



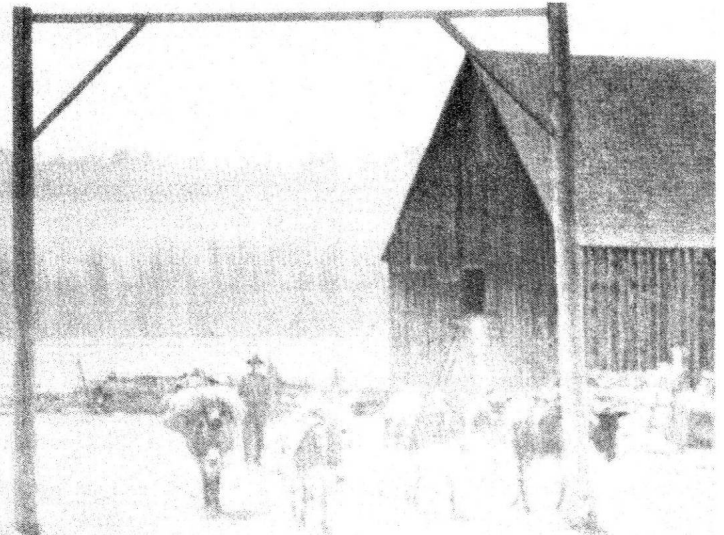
Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society  
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## PEOPLE AND PLACES IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

*(For names of contributors of the following facts  
and anecdotes, please see close of this article.)*

George, Jackson and William Gann arrived in California from Missouri in 1853 and soon were engaged in the cattle business in San Joaquin County near the Calaveras County line. By the early 1870's they were herding cattle to the mountains of Calaveras County for summer grazing and had established a cow camp on the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike at what soon became known as Gann's Station. The late Charlie Gann, son of William, in 1902 homesteaded 160 acres there and this mountain meadow, now a summer home area on Highway 4, still is known as Gann's.

Please see **Places**, pg. 20



Blood's Station in Bear Valley was no longer collecting tolls in 1914 when this photograph was taken, but the pole frame from which the toll sign had hung, still remained. In foreground, sheep herd owner Gus Vogelsang drives burros up the road. Mounted horseman with white hat in background thought to be Tone Airola. Louis Lombardi stands at horse's head.

*(Photo courtesy of Stanley Lombardi)*

## HARVEY BLOOD BUILT PIONEER TRADE CENTER

No individual ever played a more influential role in the opening of the Ebbetts Pass road across the Sierra than did Harvey Blood.

Blood, during the 1860's, changed the status of this summit crossing from that of little more than an improved trail to a well traveled wagon road which became the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike.

As a result of his actions, the Ebbetts Pass route during the silver boom days, attracted a substantial share of trans-Sierra traffic headed for Silver Mountain and the Nevada mines.

Blood lived to see the flow of travel change from pack train and the wagons of emigrants to freight wagons, and finally, gasoline powered horseless carriages headed over the summit.

For 46 years, from 1864 until his death in 1910, Blood and his family operated Blood's Station in Bear Valley and maintained the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike as a toll road.

During those years Blood's Station served as the major stopping place and supply center for travelers and teamsters between Murphys and the settlements on the eastern side of the Sierra.

In fact, Blood's over the years, was destined to become  
Please see **Blood**, pg. 14

**Blood**, cont. from pg. 13

far more than simply a roadside way-station or last chance spot to replenish supplies.

Blood's became a high country institution — a gathering place for the old time cattlemen and sheepmen of Calaveras and Alpine counties. For more than 50 years, even long after Harvey Blood's death, it served as trade and message center and jumping-off place for hunters, trappers, survey parties and others whose business took them into the mountains west of the summit.

Mt. Reba, which rises out of the Mokelumne Wilderness to tower over today's Mt. Reba ski complex and the Bear Valley area, was named before the turn of the century by members of a U.S. Survey party, for Reba Blood, only daughter of Harvey and Elizabeth Blood.

One of the Stanislaus National Forest's first installations, a log cabin guard station, was built in 1909 in Bear Valley on property acquired from Blood.

As late as the 1920's Louis and Alex Lombardi, members of the pioneer Calaveras County cattle ranching family, butchered beef at Blood's and hauled them by pack train to Highland Creek to feed the construction crew building Spicer Dam.

Today the paved surface of Highway 4 runs the length of Bear Valley, past subdivision cabins and a plush ski lodge, then heads off into the mountains to the east where it crosses 8,731-foot Ebbetts Pass.

But the history of the Ebbetts Pass highway goes back a full 160 years.

It is in the vicinity of Ebbetts Pass that the mountain man and trapping party leader Jedediah Smith is believed to have crossed the Sierra in the spring of 1827 while enroute eastward to obtain supplies for his trappers in the San Joaquin Valley.

But the man for whom the pass is named was "Major" John Ebbetts, who in 1849 arrived in California with the Knickerbocker Exploring Company of New York.

In April of 1850, Ebbetts, who reportedly at one time had seen service with the American Fur Company, led a party of prospectors across the summit of the Sierra a few miles northwest of the pass that today bears his name. They followed a route that led up the West Carson River, through Hope, Faith and Charity Valleys, and crossed the summit at what later came to be known as Border Ruffian Pass. The 33-year-old Ebbetts was favorably impressed with the fact that even in April they encountered little snow.

Following the Ebbetts Party's initial crossing, other groups of emigrants using horses and pack trains, occasionally traveled this same route the next two years. Then, the summer of 1853 found Major Ebbetts back in the



**Harvey Spaulding Blood, respected businessman and civic leader. For more than 45 years he operated Blood's Station on the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike.**

*(Calaveras County Museum)*

vicinity of his 1850 crossing, employed by the Atlantic-Pacific Railroad to seek out a possible route in that area for a trans-Sierra rail line.

Ebbetts was firmly convinced that his proposed route across the summit was the most logical choice for a railroad. He supported his verbal arguments with articles published in December, 1853, in the San Francisco Daily Herald.

Actually, his proposed line of travel — along the West Carson River through Hope, Faith and Charity Valleys and across Border Ruffian Pass, despite its 8,000-foot elevation, might not have been the worst choice. Certainly it was no more tortuous than several other Sierra passes that received strong consideration.

But, it was a boiler explosion on Aug. 15, 1854, aboard the river steamer "Secretary," that changed forever the future of the trans-Sierra crossing place that came to be known as Ebbetts Pass.

Among those who died in the fiery blast on Suisun Bay near the mouth of Petaluma Creek was Major Ebbetts. With him died hopes of seeing the trail he had opened four years earlier, become a major gateway across the mountains.

Ebbetts' name, however, continued to be associated with the trail. George Goddard, his close friend and surveyor who accompanied him on his 1853 rail route exploration, named the pass in honor of Ebbetts on the maps which he prepared.

It was not until 1893, nearly 40 years after his death and



**Blood's Station in the snow. When first snowfall came, virtually everyone in the mountains, including the Blood family, moved back to the foothills or the valley.** *(Old Timers Museum, Murphys)*

many years after the route of the Big Trees-Carson Road had been moved southward about six miles to its present crossing, that a U.S. Geological Survey team, in drafting the Markleeville Quadrangle, officially named the location Ebbetts Pass.

For a time, after Ebbetts death, his route over the Border Ruffian Pass continued to attract some degree of travel. But, as other trans-Sierra crossings such as the Carson, Hangtown (Placerville), Donner and Henness Pass roads improved, the Ebbetts trail fell into disuse.

In late 1855 pressure began to build, particularly among Murphys and Angels Camp businessmen, for improvement of the route from Big Trees to Carson Valley. As a result, a

contract was awarded to L.W. Noyes and Dr. N.C. Condon, of Murphys, and in June, 1856, road construction got underway.

By late August of that year a rudimentary wagon road that included eight bridges — one 75 feet long — had been completed all the way to Carson Valley. As a result, a fair portion of the immigration into California that fall and during the spring of 1857, used Ebbetts' road.

Use of the road continued to increase. On April 7, 1860, A. Newton announced in Mokelumne Hill that he was prepared to begin operating a stage line between that community and Carson Valley, via the West Point and the Big Trees-Carson Valley Road as soon as the snow was off the ground.

On July 14, 1860, the San Andreas Independent reported that on July 11 the first emigrant train of the season "four wagons, 14 men, and 64 large American horses had arrived by way of the Carson Valley-Big Trees Route."

Most of the traffic on the Big Trees-Carson Valley Road during its early years and into the late 1850's was from East to West, consisting largely of emigrants headed for the gold fields of the Mother Lode.

But in 1859, with discovery of Virginia City's Comstock Lode, the tide began to change. The Nevada strike triggered an almost instantaneous eastward migration, much of which flowed across the route opened by Major Ebbetts.

Then, in 1861, following the silver strike at Kongsberg (soon renamed Silver Mountain City) in Alpine County on the eastern slope of Ebbetts Pass, the volume of traffic sharply increased.

On Aug. 5, 1861, the Sacramento Union reported that T.J. Matteson had begun the first mail delivery between Murphys and Genoa, in Carson Valley. His contract with

Please see **Blood**, pg. 16



**Elizabeth Blood, wife of Harvey Blood**  
*(Calaveras County Museum)*

**Reba Blood**  
(*Calaveras  
County  
Museum*)



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**Blood**, cont. from pg. 15

the government, said the newspaper, was for twice-a-week delivery, via Big Trees Road.

The paper noted that although his schedule allowed him two days to make the trip, Matteson was making the crossings in 15 hours. It said the mail was leaving Murphys at 3 a.m. each Monday and Thursday and arriving in Genoa at 6 p.m. the same day.

“It is the intention of the contractor,” said the article, “to run this mail through the year round.”

But, not only was the road which crossed the summit at Border Ruffian Pass proving inadequate from the standpoint of travel, it also passed several miles north of Silver Mountain City. Travelers and freight headed for Silver Mountain City could go by wagon only to Silver Valley (now Hermit Valley), where Holden’s Station was located.

From Holden’s they were forced to use a horse trail which climbed southeasterly out of the valley and crossed the summit at approximately the same point where Highway 4 crosses today.

With travel and demand for supplies at Silver City continuing to increase, a group of Murphys businessmen in the spring of 1862 formed the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike Company. The state legislature granted them a franchise to construct and operate a toll road over that route for a period of 25 years.

Members of the company included James L. Sperry, owner of hotels in Murphys and Big Trees; his partner, John Perry; P.L. Traver, John Kimball, Ephriam Cutting,

Freeman Dunbar, John DeLaitee, Joseph Shepherd, Volney Shearer and Riley Senter.

Through sale of stock the company capitalized for \$100,000 and work on the road, which was to be completed in two years, got underway in June. Volney Shearer was construction superintendent.

From Big Trees the new turnpike followed generally the route of the old road through Cold Springs (Dorrington); Black Springs; Onion Valley (Tamarack); Mud Springs, also known as Grizzly Bear Valley; through Silver Valley, now Lake Alpine; and on up the ridge into Pacific and Hermit Valleys.

However, in Hermit Valley after crossing the Mokelumne River, the new turnpike was to turn from the Border Ruffian Pass route and follow the horse trail across what is now Ebbetts Pass into the headwaters of Silver Creek. From there it followed the creek to Silver Mountain City.

Work on the road continued during the summer of 1863 on a somewhat reduced scale, and in March, 1864, the company asked the legislature for a two year extension. At the same time it moved to increase its capital stock to \$200,000.

But the state filed suit against the turnpike company for back taxes. On May 11, financially troubled and bickering among themselves, the company directors entered into an agreement with Harvey Spaulding Blood to complete and operate the toll road.

Under terms of the agreement, Blood, an Angels Camp and Murphys businessman with holdings in Grizzly Bear

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**Reba Blood  
in childhood.**  
(*Calaveras  
County  
Museum*)





Hermit Valley, known as “Silver Valley,” and sometimes as Mokelumne Valley, was a busy place on the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike during the 1860’s when Holden’s station operated there.

Valley, with his partner, Jonathan C. Curtis, was to pay the taxes and repay the turnpike company with interest, the amount it had already expended on the road. Blood was to keep the road in repair and collect tolls at Bear Valley for five years, at which time it was to revert to the turnpike company. As it turned out, he had the toll road more than 40 years.

Blood, a native of New Hampshire, was only 26 years old when he and Curtis, whom he later bought out, took over the road contract.

Blood had come to California in the late 1850’s and his first business venture was in shake manufacturing in the Big Trees area.

In addition, he acquired land in Grizzly Bear Valley where he ranged livestock during the summer. He soon also was engaged in the mercantile business in Murphys.

Immediately upon signing the agreement with the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike Company, Blood and Curtis began completion of the road and Blood started construction of facilities that included a house and large barn at the toll gate in Bear Valley.

It was along this route, a few months earlier, that a caravan of Bactrian camels imported from the Amur River area of Manchuria, had crossed the summit to Nevada where they were used to pack salt from the Lahonton Basin to Virginia City.

Several camel trains crossed Ebbetts Pass during its early

years, much to the anger and chagrin of teamsters and horsemen.

The sight and smell of the camels panicked American horses. The Alpine Heritage relates that at least once, during the early 1860’s, a camel caravan attempting to cross Border Ruffian Pass was driven back by angry teamsters and was forced to use an Indian trail across Silver Mountain Pass.

The Nevada State Legislature, also during the 1860’s, passed a law forbidding camel trains to travel highways or enter towns after dark because they frightened horses so badly.

Under the supervision of Blood and Curtis, work on the Big Trees-Carson Valley Road progressed rapidly and traffic to Silver Mountain City, which by the summer of 1864 had an estimated population of 3,500, had increased proportionately.

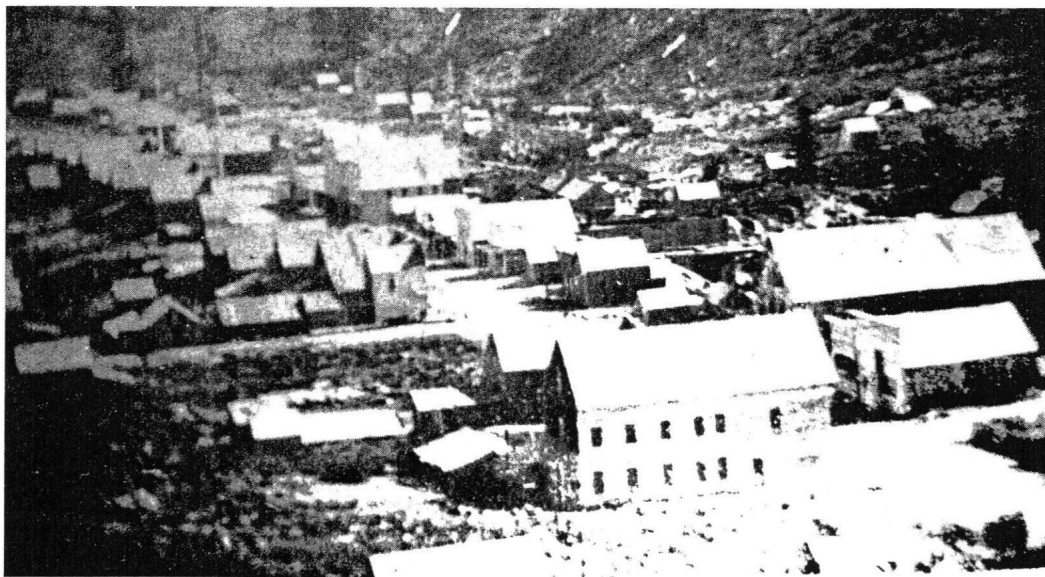
That same year the town’s name had been changed from Kongsberg to Silver Mountain City and it became the county seat of newly formed Alpine County.

Ramon Duart was delivering the road crews supplies, which included large quantities of black powder for blasting, at a cost of \$3 per 100 pounds.

Hermit Valley, largely due to the road work, polled 400 votes in the 1864 election and in 1865, had its own post office. However, as a result of completion of the wagon road

Please see **Blood**, pg. 18

**Silver Mountain City  
in its heyday  
during the 1860's.**  
*(Calaveras County  
Historical Society)*



**Blood**, cont. from pg. 17

across Ebbetts Pass that same year, its population crashed. The post office was closed on March 19, 1867.

But Grizzly Bear Valley, which quickly was becoming known as Blood's Station, was becoming a major stopping place and high country trade center.

From the time snow was off the ground enough to allow late spring travel until the snow flew again in the fall, Harvey Blood personally managed the toll station and store he had established there.

Lumber used in construction of the facilities there was hauled by wagon from the Dunbar sawmill, near White Pines, and was considered some of the best in the Sierra. In addition to operation of the toll gate, hotel and store, Blood also cut hay and grazed livestock in the meadow on the south side of the toll road.

But no attempt was made to keep the station open after the first major snowfall on the summit. During the winter months the only person who regularly traveled that country was the famed John A. "Snow-Shoe" Thompson, who from 1856 to 1876 carried the mail between Markleeville and Murphys and Placerville and Carson Valley.

In 1873, Harvey Blood married Elizabeth Gardner, daughter of John and Mary Rebekah Dorrington Gardner, owners of Cold Springs Ranch, also called Gardner's Station, which today's travelers know as Dorrington.

The couple divided their time between a home in Angels Camp during the winter, and the Blood Toll Station, in Bear Valley in summer. Later, after Blood acquired the Sperry Hotel in Murphys, the family spent its winters in that community.

From his marriage to Elizabeth Gardner, one daughter,

Reba Blood, was born. Reba, in 1902, married Tilden Tognazzini, cashier of the Central Trust Company, of San Francisco.

Upon Tognazzini's death, his widow later married Dr. Alfred B. Grosse, of San Francisco. She died in Santa Barbara, in April, 1959, and her place of burial is in the Altaville Protestant Cemetery.

Blood, in 1878, was granted a land patent for 160 acres near Cottage Springs. By the mid-1870's many Calaveras County cattlemen were summering large herds of cattle and sheep in the mountains of eastern Calaveras and western Alpine counties. In addition to his toll business and sales to travelers, the cattlemen during those summer months were valued customers at his store.

The cattlemen, the Airolas, Robies, Lombardis, Ham Luddy, Wheat, the Gann brothers, Dell'Ortos, Filippinis and many other families, arrived in June to fix fences and repair winter snow damage at their camps and cabins. The cattle and sheep were brought up in June and stayed on the summer range until the snow flew.

In addition to his other activities and interests, Harvey Blood was an active member of the Masonic Lodge. He had joined the Ophir Lodge in Murphys during the early 1860's, but later became a member of Bear Mountain Lodge, in Angels Camp, where he served as master for more than 20 years. He regularly made the horseback trip from Bear Valley to Angels Camp to attend lodge meetings and he was much sought after to conduct Masonic funeral services.

Blood took an active part in county affairs and in 1898 he was elected to the State Assembly. He was a leading participant in the bitter political fight at the state capitol when

aspiring U.S. senatorial candidate Dan Burns allegedly attempted to “buy” his way into the senatorship.

In 1887 as the 25-year toll road franchise granted by the state was expiring, Blood on April 7, went before the County Board of Supervisors and was granted the right to collect tolls at Bear Valley for another 10 years.

Then, in 1890, the supervisors granted him permission to install toll gates at Dorrington and in Hermit Valley. However, establishment of the gate at Dorrington drew immediate protest from George Wood, who had homesteaded land west of what is now Cottage Springs.

Wood refused to pay tolls and Blood brought action against him in Murphys Justice Court. The case was transferred to Calaveras County Superior Court which subsequently ruled that with expiration in 1887 of the franchise granted by the state, the Big Trees-Carson Valley route was now a free public road.

But, in 1893, after the county supervisors, acting under liberalized authority granted by the state, adopted a new ordinance, Blood once again began to collect tolls at Dorrington.

This time, it was R.T. McCarty who challenged the legality of Blood’s franchise and refused to pay \$30 toll for a band of sheep. Blood again sued in Murphys Justice court, and this time, his claim was upheld. He continued to collect tolls at the Dorrington station for another 17 years.

Blood continued to maintain the Big Trees-Carson Valley Road all the way from Dorrington to the Ebbetts Pass summit.

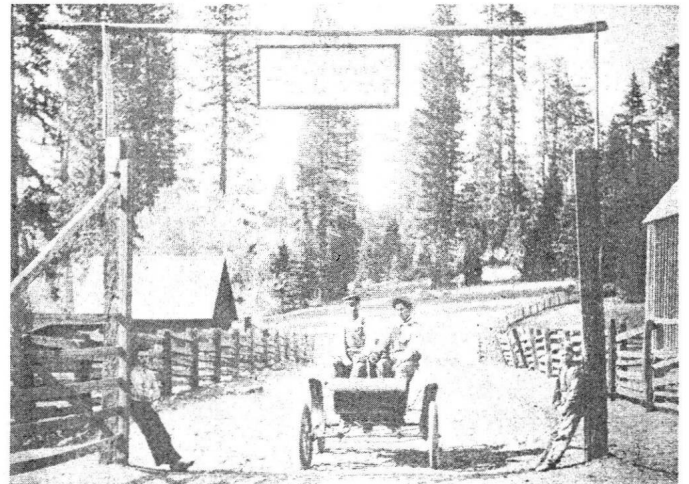
By the turn of the century Blood’s house in Bear Valley was a two-story dwelling with kitchen, dining room and store located on the ground floor. The upstairs contained three bedrooms which sometimes were used by travelers.

In addition to the house and barn there was a blacksmith shop, storage building where store supplies were kept, a milk house and chicken house. The Bloods brought the chickens up to the mountains each spring and hauled them in cages back to Murphys each fall, thus assuring themselves and guests of fresh eggs during their stay in Bear Valley.

Blood continued to maintain and improve the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike to the summit of Ebbetts Pass, although by the late 1860’s mining at Silver Mountain City had virtually ceased and in 1868 the town’s population was estimated at about 200. During the mid-70’s the Alpine County seat was moved to Markleeville.

In 1901 the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors renewed Blood’s toll road franchise for the last time, for a period of 12 years, and the road between Bear Valley and Markleeville continued to see limited use.

The first automobile crossing of Ebbetts Pass is said to



**In 1904 Ed Aldero and Will Pope paused at Dorrington in this 1902 Oldsmobile after reportedly being the first motorists to successfully drive from Big Trees to Markleeville, via Ebbetts Pass.**

*(Calaveras County Historical Society)*

have occurred in the summer of 1904, although this claim raises dispute.

A Calaveras County Historical Society photo credits Ed Aldero and Will Pope with taking a 1902 Oldsmobile across the pass from Murphys to Markleeville in the summer of 1904. The road was said to be so steep in some places that Aldero and Pope had to climb the worst spots in reverse in order to keep gasoline feeding into the car’s carburetor.

The Alpine County Heritage, published by the Alpine County Historical Society, says the first crossing was made in 1908 by a man named Myers. The Heritage says that a Dr. Sargent, of Angels Camp, also drove an automobile over the summit that year.

In April, 1910, three years before his franchise was to expire, Blood at a meeting of the county supervisors, relinquished his franchise rights and the route from Dorrington across Ebbetts Pass became a free road.

A month later, Blood, in early May left Murphys for San Francisco to visit his daughter and bring his two grandchildren back with him to spend the summer with him and his wife at Blood’s Station.

While waiting to embark in Oakland on the Oakland-San Francisco Ferry, the 72-year-old Blood suffered a stroke. He died a few days later, on May 9, 1910, in the home of his daughter.

Masonic funeral services for Blood were conducted in Angels Camp and local papers noted it was one of the  
Please see **Blood**, pg. 20

**Blood**, cont. from pg. 19

largest funerals ever held there. Burial was in the Altaville Protestant cemetery.

For more than a dozen years after Blood's death, Blood's station and store was operated for the Blood family by Louis Lombardi, one of Calaveras County pioneer cattlemen and longtime friend of Blood's.

For a number of years the Lombardis also ran their own store in Bear Valley and ran their cow camp from there.

Louis Lombardi's cabin remained there until the mid-60's, long after the cow camp was gone and the Lombardis had ceased operations there. It finally burned when a butane tank which had been installed in it, caught fire.

The Blood family sold their Bear Valley holdings in the 1920's to the Bishop Mining Company, and the mining company at one time seriously considered building a dam at the south end of the Bear Valley meadow and creating a large reservoir.

The idea was dropped, however, and in the early 1950's Bear Valley was sold to the Orvis family, of Milton. From that sale eventually developed the present Bear Valley winter sports complex and developing of its neighboring Mt. Reba ski area.



This bronze plaque stands at the edge of the old road, in Bear Valley, directly in front of where Blood's Station was located. There is one error on it, however. Jedediah Smith did not make his historic crossing of the Sierra in 1821. He and his two companions crossed the mountains, traveling from west to east, in the early summer of 1827.

**Places**, cont. from pg. 13

One morning during World War I, Charlie Gann's sister, Susan Gann Beery and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Henry Gann, while on a morning horseback ride east of Gann's Station, came upon a strikingly beautiful view of the Stanislaus River Canyon.

Feeling that the spot should be marked, they rode back to Gann's, and Susan, using green paint and her brother's shaving brush, painted the words "Liberty Point" on a sign which she posted at the lookout spot. She chose the word "Liberty" because of the campaign which was underway for the sale of Liberty Bonds.

The sign remained for many years, and today, although the State Department of Transportation has changed the name to "Liberty Vista," it still is a designated scenic highway viewpoint.

☆ ☆ ☆

Poison Springs, on Highway 4 about two miles west of Gann's, should be properly called Williams' Springs, said the late Louis Lombardi, of Mokelumne Hill, who for most of his life as a cattleman, was associated with the Ebbetts Pass area.

At this site there at one time was a road house operated by a man named Williams, which served the freight traffic and stages traveling to and from Silver Mountain City.

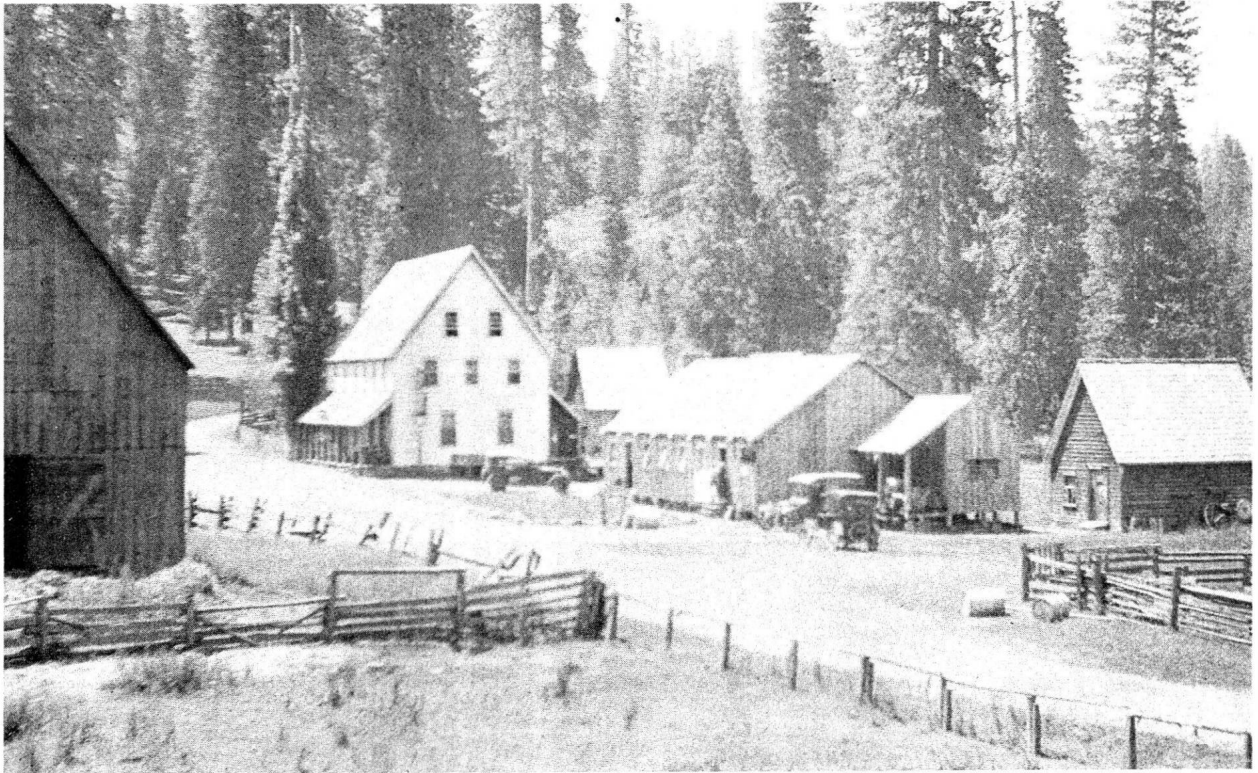
Poison Springs, sometimes called Poison Flat, was actually about three-quarters of a mile southwest of Gann's, said Lombardi, and got its name when a large number of sheep belonging to a John Stringer, of Jenny Lind, were poisoned there before 1890. He said there was confusion as to whether the sheep died from drinking medically treated dip water or were poisoned by a cattleman on whose range they were infringing. Stringer had a camp at the "Brewery," on the old trail crossing at Blood's Creek.

☆ ☆ ☆

Gus and Louie Voglesang also were sheepmen and had a sheep camp at the Brewery. They ran sheep on the present Underwood Valley range and along the Mokelumne River from Grouse Creek to Lake Valley until the 1920's, said Louis Lombardi.

During those years Stanley Lombardi was a boy in his teens. "If we were in that area we always tried to make Gus Voglesang's camp at noon. He always had fresh baked bread and a big lamb stew."





**Dorrington Station, circa 1925, was even then a popular summer vacation and picknicking spot for both Calaveras and San Joaquin County residents. In its early days it was called Cold Springs Ranch.**

Hamilton Luddy, whose home ranch was on McNighter Road along the South Fork of the Calaveras River, southwest of San Andreas, ran cattle in the Blue Creek and Black Springs areas for 40 years.

He rented grazing rights on the Van Buskirk land and he and his wife spent their summers in a cabin at Pumpkin Hollow while he took care of the cattle. Luddy also owned the Mattley Meadows area which he sold to a Mr. Thompson, of Jenny Lind, in 1917. He delivered mail to the Cuneo's and Mattleys and others who also had cattle in the Blue Creek area.

☆ ☆ ☆

Luddy said there were a lot of bears in and around the Blue Creek area between 1910 and 1920, but they caused no problems and they quickly cleaned up the carcasses of any cattle that died. He said that he once saw six bears feeding on a dead cow and during the early years, even saw a couple of California Grizzlies.

Ham Luddy also knew the route of the original emigrant road and had ridden it many times. He said he found a

very old grave along the road where it followed the ridge above Pumpkin Hollow, but in later years, all traces of it had disappeared.

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Luddy told Bill Lunsford that in the early days there was a stopping place and saloon in a small meadow on the road east of Gann's, which the local Indians called "Money Bar."

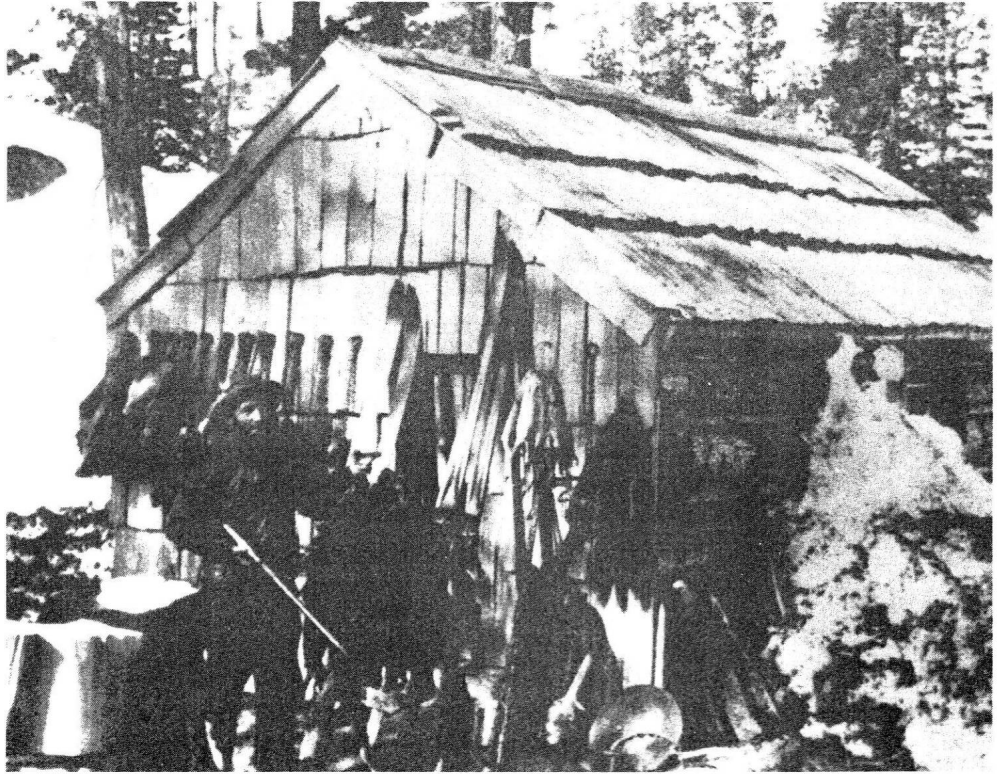
He said the owner had a grown daughter whom the Indians, on occasion, would threaten to kidnap and that her father would give them money to leave her alone.

☆ ☆ ☆

Bill Hinkleman was an old German, who, from turn of the century until well after World War I, had a small store, hotel and stock corrals in the meadow east of Camp Connell where the U.S. Forest Service camp is now located.

Cattlemen used his corrals for an overnight holding  
Please see **Places**, pg. 22

**Trapper and mountain recluse Monte Wolfe at his cabin deep in the Mokelumne River canyon, where he lived and traveled through the mountains year-round. Wolfe mysteriously disappeared during the early 1940's. (Old Timers Museum)**



**Places, cont. from pg. 21**

place for their livestock on the way to and from the mountains each spring and fall.

Hinkleman lived there year-round, cutting hay in the spring and raising hogs. In the fall when the weather cooled he butchered hogs, hauling them by wagon to Murphys and Angels Camp, where he sold halves or whole carcasses to stores and homeowners.

The area where he had his place still is known locally as "Hinkleman Flat."

☆ ☆ ☆

Bear Trap Basin got its name from the fact that sheepmen who used the area during the early days (Vogelsangs were among those who ran sheep there) built a log bear trap which they baited with dead sheep, and caught a bear in it. Bear Trap was once used as cattle range by the Airolas and later, 160 acres there was patented by Eugene Jelmini.

Guyton Jelmini patented another 160 acres in what is now Jelmini Basin. He summered dairy cattle there and hauled butter and home-made cheese by wagon to Angels Camp.

A man named Freitas ran sheep in Grouse Valley about 1924. He had a shepherd named J.I. Webb.

Ed Tryon ran sheep on the eastern side of the summit and Charles Tryon summered horses in the Highland Lakes area. Bill Orvis brought sheep into that area about 1915, but later, Tryon and Cutler brought cattle back there. From 1890 to around 1910 the Wheeler family, from Stanislaus County, ran sheep in the Wheeler Lake area and above.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Gabbott family, of Paloma, had a dairy string in Gabbott's Meadow, on Highland Creek, during the summer. Dave Eltringham, of Douglas Flat, camped with them and had the Elephant Rock range.

Later, the Robies, Airolas and John Kuhn ran cattle in the Gabbott's and Wilderness Creek area.

Hiram Tyrer brought sheep to the Hiram Meadow area and later his grazing allotment was taken over by Henry Ward (Henry's Peak), who put cattle on the summer range there.

Tyer, in 1902, at age 79, still was going to the mountains with his sheep.

Walter Robie, in 1875, began driving sheep from his ranch on Milton Road, to summer pasture near Bear Valley. He, his son, Walter John Robie, and later his grandson, Rothwell "Bud" Robie, took cattle, horses and sheep to the Lake Alpine, Dardanelles and Gabbotts Meadow areas for many years. During the 1880's Jake Tower ranged cattle in the Duck Lake and Stanislaus Meadows area.

☆ ☆ ☆

Turkey Johnson was a sheep camp tender in Onion Valley (Tamarack) who for several years also successfully raised a flock of turkeys there each summer.

With the help of his dogs and youngsters he would herd them down the road from the mountains each fall, much the same as he would herd sheep.

However, he gave up the project in disgust after an early fall snow hit the area stranding his turkeys and scattering them into the trees, from which, short of shooting them, he was unable to get them down.

☆ ☆ ☆

Andrew Jackson Smith (sometimes derisively called "Trapper Smith" because during a winter trapping expedition his total take was one gray squirrel) was a guide for Perry and Sperry when they owned the Big Trees Hotel.

But Smith was both an avid and expert trout fisherman, who during the summer provided trout for the daily menu at the hotel.

However, more than being just a fisherman, he also was something of an early day conservationist. He is credited with stocking the upper reaches of Beaver Creek with trout by catching them in the Little Mokelumne and carrying them in buckets to Beaver Creek.

☆ ☆ ☆

Louis and Alex Lombardi, during the 1920's furnished the beef which was eaten by the crews building Spicer Reservoir.

The cattle were butchered at Blood's and until a road into the Spicer Reservoir site was completed, the meat was taken by pack horses to the Spicer camp. It was the job of Stanley (Corky) Lombardi, then 15 years old, to make the weekly trip with the pack train from Blood's (now Bear Valley) to the Spicer Camp.



**Al Mattley, Howard Joses and George Mattley haying on a meadow at Blue Creek.**

*(Joses Family Album)*

Ephraim A. Sapp (42 years old in 1902), of Valley Springs, camped at Sapp's Meadows just north of Highland Creek and ran cattle in Spicer Meadow, along Highland Creek. Later Lee Hunt, with his sons Mike and Elmer, took over the grazing allotment and built a cabin which was flooded when Spicer Reservoir was built.

☆ ☆ ☆

Many of the ranchers who took dairy cattle to the mountains stripped bark from lodgepole pines to make cheese molds.

Bill Lunsford said evidence of an old cabin and the presence of many barked trees in Stanislaus Meadow indicates an early day dairy operation there. He said barked trees also were found in the Lake Alpine and Pacific Valley areas.

☆ ☆ ☆

Ethel Adams, of Murphys, had the cattle range in the Iceberg area with her camp located on Disaster Creek. She died there and her body was packed out on a mule. The spot where her camp was located still is known as "Adams' Camp."

☆ ☆ ☆

The Utica Mining Company began construction of the  
Please see **Places**, pg. 24

**Places, cont.** from pg. 23

present Utica Reservoir in 1906 and completed it in 1911 at a cost of \$150,000, working only during the summer months.

One of the old Utica camp cabins stood until the 1960's when it and some shacks still standing near Spicer Reservoir were disposed of by Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

Union Reservoir originally was constructed as a log dam in the 1870's and Silver Valley Reservoir, later named "Lake Alpine," was built in the 1880's.

☆ ☆ ☆

Amile Lombardi built a cabin in what is now Sherman Acres, on Highway 4 between Tamarack and Bear Valley and patented the land there in 1898. The first cabin had a dirt floor and no windows. Later, he sold the land to Louis Lombardi who built a new cabin there.

As a boy, Louis Lombardi worked for David Filippini, who owned Tamarack, then called Onion Valley.

Louis, who was 94 years old when he passed away in 1974, said he took cattle to the mountains for 70 years.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Mattley family, of Jackson, Dave, John, George and Al, owned what is now known as Mattley Meadow and Mattley Ridge, on the northside of Blue Creek.

For many years the Mattley cabin, near Mattley Meadow was a landmark in that area. The Mattleys sold the last of their holdings there to the Busi family in the early 1930's. That area now is a part of the Dell'Orto Cattle range.

☆ ☆ ☆

Cuneo Camp, on upper Blue Creek, originally called Tice's, was one of the early day dairy meadows as well as a cow camp.

August Giannini, father of Nat Giannini of San Andreas, milked a dairy herd and made butter and cheese shortly after the turn of the century in the meadow there now owned by Jerome and Verne Cuneo, of Amador County.

Blue Creek, during the early part of this century was noted as a prime deer hunting area and for the quality of the trout fishing there in summer. Trout fishermen trav-

eled by wagon all the way from Stockton to camp along Blue Creek and fish there.

☆ ☆ ☆

Little appears to be known about the origin of Shovel Grave, located north of Moore Creek, on the ridge overlooking Salt Springs Reservoir.

Early travelers in that area are said to have found what appeared to be a grave with a broken handled shovel serving as a headstone or grave marker. The location, some distance northeast of Calaveras Dome, still is shown on Stanislaus National Forest maps.

☆ ☆ ☆

Hamilton Luddy, in 1967, told Bill Lunsford that Horse Gulch got its name during the early days because there was a big green hillside above it which produced a particular variety of fern which cattle liked.

However, according to Luddy, during that period when the fern was producing seed spores, it would kill cattle if they drank water immediately after eating it. The fern had no effect on horses, he said, so the livestock owners pastured horses there instead of cows, hence the name, Horse Canyon or Horse Gulch.

☆ ☆ ☆

Amon Tanner was born in Murphys in 1878.

His father, Ormund Tanner, a native of Norway who changed his name from "Torgensen" to Tanner upon arriving in the U.S., was one of the first miners at Silver Mountain City, on the east side of Ebbetts Pass. After being hurt in a mining accident he moved to Murphys where Amon Tanner was born.

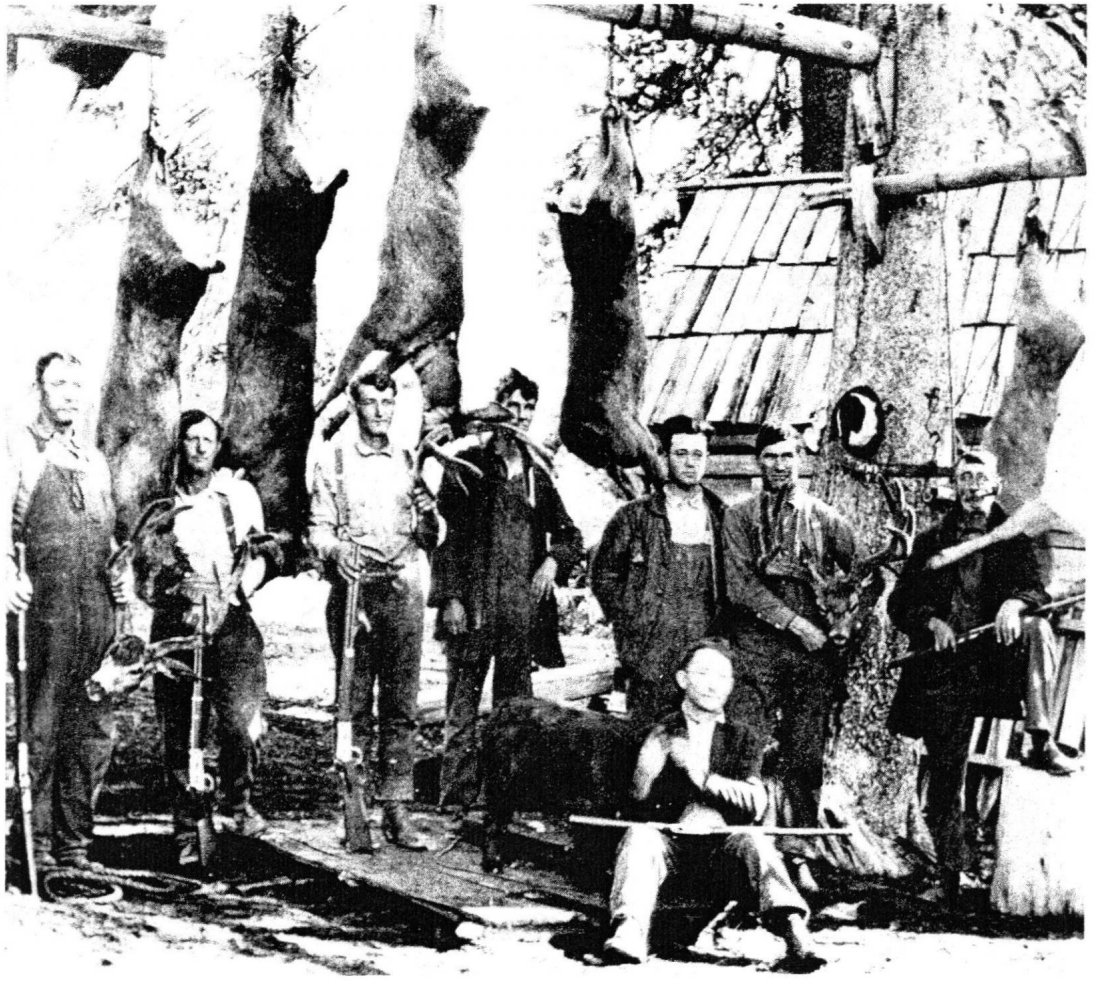
From 1908 until shortly before the start of World War I in Europe, Amon Tanner ran a stage line and held the contract to deliver mail between Angels Camp and Dorrington. In winter when it became impossible, due to snow, to operate the stage, Tanner carried the mail to and from the upper country on skis. His father came from the same town in Norway where Snowshoe Thompson was born.

☆ ☆ ☆

Lake Alpine, before the dam was built that created the reservoir there, was called Silver Valley.

Deer hunters at Blood's Station, circa 1914: L to R, Bill Stanaway of Milton; Arch Lester and Louis Lombardi, of Mokelumne Hill; Hermie Donner, of Milton; Lester Stanaway, son of Bill; Alex Lombardi of Mokelumne Hill; Herman Donner, father of Hermie. The man who is seated is named Martell and was related to the Martells for which that Amador County community is named. The Donners were direct descendants of survivors of the Donner party. The bucks hanging there were killed in Cat Valley, in what is now the Mokelumne Wilderness. The building in the background is Blood's chicken house.

*(Calaveras County Museum)*



It was given that name by the Murphys exploring party of 1855 after a member of that group found what he thought was a vein of silver ore. The ore turned out to be nothing more than plumbago (graphite) instead of silver, but the name Silver Valley continued to be used for many years, and the stream which flows from the present lake into the North Fork of the Stanislaus River still is called Silver Creek.

☆ ☆ ☆

The first cabin believed ever built along the route of the emigrant road between what is now Dorrington and Bear Valley was in the meadow at the head of the Blue Creek drainage.

This spot originally was called Big Meadows, and when Dr. N.C. Condon, A.H. Hall, J. Thornton and others who made up the Murphys exploring party came upon it in

1855, the cabin already was there and a man named Smith and four others were cutting grass hay.

The cabin, which was still standing in the 1930's, had a dirt floor, no windows, and gun ports in its log walls. In the early days, the present Big Meadows through which Highway 4 runs, was known as Register Flat.

☆ ☆ ☆

The present Lake Alpine Lodge was built by B.R. Giannelli in 1926 and 1927. The building was badly damaged by snow in 1932 and was rebuilt the following year.

The huge fireplace in the end of the building, constructed of big rough granite blocks, was built by the trapper-mountain man, Monte Wolfe.

Actually the Lake Alpine (Silver Valley) area was first used as a stopping place when Sam Osborne, in 1864, built

Please see **Places**, pg. 26

Places, cont. from pg. 25

a barn near what is now Silver Tip Campground, to support his freighting business which he ran between the Angels Camp-Murphys area and Silver Mountain City.

☆ ☆ ☆

“The Brewery” was a series of small, quaking aspen flats and clearings along Blood’s Creek, above the Stanislaus River where shepherders often camped in summer.

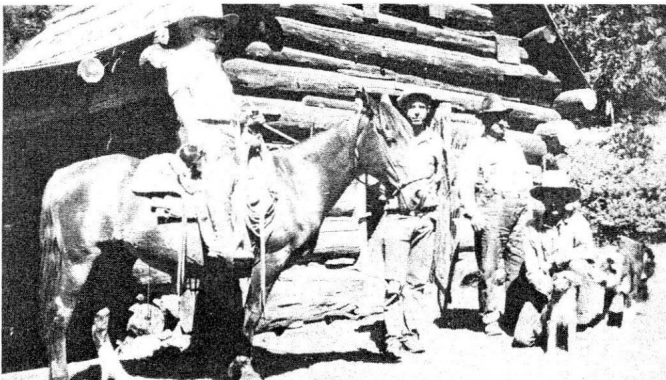
It got its name from the fact that one of the shepherders who camped there much of the time made root beer which he offered to anyone who passed by.

In later years, the campsites often were used by deer hunting parties, but the name stuck with it, and today oldtimers in the Ebbetts Pass area still call that area along Blood’s Creek the “Brewery.”

☆ ☆ ☆

*Thanks for many of these historical notes goes to retired Calaveras District Ranger Bill Lunsford who foresightedly, many years ago, took the time to interview and record the memories of “up country” oldtimers.*

*Thanks also goes to Stanley “Corky” Lombardi of Mokelumne Hill and his neice, Mary Kress, of Hathaway Pines; Rancher Doug Joses and his wife, Loree, of Mountain Ranch; Irvin Tanner and David Kenfield, both of Murphys; Charles Filippini, of San Andreas and others, all members of pioneer Calaveras and Amador County families.*



**Most Ebbetts Pass area cow camps had log cabins such as this one, until well into the 1920’s and 1930’s. In foreground, (L to R) are Bill Rodriquez, Howard Joses, Albert Mattley and George Mattley.**

## TAMARACK ONCE WAS CALLED ONION VALLEY

The first white men to have seen what is now Tamarack, on the Ebbetts Pass Highway, probably were Hudson Bay Company trappers, who during the 1830’s, ranged the western slope of the Sierra.

It is also possible that Jedediah Smith, accompanied by Robert Evans and Silas Gobel, may have passed through Tamarack in 1827 when they crossed the mountains from West to East, enroute to Utah for supplies for their trapping party camped in the San Joaquin Valley.

Major John Ebbetts and a group of prospectors he guided westward across the summit in 1850 are believed to have camped there while on their way to the gold fields.

Dr. N.C. Condon, A.H. Hall, J. Thornton, L.W. Noyes, J.S. Niswander and H. Capron, who on an exploring trip crossed the mountains from Murphys to Carson Valley in Aug. 1855, mentioned finding a flat where Indians had been digging wild onions.

For more than 80 years, before its name was changed in 1936, Tamarack was known as “Onion Valley.”

Charles Filippini, of San Andreas, whose father and grandfather ranged cattle there for nearly 50 years, recalls riding a horse through the meadow that is now Tamarack during the summer when the air was fragrant with the odor of wild onions.

The Tamarack area came into use as a cattle and sheep grazing area during the late 1860’s or early 1870’s when Carlos Giacomo Fillipini, grandfather of Charles Fillipini, began bringing cattle there.

Filippini had come to Calaveras County from Switzerland in 1855 and after establishing his home ranch near the mining settlement of El Dorado (now Mountain Ranch) was one of the first cattlemen to utilize the high country for summer range.

Filippini, however, did not file on Onion Valley. Instead, he took up land encompassing an area that included what is now Sky High Ranch subdivision, southwest of there.

His first summer range headquarters was a cabin north of Big Meadow Creek and west of the meadow in which Dell’Orto Camp is presently located.

But Carlos Filippini used the Big Meadow Creek camp only a short time, then moved his summer headquarters to the larger and more open meadow and grassland area that

is now Sky High Ranch. There he built a cabin, milk house and corrals.

He milked a string of dairy cattle, manufactured butter and cheese and drove hogs to the mountains to use the excess milk left over from the cheese and butter making.

The hogs were driven only at night along the trail from Mountain Ranch to the Filippini summer camp in order to keep them from overheating.

“They always waited until there was a full moon so they would have several nights of bright moonlight in which to move the pigs,” said Charles Filippini. “They never had any trouble.”

The first person to set up a permanent summer camp in Onion Valley is believed to have been “Turkey” Johnson, a sheep herder who during the late 60’s or early 70’s ran sheep in the area and had a herd of turkeys which he also drove to and from the mountains.

Johnson had his camp and a barn there, and while he ranged his sheep over a relatively large area of the mountains, his youngsters tended the turkeys at the Onion Flat camp. However, he simply used the area, which at that time was federal forest reserve land, and made no effort to acquire ownership of it.

Neither did Carlos Filippini, during those early years, make any move to acquire title to Onion Valley. It was not until around 1880 that Carlos Filippini’s son, Dave, who had been born in 1863, homesteaded Onion Flat.

At that time there was only the barn there which had been built by Turkey Johnson.

Dave, who was Charley Filippini’s father, summered his cattle in that area until 1919 when he sold both the Onion Valley and Sky High Ranch properties to Thompson and Reeves who in turn, sold it to Charlie Gann.

Gann later sold the two properties to the Swinborn family, of Toyon.

During the 1920’s as Highway 4 from Big Trees to Markleeville continued slowly to be improved, and automobile traffic increased, Bill Hutchins opened a store at Big Meadows.

His store, which he operated only in summer months, was simply a tent pitched on a wooden platform. In the early 1930’s he moved the store to Onion Valley, which he renamed “Camp Tamarack.”

Hutchins’ new store was a large building which also housed a dance hall. Dances were held each Saturday night, and it was during those years that Gann developed a summer home subdivision there.



**The Carlos Filippini cow camp, before the turn of the century, at what is now Sky High Ranch mountain cabin subdivision. His son, Dave Filippini, homesteaded Onion Valley, which later was named Tamarack.**

*(Courtesy of Charles Filippini)*

However, in 1934 the store was destroyed by fire and later that same year the property in Tamarack meadow was purchased from Gann by William B. Bracey and his wife, Ruby.

The Braceys built a store and two rental cabins which they later sold.

Another store established there burned out not long after it was built and the property then passed through a succession of owners that included Ray Garamendi, of Mokelumne Hill and Gaylan Core, of San Andreas.

The building that has become known as Tamarack Lodge was built by Harold Mosbaugh, of Arnold, after he acquired the property in 1956.

The lodge originally was built on the north side of the creek and the old highway that ran through the middle of the meadow. The State Department of Highways, when it realigned Highway 4 along the north side of the creek, moved the lodge to its present location.

Please see **Tamarack**, pg. 28

**Tamarack**, cont. from pg. 27

The old Bracey store was cut in half and the two sections were moved behind the lodge where they served as utility buildings.

In the late 1960's the lodge and property was acquired by Dennis Jarnigan, of Arnold, who operated it during the years that Mt. Reba Ski Area and Bear Valley Lodge and the Bear Valley winter sports complex was being developed.

Other owners since then have included David McTaggart, who for a time was manager of Bear Valley Lodge and who for a time, changed the name of Tamarack to Mega Bear.

In recent years Tamarack Lodge has been expanded and refurbished by its owner, Ferrarini Corp., of Thousand Oaks, and it has become a popular cross country skiing



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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.



center in winter as well as summer recreation area.

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### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome these new members to the society:

- Mrs. Dorothy Charlton, Valley Springs
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- Mr. Davie E. Cosgrave, Altaville
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- Randy and Sherri Pitto, Jackson

#### IN MEMORIAM

- Mrs. Venus McCarty, October 20, 1987
- Mrs. Josepha Wolfenbarger, November 5, 1987
- Mrs. Roxie Airola, November 6, 1987
- Mrs. Margaret (Bessie) Airola, December 8, 1987