subjects of county history worthy of further study and compilation.

## New Members

We are happy to welcome these new members, two of whom are former members who have rejoined:

Mrs. Helen R. Pierce, Mokelumne Hill.  
Mrs. Frances S. Bishop, Oakland.  
Mrs. Marjorie Jensen, San Andreas (rej.).  
Mrs. George Zumwalt, Mokelumne Hill (rej.).  
Miss Ellen D. Peek, Castro Valley (junior).

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of the ways in which this can be gathered and preserved. We need your help in this project.