



Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society
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FORMER DEPUTY SHERIFF RECALLS THE DRY YEARS

Pardee Dam was under construction in 1922 when Howard Collins went to work as a deputy for Calaveras County Sheriff Joe Swinge.

The mines were operating at Melones and Copperopolis and prohibition was in effect in word, if not in deed.

Collins, now 96, living near Pioneer with his wife, Mary, still vividly recalls his experiences while helping enforce the law, first as a constable, then as a sheriff's deputy until 1943.

Once, in Copperopolis, a woman emptied a revolver at him. Another time, in Melones, a miner cut Collins badly with a knife.

Please see **FORMER DEPUTY**, pg. 34

LUMBER IN 1849 WAS AS VALUABLE AS GOLD

Among the primary needs of American settlers who arrived in Northern California before the discovery of gold was that of lumber for buildings and development of agricultural pursuits.

At first those early agriculturists who came to the Central Valley and edge of the foothills depended heavily on adobe and stone for building materials. The few sawed boards they used were provided through the laborious process of cutting them with hand-powered whipsaws. But their needs quickly expanded.

It was the need of lumber for continued expansion of his rapidly growing colony he called New Helvetia, at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers, that led John Sutter to construct a sawmill on the edge of the pine belt, at Coloma.

But, with James Marshall's discovery of gold at Sutter's mill on Jan. 24, 1848, California's pastoral scene vanished.

As men headed for the gold fields the demand for commodities, including lumber, increased a thousand-fold overnight and then increased again. At Rattlesnake Bar, on the American River, boards from dismantled wagons that could be used to build

Please see **LUMBER IN 1849**, pg. 32



Raggio Bros. steam tractor helped revolutionize Calaveras County lumber industry after turn of century.

LUMBER IN 1849, cont. from pg. 31

rockers and sluice boxes sold for several dollars per board. Prices probably were the same elsewhere, including Calaveras county, during 1848 and '49.

William Perkins, in the journal of his gold rush experiences, reported that in Sonora a large number of men were kept employed cutting lumber by hand during the winter of 1849-50, but that by April, 1850, a steam powered sawmill was producing several thousand feet of lumber per day at a price of \$500 per thousand board feet.

In Calaveras County the limited amount of lumber produced in 1848 and 1849 also appears to have been hand sawed and almost every community or mining camp had one or more whipsaw pits.

Exactly when the first water or steam powered sawmill went into operation in Calaveras is not recorded, but it probably was no later than 1850.

By that time men with experience in the lumber industry had arrived, and upon observing the need for sawed lumber, launched logging enterprises.

In addition, ditch companies were being organized to bring water to mining operations and they needed lumber for flumes.

Ebbetts Pass area historian Frances Bishop points out that by 1852, the Union Water Company, from which the present Union Public Utility District draws its name, was operating a mill on Love Creek, eight miles east of Murphys.

Also in that year, the Mokelumne Canal Company was producing lumber for flumes at its mill on Mosquito Gulch, near Glencoe.

By the summer of 1853 the Glencoe Mill was producing 15,000 board feet of lumber per day, and both it and the Union Ditch Company were selling excess production to miners and merchants.

By the mid-1850's several independent lumber companies were in operation with sawmills at West Point and in what is now the Arnold-Avery area, along Big Trees Road.

One of the pioneer loggers was William H. Hanford, who in 1855 built a mill on Hunter Creek in the vicinity of the present Hunters Dam. That mill was sold to Kimball and Cutting, who in 1878, sold to John Manuel.

Manuel, born in Chasewater, England, in 1839, came to California at close of the 50's and plunged into mining.

He developed the famed Central Hill gold mine at Douglas Flat and later, purchased the Texas Mine there. His brother, Matthew, drowned while attempt-



Steam tractor at Manuel Mill.

ing to de-water a mine shaft there.

By the time he acquired the lumber mill in 1878, Manuel had broadened his financial holdings and was becoming a wealthy man.

John Manuel moved the mill to the site of the present Boy Scout Camp on Highway 4, between Avery and Arnold. The present highway is built across the mill's sawdust pile and for several years after its surface was paved, it continued to settle and crack.

Although placer mining was in decline by the late 1850's, lode mining was rapidly expanding, and the demand for sawed lumber and timber for the underground mining operations continued to grow.

A man identified as Dr. Fisher had established a large mill near West Point and the Daily Alta California reported in 1860 that lumber production in Calaveras County had reached nine million board feet annually. The price of lumber was quoted at \$55 per thousand at Mokelumne Hill.

In 1868 the State Agricultural Report listed five steam powered and six water powered sawmills operating in Calaveras County and lumber production continued to increase.

In 1885, Nova Scotia logger Nathan McKay and his brother, John, purchased 160 acres of prime sugar pine on Love Creek, a mile south of the Calaveras Big Trees.

There they built the "Clipper Mill," named in honor of Donald C. McKay, a relative and builder of the famed clipper ship "Flying Cloud" and other well known American clipper ships.

The McKay mill operated more than 18 years, closing in 1904 after exhausting its timber supply.

Please see **LUMBER IN 1849**, pg. 38

POST-WAR YEARS BROUGHT LUMBER BOOM

The lumber industry during the 1930's was at low ebb in Calaveras County.

Other than demand for mine timbers, there was little activity in the lumber market during the depression years.

But, as the nation's economy slowly improved and with the outbreak of World War II in Europe, lumber sales began to expand.

The end of the World War II saw the lumber industry booming in Calaveras County as never before.

By 1946 there were 46 sawmills in operation in the county.

They ranged in size from small, two and three-man portable outfits to huge plants such as the Blagen, Stockton Box and the Associated Lumber and Box Company mills which later were absorbed by the American Forest Products Company.

The Associated Lumber and Box Company mill at Sandy Gulch, near Wilseyville, at height of its operation, employed up to 300 men and women and turned out 35 million board feet of lumber per year.

They ranged from the primitive to the fully automated "push button mill constructed in San Andreas by the late Marius "Maury" Rasmussen, who later was to become the developer of Mt. Reba Ski Complex.

Please see **POST WAR**, pg. 36

Van BUSKIRK DREAMED OF NEW TIMBER EMPIRE

High on a ridgetop overlooking Blue Creek and the steep walled Mokelumne River Canyon, Charles Van Buskirk gazed out over miles of virgin forest and envisioned a new timber empire.

The year was 1893 and Van Buskirk, a successful Wisconsin lumberman, had just acquired large holdings of prime Ponderosa, sugar pine and white fir timber in the sprawling Blue Creek drainage.

With his Wisconsin timber resources dwindling, Van Buskirk had sent Grover Bruce, his chief timber cruiser, to California to prospect for new timberland.

In Calaveras County Bruce found what he was looking for and sent for Van Buskirk to view it.

Van Buskirk also apparently was pleased and by 1893, after establishing a headquarters in Lodi, began acquiring the timberland in the Blue Creek area.

During that era, lumbermen and land speculators were making free use of the Timber and Stone Act of 1878 to acquire public domain timberland at a fraction of its value. In the Southern Sierra, valuable forestland, including that upon which stands of Giant Sequoia were growing, sold for \$2.50 per acre.

Land speculators also purchased discounted military land warrants and acquired other tracts by

Please see **Van BUSKIRK DREAMED**, pg. 37



The Late Maury Rasmussen helped perfect portable sawmills during the years following end of World War II.

FORMER DEPUTY, cont. from pg. 31

"The woman was drunk in a house on Davis Lane and when a matron and I got there, she was standing nude at the head of the stairs and she shot at me five times," he said.

"We got handcuffs and a coat on her but she slipped out of the cuffs, shed the coat and ran. She went through two barbed wire fences and never got a scratch, but I ruined my shirt and pants getting through them.

I never saw the knife in the miner's hand until he cut me with it," said Collins.

"But those were the exceptions," he said.

"There were few crimes of violence. Mostly, the complaints we received involved cattle rustling, Saturday night trouble in the mining towns, market hunting of deer during the depression years and of course, bootlegging."

While Pardee Dam was being built it naturally attracted construction workers and those workers wanted whiskey, explained Collins. So did the miners at Melones and around Copperopolis, he said.

Furthermore, the foothills, sparsely settled and remote as they were in those days, were a natural place for makers of illegal whiskey to locate their stills.

"Some counties sort of winked at the bootlegging trade, but not Calaveras while Joe Swinge was sheriff. If Joe heard of a still or got a complaint about a bootleg joint, he'd raid it," said Collins.

"I personally arrested one Valley Springs restaurant owner three times for selling whiskey.

Off and on, during the early 1920's there were seven bootleg joints operating in Copperopolis.

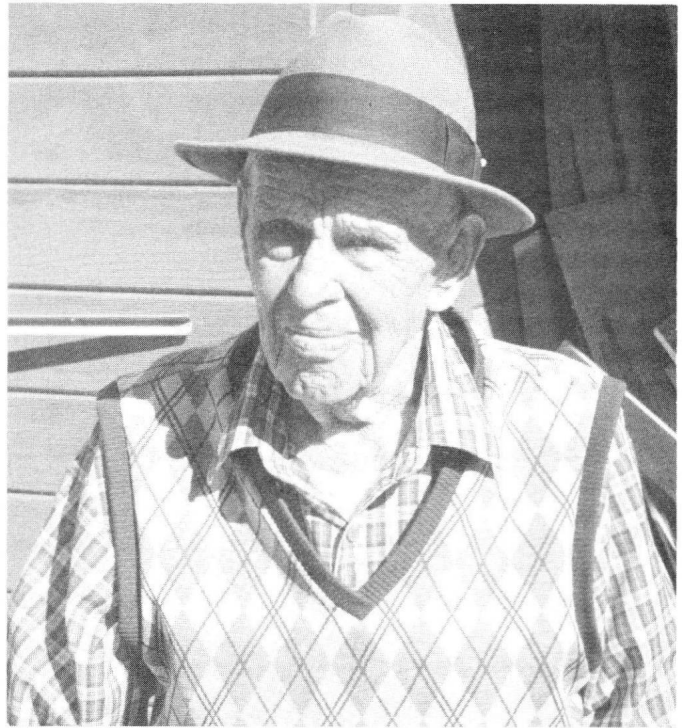
The Old Corner Saloon had a ground-level bar — I guess its the same one they use now — where you could buy soft drinks. But downstairs, in the basement, they had a room which the locals called the sump. That's where they sold the hard stuff," said Collins.

"We raided stills pretty regularly," he said. "Generally the big stills were owned by outsiders. We got one up on Hog Mountain that belonged to an outfit from Arizona. We confiscated 99 five-gallon cans of alcohol and three tons of sugar.

We gave the County Hospital all the sugar it could use, then auctioned off the rest.

Another big one, all camouflaged by brush in a little canyon off of Hunt Road, was owned by some fellows from Stockton.

The big outfits turned out pretty good whiskey, but



Howard Collins remember the old days.

some of the little ones made pure poison," he said.

"Mostly, the judges weren't too tough on them. They were mostly all charged with misdemeanors and they mostly got off with fines and maybe a little time in jail. Their biggest loss was the loss of their stills.

There was one fellow who had five or six kids — had a still up there behind Mountain Ranch.

We'd go up every so often and bust up his still, but we didn't arrest him. The supervisors were afraid that if he went to jail the county would have to feed his wife and all those kids."

At 96, Collins still has a sharp sense of humor and can laugh heartily.

"We sneaked in on this place down near Burson with the idea of getting the operators and their still. Joe knew that if they heard us coming, they'd run.

We got to the gate, carefully opened it, and as we did, a big church bell up in a tree began to ring. The gate was hooked up to the bell."

We raided a big still on a dairy ranch near Wallace," said Collins.

We found the still, dumped the mash and the cows ate it and got drunk. The owner got mad because he couldn't milk the cows for a couple of days and sued the county, but he lost."

FEW REMEMBER OLD MINING CAMP OF EMPIRE

The virtually now forgotten mining camp of Empire may have been the site of one of Calaveras County's earliest gold discoveries.

Today only a crumbled stone chimney and few unidentified graves mark the spot on a tributary of Black Creek, east of Copperopolis, where the settlement once stood.

Exactly when Empire was established or how it got its name, cannot be determined. The townsite, located almost in the shadow of Johnson Mountain on what is now known as Empire Gulch, was a placer mining operation, at least in its early years.

Mrs. George Bouldin, who died in Copperopolis in 1954 at age 105, told townspeople her parents lived in Empire for a short time before moving on to Upper Calaveritas.

Mrs. Bouldin was born in Upper Calaveritas in 1849. Apparently her parents were among the early American arrivals in Calaveras County and certainly, among the earliest to settle in the Calaveritas area.

The gravel deposit in which the miners found gold was not large, but was quite deep, say local people who are familiar with the area. One of the major problems encountered by the early miners on Empire Gulch was lack of water. Being high on the ridge, the area had virtually no watershed behind it and only in winter was there adequate water for sluicing.

A few scattered springs provided a meager year-round water supply for residents' few household needs.

Later, as the gravel deposits were worked out, prospectors found gold bearing quartz veins on a portion of the west side of Johnson Mountain which they called Pocket Mountain.

Evidence of pocket mining still can be seen there, but apparently the mining operations were short lived.

In fact, it appears that Empire, like so many early day mining camps, bloomed briefly, withered just as quickly and within a few years was virtually forgotten.

A stone lime kiln stands near the southeast end of the placer mining area on Empire gulch, but there is no evidence that stone or brick buildings in which lime based mortar would have been used, ever were built there.

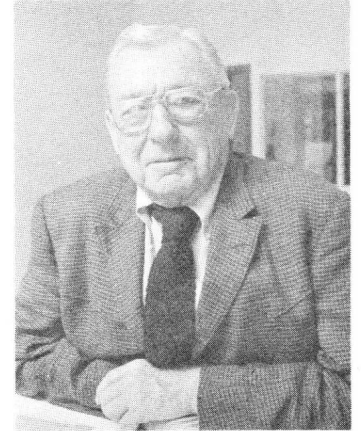
There also are charcoal pits on Black Creek at the edge of the old Burnham Ranch, near Empire, but their connection with the old mining settlement is un-

ELDRED L. LANE 1906-1986

The untimely death Aug. 4 of rancher-businessman Eldred Lane is regarded as a true loss by his myriad friends in Calaveras County and throughout the entire state.

His passing is no less of a blow to the Calaveras County Historical Society, for the society has benefited greatly from his efforts and dogged determination to help preserve its Gold Rush heritage.

Eldred Lane's far flung interests covered many things, from ranching and range management to protection of human and individual rights, but preservation of Central Mother Lode history and Gold Rush artifacts was among his prime concerns.



Eldred L. Lane

He was a leader in the project to save and restore the historic Altaville Schoolhouse and worked tirelessly to have it moved to a new and safe location where it now stands as a Gold Rush shrine.

A native of Ione, Eldred attended elementary school in Clements and graduated from Lodi High School, which only a few years ago in recognition of his athletic ability, named him to its Athlete's Hall of Fame. Later, he played varsity football for the University of California at Berkeley, from which he graduated in 1930.

The Lane home in Mountain Ranch, an original Gold Rush era structure which Eldred and his wife, Blossom, restored to its former elegance, is an example of his love of Mother Lode history.

Eldred Lane will long be remembered as a friend and benefactor of the Calaveras County Historical Society.

known. The charcoal may have been used to fire forges in which miners sharpened their tools.

The last person to live at Empire was a Mr. Austin, who during the late 1920's or early 1930's mined there briefly.

Today the only access to the old townsite is over a virtually unmarked dirt road across private property, south of Bar XX Subdivision.



Oxen were used heavily in early day Calaveras logging operations.

POST WAR, cont. from pg. 33

"It seemed there was a sawmill behind every pine tree," said Gaylen Core, of San Andreas, who in those days in addition to being involved in sawmill operation, brokered and hauled lumber produced by some of the smaller sawmills.

In addition to the Associated Lumber and Box Company Mill at Wilseyville, the two Stockton Box Mills at West Point and the blagen Mill at White Pines, there were sizable mills at San Andreas, Toyon and at Wallace.

Joe Josephson operated a mill in Mountain Ranch at the northwest intersection of Mountain Ranch and Whiskey Slide Roads; there were two mills on Hawver Road; Paul Morris had a sawmill in Sheep Ranch and J. W. Griffin operated a mill on Summit Level Road.

The Matson Mill also was located on Summit Level Road and the Hamilton Mill was on Swiss Ranch Road. There was another mill on Prussian Hill Road and the Powell and Burluson Mill was operating on Moran Road, just East of Avery.

At that time, the local lumber producers estimated that 80 percent of their lumber was utilized in the California market with the remainder shipped to the East.



Forest Products lumber plant at Toyon during post-war boom.

Van BUSKIRK DREAMED, cont. from pg. 33

paying delinquent taxes. A 160-acre plot of mixed conifer forest northeast of Dorrington was obtained in 1889 by Frank Solinsky who paid the county \$57.83 to cover the back taxes.

One of the reasons the vast Blue Creek area timber resource still lay untouched at the start of the 1890's was its remote location and lack of long distance transportation.

Unlike Tuolumne and some other counties along the western slope of the sierra, the Calaveras lumber industry did not develop a rail system to move sawlogs to the mill sites.

Instead, Calaveras lumbermen used oxen, mules, and later, iron wheeled tractors to haul logs and lumber, thus limiting themselves to relatively small areas in which they could economically operate.

But Van Buskirk, calling upon his experience in Wisconsin forests, planned to overcome distance and eliminate hauling costs in the same manner that lumbermen did in his native state.

He planned to float his cut logs down the Mokelumne River to a mill at Lodi.

That summer the Mokelumne River Canyon echoed with the thunder of dynamite blasts as Van Buskirk's crews blasted out rocks and reefs which might block floating logs.

The following year actual logging operations got underway. Prime sugar pine, Ponderosa and fir logs were rolled to the creek and slid to the river to await the coming of the high water that would take them downstream.

A boom was constructed across the Mokelumne River at Lodi to catch the logs at the site where they were to be milled.

But the high water to float the logs as Van Buskirk envisioned it, did not come.

Finally, when winter storms brought the river to flood stage, some of the logs started downstream, but then the Wisconsin lumberman made another new and disappointing discovery.

Unlike the lightweight white pine logs of Wisconsin, the big Ponderosa, and sugar pine and white fir logs of the Sierra were largely "sinkers." They refused to float.

Those logs that did make it all the way downstream on the flood waters to Lodi broke through the boom and a few days later were creating a navigational hazard in San Francisco Bay.

In 1902 Van Buskirk sold three-fourths of his timber holdings to the Brown Brothers, owners of a Rhine-

**PIONEER SCHOOL ALBUM
GOING TO PRESS**

A limited edition "Album of the Pioneer Schools of Calaveras County," is scheduled to be published by the Calaveras County Historical Society in late November.

The Album, printed in hard cover, will contain approximately 160 pages with 120 photographs and illustrations of schools, pupils and teachers. The text includes articles on each of the county's 60 elementary school districts which existed between the early 1850's and 1912 and tells what became of them.

Incorporated in the Album is a list of teachers in these pioneer schools, names of their superintendents and other material of interest. Included is information concerning early day teachers' examinations, teachers' institutes and games played by the children of the past century.

The Historical Society has set a pre-publication price of \$16.00 for the Album, plus tax of 96 cents and \$1 mailing cost, effective through Nov. 1. After that date the price of the book will be \$19.00 plus tax and mailing.

Following publication, copies of the Album will be on sale, Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Historical Society Office in the old Hall of Records, 30 N. Main St., in San Andreas.

Orders may be mailed to the Society at P.O. Box 721, San Andreas, Ca. 95249.

lander, Wis., lumber firm.

He later sold the remainder of his timberland to Charles F. Ruggles, a Michican lumberman.

Ruggles, as late as 1930's envisioned a railroad running through central Calaveras County to tap the timber resources, but the depression canceled that plan.

During the mid-1930's Ruggles sold to the Calaveras Land and Timber Company which also acquired the remainder of what had been the Van Buskirk and Solinsky timberlands.

In 1939 the Blagen Lumber Company, after contracting with the Calaveras Land and Timber Company to cut its southeast section, built a mill at White Pines.

American Box Company, later to become American Forest Products Company, purchased the Blagen Mill in 1940, then purchased the Calaveras Land and Timber Company and its holdings in 1962, adding the Winton Lumber Company and its Martell Mill to its ownership in 1964.



Logging team near Lightner Mine in Angels Camp. Deep mines utilized much of Calaveras timber production.

LUMBER IN 1849, cont. from pg. 32

Meanwhile, the Raggio Brothers, Ernest, Joe and John, opened a major mill on San Domingo Creek, later moving it to Cowell Creek in 1910.

As the new century started it was the Manuel and Raggio companies which were the largest lumber operators in the county.

John Manuel, who had fathered a family of 12, died at age 59, in 1898 in Stockton, after contracting pneumonia while campaigning for State Senator.

Following his death, Manuel's family organized the Manuel Estate Company and under the management of his eldest son, Matt, the company continued in the lumber business until the 1930's.

In addition to their mills, the Manuels and Raggios also operated lumber yards in Angels Camp. The Manuel yard was located near the Sierra Railroad Depot, on what is now called Depot Road, and the Raggio lumber yard was near the present site of the Angels Camp swimming pool.

The Raggio mill finally ceased operation when its mill was purchased in the 1920's by the Manuel Company and moved to San Antonio Creek, about a mile upstream from San Antonio Falls, where it operated during its final years.

All of Calaveras County's early logging companies were handicapped to an extent by lack of adequate transportation to outside markets.

The rail line to the valley ended at Milton, and the Sierra Railroad, completed from Oakdale and Sonora to Angels Camp in 1902, had high freight rates that discouraged major lumber shipping.

The mines were the major consumers of lumber in

Calaveras.

Charles D. Lane, soon after acquiring the Utica Mine in Angels Camp, in 1884, informed John Manuel the mine could use all the lumber he could deliver.

In the early years the loggers depended largely upon oxen to haul logs to the mill, and teams of up to 16 animals were not uncommon. In 1888 the McKays built a horse drawn railroad to haul logs from the woods to the mill, but by the 1890's, horse and ox power was being replaced at least to some extent by steam powered traction engines.

John Manuel was the first to convert to steam traction engines for long hauls, and the McKays began using the steam tractor to pull logs to the mill.

Raggios quickly followed suit, for each of those huge old steam powered behemoths could pull five wagons loaded with a total of 40,000 board feet.

The old iron wheeled tractors were not popular, however, for they chewed the roads to ribbons, and their noise frightened any horse which came near them.

Following the close of World War I, gasoline engine trucks were replacing horses and the steam tractors for most long hauls.

Ernest Raggio, son of the founder of the raggio mill, recalled that gasoline powered trucks hauled the lumber and other building materials that went into the construction of the original Spicer Dam.

Today, two of the old steam traction engines that once hauled the logs and lumber to the Manuel and Raggio mills are on display in front of the Angels Camp Museum, reminders of the days when logging was a tougher and much more personal business.

THE CHOKER SETTER

By Norwood A. Driscoll

(Condensed from the American eagle
of September, 1956.)

The choker setter; he's that long legged brush popper who spends two-thirds of his time waiting on the main line and the other third chasing chokers at top speed so he can spend the other two-thirds waiting on the main line.

In the old days he set chokers behind bulls. These days he sets them behind cats and hands out the bull himself.

Sure footed as a mountain goat, he's a strapping, vocal young fellow who loudly disputes the hook tender on every decision whenever the boss is out of hearing.

He's an authority on everything from logging to women and knows all the big shots by their first names. If single, he goes to town every Friday night. And, if he's married, he still goes to town every Friday night.

In winter he wears heavy, black wool underwear, staggled, high water pants and a hickory shirt.

He's never dry, swears by all that's holy he's not cold, but has a tendency to build a fire on every pitchy stump he comes to, only to move on just as the fire begins to burn brightly and is preempted by the hook tender.

He either snooses Copenhagen or smokes Camels — sometimes both — and bums a chew from the hook tender every time he passes by.

In a big logging outfit the turnover in choker setters is terrific. Monday morning after payday finds the general manager, the siderod, the hook tender, the bookkeeper and a flunky or two from the kitchen setting chokers.

The choker setters will be back in a couple of days, assuring everyone that no harm was done, as the brass needed the exercise anyway.

In summer he wears the same pants and shirt, and his now worn-out boots with three caulks in the left foot and five in the right. But, he's still sure footed as a mountain goat and sees no reason for putting out \$60 bucks for a new pair of boots, since his feet are dry all the time anyway.

He'll explain the difference between a cat hook and a peter hook and is an authority on politics and world affairs.

He spends his spare moments in the woods in earnest conversation with one of his kind, assuring him that "now you won't believe this, but—," while his



Coming out of the woods near Avery.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome these new members to the society:

Ruth Hickman, Glendale
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Burns, San Andreas
Gino Parini, San Francisco
Gail Guasch, Murphys
Julius Kahn III, San Francisco
Lee Thomas, Antioch
Dean Mayhall, San Andreas
Nancy A. Kuellmer, Oxnard
Mary W. Paisley, Mariposa
Gino & Betty DeMartini, Valley Springs
Ina Davies, Avery
Mrs. Louis Sullivan, Altaville
Howard & Eline Beede, Rail Road Flat
Mr. & Mrs. Paul D. Raggio, Angels Camp

IN MEMORIAM

Phyllis Munn

counterpart spends his time assuring him "now you won't believe this but—."

Someday, in some drinking emporium up on the edge of the woods some fellow will get you in a corner where you can't escape and begin to tell you what's wrong with the lumber industry and the world in general.

When he finally gets down to brass tacks, lowers his voice and tells you confidentially that "you won't believe this but," then sir, you'll know you've met your first choker setter.

Calaveras County Historical Society

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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.

The Society's office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 5:00. The telephone number is (209) 754-1058. Visitors are welcome.

(EDITORIAL) WRITE IT DOWN...

The history of Calaveras County, dating back to Gold Rush days and before, is rich and colorful.

Thanks to early-day editors and historians, and in more recent years to its County Historical Society, much of the history of Calaveras has been well recorded.

Still, there is much of this county's past to be told — tales of its early days, its places and its people — yet to be preserved on the printed page.

Around the campfires of mountain cow camps, before warm fireplaces on winter evenings in old Calaveras County towns, true stories still are recounted of early day incidents that have never been reduced to writing.

It is history handed down by word-of-mouth from mother to daughter or father to son among the descen-

COMING EVENTS

Nov. 20 — Business Meeting, 8 p.m., Grange Hall, San Andreas:

Following business meeting, Gail Guasch, curator of Old Timers Museum, in Murphys, and a knowledgeable collector of antiques, whose hobby is Victorian era dolls, will be the guest speaker.

She will bring with her a sampling of her doll collection and present information on what is rapidly becoming one of the most popular collectibles of our day.

Refreshments will round out the evening.

Dec. 18 — Annual Christmas Dinner and Party: Metropolitan, San Andreas, Social Hour, 6:00 p.m., Dinner, 7:00 p.m.

This traditional dinner party will be one of our year's highlights. Our host, Don Cuneo, promises another of his excellent dinners, featuring roast turkey, baked ham, ravioli and salads with wine and dessert, all for the modest price of \$10 per person.

After dinner there will be a presentation of Christmas music and we will be visited by Santa Claus. Ladies are requested to bring a gift marked for "lady," and men a gift marked for "man."

Cost of the gifts is not to exceed \$4.00.

Since this is expected to be a sold-out event, reservations should be made on or before Dec. 15.

Reservations may be made with:

Eva Soracco — 754-4105

Bessie McGinnis — 736-2189

Jack Kennedy — 754-1259

Madeline Cavagnaro — 754-4105

dants of our pioneer families.

But inevitably, unless recorded in writing, this history will one day be lost, for only the written word endures. Too much Mother Lode history already has been lost or distorted because no one took the trouble to write it down.

Perhaps the incident of long ago that some friend or relative has related seems not too important now. It will not seem so unimportant to our children and our grandchildren.

So, write it down. It doesn't have to be a masterpiece of prose. History is made up of facts.

Make a copy for the Calaveras County Archives, or make it available to our Las Calaveras if you'd like to see it in print, for only with the written word can we preserve our knowledge of the past.