



Quarterly Bulletin of the
Calaveras County Historical Society

Volume IX January, 1961 Number 2

TELEGRAPH CITY

By J. A. SMITH

The location of Telegraph City is in the extreme westerly part of Calaveras County in Section 15, Township 1 N., R. 11 E., M. D. M.

In 1938 I wrote R. B. Parks who at one time was the owner of the land in and around Telegraph City for information that he might be able to give me about the place. Mr. Parks at that time was living at the Hotel Clark in Stockton. His reply follows:

Mr. J. A. Smith
Superior Judge of Calaveras County
San Andreas, California.

Dear Judge:

The reason I have not answered your letter of the 17th sooner, is that I have been out of town.

I have been told the name of Telegraph City originated through the telegraph line going from Stockton to Sonora. The city was established in the early sixties and was on Reed's Turnpike.

The buildings which I remember being there were the Telegraph City Hotel, which was operated by my father and mother, Mr. E. Parks and Mrs. Mary Parks, and a general merchandise store owned and operated by C. S. S. Hill. There was also a large mine about two miles from Telegraph City, known as the Quail Hill Mine.

In the early days, the sixties, there were a great many miners prospecting for copper, several hundred. This was during the war and copper was selling for about fifty cents a pound, which brought a great many people to the city.

The old palm trees near the side of the road were planted in about 1900. I had these planted there. The old fireplace and chimney which remains was to my house, which I had erected at a cost of about \$5000 at that time. The house was destroyed about ten years later by fire.

Sorry that I cannot give you more information but this is about all I can remember of the city.

With kindest regards, I remain,

Yours very truly,
Robert B. Parks

At one time there was a school district known as Telegraph City School District.

Calaveras County Historical Society Essay Contest

The Calaveras County Historical Society is sponsoring an essay contest on local history in the two high schools and in the fourth through eighth grades of the elementary schools of the county.

RULES FOR LOCAL HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST

1. The subject shall deal with some phase of local Calaveras history such as: personalities, buildings, objects, sites, events, industries, discoveries, transportation, etc.
2. The material presented shall be, as far as possible, original research, and not copied verbatim from any previously published sources.
3. Efforts should be made to check the truthfulness of the material, and all sources of information should be carefully listed.
4. All essays must be submitted on or before April 1, 1961, and are to be read by the winners at the April dinner meeting of the society.
5. Essays should be 1500 words or less in the 7th, 8th, and High School groups, and 500 words or less in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. Essays may be in student's own handwriting or typewritten.
6. A group of judges known only to essay contest chairman and each other will judge all essays submitted.
7. Prizes shall be the same for each group: One group, high school; one group, 7th and 8th grades; one group, 4th, 5th, and 6th grades.
1st prize — \$10.00; second prize — \$5.00 and membership for 1 year in the Historical Society, a copy of the April issue of Las Calaveras, and a free dinner.

Essays, when completed, may be sent to the office of the County School Superintendent, to the office of the Unified School District, or direct to Hattie E. Hertzog, Chairman, Calaveras County Historical Society Essay Contest Committee, San Andreas, California.

Two Killed at Carson Valley

Sacramento "Daily Union," January 19, 1864

The San Andreas "Register" of the 16th of January says: "We have been informed that B. T. Bradley and Wilson, residents of Salt Spring Valley in this county, were recently killed at Carson Valley by B. F. Marshall, formerly of Mokelumne Hill. It seems there was a difficulty between Marshall and Bradley, in which the former killed the latter. An examination was had and Marshall admitted to bail. After being released, Marshall found Wilson, father-in-law of Bradley, who had been a witness against him on the examination, and deliberately shot him through the head. Marshall was formerly Sheriff of this county, Bradley a member of the Senate, and Wilson a member of the Assembly in 1860, and was a candidate for County Judge in the last election, on the Democratic ticket."

GABRIEL K. STEVENOT

My Grandfather, Gabriel K. Stevenot, was known as "Angel Gabriel" K. Stevenot for the many things he did for people on the Mother Lode.

He came around the Horn in 1846 from France to San Francisco. Then, in the same year, he went to Marysville with General Sutter. They built the mining town of Elizerville on the Feather River, 10 miles from Marysville, and named it after Sutter's daughter, Eliza.

My grandfather left there and started for the Mother Lode. He had a buckboard and a span of horses with two pack animals. He arrived one half mile below Carson Hill and pitched his tent here. This spot was later called New Melones and named after the nuggets found in the form of melon seeds in Spaulding Gulch. My grandfather was an attorney. His son, my father, arrived in the Mother Lode in 1862. He had graduated from Strassburg in mining, chemistry and geology.

Sincerely,
ARCHIE STEVENOT,
 "Mr. Mother Lode."

FROM THE DIARY OF GABRIEL K. STEVENOT

Sunday, January 1, 1865

Gifts	25.00
Expenses	5.00

Night before last at 8:30, I returned from my trip to New Melones, during this time, I met Mr. Coignot at Copperopolis, Engineer of mines, sent by the French Government to examine Mines in North America.

Monday, January 2, 1865

Expenses 12.00

I have worked all day in my laboratory having difficulty in extracting precious metal, with my son, Emile K. Stevenot.

Wednesday, January 18, 1865

Bought Furnace for foundry from Smitt,	32.75
Departed for New Melones with Mr. Coignot Engineer. Expenses for trip Wagon and Steamer	17.50
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	50.25

Friday 20.

Expenses at Copperopolis Tavern	4.50
Arrived New Melones, Horses	4.00

Saturday—21

Livery stable at Robinson's Ferry	1.50
96 lbs. of oats at 8 cts.	7.70

Total Expense of trip to date 71.70

March—Wednesday—8th

I paid \$150.00 for my passage to New York, on steamer Golden City.

March—Friday—10

I sent Emile K. Stevenot \$200.00 for pocket money. Am sending on Steamer Golden City, 4600 lbs. of mineral to my address in New York.

March—Monday—13

Leaving for New York on Steamer Golden City.

April—Friday—14

We have just heard the sad news that Mr. Lincoln, President of the U. S., has been assassinated and that Mr. Seward, first minister, has been stabbed in bed.

April—Saturday—15

Received a telegram that tells me we have it richer than ever in the Stanislaus.

MILTON

Completion of the Southern Pacific Railway from Stockton to Milton in 1871 marked the birth of the little foothill town of Milton, which was named to honor Milton Latham, a construction engineer who helped build the railroad to Milton.

It was intended to construct the line at first to Copperopolis, but due to the expense of constructing further into the hills, Milton was made the terminous. From this point large teams consisting of as much as 12 and 14 horses at times conveyed the freight to and from the mountain towns of Copperopolis, Angels Camp, Murphys, Vallecito, Columbia, Sonora, San Andreas and other places. Six Horse stages carried mail, express and passengers to these towns. It was a stage bound for Milton that was stopped by Black Bart, which led to his capture through a laundry mark on a handkerchief or a cuff that he dropped at the time of the stage robbery. Gold from the Mother Lode Mines was sent by express on these stages and was guarded by R. E. McConnell, T. M. Epronson, William Hendricks, Jack Morley and A. Banks, all express messengers.

Travel to Yosemite Valley and the Big Trees of Calaveras was routed by Milton. Parties would leave their splendidly equipped private cars at Milton while they rode in carriages or stages to their destinations.

The Milton road lost a great deal of its business when the Narrow Gauge railroad was built to Valley Springs, had a further loss when the Sierra Railroad was built into Tuolumne County and a branch into Angels Camp. The change of transportation by trucks and automobiles was a further factor in the decline of Milton.

In 1872 a private school was taught by Miss Mary Aull and in 1873 a public school district was established, a schoolhouse built, and Miss Jenny Zigler installed as teacher.

The first grocery store was owned by Mr. J. C. Bunds and the post office established July 14, 1871, in the store of Belts and Crawford, with Mr. Crawford as the first Postmaster.

The first hotel was owned by Harvey & Utter, and then a Mr. Fox built a hotel that was blown from its foundation and was always known as the "Tornado Hotel." Mr. and Mrs. Donner conducted this hotel for many years.

Peterson and Dake were storekeepers in Milton at an early date. McDonald had the livery stable that afterwards was conducted by Nealey.

There were several feed stables and blacksmith shops to accommodate those engaged in freighting.

Louis Beysser, Sr., was the first forwarding agent for the railroad.

The following are the names of the old families who first grazed their stock around Milton: C. D. Reynolds, Thos. Wheeler, Rhodes Bros., William Snow Schroebel and Walter Robie.

Two famous actresses spent their childhood days here

with their grandparents, namely Nancy O'Neill and Lillian Lampson.

Much of the ore from the mines at Copperopolis was shipped by rail from Milton and great numbers of cattle and sheep went from Milton.

The Methodist church was built in the late seventies.

Most of the old buildings have been destroyed or torn down. The depot building no longer exists.

George Callahan came to Milton as a track laying foreman. He remained and was a successful stock raiser and in addition conducted a hotel.

In its hey-day Milton had a population of about 500 persons. At present most of the lands around Milton are used to graze stock.

SOUTH GROVE OF THE CALAVERAS BIG TREES

Although the North Grove of the Big Trees had been acquired by the state and made a State Park in 1931, through the efforts of the Save the Redwoods League and the generosity of private individuals, such as Desire Fricot, the South Grove of the Calaveras Big Trees, discovered in 1870 and located some eight or nine miles across the Stanislaus River in Tuolumne County, remained in the hands of private lumber companies. When logging operations reached the boundaries of the valley protecting the South Grove and there was real danger to the Grove, not so much for the actual use of the redwood lumber because the Sequoia Gigantea makes poor building material, but because the protective surrounding belt of large pines would be logged with disastrous effect on the Big Trees, a renewed effort was made by the Save the Redwoods League. Led by the energetic efforts of such people as Stuart Gibbons and Mrs. Owen Bradley, the League worked to raise enough funds when matched by state funds to purchase trees for the South Grove and put it for all time into the protective custody of the state park system. With the assistance of a large grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the necessary funds were raised and the Calaveras South Grove was purchased and added to the State Park System in 1954.

Because the South Grove could be reached only by privately owned logging roads, it was not opened to the public until public access roads could be built. The first step in this road construction was completed in the fall of 1959 when the first five miles of an excellently graded and paved road was opened to public travel from the North Grove to the Stanislaus River, providing many additional camping areas. The final three miles of road construction must await further financing.

Calaveras Big Trees Sentinel Falls in Storm

"Stockton Record," November 29, 1919—P. I.—Saturday

One of the two Sentinels guarding the entrance to the famous Calaveras Big Tree Grove was uprooted by the terrific storm of Wednesday night. It fell with a crash.

The mammoth Sequoia, estimated to be between four and five thousand years old, was 325 feet in height and 25 feet in diameter. The news of the falling of this magni-

ficent tree so often admired by travelers will be received with regret by nature lovers.

The two Sentinels stood guarding either side of the road just outside of the grounds of the Calaveras grove as the traveler approached the hotel. Nearby a creek flowed into the meadow below. During freshet seasons the stream flow eroded the earth from the roots of the eastern Sentinel and a few years ago during a winter storm the old Sequoia almost went over. It toppled against its brother tree on the west side of the highway and has since been supported by the upper branches of the west Sentinel. An archway was thus formed under which traffic was routed.

The news of the falling of this mighty monarch was telephoned to Edgar Whiteside of the Holt Manufacturing Company last evening by his mother Mrs. Job Whiteside who conducts the Big Trees Hotel. Mrs. Whiteside motored down to Angels yesterday. She is preparing to come out of the Big Trees for the winter next Sunday or Monday.

"Mother has remained in the mountains and kept the hotel open later than usual this year," Mr. Whiteside told the Record. "This was largely due to inability to get a winter keeper. The man who usually stays at the hotel throughout the winter had cattle to get out of the mountains and couldn't go on the job.

"I don't know just what we will do with the fallen Sentinel just yet, but you may be sure that we will feature it as a novelty. We may cut a cross section out and route the driveway through it, or, if the trunk is not too badly broken up, we may bridge it and route a driveway down the top. Since the tree was 325 feet high we ought to be able to make quite a feature of an elevated drive for automobiles out of its trunk. The storm did no other damage to the grove, although a few old branches were carried down from some of the trees."

"Little Bud"

Andy Cademartori of Murphys tells the story about an incident which occurred in 1895 when James Budd was running for governor. Budd stopped at the Mitchler Hotel and inquired of Frank Mitchler who was the best Democrat in town? He was sent over to Dave Baratino's blacksmith shop, located just across the street from the present post office, where he invited Dave to introduce him at the public meeting which was to be held. Dave was highly honored to have this opportunity and introduced the candidate as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen. I want to introduce my good friend, Jimmy Budd. He is only a little bud now but by and by he be a big flower!"

The Wounded Messenger— "Calaveras Prospect"

No particulars of the attempt at robbery were received at the local express office, as no one came in from the stage line this noon.

Tovey, the messenger, is an old and tried shotgun man who has had various battles in his business. A year or two ago two men, named Sharp and Jones, stopped the stage from Bodie to Carson. Tovey was aboard. He shot and killed Jones, and was himself shot in the arm by Sharp, who escaped.

OFFICERS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

San Andreas, California

Judge J. A. Smith, President San Andreas
Paul Lewis, Vice-President Mountain Ranch
Coke Wood, Second Vice-President Murphys
Sadie Hunt, Secretary Valley Springs
Violet Ouslidge, Treasurer San Andreas
Board of Directors: Mrs. Alice Eldridge, San Andreas; Ed
Leonard, Angels Camp; Claude Smith, West Point; Harry
Buchanan, Rail Road Flat; Mrs. Rhoda Dunlap, Sonora.

Editor of Las Calaveras Coke Wood, Murphys

Las Calaveras is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society for the benefit of the members. Membership in the society is \$4.00 a year. Non-members may obtain copies of Las Calaveras for \$1.00 a copy. The historical material in this bulletin is not copyrighted and anyone is invited to use it. Mention of the source will be appreciated.

The Calaveras County Historical Society meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Courthouse in San Andreas. Dinner meetings are held each quarter at different places in the county.

EDITORIAL

Congratulations to Irene Corneau and the Copperopolis Community Club on the fine success of their Centennial Celebration. Nothing can be criticised and all activities were well-done and interesting. The meeting of the Golden Chain Council, the Clamper initiation, the parade on Sunday, and the joint meeting of the Tuolumne and Calaveras County Historical Societies were all events well attended and enjoyed. The excellent program on the history of Copperopolis presented by Helen and Paul Lewis at the joint historical society meetings in the historic old Armory Hall (1862) was especially interesting and successful. The souvenir Copperopolis publication was very interesting and was well received. Members of the society might like to know that 225 copies of "Las Calaveras," carrying the Copperopolis story, were sold.

A big vote of thanks should be given Mrs. Alice Eldridge, Chairman of the Committee, for the very fine Christmas program which she arranged for the society. This historical Christmas meeting has become one of our most enjoyable of the year. One of the big surprises of the program presented by Mrs. Eldridge was the amazing harmonica concerto rendered by our usually dignified vice president, assisted by his lovely wife, Helen, and Lola Christianson. The beautiful Christmas decorations, all made by Mrs. Eldridge, gave a pleasant setting for the refreshments served by the Home Economics Committee of the Calaveras Grange after the meeting.

The first joint workshop of historical societies of the Mother Lode was held on October 15 in Columbia and was well attended. Full credit should be given to Mrs. Tillie Sheatsley, Regional Vice-president of the Conference, for the success of the workshop. The panel dis-

cussions on membership, publications and programs were very stimulating to the respective delegates from Mariposa, Tuolumne, and Calaveras Counties. No delegates were present from Amador County. The panel of presidents of the societies, consisting of Judge Tom Coakley of Mariposa, Mrs. Tillie Sheatsley of Tuolumne, and Judge J. A. Smith of Calaveras was especially interesting. At the luncheon meeting, Dr. Robert Burns gave a very fine talk on California. The workshop adjourned about three o'clock with everyone vowing that this type of meeting should be repeated again next year.

Calaveras County Seat Moves Sacramento "Daily Union," March 1, 1864

The majority of the Board of Supervisors of Calaveras County have ordered the removal of offices, together with all books, papers, and other movable property belonging to the county and to the town of San Andreas from Mokelumne Hill.

Big Trees Stage Line

The "Alpine Chronicle," April 30, 1870

We learn that Mattison and Garland of Murphys are preparing to stock the Big Trees Road for a stage line between Silver Mountain, Big Trees, and Murphys as soon as the snow is off the road.

New Big Trees Grove

"Alpine Chronicle," August 13, 1870

"A grove of big trees has been discovered on Sperry's Ranch, Calaveras County, and the trees are said to be larger than those in the already famous Big Tree Grove."

A Later Account (Special to the "Mail")

San Andreas, April 30, 1892. The Sheep Ranch Stage, carrying coin for the mines, was stopped this morning on Willow Creek, four miles from San Andreas, by two robbers.

The first notice was a shot which instantly killed Miss Rodersino of Eldorado, 16 years old, badly wounded Driver Raggio (he receiving 4 buck shot, two through his lungs) and slightly wounded messenger Tovey.

No treasure was secured, officers and citizens are following on the trail.

T. J. MATTESON HAS RETIRED

Stockton Mail, September 16, 1892

The stage line running from Murphys through Angels Camp to Milton and connecting with Mr. Sperry's stages for the Calaveras Big Trees has been sold to John Raggio, owner of the Valley Spring, San Andreas and Angels Camp stage line. T. J. Matteson, the former proprietor of the line transferred, has retired from active business and moved his family to Oakland. He sold his livery business at Murphys a few weeks ago to his son, Earnest, and bonded a gold mine, which he owned at that place, to capitalists, receiving \$20,000 cash in part payment. Mr. Matteson resided at Murphys for many years.