

Volume XLVII

Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society
July 1999

Calaveras County Historical Society
Essay Contest

Number 4

Dear Mon,

When driving through Old Town Murphys it's like driving back in time.

The old store fronts look the same they did over a century ago, except for a little remodeling. The store owners show pride in their ownership and to show that they have plaques. When I looked at the plaques and read them, this is what the plaque for J.J.O. Murphys store said, "The store was rebuilt in 1859 as a stone fire proof grocery and provisions store by Vassallo and Company. In 1861 it was the homestead of J.C. Green and wife. By 1863 owned and operated as a bakery by B.M. Orenega and Ruiseco. It is said that Ruiseco was shot to death by a gun he had in his cash drawer while getting change for a little girl's five dollar gold piece early in the morning. Purchased in 1871 by Paul Segale and David Baratini. Paul and Rosa Segale raised 8 children here. Second youngest Annie owned it until death at age 94. Then Jim Rigg's family purchased the building in 1978 and still own it.

This about the Compere Store. Built in 1858 by Pierre Bonet with fine proxy steel shutters and stone walls owned and operated by Victorene Compere to provision the miners. Restored and preserved as a private residence in 1939.

This about the E.C.V. Saloon. Near this spot next to the Compere Store stood in 1853. Believed to be the only E Clampus Vitus miners Fraternal Order Saloon officially recored.

Sincerely,

Chris

P.S. Murphys is still the Queen of the Sierras

A letter describing Murphys
By Chris Best, 4th Grade
Mark Twain Elementary

Annual Student Historical Essay Contest

The annual Historical Essay contest made a comeback this year. After a decline in student participation and a break in the annual contest, the Historical Society offered the contest to Calaveras County students again this year. The contest was coordinated through the County Office of Education with Superintendent John Brophy's support. We had positive results with several students from around the county participating.

The contest was streamlined and given a theme to help the students find an area in which to focus within the broad realm of Calaveras County's rich history. The theme was "The California Sesquicentennial in Calaveras County". Apparently this theme proved to be more difficult than origi-

These were Crystal Lowe who wrote *Carol Kennedy - Calaveras County's First Airport Manager*, and Jade Fee who wrote *A Piece of History From the Snyders*. Second place in the fourth grade went to Chris Best of Mark Twain Elementary who a "letter" describing the buildings in Murphys, which is featured on the cover of this issue.

Our third place winner for the 8th grade was Meghan J. Halligan who addressed an interesting subject titled *From Mine to Vines: Early Viticulture in Calaveras County*. All 8th grade students were from Avery Middle School. The high school participant was Lisa Rusk, a senior at Calaveras High School who wrote *The History of Jenny Lind*. Lisa is particularly commended for taking the initiative to enter the contest on her own.

Each winning student received a cash prize plus a one-year membership to the Calaveras County Historical Society which includes a subscription to this journal. Several of the winning essays are featured in this issue. Others may be printed in the future. Our congratulations go out to all of these fine creative writers.

The study of California history does not fit the curriculum for every grade. However, several teachers encouraged their student's participation in the contest. Teachers who

promoted the contest were Kathy Casas of Mark Twain Elementary, Joanne Randall of Valley Springs Elementary and Patty Shulz of Avery Middle School. Each of these teachers has been rewarded for their efforts by a gift from the Historical Society to help them further California history studies in their classrooms.

The contest was coordinated this year by volunteer Bonnie Miller. Anyone interested in working with this fun project for next year is encouraged to contact the Society office. Our thanks go out to Sharon Daniels of the Calaveras County Office of Education who coordinated getting the information about the contest out to the schools early in the school year. In appreciation of the Office of Education's assistance with the project, they have been given a copy of our new *Index to Las Calaveras*. Thanks also go to our volunteer judges, Georgia Everson, Betty Carlson, Glenn Wasson, and Frank Orlando. Without these fine volunteers, this contest would not have been the success that it was.



Main Street Murphys, as described by Chris Best's "letter" on the cover.
1861 photo courtesy of the Calaveras County Historical Society

nally imagined. But several students successfully tackled it, such as our 8th grade first place winner, Jimmy Boucke, who analyzed gold seeking techniques. His essay was titled *Gold in Calaveras County: People and Things Related to Gold in Calaveras County*. The second place winner in this division also successfully addressed our theme. Amy Gates described the growth of Vallecito as seen through the eyes of a young girl writing back home to her grandparents, in her essay titled *The History of Vallecito... As Told in the Letters of a Young Girl*.

Despite the suggested theme, some subjects are still popular with our students such as Mark Twain, or our famous bandit Black Bart, or gold panning. Our fourth grade students had a tie for third place with an essay on Mark Twain by Jennifer Turner of Valley Springs Elementary, and one on Black Bart by Todd Adkins of Mark Twain Elementary. And, there was another tie in the 4th grade division for first place between two students from Valley Spring Elementary.

Black Bart

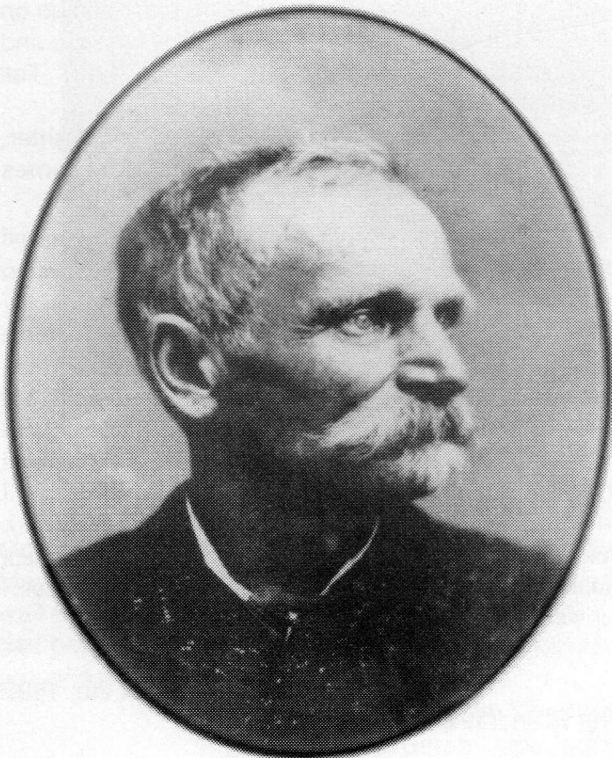
by Todd Adkins
Valley Springs Elementary

Black Bart was the infamous stagecoach robber and the poetry writer. His real name was Charles Boles. He really hurt the Wells Fargo and Co. with at least 28 stagecoach robberies. He was very well known for working on foot with an unloaded shotgun and he would never rob the passengers or drivers.

His first hit was at Calaveras County at Funk Hill on Sonora Milton Road east of Copperopolis that was July 26, 1875. It was 25 robberies later he hit in our area again that was June 23, 1883. That was his last good robbery. It was Amador County on the Jackson Ione Road. Then he hit Funk Hill Nov. 3 1883. That was the same spot as the 1875 robbery. He hid behind the large rock on the lift and placed sticks across the top of it to simulate gun barrels.

In November, 1883 when Black Bart was in the Calaveras County jail in San Andreas he then confessed to all of his stage coach robberies. He had to serve 6 years in prison.

In 1888 he disappeared from the Palace Hotel in Visalia and no one saw him again. Some say Black Bart died in the dry Nevada wasteland in an unmarked grave.

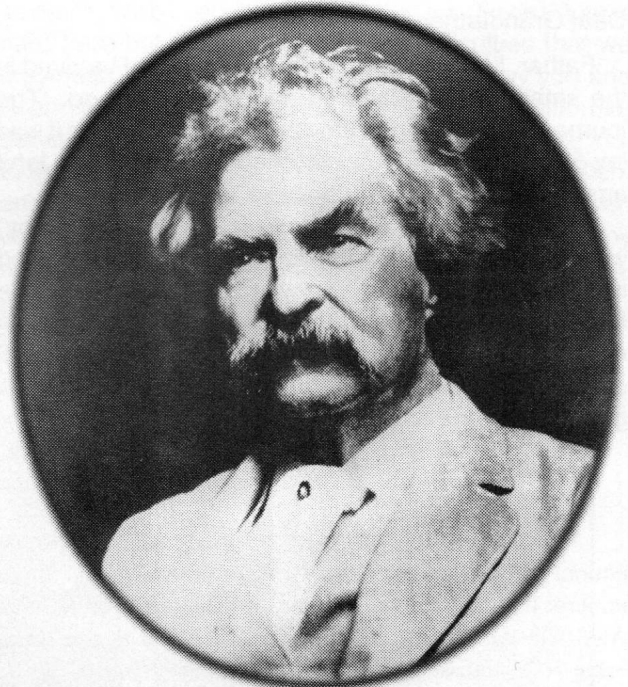


Charles Boles, aka Black Bart
Photo courtesy of Calaveras County Historical Society

Mark Twain

by Jennifer Turner
Mark Twain Elementary

There is this man named Samuel Clemens but everybody called him Mark Twain. They called Samuel Clemens Mark Twain because he chose that it would be for all as well. Samuel was famous because he was a newspaper writer and a book author.



Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain
Photo courtesy of Calaveras County Archives

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in 1835. He died in 1910. Samuel Langhorne was born in Florida, Missouri. When Delano Roosevelt was nine years old he was taken to visit Mark Twain in Hannibal, Missouri, where he used to live 1839-53. Some of his books are based on his life in that town. Samuel Clemens father died in 1847. In 1861 the Civil War interrupted river traffic.

In 1866 mark Twain became a traveling correspondent of the Alta California. Samuel Clemens' final illness, death and funeral were treated in the front page news across the country. Samuel was buried in New York City at the Brick Church. When Samuel Clemens died, it became a major event in America's history. It gave writers and readers another chance to take a closer look at "Mark Twain" in his times and for all time. I think Samuel Clemens had a wonderful life as a newspaper writer and a book author.

THE HISTORY OF VALLECITO ...

As Told in the Letters of a Young Girl

by Amy Gates, Avery Middle School

It was a Spring day in 1850 when a small group of Mexican miners in search of gold settled Vallecito. Filled with shabby tents, makeshift buildings, and dirty miners who hadn't and wouldn't shower for countless days, it would become one of the first towns in all of California.

April 23rd 1852

Dear Grandfather,

Father, Mother, John, baby Sammy, and I arrived in the small town of Vallecito about a month ago. The journey from San Francisco harbor was long, yet it was joy-filled as we were all extremely happy to be on land again after the long sea trip from Vermont.

The small town of Vallecito (meaning little valley) was the first town we came to after San Francisco and is filled with activity! Everywhere you look there are horses, tents, houses, businesses, and dirty, smelly miners! I hope father never gets to be like that. Well dinner is coming soon and I must go. We are all in good health and eager to strike it rich!

Your loving granddaughter,
Sarah Lottie James

Vallecito soon, however, grew in size as many people poured in from all over the world in search of that shiny mineral that was known to take over men's lives - Gold! And with the growth in people (about 4,000 at one time) some 50 businesses came to be (*"Vallecito History" pg. 1, authors: 1972/73 Vallecito Schools's fourth grade class and Wanda Richards*) which provided miners with mining supplies, food, and clothing. Vallecito even got a local school house, church, hotels, slaughter house, and a post office.

Dear Grandfather,

July 12th, 1852

It's been about three months since we came to Vallecito and we are quite adjusted to this new life. It's rough to live here and I discourage you from moving out here, Grandfather. We're all happy thought, and doing well. I am aware that I am only thirteen years old, but even I have realized that is much harder to strike it rich than anyone expected. There are miners everywhere!! Most of the miners have been camping out in tents for only God knows how long while only those who had some luck or travelers passing through stay in hotels.

Father has a claim and pans for gold every day at Coyote Creek, yet he only makes enough money to keep food on the table and to build us a small home! It is white with yellow trim and it has yellow shutters over all the windows. I think it is one of the nicest houses in the entire town. We live across the street from Mr. and Mrs. Homer Wyatt as well as Ms. Mitchell. Below us is

the newly established Dinkelspiel store owned and run by Mr. Moses Dinkelspiel.

We also live just below the local church that we all attend every Sunday. John (who turned eleven last week) and I are enrolled in the Sunday School program as well. Every Sunday after church the entire congregation goes down to Natural Bridges by horse and wagon. It's the most beautiful place down there! It's a cave with water flowing through it! I look forward to going there each week. John and I have started to make friends although there aren't a lot of children out here, and even fewer girls even rarer still to see any adult women.

Which reminds me that mother is going to have another baby. I do wish that I had a sister. My best friend in the entire world is a wonderful thirteen year old girl named Amelia Catherine Maladane. We can't wait to start the new school together in the Fall. Her father helps run the slaughterhouse with George Rufe on the north end of town and he gets paid five dollars a day! His wife helps run the post office along with postmistress Cloe Lewis. Well, I will write to you again soon. I must go and meet Amelia at the swimming hole, which is also known as Mitchell's Pond. You can even go on a ferry ride there! It's nice to get out of my dresses and go swimming (don't tell Mother I told you that)! Tell Grandma Sarah says hello and that I love her.

Your loving granddaughter,
Sarah Lottie James

With approximately 4,000 people living in Vallecito and the Goldrush slowly fading away, many tempers were short and people discouraged, so entertainment was needed. Many people found entertainment a way to get away from all the stress of the Gold Rush, and so there were dances, entertainment affairs, card parties, and magic lantern shows held. Saloons such as the Jack Solari Hotel and Saloon, Fred Meinecke's Saloon, and Nuner's Saloon also were enjoyed by miners (*Vallecito History, pgs. 27,31, authors 1972/73 Vallecito School's fourth grade class and Wanda Richards*). Meanwhile when kids didn't attend the town's entertainment affairs, they went to school, played games, and in the summer went swimming to keep themselves occupied.

November 9th, 1852

Dear Grandfather;

School has started up, and John and I are among the students attending. It's nice going to the new school. Our teacher is very nice and is a very wonderful lady. It's a one room schoolhouse with rows of benches and desks running along the sides and an aisle running down

the center. It enrolls kids from grades Kindergarten to High School. We have a small play yard outside of it where we all play at recess. Sometimes the boys toss a ball back and forth over the schoolhouse while all of us girls play games with each other such as jumping rope and sometimes ring around the rosie (*Interview with Bea Farbotnik*). I also love coming home after school and opening the door to the smell of Mother's fresh home-baked bread. All of us then sit down around the table and eat it with fresh churned butter and fresh milk from our cow Isabella. We also have four chickens, one rooster, and a cat named Tucker. We keep our animals in a field right near our home, except for Tucker.

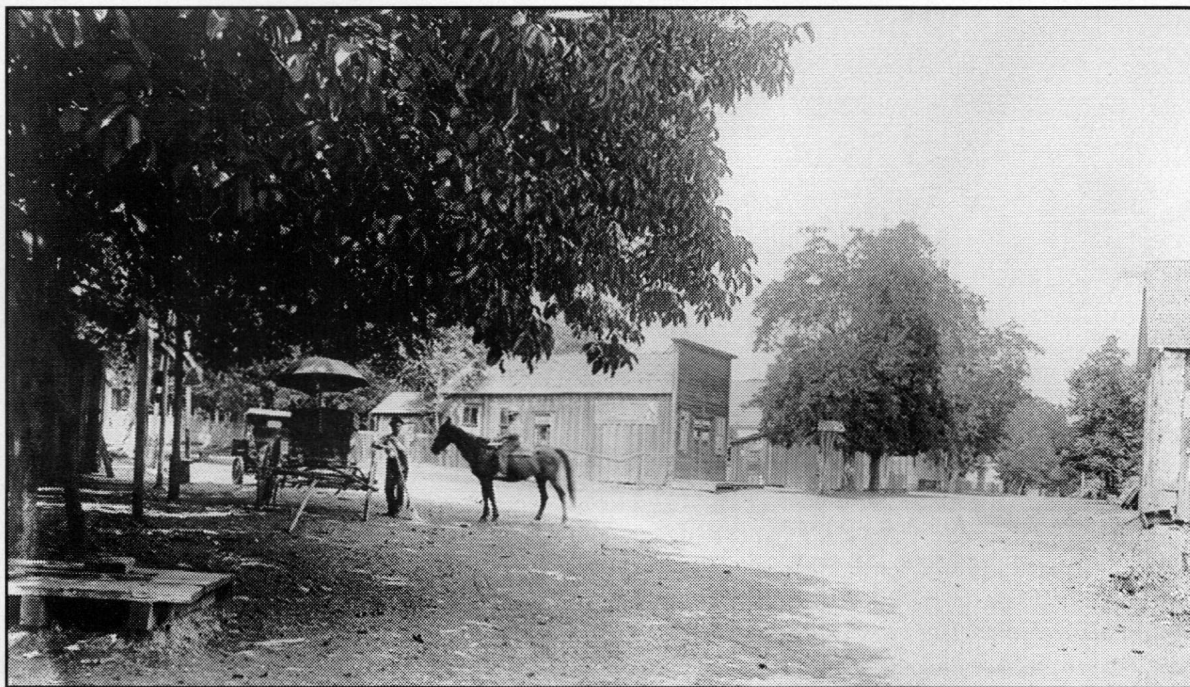
Father and Mother went to a dance tonight! Mother put on her longest, nicest, skirt and wore a lovely white blouse with a brooch. And Father wore a nice plaid shirt. John and I had to stay home and take care of baby Sammy, who is two now, and is always crawling around. Soon I may have to watch another child since

ing a better life for themselves and becoming rich. And in fact some people did become rich, but most just got a little adventure and a new home. Many people did stay in California with their families and to this day the goldrush has been a major contribution to the population, history, and value of California, The Golden State.

June 13th, 1853

Dear Grandfather,

We have been in California for over a year now and are fully adjusted to this new life-style. I have learned so much since I came here, and glad we moved. Life is hard here but every place has it's difficulties that we must learn to overcome. I hope that one day you and Grandma can come and visit us in Vallecito California, our new home. You might even decide to live here too. In the last year I have seen this town grow so much, and I have learned to love it here. Mother had twins on January 4th! A week before my 14th birthday. A boy named Andrew James and a girl (a sister) named An-



Main Street Vallecito, much as it would have appeared in the "letters" written by Sarah Lottie James, aka Amy Gates. Photo views north at Jim Barney's Livery Stable, the General Store, and Nuner's Saloon.

Photo Courtesy of the Calaveras County Historical Society

Mother's going to have her baby in the next few months. Maybe the baby will be born on New Year's! I can't wait until I can go to dances and other events. Well, I had better be going. Sammy is crying. Much love to you and Grandma.

Your loving granddaughter,
Sarah Lottie James

Like all things, the goldrush eventually came to an end, though many people still continued to pan in hopes of mak-

ing a better life for themselves and becoming rich. And in fact some people did become rich, but most just got a little adventure and a new home. Many people did stay in California with their families and to this day the goldrush has been a major contribution to the population, history, and value of California, The Golden State.

nie May! I'm certain they're the sweetest babies in all of California. All the rest of the family is doing great also. Father wants to own his own hotel. The James Hotel he said he'd call it. Who know, it might actually happen! We moved here, didn't we? Well, I'll try to write again soon. I miss you all terribly and love you all as much as our weight in gold. Write me if you can.

Your loving granddaughter,
Sarah Lottie James

Carol Kennedy - Calaveras County's First Airport Manager

by Crystal Lowe, Valley Springs Elementary

In 1954 Carol Kennedy was a flight instructor for a big flying club in Los Angeles. The Boss had a brother that lived in San Andreas. They flew up to see his brother at Thanksgiving. They landed in Jackson because they had no airport here in Calaveras County. However, they had already started building one.

While she was visiting here, she asked a supervisor on

Carol Kennedy liked a certain site for a new airport, for a long time. One day Reggie Howell and Carol were on a flight. On their way back she showed him the site. He liked it. They went to the County Supervisors. It came to a vote. It was voted down in 1971. Then in 1978 they voted it in. The new airport was opened in 1981.

There was a newspaper article that said they were look-

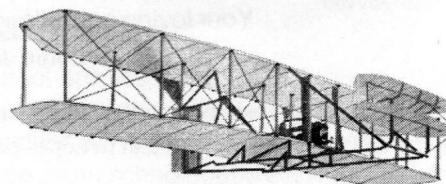


Carol Kennedy, Calaveras County Airport, 1965. Carol is standing in front of a Cessna 206, a plane she used for charters and once in an air race where she placed "in the top half of the finishers." Photo courtesy of Carol Kennedy

the board if they were accepting applications for airport manager. She was the first airport manager in Calaveras County in 1955. They had no money to pay her. She did get a free place for her airplane, a free space for a mobile home, and a portion of selling airplane fuel.

There were several people that wanted to learn to fly, so they all went in and bought an airplane. It started building up and up until they needed larger and more airplanes. More and more people were getting their license. Which started the Calaveras Flying Club and it is still in existence today but it's over in Jackson now. Seventeen years later she was finally getting paid as a County employee. She only charged \$2.00 per hour for flying lessons. She quit after nineteen years.

ing for names for the main building and the road. Carol sent in Rich Howl's name for the building. One day someone called Carol and said, "You better come out to see if they are building your road all right." She thought they were talking about her driveway. She said "There's nothing wrong with my driveway." They said "No, the road at the airport." She said, "That's not my road." They said "Yes it is!"



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Calaveras County Historical Society is proud to announce the gift of several academic scholarships to 1999 graduating seniors. Jake Stone of Bret Harte High School and Joseph Shanley of Calaveras High School each received \$1,000 for their college expenses. Jake plans to study General Education at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo and Joseph plans to study Liberal Arts at Sonoma State University.

Of special note this year is the George Hoeper Scholarship. Last year after the passing of our former editor, a one-time scholarship fund was established in his memory. Funds were sufficient to provide four individual scholarships. It was our objective to award the unique scholarships to students intending to further their studies in history or journalism or a related field. We are happy to announce the award of four individual \$250 one-time scholarships to Tiffany Perkins of Arnold and Tiffany Frevert of Murphys, both of whom attend Bret Harte High School. Winning students from

Calaveras High School were Jessica Gilbeau of San Andreas and Erin Dudley of Valley Springs. Tiffany Perkins plans to attend Sonoma State University and study Education. Tiffany Frevert plans to attend the California Culinary Academy and pursue Culinary Arts. Jessica plans to attend Modesto Junior College and study Agribusiness, and Erin plans to attend UCLA and study history. We feel very lucky to help support such deserving people, and wish them the best in their studies.

The Historical Society promotes the education of our youth in Calaveras County. Awarding academic scholarships is just one way that we pursue this objective. Our thanks to Sue Smith and Joanne Randall for coordinating the 1999 scholarships. And our deep appreciation goes to all of our generous donors who have funded the George Hoeper Scholarship.

VOLUNTEERS HONORED

The month of April was National Volunteers Month, and the Calaveras County Historical Society celebrated in style. Our volunteers were treated to a Spring luncheon on Saturday, April 10. All of our volunteers were invited to attend the luncheon that was held in their honor and to bring a friend along as well. Approximately 65 people joined the fun and participated.

Everyone was given a tour of the museum complex with a talk on the remodel update and how it will effect future tours and operations. Everyone received the news enthusiastically, and as always many additional good ideas were exchanged. The tour was followed with a complimentary luncheon at the Metropolitan.

For those who were unable to attend the event, we're sure sorry that you couldn't make it. But your efforts are always appreciated. Everyone in the Society deeply appreciates the services our volunteers provide.

Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. Tasks that can be done by volunteers come in all shapes and sizes as well. Perhaps there is a special job that you'd like to try? If you have a little spare time that you would like to donate to the Historical Society, we're sure that we have a job that could use your

special skills. Won't you consider volunteering today? Please give Dee a call at the office at 754-1058.

You may be surprised how enjoyable being a Society Volunteer can be!



Historical Society Volunteers were honored at a meeting in the old courthouse followed by a luncheon at the Met.

Photos courtesy of Donna Schantz



Calaveras County Historical Society

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

Officers and Directors

President	Donna Schantz, San Andreas
Vice President	Joan Donleavy, Paloma
Treasurer	Rosemary Faulkner, Jackson
Recording Scty.	Shirley Huberty, San Andreas
Membership	Duane Wight, Lodi
Directors	Cheri Folendorf, Angels Camp
	Willard P. Fuller, Jr., San Andreas
	Bonnie Miller, Mtn. Ranch
	Sue Smith, Valley Springs
Las Calaveras	Bonnie Miller
Office Manager	Dee Tipton

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.

The Calaveras County Historical 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 museum while in the area. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:00, and the telephone number is 754-1058.

The *Las Calaveras* is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society. A subscription to the *Las Calaveras* comes with membership in the Calaveras County Historical Society for \$16.00 per year. Non-members may obtain copies from the Historical Society office. The original historical material presented in the *Las Calaveras* is not copyrighted and anyone is invited to use it. Mention of the source would be appreciated. Contributions of articles about Calaveras County is appreciated and may be submitted to the Historical Society.

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.

Museum Donations

The Calaveras County Historical Society wishes to thank the following persons who recently made donations to the Calaveras County Museum:

March 1999

Gladys Shalley Estate

Various printed items

Lillian Browning, Lodi

Garments belonging to Irene Ham, native of Rail Road Flat

April 1999

Rosemary Faulkner, Rail Road Flat

Carpet for Museum Complex

Richard Lenfestey, Campo Seco

Print of Paloma School in Fosteria

May 1999

Drs. Larry & Vickie Sanders, Stockton

Various gold mining tools given in memory of her father, William L. Hunter, miner and businessman in Calaveras County 1939-1953

R. L. Dyer, Sonora

Six Interview Tapes

Meeting Notice Reminder

July 22, 1999 - Black Bart Park in San Andreas

August, 1999 - No Meeting

September 23, 1999 - Rosetti's in Wallace

Don't forget to RSVP: 754-1058

New Members

The Calaveras County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

March 1999

Ward La Valley, San Andreas, CA
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Howard, San Andreas, CA
Kay Hubbard, Coronado, CA
David Rice, Bear Valley, CA
Craig & Linda Rice, Angels Camp, CA
Avery Middle School, Avery, CA

May 1999

Karen Long-Harper, San Andreas, CA
William E. Brown, Soquel, CA
Ted Allured, San Andreas, CA
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Sedler, Altaville, CA
Ted Watson, Battle Mountain, NV