



Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society
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SIXTEENTH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

The Society's school essay contest was started in 1957 in an effort to stimulate an interest in school children in our county's history. It was felt that such a contest would also provide a useful project for both history and English teachers to use in their classes. Each year's winning essays were, for a number of years, printed in mimeograph form. Copies of most of these booklets are still available.

For eleven years the "Annual Essay Contest" was a popular activity, and was one in which the Society took much pride. In 1968, interest, both on the part of the schools and the Society, began to wane in the essay project and it was postponed until 1969 when the 12th contest was held. In 1971, the 13th, and in 1976, the 14th contests were sponsored by the Society. For the next seven years there was insufficient interest to continue.

The year 1983 saw a reactivation of the project with the 15th contest. This was well received and led to the 16th Essay contest this year. We decided to publish this year's winning essays in "Las Calaveras", and believe our readers will be interested in seeing the work of our school-age historians. Mrs. Lorraine Kennedy chaired the Society's Essay Committee for the 15th and 16th, and deserves much credit for their success. We hope the contest will continue as an annual affair.

The six winning essays are printed in this issue. They are followed by four essays receiving honorable mention. We feel sure that you will be surprised at the range of subjects covered and the excellent work of these 7th and 8th graders. The essays are printed essentially as received and the Society has not verified any specific facts contained in them.

Editor

G. TISCORNIA COMPANY

by Jehanne Tiscornia
8th Grade, San Andreas

G. Tiscornia Company, Incorporated, was a general merchandising business in San Andreas from 1884 until 1919. It was owned by my great-great-grandfather Gerolamo Tiscornia. He started in the merchandising business in 1867 when he became a partner with John Dasso who had owned a store where the Kentucky House is now. (The Kentucky House later was the guest house of the Calaveras Cement Company.)



GEROLAMO TISCORNIA

Courtesy of Barbara T. Kathan

Gerolamo Tiscornia was born in Zerli, Italy, in 1842. He came to the California goldfields by way of Panama in 1862. He mined on San Antonio Creek in Calaveras County for almost six years and saved \$1700. With this money he became Dasso's partner in his first store. In 1867 Gerolamo and Dasso bought a store owned by Thomas Tassano on Main Street in San Andreas. This store was located where the Black Bart Restaurant is now. Immediately an addition was added by Frank Bernasconi which is now the Black Bart Bar. The rock used on the addition was quarried from Dasso Field. Dasso Field is now called Hillmont. Lime in the con-

struction came from the Bernasconi Ranch.

Gerolamo sold out to Dasso in 1879 and took a trip home to Italy. He returned in 1880 and bought a store in Camanche and married Miss Eugenia Raggio who was born in Mountain Ranch in 1860.

In 1884 Gerolamo and his family which now included sons Chester (1881) and Frank (1882) moved back to San Andreas. He went back into the store business with Dasso at the same place on Main Street. It was this store that came to be known as G. Tiscornia Company. His other three sons were born in San Andreas. They were Adolpho (1884), James (1885), and Waldo (1892).

In 1897 Gerolamo bought out Dasso and ran the store until 1907 with the help of his sons Chester, Frank, and James. Gerolamo and his family then moved to Oakland leaving Chester to run the store until it was sold to San Jose businessmen in 1919.

G. Tiscornia Company was the largest store in San Andreas. They did more business than all the other stores combined. Besides the large double store they had three warehouses. One warehouse is now the location of the Airola law offices on Main Street. This warehouse was for flour, brooms, sugar, canned goods, and other household items. Another warehouse had been an old Chinese store and is now Shirley's Beauty Salon and Friar Tuck's Restaurant. This warehouse was for pipe, structural steel, rail, and other construction materials. The third warehouse was torn down during highway construction in the 1950s. In part of its place is the lawn between Gooney's Saloon and Winkler's Village Mart. This warehouse was for grain storage only. By 1900 the merchandise of G. Tiscornia Company was valued at \$25,000.

G. Tiscornia Company was open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. After the store closed, Chester would stay and work on the books, and if he heard somebody knocking at the door, he would let them in to buy something.

On the main floor of the store they carried groceries, saddles, harnesses, pickled foods, pots and pans, guns, ammunition, clothing, boots, shoes, hats, liquor, tobacco, and hardware. They had no refrigeration but sold bacon and cheese. They had a bar and sold shots of whiskey, beer, wine, and soda water. His son Chester said that he sold shots of whiskey at one end of the counter and girdles at the other. Downstairs in the basement (the current Black Bart Room) they carried things like rubber shoes, other rubber goods, giant powder, rope, and stored barrels of wine and whiskey.

They usually had four employees. They had delivery boys who traveled by horse and wagon. In town they

used a spring wagon. To go out of town they used a heavy wagon. It was a thorough brace with leather straps like a stagecoach instead of springs. One employee was Chester's brother-in-law Johnny Gnecco, a young man born and raised on a ranch on Jesus Maria Road. He was very strong. He would carry 140-pound wheat sacks under each arm from the grain warehouse to the store. People would stop him on the street to see how long he would stand there holding the wheat and talking to them.

G. Tiscornia Company bought more gold than anyone else in town and might have been the only business to buy gold. One Chinese miner mixed lead with his gold. Gerolamo finally figured this out when the weights from the San Francisco Mint were always light. He tested the Chinese miner's gold in hydrochloric acid and noticed the bubbling of the lead. When the miner returned to sell more gold, Gerolamo gave him a swift kick and ran him out of the store. The Chinese in San Andreas were generally mistreated. Some shopped at the store but most shopped at Cassinelli's (near the current Matador Cafe) where they spoke Chinese or at the Chinese stores.

The store was a busy place. People from the Courthouse and Hall of Records across the street came in to shop and drink. There were never any robberies, but when Gerolamo went on buying trips to San Francisco, he left strict orders about closing the steel doors in case of fire.

There was a murder in the store. A Mexican and a Frenchman had an argument. The Mexican pulled his gun. Gerolamo grabbed him and held his arms. Sheriff Ben Thorne walked in, slapped Gerolamo across the face to release the man, then the Mexican shot and killed the Frenchman. Gerolamo never voted for Ben Thorne again even though he said he was the best sheriff they ever had. Ben Thorne is well-known for arresting Black Bart and building his brick house which still stands on Highway 49 (St. Charles Street).

San Andreas had no bank. People left their money at G. Tiscornia Company until they needed it. As a result the store had large amounts of cash in the two safes and hidden in other locations in the store. One time Chester hid a bag containing about \$40,000 in the basement inside a coiled rope. When he returned the bag was gone. He later found it and decided that a rat had moved it.

When the store was sold in 1919, the San Jose buyers were only interested in the dry goods and liquor. They sold the building to Sharkey Quierolo and Candie Beffa who had worked for Gerolamo. Later they sold the

building to Al Treat who had a small store down the street and Bill Treat who had come from San Francisco. After Al died, Ralph Treat joined the business which is now Treat's General Store.

From his experience in the store Chester realized that San Andreas needed a bank. In 1922 he organized the Central Bank of Calaveras which was located at the store's old household items' warehouse. He was the president of the bank until he retired in 1942. During the time he worked in the store and the bank, he was also a cattle rancher. He was a cattle rancher until his death in 1974 at the age of 93.

After Gerolamo went to Oakland in 1907, he became involved in the real estate business in the Bay Area and Southern California. His wife died in 1928, and he died ten years later at the age of 96.

The Tiscornia family has had business interests in San Andreas and Calaveras County for over one hundred years. I chose to write about my great-great-grandfather's business because I wanted to learn more about my family.

Bibliography

- a) February 1, 1984, interview with my grandfather Vincent C. Tiscornia, the grandson of Gerolamo Tiscornia and son of Chester J. Tiscornia.
- b) The Calaveras Publishing Company Centennial Edition, July 16, 1981, article about the Tiscornia family written by my aunt Barbara J. Kathan
- c) "Representative Citizens of Northern California," copyright 1901, pages 535 and 536, "Girolamo Tiscornia" (sic)

TWO DITCHES OF THE MOTHER LODGE

by *Tim Teale*
7th Grade, Rail Road Flat

During the time of the Gold Rush, ditches were all over Calaveras County. There were two ditches in the Mokelumne Hill territory that delivered water to the townspeople and the miners of the area. Some of them can still be seen today.

When it was built in 1852, the Mokelumne Ditch was made up of trench and wooden flume. These flumes were six feet wide at the top and went to twenty-two inches wide in the bottom. This ditch started out of the South Fork of the Mokelumne River, just below the present South Fork Bridge on Highway 26.

Most of the flumes eventually rotted out and they were replaced by more flume and siphon pipes. Five hundred Chinese men installed the ditch, flume and pipes to the Mokelumne Ditch. They kept it level by

letting a little water run in behind and then digging the ditch deeper if they had to. The ditches were two feet wide and three feet deep. There were quite a few siphon pipes on this ditch, and the ditch tenders had one which went right over the place where the Exxon station is now in Mokelumne Hill.

There were always problems with the pipes. At one time the water was blocked off in front of a pipe. The water that was in the pipe kept going, and it created a vacuum which just flatted out the pipe. The ditch crew had to put in a new one. Another pipe rusted out near the old Yale Ranch in little pieces; so, the ditch tenders put wooden plugs in it. There were so many plugs in it that it was named the "Porcupine Pipe." Still another pipe rusted out in one place and they put inner tube and other pipe in that to fix it. The water dried up one time, and when it came back through, the inner tube had cracked, so the ditch tenders then put horse manure down the top of it. Somehow, that stopped the leaks.

The Mokelumne Ditch went all the way to the town of Wallace. It went over Flumehouse Ridge out to Paloma. There it separated, using the ditch to Valley Springs. The other part went to Campo Seco.

Bill Prindle was the superintendent for the ditch before it was turned over to the Calaveras Public Utility District in 1939. He made sure that his water got to where it was needed. There were six camps on the Mokelumne Ditch for the ditch tenders. They covered an average of sixteen miles in two days in keeping up their particular part of the ditch. Maintenance became worse in the winter season because the winds would knock down trees or branches, clogging the ditch. When it got really cold, the ditch would freeze up and there would be chaos. Ditch tenders hired people to break up the ice. If they didn't get it all broken, it would freeze up again and would not let water through for several days or even weeks.

The Clark Ditch was built by Warren V. Clark in 1856. It started on the Little Mokelumne which fed into the South Fork. It held 2,000 miners' inches of water where the Mokelumne carried 3,000. This ditch went from Blue Mountain all the way to Rich Gulch. Mr. Clark used most of the water for his hydraulic mining and the remainder went for his placer mining.

This ditch also went to two reservoirs - McCarty, and what is now Miner's Lake. One time it started a huge controversy when the Clark Ditch took a lot of water. The Mokelumne Ditch had been taking a large part of the water out of the river and got almost nothing. The two went to court. The Mokelumne Ditch won because it had prior water rights. So, when the water was low, they dumped water out of the reservoirs down

Spruce Gulch with the Clark Ditch and filled up the river.

At one time the Clark Ditch went across Alabama Hill with the help of a flume to deliver water. By the end of the Gold Rush, most of the miners had gone out of the Rail Road Flat area. Part of the Clark Ditch and the Mokelumne Ditch were bought by the Calaveras Public Utilities District. These ran until they placed a pipe underground in 1976.

Traces of these ditches can still be found today. The Clark Ditch can be seen if you look hard along Independence Road in Rail Road Flat. The Mokelumne Ditch can be seen clearly today on Flumehouse Ridge and can be followed all the way to Valley Springs.

STEWART'S FORD-MERCURY

by Jaime Lynn Gerard

7th Grade, San Andreas Elementary School

My great-great-grandfather, George Stewart, owned a store in 1913. The store was called Stewart's Grocery. He worked with his son, Leslie Stewart. The grocery was at the corner of St. Charles and Main Street in San Andreas.

George Stewart had wanted a new car. He had gone to different places and couldn't find a car. He went to a Ford Motor Company in San Francisco and got one. Seeing how good the business was down there, he decided to go into the car business himself with his son.

Business was really good. The first year of the car

business, George delivered four cars. George and Les were having a ball delivering cars. Since automobiles were a new kind of transportation, the Stewart's taught each customer who bought a car from them how to drive.

When the Ford Motor Company delivered cars, they didn't have any convoy trucks to deliver for them. To deliver to Stockton, they put the cars on a boat. To deliver to Valley Springs, they used railroads.

When Les got back from the army, his father, George, gave him the store. After two years of the store business, he gave it back to his dad. He wanted to be in the automobile business. The store was sold to F.E. Winkler, which is now Winkler's Village Mart.

Les had been studying about salesmanship for a long time. He thought he was ready to sell cars, by asking at different houses. He did a very good job. When World War II came along, business picked up. Everybody started working harder. There was lots of things that could be done. They sold lots of cars. The business was very good. They were known to be the best dealers. They started to get more cars. Having so many, they changed their location to across the street, where they have been located until 1983.

The lady that worked at the garage, ever since it opened, was very valuable to the garage. Her name was Lois Hengen. She kept everybody in order. She was a very good worker.

Once George Stewart passed away, the business was handed down to Les, his son. Then Les retired and his



STEWART'S FIRST GARAGE

This was located on the lower part of Main Street near the bridge.

From Society Files



THE MOUNTAIN RANCH HOUSE

A view of the well-known landmark as it appeared some sixty years ago.

Courtesy of Deirdre Flynn

son, Vern Stewart, took over. My dad, Fred Gerard, also worked there. My grandfather, Al Gibbens, worked there too.

Stewart's was in business for seventy years. The name changed once from George A. Stewart & Son to Stewart's Ford-Mercury Sales. The business was started in 1913 and was closed in December of 1983.

My great-grandfather, Leslie A. Stewart, died at the age of 86, on January 6th, 1984.

THE MOUNTAIN RANCH

*by Deirdre Flynn
7th grade, San Andreas*

My home, the "Mountain Ranch," was formerly a store. It is located on Whiskey Slide Road, one mile northwest of the town of Mountain Ranch. In the early days, Mountain Ranch was known as El Dorado.

The earliest record found of The Mountain Ranch is a deed, "W.D. Atterbury to McKeon and Sullivan," filed on March 22, 1853 in Mokelumne Hill, Calaveras County. This deed refers to an earlier sale by John Sanford on the day of June 7, 1852. (The 1852 Mokelumne Hill Court House fire destroyed all earlier records.)

The Atterbury to McKeon and Sullivan Deed indicates a three-quarters section of land, all goods, groceries, hardware, a wagon, one gray horse, and one dark brown mule were sold. This shows that the Mountain Ranch was built and used as a store as early as 1853.

Mining and Land Claims Deeds show that Mr. Sullivan used this land for cultivation or grazing purposes. John D. Sullivan was a pioneer who crossed the plains in 1849. He ran the old store at the Mountain Ranch. Later he moved to San Andreas where he operated a larger store.

At that time the store was a one-story rock building which is sixty-four feet in length, having a three-quarters size basement, with two-foot thick rock walls and three iron-doored front entrances and a sod roof.

John Sullivan sold his share of the ranch to his partner John McKeon in 1856. John McKeon then owned and operated the Mountain Ranch which was known as the McKeon Store. During that time a post office was established and John McKeon became the first postmaster. The mail was delivered to the post office once a week by a Pony Express rider who brought it from the San Andreas Post Office.

In 1859, after six years of ownership, McKeon lost

the store due to delinquent taxes. From that time on it changed hands many times. On December 18, 1859, it was sold by the sheriff, D.E. Mulford, to John and Charles Rogers.

In 1860 a second sheriff's sale occurred when the Mountain Ranch was purchased by a storekeeper named W.H. Holmes.

George McPherson owned the property in 1881 through 1886. He was a miner by trade who built a wood-framed house behind the store and then added a second and third story to the store. He employed a carpenter, Charles W. Damon, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, who did the work. There were seven bedrooms, a storeroom, library and an attic. The property was homesteaded in 1884.

In 1886 the Ranch was sold to Mr. Elmer Van Buren and two years later it was sold to C.W. Frost who owned it for just four months. The next owner was Charles B. Cox who owned it for two years. In 1891 it is shown as being owned by J.D. Barnett, and three years later it was again sold, to Mr. A. Reichel in 1894. His son, Otto Reichel, was born in the Mountain Ranch between 1894 and 1900. In 1900 the property was owned by C.H. Kegley and he in turn sold it to W.G. Craven in 1904. Mr. Craven was a farmer and lived in the stone house where a child, Maude Craven (Brown) was born between 1904 and 1914.

In 1914 the Craven family sold the ranch to the Edgar Dales of Ross, California. They ran a livery stable known as Dale's Livery and moved to the Mountain Ranch after a fire destroyed their business in Ross. Even though they sold the property to Howard Joses and his father in 1924, the Dales remained in the area and are now buried in the Mountain Ranch Cemetery.

In 1924 Howard Joses started to clear more land for grazing purposes. He raised cattle, sheep, horses and Angora goats. He was married to Margaret Howard Reed of Rail Road Flat in 1931. In 1932 a roof was constructed on the front porch by a Walter Howard. The Joses family utilized the entire house, with the hired workers sleeping in the upstairs rooms. The Howard Joses had three sons, Doug, Elliott, and Gary who helped their parents on the ranch. In 1960 a backporch and a new bathroom were added. In 1979 remodeling was done in the kitchen and bedroom area.

In 1980 Doug and Loree Joses started to restore the building. The upstairs was changed somewhat and made into separate living quarters.

The Joses family has owned the Mountain Ranch for the longest period of time - 1924 through 1984, or 60 years.

THE HAZEL FISCHER SCHOOL

*by Lisa Salvi
8th Grade, Hazel Fischer*

Introduction:

The Hazel Fischer Elementary School is a small school, located 4,000 feet up in the Sierra-Nevada Mountains of California. It is located in a town called White Pines. The town was once a logging area with one general store and a post office. This small town adjoins a mountain community called Arnold. It wasn't until recently that the small town of Arnold was even seen on a California map. The town is still noted for its logging, but it is mostly known as a resort area for skiers and summer vacationers.

Early History of the School:

The Hazel Fischer School was not always known by that name, nor has it always been in the town of White Pines. Its former name was "Avery" where the old school was built on a plot of land donated by George Avery in 1886. The school was of the same county school architecture - one room for grades 1 through 8. Years later another room was added to serve as a library. The little school house was heated by a wood stove and the water had to be brought over from the Avery Hotel. The water usually had to be brought over by a bigger male student or by Miss Fischer, the teacher-principal. Miss Fischer as the only adult at the school had to perform all of the maintenance and secretarial duties.

The land for the old Avery School was large enough and well enough suited to satisfy every need. The woods in back and a lush meadow in the front of the school made up a lot of their playground.¹ Miss Fischer mentioned nature walks and the time when a rattlesnake slithered between her and a student.

Eventually, in 1937, the population expansion forced the school to double sessions and they used orange crates for desks. After many attempts of having certain grades in the Avery Hotel to help reduce the overcrowdedness of the classrooms, they realized that it was time to build another school. The construction took place in 1941.

The New School in White Pines:

The Blagen Lumber Company granted one acre of ground for the new Avery School - later ten. The origi-

¹Mr. Hoffmann described some of his memories from an interview.



THE AVERY SCHOOL

Loaned by Marcelle Avery

nal building consisted of two rooms and two washrooms. A folding wall separated the two rooms and on holidays it was taken down to provide one large room.

The staff for the school year 1948-1949 was composed of Miss Fischer, principal and teacher of 6th, 7th and 8th; Miss Jo Dyer, 4th and 5th grade; and Miss Powell, grades 1 and 2. Unfortunately, the population increased so much that after a few years of double sessions, they were forced to build another school.

Miss Hazel Fischer:

A lady of total dedication fully fits the description of Miss Hazel Fischer. She treated all her students fairly and she expected the students to treat her the same. The students loved and trusted her.

At the beginning of Miss Fischer's teaching career at the Avery School, she nearly quit because she thought that she could not do a good job. A friend of hers talked her into staying and from that day forth she did the best she could, and believe me, she not only was good,

she was great!

"The school was her life, she lived it, and often from 6:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M."² Residents began to complain that because she stayed at work for so long, she used up too much electricity. On the weekends she would be found gardening in the meadow to help beautify the school. Due to the fact that she was so dedicated, she never had time for a social life and thus never married.

She was forced to retire in 1964. This made her very upset, but she didn't let it get to her. She started to help some of her relatives.

She certainly deserved to have our school named after her. For without her, I feel that we might not have had such a great school system as we do.

Present-Day Hazel Fischer:

The present-day school now has an enrollment of 485 students and 17 full-time teachers. We have a great staff. There is now a new computer room in which all of the

²A quote from Mr. Hoffman's paper called "The Hazel Fischer - The School and the Lady."

students are able to learn the basics and advances of a skill highly needed to survive in this world.

We have "special" teachers to help the slow learning children. There are many more things that I could tell you about, but it might take four pages, so I just gave you a few.

I am a student of the Hazel Fischer School and I feel that it is great, both academically and athletically.

REFERENCES

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"Public School Systems in Calaveras County, 1850-1910."

The above information was loaned to me by Mr. Gano with whom I discussed this essay. I asked our school's staff about information on the school, both past and present. My own input also was added.

NOT MY LUCKY DAY!

A Fanciful Tale

*by Allen Moses
7th Grade, San Andreas*

I was doing just fine until I got to Paradise's bridge. I only have a few more miles to go before I get off this dumb stagecoach.

As I was coming up on the bridge, I decided that I would walk the horses across. I liked going across the bridge because I like to look down and see the water rushing past below. While I was looking down at the river, I realized there was a man standing no more than ten feet in front of me. He had his hand up, and said, "Throw down that box!"

At first I didn't understand what he meant, but when he aimed his gun at my face, I caught on real fast. Quickly I grabbed the box (the Wells-Fargo's shipment of gold) and held onto it. Boy, was I scared! I could feel the sweat flow down my neck. Then, after what seemed like hours, he said, "Drop it on the bridge!" So I did.

Then, I stole a look at this bandit. He really looked rather silly. He had an old flour sack over his head. There were two holes in it for his eyes to peer out. He was holding a shotgun no more than five feet away from my face. It seemed that the clothes he had on were fairly new. The bandit walked slowly toward me and said, "Keep your hands up and don't move!" He sauntered past me real slow-like, taking my gun with him. Then he walked over to the coach just below me and peered in through the door. Soon after that I heard a loud sigh. It was Miss Toflen, a passenger. She had fainted. Slowly I turned just in time to see her money belt fall to the dusty bridge. The bandit saw it, too, and bent to pick

it up. He stood there, staring at it for what seemed like quite awhile. Then he gave it back to her. He then walked around to the front of the stage and said, "Relax, boy, I won't hurt you." Picking up the box containing the gold shipment, he walked away, pausing only to throw my gun onto the stream bank below.

It was about two minutes later when the first shot rang out from the far side of the river. The well-aimed bullet struck him in the left side. Instantly he was sent sprawling on the wooden planks of the bridge. Quickly he got up and started running away. I realized that this was my chance to get the members of my stage to safety. I grabbed the reins of the horses and gave them a hard wack. I got the last look at the bandit before he disappeared into the trees on the other side of the road. He had dropped lots of personal things. They were scattered all over. We were going mighty good when we got into Byrne's Ferry. After pulling to a stop, I jumped down and breathlessly reported the incident to the sheriff who was standing nearby. He said, "Well, I'll do what I can."

Several weeks later when I went into town to get the weekly paper, on the front page, in big black letters was "Black Bart Behind Bars!" As I continued to read, I learned that he had been caught 19 days after I had been held up. Still further into the article I read he had been given away by a laundry mark on a handkerchief that was dropped at the scene of one of his robberies. I also read that it was believed he had been shot in the left side during the struggle. The most shocking part of all was the fact that he would be sentenced to six years, eleven months, in San Quentin Prison. You know, I almost felt sorry for the guy.

Today I'm still driving stages for Wells-Fargo. Charles E. Bolton was the real name of the bandit Black Bart.

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Calaveras County Archives

County Jail (where Black Bart stayed)

Library, Main Street, across from Black Bart Hotel

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Calaveras Enterprise, Sept 8, 1982

"Tales of Old Calaveras" by Coke Wood

THE DOMENGHINI FAMILY

by Matt Brennan
8th Grade, San Andreas

Luigi and Caroline Domenghini came to America in the early 1870's by ship with their son, Atteleo. Luigi was a native of Malvaglia, Canton Tessin, Switzerland, which is near the border of Italy. They moved to a hidden valley near Murray Creek. They gradually obtained a lot of land. In 1878, a son, Cassimiro (or Cash) was born. A year later, another son, Charles, was born, but he died as an infant.

Earlier in 1872, Luigi bought a large stone building in Mountain Ranch in which he ran a bar and pool hall. The building was built by Mr. Pagani in 1856. Luigi died in 1891. His will stated: "I leave whatever property I may have either in this country or in my native place to my wife, Carolina Domenghini, authorizing her at the same time to act as tutor to my son, Cassimiro Domenghini, during his minority . . ." At the time of Luigi's death, his real estate was valued at \$575, and his personal property value was \$165. He had no debts.

In 1901 Atteleo Domenghini married Clorinda Valente. Later that year they had a child, Louis. At about that same year, they changed what was the bar and pool hall into the Domenghini General Store. Cash Domenghini married Elba Ames in 1919, but died six years later with no children.

As Louis got older, he helped his father run the store. They both freighted supplies from Stockton and had masonry skills. In 1925, Edyth Roe was married to Louis. They never had any children.

During the depression of the 1930's, Louis Domenghini extended credit to the people in need, which meant about half of the county. After times got better, some people paid him back. If they couldn't pay him back and owed him a large sum of money, they would give him land instead of money. Near the end of the depression, Caroline, Louis' grandmother, died.

Around eighteen years later, Atteleo died. Louis took care of the store. This brought changes to Mountain Ranch because he wouldn't allow liquor in or around the store. After awhile, a neighboring store opened in Mountain Ranch, Sender's Market, which got more business. Finally, in 1963, Louis died. The store and his property were bought by Phil Alberts in 1965.

The old General Store still stands today in the same place in Mountain Ranch. It is now used as a saw shop, but it still contains many old items that the original store might have once carried.

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2. The Calaveras County Archives: Probate of Louis Domenghini - Mrs. Kennedy
3. An interview with Beau Vincent
4. An interview with Kent Wilson
5. Old newspapers, pictures and documents - Kent Wilson

STAGE COACHES AND STAGE STOPS

by John Bartlett
7th Grade, Valley Springs

Introduction: Stage Coaches and Stage Stops is about the way people traveled in the late 1800's and early 1900's. It will tell about the robberies many stages faced. These were the beginnings of our means of travel.

Stage Coaches and Stage Stops: One of the most famous stage lines was the Big Tree route. This line was one of the most important also, because many people depended on it to get them where they wanted. The Big Tree Stage coaches were four-horse-drawn and made quite a bit of money since it was a faster way of travel than walking. Many of the miners used the coaches for shipping gold.

One of the stages that came into Big Trees was the one started by Milton Gann, put into service just after the turn of the century. This stage line ran from Milton to other places besides Big Trees, such as Angels Camp and Murphys.

One of the first stage lines to operate out of Murphys was the Dillon and Company Stage Line. It operated between Murphys and Stockton by way of Vallecito, Angels Camp and San Andreas. The fare from Murphys to Vallecito was \$1.00. From Murphys to Stockton was \$8.00.

Another stage line out of Murphys was started by T.J. Matteson about 1850, called the Wingdam Stage. This stage ran to Angels Camp by way of Six Mile Creek. He ran this stage for 36 years and then went out of business.

Stage Robberies: In late April of 1892 a Sheep Ranch Stage was stopped and robbed by two masked men. One fired a buckshot without warning, killing a lady passenger, mortally wounding the driver, and shooting the messenger in the arm. He was not hurt bad. Sheriff Thorne was after robbers for a long time with no clues. This stage was held up near San Andreas.

Another stage robbery took place on a stage line between Murphys and Stockton. It was a Wells-Fargo



LEAVING VALLEY SPRINGS FOR THE MINES

From Society Files

coach, robbed of about fifteen to twenty thousand dollars. It was robbed by about three men; one was a large man who wore a mask and spoke with a Scottish accent.

Stages' Background: Stage coaches were brought to Calaveras County during the mid and late 1800's. Stage coaches were the most popular way of travel back then. They were used for servicing mail, passengers, gold, and other luggage. Most stages held nine passengers, but lots more were usually crowded in and more sat on top.

Stages from Missouri to San Francisco were started in the 1840's; much earlier than in Calaveras. The stage wasn't started in Calaveras until the late 1850's.

The passengers were huddled together as the coach started over bumps. Most of those stages had leather curtains to protect the passengers from the weather, but the driver could expect to be soaked by rain, overcome by heat, chilled by frost, and almost suffocated by dust. The food passengers carried became spoiled and the food at the stops wasn't too good. The stage drivers often carried guns, along with some male passengers,

because the stages that took routes off main roads were subject to being robbed or attacked by Indians.

THE BLUE MOUNTAIN BOYS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

*by Kevin Glenn Brown
8th Grade, San Andreas*

Dedicated to my Grandpa, Walt Jones, and My Uncle, Lloyd Adams - Whom I will Love Forever.

The life of a fur trapper was lonely and boring all winter, and by spring they were ready to get together with other men to gamble, tell stories, drink, fight, or just to trade furs. These get-togethers were called rendezvous and were usually at the end of April, because of the snow melting away. The first one was in 1825 and was thought up by William Ashley.

Kit Carson in 1844 was trying to discover a way over the Sierras. He came down the south side of the Mokelumne River Canyon. He then went east on the north side of these mountains and discovered the Car-

son Pass. Near West Point he met up with the trappers who were having their yearly rendezvous and joined the group. He was not an active member because of his traveling.

In 1850, a rendezvous two miles south of Mountain Ranch on McKinney Creek was held. A hole in a hill was discovered by Catus Taylor. After a short while the hole was named Cave City and a little while later a hotel was built there.

In 1852 there was a rendezvous up by Coyote Creek. Because of this gathering, the discovery of Calaveras Big Trees (giant redwoods) was made by Mr. A.T. Dowd who was hunting for ingredients for the now famous "bear cat stew."

One of the wildest rendezvous ever held was when John "Grizzly" Adams showed up with his pet grizzly bear. Old John was a true addition to the Blue Mountain Boys of Calaveras County. The present day club is now led by Lloyd "Grizzly" Adams who is a direct descendent of Grizzly Adams.

In 1883 a gathering of Mountain Men was held south of Angels Camp. This gathering led to the capturing of Black Bart (Charles Bolton), the famous Mother Lode bandit and poet. He was sentenced to San Quentin. During a recent rendezvous, the Mountain Men found a large stone believed to be Black Bart's grave marker.

In 1885, seven miles east of Mountain Ranch was the town of Sheep Ranch, home of the Mother Lode's most famous gold mine. When a well known newspaper man, William R. Hearst, came to a rendezvous, he was so overwhelmed with it he purchased a portion of the Sheep Ranch Mine, which in later years laid the foundation for the Hearst fortune.

In 1892, on April 30th, a payroll stage heading for the Sheep Ranch Mine was held up between San Andreas and Mountain Ranch. It was the Mountain Men from the rendezvous who gave chase, but were not able to capture him because they had had too much to drink the night before. A monument was erected in 1963 on Mountain Ranch Road which says:

"Attempted stage robbery at this place April 30, 1892, without warning, a lone bandit fired two charges of buckshot into the stage carrying the payroll of the Sheep Ranch Mine. Miss Johanna Rodesino, a passenger, was killed instantly. Babe Raggio the driver, was severely wounded. Mike Toverly, a messenger, was slightly wounded. Miss Agnes Filippini and Mrs. A. Lloyd, passengers, were unhurt. No treasure was taken and the bandit was never apprehended."

In August 1967, the modern-day Blue Mountain Boys

were started by Walt Jones and Lloyd Adams. Both of these men had been active in black powder shooting for twenty years and are highly interested in the history of Mountain Ranch. Next they put together some costumes, made some signs calling themselves the "Blue Mountain Boys," and entered the Eldorado Days Parade.

On December 6, 1969 the Blue Mountain Boys went to Alcatraz to give goods and clothing to the Indians. They were the first white men on the island since the take-over by the Indians as a protest.

In 1970, the Blue Mountain Boys attended the Eldorado Days Parade and won a very special trophy which was the Mountain Men Trophy. On November 7, 1971, they shot with the Seventh Calvary. They won by one point. But the next year they shot with them again and the Seventh Calvary won by one point. At least they won once even though it was real close. In 1973, the Blue Mountain Boys were given the Official Honor Award for California by Governor Ronald Reagan at Coloma's 125th Anniversary of the discovery of gold.

This group of Mountain Men has grown into a family activity. All the clothing was handmade from buckskin and cowhide.

The legend of the Blue Mountain Boys will live forever.

SOURCES

Blue Mountain Boys Bibliography
Interviews with: Walt Jones and Lloyd Adams
Blue Mountain Boys Pamphlet
Articles on Blue Mountain Boys

MARK TWAIN

*by Lief Barg'e
7th Grade, San Andreas*

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in 1836, in a little town in Missouri. Samuel Clemens was better known by his pen name, Mark Twain. He did not get out west until 1861. He then left the east to join his brother Orion who was appointed secretary of the Nevada Territory. Samuel tried his hand at prospecting, then worked as the editor of the Virginia City Enterprise, where he first used the pen name of Mark Twain. Then he moved to the Mother Lode.

Mark Twain moved to Calaveras County in 1864. He moved to Jackass Hill, and made regular trips to Angels Camp. On his way by the Angels Hotel, he met Ben Coon and he told Mark Twain about the famed jumping frog. Mark Twain wrote a book about the frog and called the book "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of

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"LAS CALAVERAS"

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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 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.

APOLOGIA

Once again we are late with the Quarterly Bulletin. This issue should have come out in time for the April meeting, and is thus about four months late. We are truly trying to get caught up to our publication schedule, and respectfully request our readers' indulgence in the meantime.

IN MEMORIAM

Winifred Romaggi	January 14, 1983
Marie M. Allison	October, 1983
Edna R. Feeny	February 28, 1984
Mary Dutil Ivie	April 28, 1984

MARK TWAIN, continued from p. 33

Calaveras County." This made him famous overnight. Mark Twain was one of America's greatest authors. He wrote many excellent books such as "Tom Sawyer," "Huckleberry Finn," "Life on the Mississippi," and many more. These books were enjoyed by young and old alike.

Mark Twain only stayed out west about one year. Then he returned back east. There he met Olivia Langdon and married her. Mrs. Clemens' health was never good; she became very ill and died in 1904. Mark Twain had two daughters - Suzy was his favorite and oldest daughter; she died while she was on tour. Jean died in 1909. Mark Twain used to call himself the "unaccountable freak," like Halley's Comet which was seen the night of his birth. He was known to say he would die on its return flight, and 75 years later when it appeared, Mark Twain died the very next day.

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ERRATA

Mrs. Jean Kirkpatrick's sharp eye discovered two inaccuracies in Gary Maniery's article on the Six Mile Rancheria in our January issue, and the author has requested us to call them to our readers' attention.

Rose Davis (Limpy) died in 1930, not in 1928 as stated on page 12. The photograph of Limpy on the same page should have been dated 1924-25 instead of 1905.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to the Society:

Lou F. Cilenti, Mokelumne Hill
Shannon Crutcher, Pleasant View, TN
Jack & Ida Darby, Fremont
Mrs. JoAnn N. Gardiner, San Andreas
Carol Hancock, Mokelumne Hill
Earl & Betty Bader Houston, San Mateo
Mrs. Opal Hulburd, San Diego
Karl O.E. Kersten, San Andreas
Steve Kessell, Lodi
Mrs. Louis J. Reynolds, Redding
The Allen County Library, Fort Wayne, IN
Gay L. Vanier, Mountain Ranch