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ARTHUR EARL HADDOCK CALAVERAS' LANDSCAPE ARTIST

by *Bonnie Miller*

From the golden hills of western Calaveras came one of the West's greatest artists. The offspring of two pioneer families who settled western Calaveras County, Arthur Earl Haddock was introduced to his life's passion in the one-room schoolhouse where he first held a box of paints. He would go on to study under Maynard Dixon and produce thousands of painting in his lifetime, most of which he never sold or showed. He was an intensely shy man who worked for years at a job he hated so that he could pursue his painting. Inspired by the simplicity and charm of the foothills around Wallace, Haddock would become one of the West's most accomplished and prolific artists few have heard of.

"Painting and living were for Arthur Haddock, languages whose meanings he contemplated in reclusive and shy existence, guided only by his feelings. He understood art as self creation; a diary on canvas which recorded the cycles of his psyche. The act of painting was a private transaction. To keep it that way he decided early on not to

depend on the sale of his art for support. To make a living, which he called making coins, he worked for thirty years as a railroad man. The night ticket and baggage clerk at the Stockton Santa Fe Depot was a job he despised."

—Ernesto Mayans



Some ruins and a spring at the base of a tree are most of what is left of the historic site of Catt's Camp, now shadowed by the Lake Camanche dike.

Photo by Bonnie Miller, 3/2014.



The first home built by Arthur's parents, William and Emma Haddock. William is on the far left while Emma sits on the porch with baby Arthur, circa 1895.
Calaveras County Historical Society photo.

Settling Wallace

The origins of this amazing painter are the pioneering families who settled in early California. On his father's side, the Haddocks came from sturdy English folk. George Haddock was a stonemason who married Rosetta Holt, a dressmaker in his hometown of Newcastle. They married in 1852 in London and set out on their journey that brought them to California. After crossing the Atlantic to North America, they headed south and crossed the Isthmus of Panama. Next they travelled up the west coast of North America to California. Lastly they travelled by steamer to Stockton, eventually settling near the western edge of Calaveras County. They had two sons, Ezekiel Charles and William.

Arthur's maternal ancestors followed a different route to California. English emigrants in Belfast, Maine gave birth to a son Charles Henry Little. He married a woman from Pennsylvania, Angelina Metz. The couple traveled to California by the overland route. Little was a wheelwright by trade so had no problem securing a position in a wagon train. Forever after he would regale his offspring and their children with vivid stories of this adventure. Charles and Angelina had three daughters, Lecta Loretta, Lizzie and Emma, and a son Henry. The family settled in a place called Catt's Camp, an area also near the northwestern border of Calaveras County. Little built the family home with lumber sawn from sugar pine logs, topped with a cedar shake roof.

Catt's Camp was a trading post supplying miners who travelled from Stockton, about two and a half miles west of the town of Camanche. Little raised and sold horses to the stage operators who transported people and goods through Catt's Camp on their way to the mining communities further east. The camp was located along the route that followed the southern banks of the Mokelumne River. Eventually this route was abandoned in favor of a more southern road where a railroad would run. Today we know this newer road as Highway 12.

George and Rosetta's older son Ezekiel Charles married the Little's older daughter Lecta. This union would produce five children, including Walter Haddock who remained in the area. Walter would become his own family's informal historian, to whom we are grateful for much of the family history. Walter himself was somewhat of a local hero, such as his successful career in baseball. But it was Walter's cousin who became the artist.

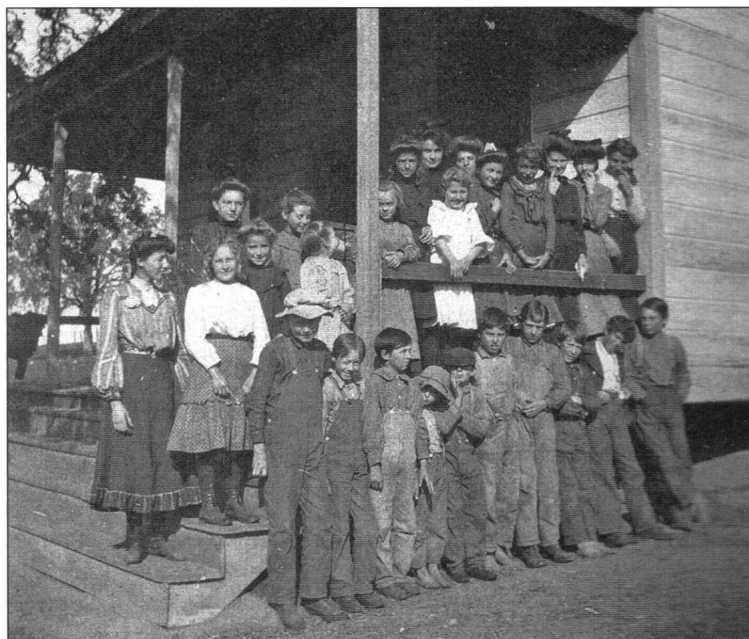
In 1883 the community of Wallace was established as a railway station with the construction of the narrow gauge San Joaquin and Sierra Nevada Railroad. The railroad owners felt it was inappropriate to name the new community Catt's Camp. Instead, the town was named for the surveyor who laid out the rail line.

The Haddock and Little families were significant contributors to the settling of Wallace and western Calaveras County. The two families were joined by the



Members of the Haddock and Little families gathered in 1895 for this photo in front of the Little home. Arthur's mother Emma is to the left of the baby buggy, Arthur is the baby on the right, and his grandfather Charles Henry Little is seated to the right of the buggy.
Historical Society photo.

union of Charles and Lecta. Interestingly the couple's siblings also chose to marry. So two Haddock brothers married two of the Little sisters. William Haddock and Emma Little were married on June 28, 1893. They decided to build a house across from her father's ranch, just north of the little town of Wallace, closer to the old Catt's Camp. Two years later their first and only child, Arthur Earl was born on April 10, 1895.



Arthur Haddock is the only child not looking at the camera in this photo of Washington Elementary School in 1905. Photo courtesy Ernesto Mayans.

Arthur grew up near the communities of Clements and Wallace and never forgot the hot, dry foothills, "... a foot of dust in the summer, and a foot of mud in the winter..." was how he described it. Yet despite such cynical words, he enjoyed the foothill communities and their raw beauty.

Wallace served primarily as a rail stop on the line between the valley and the gold communities further to the east. By this time Wallace was a busy commercial outpost, and a community of nine homes plus two saloons, a livery, a grocery and a blacksmith. Arthur's father William worked as a teamster driving a wagon pulled by six horses, no doubt furnished by his father in law. He delivered supplies and garden groceries from Wallace to the gold camps.

Arthur's mother Emma also contributed to the support of their little family making clothes and lace to sell. For entertainment she played the organ. Emma's brother Henry was a blacksmith in Wallace but also talented on the violin. And so was her husband William. With Emma's organ music, and William and Henry's violins, they made a fine musical trio. Occasionally they would play for hire. They would load their small orchestra of three, along with Arthur tucked safely inside, into a buckboard wagon made by William, and would travel to play for square dances.

Despite the apparently lively home life and upbringing, Arthur was a quiet and shy child. He was known to hide under the bed when visitors came by the house. But

he adored his parents and loved doing things with them. He recalled waiting by the window, gazing at the horizon for hours in the afternoons while waiting for his father to come home. He fondly remembered going for walks around the countryside with his mother. When they spotted the higher ground to the east called Bear Mountain, she promised that the bear would never come any closer to harm them.

In 1901 William purchased three lots of Block B in the Wallace Townsite, next to the school. He paid \$50 to Mary Ives Crocker of San Francisco for the land. It appeared that the family wanted to move to town.

When Arthur was about seven his father quit hauling for a living. Henry had taught blacksmithing to William and sold him the business. William was kept busy repairing the iron wheels that moved every kind of cart, buggy or wagon necessary for the transportation and commerce of the day. By the time Arthur was eight, he was working alongside his father. He reconstructed the wheels needing repair, and built wagons with his father, each wagon finished with eight coats of paint. He worked this way for three years.

His father "... instilled in his son a sense of devotion for things well made, an unerring wit, and a dry sense of humor" explained Ernesto Mayans, Arthur Haddock's biographer. These traits learned in the hot or muddy foothills of Calaveras County remained with Arthur.

The Young Artist

Arthur attended a little one room schoolhouse, the same one his mother had attended. It is understood to have been the school called Washington Elementary, built on the county line. No trace remains of that school, however an identical school still exists in Wallace that was built around the same time. The only difference between the two schools is the number of posts on the front porch, and a side porch on the Wallace school.

Over the years the county boundaries and populations have changed, confusing the matter further.

When the railroad built Wallace land had been set aside for a school but the railroad company failed to build the school. Arthur's grandfather Haddock was one of the first trustees who worked to obtain

funding for the construction of the school. In 1886 it had been completed with labor donated by the community. The original building was one room with an asymmetrical porch wrapping around two sides. The building was constructed on a small rise, well above ground for protection during floods. Five tall steps led up to the entrance. In the summer the building was shaded by a large oak tree.

It is likely that young Arthur attended both of these schools during his youth, depending upon where his parents were living at the time. The Wallace and Washington schoolhouses made a lasting impression on the boy and he revisited those memories continuously throughout his life.

"His work has its origins in the quiet valleys and mountainsides of California," explained Mayans. Arthur vividly remembered the day his interest in painting was sparked. When he was nine, the school children were given a box of watercolors to paint with. It changed his life. Many years later he could still describe that day: *"They gave we students a little watercolor box, and then the teach would go out in the school grounds right up to the hillside in back and get a wild buttercup and put that up in a vase and expect the students to paint that buttercup in watercolor, the most difficult media of all. It was ridiculous, but anyway, that's the first thing I ever tried to do."*

Unfortunately Arthur's painting, and his time in Wallace, came to an abrupt halt three years later. Arthur's father had sold the blacksmith business for health reasons and turned instead to working as a traveling salesman selling hardware. In 1905 William and Emma sold the lots in town for only ten dollars, leaving no evidence that they ever built a house there. The Haddocks moved to Santa Rosa two years later to accommodate William's new job.



Ira Crouch and Arthur Haddock, circa 1928. Photos courtesy Ernesto Mayans.

Arthur was a typical boy growing up in the early days of the century. When he had lived in the country he had hunted game with his father. He liked to play baseball and build model airplanes. And he liked to draw. He helped his father build their new house, providing the

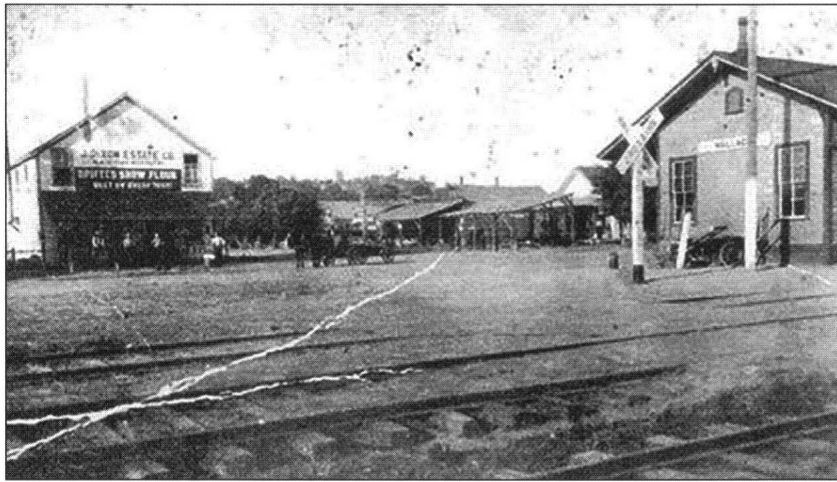
preliminary drawings. Once the house, and much of the furniture, was constructed by the boy and his father, his father noted that the new walls were too bare. He encouraged his son to abandon his pen and ink drawings and try his hand again at color. Arthur created a painting that hung proudly in the new Haddock home. Over time several paintings by Arthur adorned the walls of the Santa Rosa home.

In 1915 the Panama Pacific International Exposition showed in San Francisco for nine months. Arthur visited the show several times throughout the year. He was particularly drawn to the paintings exhibited in the Palace of Fine Arts. Arthur began to explore deeper with colors and pigments in his paintings, yet again his interest in art was derailed.

William Haddock passed away in 1916 in a nursing home near Placerville leaving his widow Emma and his only son Arthur alone. Arthur escorted his father's body back to Wallace for burial. Emma's finances were severely strained after William's illness and she was forced to put the beautiful Santa Rosa house up for sale. Arthur dutifully sought employment to support them and obtained a job with the Southern Pacific Rail Road as a clerk. They moved to a modest house in Stockton.

Arthur performed various jobs in various locations for the rail road, establishing for himself a pattern that he maintained for the next thirty years. The job suited him and served him well. He purposely worked the night shift so that he would have his days free to paint. He was also exempted from service in WWI due to his work with the rail road, a job considered essential to the war effort.

A friend of Arthur's from Santa Rosa introduced him to Maynard Dixon in 1917, launching a 30 year friendship. Dixon encouraged Arthur to paint nature by viewing



Wallace Depot circa 1910. *Historical Society photo.*

it, not imagining it. For one month Arthur attended the San Francisco Art Institute, but for the most part his training was from working informally with Dixon. He immersed himself into a dedicated career as night-time rail road clerk, and day-time artist. His rail pass allowed him to travel to western locations to study landscapes up close, producing an immense body of work almost entirely of landscapes. During the day his favorite places to visit to paint included Valley Springs, Farmington, Wallace, Jenny Lind, and Camanche, among others.

One evening in 1928 while working at the Stockton Depot Arthur met a teacher traveling through. He slipped her his card with a handwritten apology that he was unable to secure a desired berth for her on the train. Ira Crouch had been teaching in Nevada and was heading to her home in Wortham, Texas. Apparently Ira was not inconvenienced with the berth she received and was intrigued by the polite, tall thin man whose card simply stated that he was an artist. A friendship ensued and they corresponded throughout the following year.

That next year Arthur and his mother travelled to Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico to vacation and for Arthur to paint. Ira met them there. They would return again the following year and were married in Santa Fe on August 18, 1930. For the next twenty years they would periodically travel to Santa Fe and Taos to vacation and paint. But life in Stockton was becoming uncomfortable for the

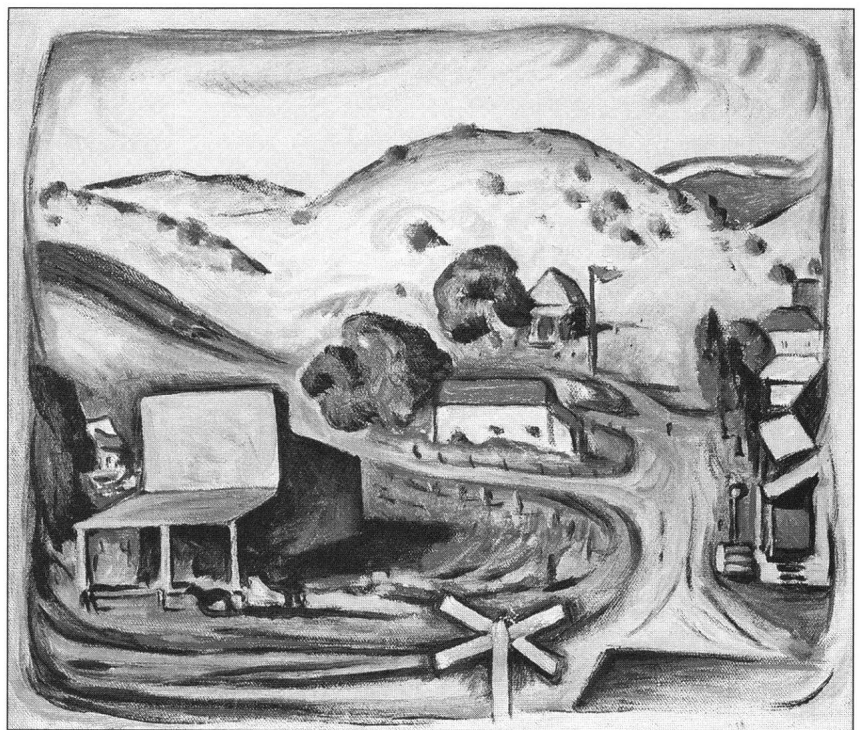
Haddocks. Ira and Arthur continued to share the house with his mother, while he maintained a separate studio. *"Money goes out, and there is no return. Just canvas,"* his mother observed.

The Painter Evolves

Arthur continued to paint and study under Dixon, and occasionally showed some of his work, but for the most part he kept his paintings to himself. He did not seem interested in selling his paintings. One time he submitted a glamorous painting to a Hearst publication for consideration for a cover and was rejected. *"You*

are a rail road man. Paint those mountains with the solidity they need to hold a train," Dixon advised his protégé.

He primarily created landscapes, painted with oils. Although he preferred natural landscapes, he would also paint hundreds of scenes of rooftops or buildings. Over one ten year period he painted the same view out his studio window 200 times, emphasizing various aspects of his view. He kept meticulous notes, logging every painting carefully in notebooks. On the backs of paintings he might note if it were painted from a photo, or which paints and pigments were used to create the piece. If he felt a painting



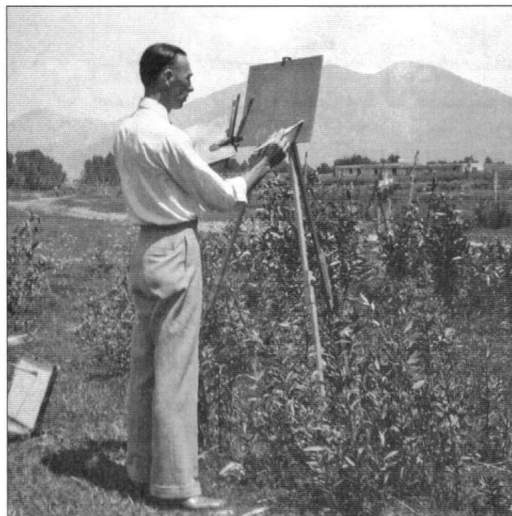
Haddock painted this oil of Wallace with its railroad crossing in 1946. The schoolhouse with the large oak tree is in the rear.

Reproduced by permission of Ernesto Mayans.

was not ready, he would not sell it, no matter if he were offered a high price for the piece. He was known to purposely destroy a painting if he felt it incomplete or inadequate. He was not bound by the demands of commercial success since he had his night job. He explained that his paintings were an education rather than a finished product.

The 1930s were strained for Arthur as he continued to balance his rail road work at night and his pursuit of painting perfection in the day. In 1936 he again took up the frustrating medium of watercolors. But the 1940s threw even more twists into Arthur's life. WWII prompted Ira to get a job so as to contribute to the national effort, while the war continued to darken the national mood. Despite the convenience, Arthur was tiring of his job. He had grown to dislike it, and despised "the cruel ways of the railroads" he explained. He watched too many employees treated unfairly by the big company. Arthur suffered bouts of depression and destroyed much of the work that he created in this time.

In 1941 Arthur's mother passed away while he and Ira were on a painting journey. He returned home to see that she was buried near Wallace alongside his father. In a short span Emma Haddock passed away, Ira's father in Texas died, Arthur lost the lease on his Stockton studio, tension with the railroad escalated, and then his friend and mentor Maynard Dixon died. In 1947 Ira and Arthur decided to make the move to Santa Fe permanent.



Arthur painting in Taos in 1929.

Photo courtesy Ernesto Mayans.

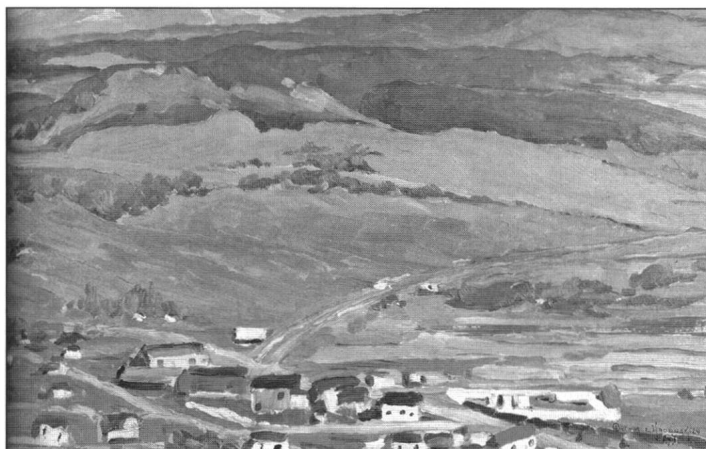
Later years in the Southwest

Arthur occasionally displayed his paintings in various shows between Stockton, Santa Fe and Taos, but he never saw any great commercial success during his lifetime. This may have been in part due to his deep shyness, or because he did not produce paintings that he felt were commercially appealing. He painted art for himself, producing material that he felt was not appealing or desirable to consumers. "They want a small, inexpensive oil with an

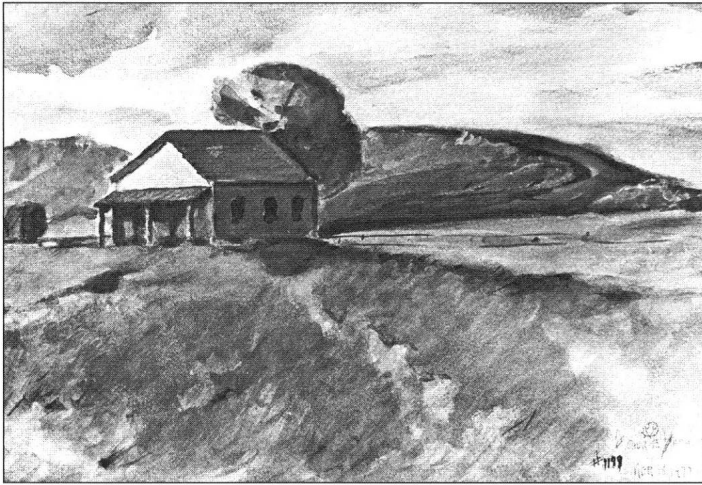
adobe in it," he said. He suffered many rejections from galleries and artists' associations that blackened his opinion of the art world. He was leery of galleries and their motives. Once a gallery dealer had assisted him in a move and several paintings disappeared. The paintings reappeared later on the market. Haddock's fastidious habits of journaling his own works came in handy.

Despite his obvious lack of commercial success Arthur spent the next thirty years expanding his art for his own sake. He and Ira built a house in Santa Fe that they named Calle Pena. They spent their time between Santa Fe, Taos and Prescott as Arthur continued to paint the fascinating southwestern landscape. In time he opened a frame shop, and Ira went to work at a bank for additional income. He was happy to highlight the work of other artists while downplaying his own art. Throughout his entire career he continued to employ the fastidiousness, detailed organization and work ethics that he learned from his father. The diaries where he noted his paintings and travels employed the same neat handwriting and were said to resemble the logs he had maintained as a rail road clerk.

In 1969 EBMUD destroyed or buried under reservoir dike construction most of what remained of Catt's Camp and the Little Ranch. The cemetery that contained William and Emma's remains was removed, and they are believed to have been reinterred in Lodi. The construction of Lake Camanche required that most of Arthur's childhood memories be inundated. One would think that such acts of desecration would infuriate him, yet the memories and appeal of the foothills remained intact. In 1946 he had painted the Hogan Dam during one of his day trips while he worked nights. It was one of the few



This bird's eye view of Valley Springs was created by Arthur using oils in 1929. Reproduced by permission of Ernesto Mayans.



The Washington Elementary School was the subject of numerous paintings produced by Haddock late in life. Watercolor #1199, painted in 1977, reproduced by permission of Ernesto Mayans.

paintings that survived that dark period in his life. That painting remained hanging in Calle Pena in a quiet corner near Arthur's favorite chair, for the rest of his life.

In Santa Fe Arthur befriended Ernesto Mayans who began to accumulate biographical information about Haddock. In 1971 Mayans corresponded with the Calaveras County Museum while conducting research for a book he would write about Arthur. Arthur's relationship with Wallace was again renewed in 1977 when he was contacted by his cousin Walter. Walt was requesting a painting of the schoolhouse that they had attended as boys. Nothing had changed, he reported, except the big oak tree that had shaded the school was now gone. This request possibly sparked a new trend in Arthur's later work. He spent most of his last years repainting his earlier works, continuing to pursue perfection. His numerous studies of the Wallace and Washington schoolhouses became an important component of his later work. His biography contains three versions of this view that meant so much to him.

Ira and Arthur had no children of their own, save a niece of Ira's who lived with them for a short period in Stockton. Through every twist and turn, Ira had remained by his side. "If Arthur sacrificed everything in his life for his art, he could not have realized any of his accomplishments without Ira's loyalty of fifty years. She made it her role to provide him with stability. One of the measures of her grace was that she never regretted the sacrifice," summarized Mayans.

In their last years Arthur and Ira moved to a smaller apartment. They converted two rooms into a studio for Arthur and he continued to paint there until his last day. On August 28, 1980 Arthur Haddock passed away. In 1989, with Ira's assistance, Arthur's biography was published. The book beautifully presents Arthur's art. It explains the journey

of the painter, from the impetus of his bleak childhood surroundings to the fully developed landscape artist.

Arthur Haddock of Wallace was an amazing painter and an unusual man. He was the only member of his two pioneer families who attempted to retrace the routes his grandparents took to reach California. He saw only one movie in his life, and he felt that the necessity of eating took time away from painting. All his life Haddock considered himself a student of his art, and his paintings each a learning experience. He pursued his art solely for himself without concessions for others. Today western art experts believe that Arthur Haddock was every bit as good as his mentor Maynard Dixon. Arthur's views of the western foothills and eastern Sierra are particularly stunning. And we remain grateful that today the foothills and the mountains continue to inspire great artists.

Note: Las Calaveras is grateful to historian Judith Marvin for preserving the memory of Arthur Haddock in Calaveras County. We are also grateful for the assistance and permission of Ernesto Mayans of Santa Fe, NM, for making this project possible.

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The Wallace Elementary School, as shown here in 1955 with the oak's stump to the side, dramatically resembles the Washington school paintings. Historical Society photo.

Calaveras County Historical Society

30 No. Main Street P.O. Box 721 San Andreas, CA 95249

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The Calaveras County Historical Society is a non-profit corporation. It meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in various communities throughout the County. Locations and scheduled programs are announced in advance. Some meetings include a dinner program, and visitors are always welcome.

The Society operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10:00 to 4:00 in the historic County courthouse located at 30 Main Street in San Andreas; and the historic Red Barn Museum at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, also in San Andreas, which is open Thursday to Sunday, 10:00 to 4:00.

The Society's office is located in historic San Andreas, the Calaveras County seat. Visitors are always welcome to stop by the office for assistance with research, and are encouraged to visit the museums while in the area. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:00, and the telephone number is (209) 754-1058, or contact us at: CCHS@goldrush.com; Red Barn Museum (209) 754-0800.

January–March 2014

New Members

Loren Knighton—Mokelumne Hill
Arlo Robertson—Mountain Ranch
Linda Clark—Twain Harte
Jason and Jenni Roland—Arnold
Ted & Rosalie Shannon—Mokelumne Hill
Janice & Grant Barrett—Valley Springs
Gordon Long—Mokelumne Hill

Donations

The Historical Society appreciates the following generous donations:

Virginia Spencer—cash donation for Red Barn Museum & Annex
Irmgard Temple—copy of Oakland Tribune dated December 8, 1941
William Lafranchi—Cash donation
Lupe Arness—Skull yearbooks 1942–1947, cookbooks
Barbara Dorger—Cash donation
Rosemary Faulkner—Cash donation to Red Barn Museum in memory of Duane Wight
Dixie Romey—Cash donation to Red Barn Museum in memory of Duane Wight
Dave Rutz—Painting “Redbud Time in Calaveritas” by Shirley Elke
Jennifer Brock—Two albums of “Wildflowers of Calaveras County” photos compiled by Gerald “Gerry” Turner
Duane Wight—Cash donation for Red Barn Museum Olive Press project
Bill & Beverly Burton—Cash donation to Red Barn Museum in memory of Duane Wight
Eugene & Eva Jean Delucchi—Cash donation in memory of Duane Wight
Bruce & Cindy Romey—Cash donation in memory of Duane Wight
Robert & Rebecca Jorgensen—Cash donation in memory of Duane Wight
Randy & Annette Rigato—Cash donation in memory of Duane Wight
Mark Modrich—Antique Corn Husker
Sandra Wallace—Miscellaneous tools, boxes and tins from family property in West Point
Tracy Taylor—Cash donation to Red Barn Museum in memory of Duane Wight
Keith & Kelly Wight—Cash donation to Red Barn Museum in memory of Duane Wight