

MOK HILL LOOKS BACK ON HECTIC DAYS OF GOLD

Thanks for much of the material in this article must go to longtime historical society member Raymond Garamendi, who graciously allowed use of his library and gold rush history files.

Captain Gabriel Moraga with a troop of 25 soldiers from Mission San Juan Bautista, ventured during the summer of 1806 into what is now Calaveras County.

They had crossed the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers and on September 26, discovered and named the Calaveras River (River of Skulls) then moved on to reach the next river to the North.

But, it is Father Narcisco Duran who is credited, in 1817, with naming that river the "Muggquelumnes," believed derived from the Indian name or word meaning big river.

However, neither Captain Moraga nor Father Duran indicated in the records of their travels that either had reached the area in which now is located the old Gold Rush community of Mokelumne Hill.

As a result, the first people of European extraction to



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reach the Mokelumne Hill area are believed to have been Hudson Bay Company trappers.

Those men, largely of French descent, came south from Vancouver to trap the Sacramento and northern San Joaquin Valleys and the western slope of the Sierra. They had been attracted to California by the Tales of Jedediah Smith who wintered at the Vancouver Hudson Bay Post in 1827-28 after his own party of trappers was virtually annihilated by Indians in Oregon.

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The Adams Co.-IOOF Hall has dominated the Mokelumne Hill Plaza for 134 years. (*Calaveras Co. Hist. Soc. photo*)

Mok Hill, cont. from pg. 1

By 1833 the French-Canadians had established a semi-permanent camp a mile east of the present town of Mokelumne Hill in what is known as Happy Valley.

Unconfirmed, but quite possibly true stories of those trappers finding gold there during the 1830s have been handed down over the years. Certainly there was gold in the Happy Valley area for old tailing piles left from mining during the later periods, still are quite visible.

The first Americans to see the Mokelumne Hill area were members of a party headed by Captain Charles M. Weber, founder of Stockton, who in April or May, 1848, began mining the river downstream from Mokelumne Hill.

That summer a small company headed by James P. Martin, in about 60 days, took several thousand dollars in nuggets from the river near there.

By late summer Colonel Jonathan D. Stevenson with about 100 discharged soldiers who had served in his regiment of New York Volunteers during the Mexican War, arrived to begin mining in and around Mokelumne Hill.

They struck it rich at Middle Bar, at the head of what is now Pardee Reservoir and also found rich diggings in what was later to be called Gwin Canyon, where later, the famous Gwin Mine was located.

A major mining camp suddenly blossomed at Big Bar, where Highway 49 presently crosses the Mokelumne, after a party of Oregon miners found gold there and one of Stevenson's men, while getting a drink in the river, found a nugget weighing 25 pounds.

Samuel Pearsall, one of Stevenson's ex-soldiers, made the first discovery of gold in Mokelumne Hill on the north side of Stockton Hill.

What may have been the first mining laws adopted in the southern Mother Lode were drafted by Colonel Stevenson to protect the rights of his men in and around Mokelumne Hill.

The Colonel also claims to have served as the first alcalde of Mokelumne Hill, but if he did, he probably was self-appointed. There also are claims that D. Dickenson, later the operator of Dickenson's Ferry in Tuolumne County, served as the Mokelumne Diggings' first alcalde in the winter of 1848. He reportedly was succeeded by James E. Putnam, whose jurisdiction extended from Dry Creek, just west of what is now the City of Plymouth, to the Stanislaus River.

However, a handwritten document filed December 16, 1849, in San Joaquin District Court of Alta California, in Stockton, shows that James E. Nuttman posted a \$500 bond with Judge J. R. Reynolds and was appointed the first alcalde of Mokelumne Hill.

Mokelumne Hill itself did not take on any great impor-



Sam Pearsall came to Mokelumne Hill as a teenager with Col. Jonathan Stevenson's regiment; spent remainder of his life there. *(Calaveras Co. Hist. Soc. photo)*

tance as a mining area in 1848 but quickly became a major supply and trade center for surrounding mining camps.

Miners, badly in need of supplies of all kinds, induced freighters to bring a wagon load of provisions to the area. This venture was so successful that by the fall of 1848 a man named Syree was operating a tent store in Mokelumne Hill.

Some 20 or 30 miners were reported working in the Mokelumne Hill diggings by early fall and Dickenson and his family were boarding them in a tent. Also among the earliest to establish themselves in Mokelumne Hill were the Fourcade brothers whose names were long associated with that area.

But, as gold discoveries in and around Mokelumne Hill continued to multiply, its population rapidly increased.

In November, 1848, a man hunting frogs in an abandoned prospect hole saw a speck of gold, and with his pocket knife unearthed a \$2,150 nugget.

By 1849 it had become a sprawling tent city, attracting miners of every nationality who tended to set up their camps and carry out their mining operations along ethnic lines. Thus the local area names such as French Hill, Nigger Hill, Chili Gulch and China Gulch.

Bayard Taylor who came to Mokelumne Hill in 1849, reported that two negroes sluiced out \$80,000 in gold in a month.

A company of seven Frenchmen working in a ravine at

the edge of camp took out enough money in the fall of 1849 to allow them to return fully satisfied, to their native land.

It was claimed that during the early gold rush years that \$10 million dollars was mined from three acres in Mokelumne Hill. So rich were the gravel deposits there that claims were limited to sixteen feet square.

Statehood came to California in 1850, laying the groundwork for a bitter dispute over location of the Calaveras County seat, in which Mokelumne Hill was to play a major role.

Calaveras was one of the original 27 counties formed by the state legislature on February 18, 1850, and its boundaries encompassed all of its present area plus what is now the County of Amador and parts of Alpine, Mono and what was to become Fresno County. A camp called Pleasant Valley, on the Calaveras River a mile-and-a-half west of Jenny Lind, was designated by the legislators as the county seat.

However, Pleasant Valley never became the seat of county government because an amendment of the original act placed the county's first courthouse in Double Springs.

Double Springs at that time had only one building — a structure 72 feet long and 12 feet wide, built of camphor wood panels brought from China. It served as courthouse, store, saloon and hotel.

Court was conducted in a tent and the first Calaveras County Grand Jury met under a nearby tree.

The Double Springs location was unpopular with residents of both Jackson and Mokelumne Hill who felt their

towns, having larger populations, should have been the home of the county government.

Judge Fowle Smith scheduled an election for February 22, 1851, and when the returns were counted by County Clerk Lewis Collyer, Mokelumne Hill was declared the winner.

But, before the county records could be moved to Mokelumne Hill, Jackson advocates arrived at Double Springs, got Collyer and other officials drunk, and took the county records and papers to a building on Court Street in Jackson.

Charges were filed against several of the men accused of the theft, but they were never prosecuted.

Shortly thereafter, an election for county officers was held and Collyer, who was embittered toward Judge Smith because he felt Smith had a part in removal of the county seat from Calaveras, was defeated for reelection.

Collyer locked up the ballots and refused to certify the election results but Judge Smith broke open his desk, counted the votes, and declared Collyer loser in the race for county clerk.

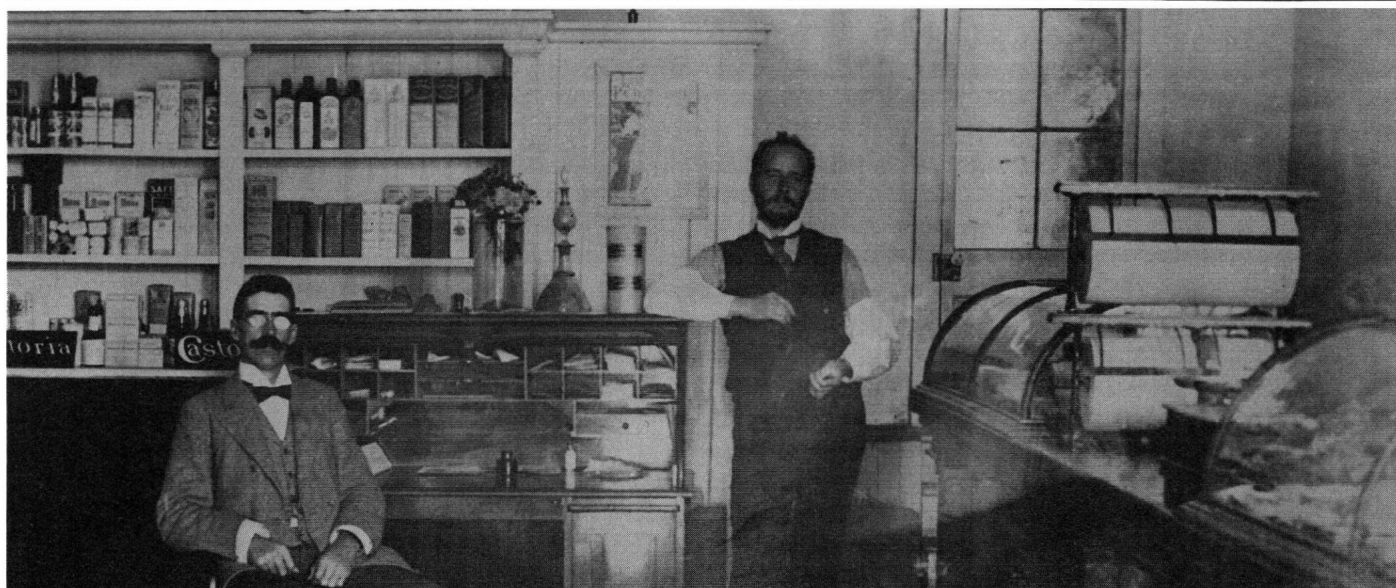
Collyer made threats to shoot Judge Smith on sight.

Smith armed himself and upon meeting Collyer on the street, fired instantly, killing him on the spot.

Collyer was not armed, but because of his earlier threats, Judge Smith was not prosecuted. Within a few months Smith resigned as Judge and left the area.

By 1852 the population of Mokelumne Hill had far outstripped that of Jackson. Another election was held that

Please see **Mok Hill**, pg. 4



Mokelumne Hill Apothecary Shop; Dr. Blaisdell (seated) with shop owner Thomas Peters.

(Calaveras Co. Hist. Soc. photo)

Mok Hill, cont. from pg. 3

year concerning location of the county seat, and that time Mokelumne Hill won handily.

When first brought to Mokelumne Hill the county government headquarters was forced to share space in a large tent with a saloon and gambling hall. Later, it was housed in a building on Center Street which burned in the fire of 1854.

Finally, a two-story rhyolite courthouse was built, which later was to become a part of the Leger Hotel. There it remained until the county seat was moved to San Andreas in 1866.

Water which greatly facilitated mining operations, arrived in Mokelumne Hill in 1853, via the Mokelumne Hill Canal and Mining Company ditch. The ditch brought water 16 miles from the South Fork of the Mokelumne River, and later, was extended on to the mining camp of Campo Seco.

It carried water to the community until 1973 when it was

made obsolete by installation of the Calaveras Public Utility District pipeline that brings water to the area from Jeff Davis Reservoir.

By 1851 Mokelumne Hill was a major foothill trade and mining center with a Post Office, a vigilance committee later called the "Calaveras Guards," formed to keep the peace; and the county's first newspaper, the Calaveras Chronicle.

Like most early Mother Lode mining camps, Mokelumne Hill, during its early years, was plagued by fires.

Major fires swept the town in 1854, 1865 and 1874. The fire of 1874 leveled every structure on Main Street except Grigoire's store and everything on Center Street except the Sturges store. However, despite the ever-present danger of fire, a fire department was not organized until 1861.

One immediate result of the 1854 fire is that many merchants and property owners began replacing their burned wood and canvas structures with stone buildings. The rhyolite from which many of those buildings were con-



Werle Soda Works and residence on Lafayette Street, in Mokelumne Hill, during the late 1890s.

(Calaveras Co. Hist. Soc. photo)

structed was quarried behind the brewery, the site of which today has been largely obliterated by construction of Highway 49.

Among the original stone buildings still standing is the Adams Express Company Building on Center Street, built in 1854. It was purchased by the IOOF Lodge which added its third story in 1861; The Calaveras County Courthouse, also built in 1854, which is now part of the Leger Hotel; the Hodap & Friend Store on Main Street, circa 1854; Italian Stone Store on Center Street, circa 1854, which in the early days housed various businesses, and in the 1940s, the Mokelumne Hill Post Office. Presently it houses the Mokelumne Hill History Center and a beauty shop. Many other historic stone buildings also still are standing and in use today.

Churches came early to Mokelumne Hill. Father John Bobard held Catholic services in a tent in 1851 and in 1852 a Methodist Episcopal Church was organized and also held services in a tent.

The First Congregational Church was organized in 1853 and the church building constructed in 1856. This church presently is the oldest Congregational Church in California.

An Episcopal Church was established in Mokelumne Hill in 1895 but disbanded in 1907.

The Catholic Church burned in 1854 and a new one with ornate stained glass windows was constructed on Brewery Hill to replace it, but it too burned in 1874. It was replaced by the present Catholic Church.

But, despite the influence of religion and the presence of several churches, Mokelumne Hill, during its early years, was a lawless, roisterous camp where disputes too often were settled with gun or knife.

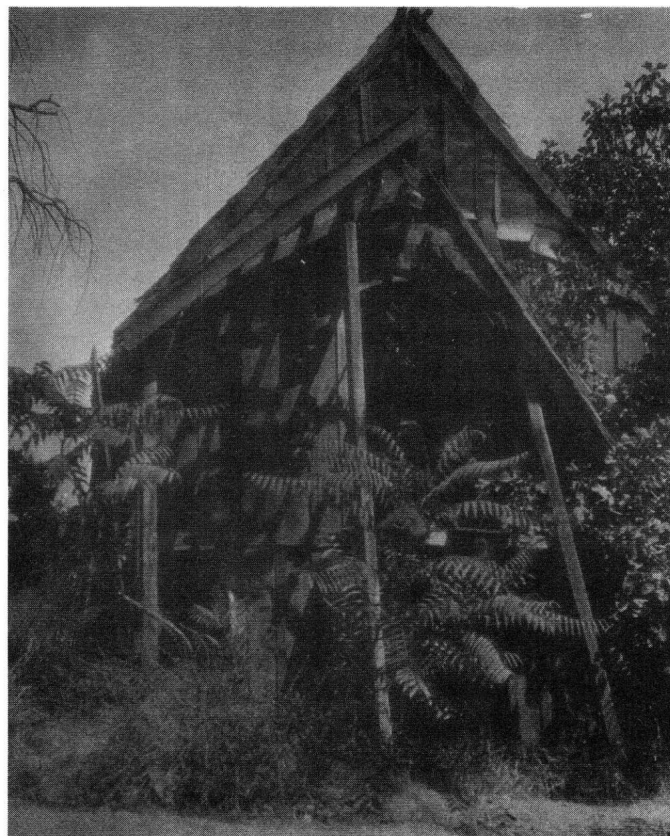
Recreation tended to center around drinking, gambling and bull and bear fights. It was a tough town and it was reported that for 17 weeks in succession there was at least one murder a week. The climax came when there were five killings in a single week, and as a result, the Vigilance Committee was formed in 1852.

Several hangings served quick notice to criminals that theft and violence would not be tolerated, and a number of suspected thieves and desperados quickly left town.

But, the mixed population of Mokelumne Hill itself often bred hard feelings and violence between ethnic groups.

The French War erupted when a group of Americans attempted to move onto rich diggings discovered by a group of French nationals on a hill on the eastern edge of Mokelumne Hill.

The French threw up stone breastworks, raised the French Tri-color and stood off the invaders. The dispute



Chinese Joss House in Mokelumne Hill, thought to be the first joss house built in the California gold country.

(Calaveras Co. Hist. Soc. photo)

was finally mediated, but not before one man was killed and several wounded.

The site of the battle still is known as French Hill.

The so-called Chilean War occurred in 1849, not in Mokelumne Hill but at Chili Gulch, south of Mokelumne Hill. The site of Chili Gulch mining camp is marked today by a plaque on Highway 49.

This also was a dispute between Chileans who had arrived in large numbers early in the Gold Rush and Americans, who claimed the Chileans were making a habit of driving them off by force whenever they made a new gold strike.

The violence ended only after a fight erupted in which two Americans were killed and several taken hostage by Chileans who invaded their camp.

The hostages escaped and with help of a rescue party, captured the Chileans, two of whom, following a trial, were hanged.

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PONTE TAKES GAVEL FOR SECOND TERM

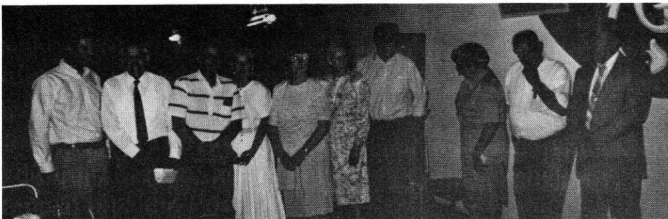
Gloyd A. "Bud" Ponte was installed July 28 to serve a second term as president of the Calaveras County Historical Society.

Also taking the oath to serve another year was Vice-President Don Cuneo; Recording Secretary Sandie Cuneo; Financial Secretary Lillian Filippini, Treasurer Ruth Matson and Directors Richard Barger and Carmenne Poore. Two new directors, Jack Kennedy of San Andreas and Charles Stone, of Copperopolis, also were installed. Kennedy replaces his wife, Lorraine, whose term as director had expired, and Stone fills the spot vacated by Director George Beaman, who resigned due to the press of business.

The officers were installed by Calaveras County Supervisor Thomas Tryon, of Angels Camp.

Tryon noted that this had been a busy year for the historical society and congratulated its officers and members on their decision to take over management of the Calaveras County Museum.

The museum, located in the 132-year-old Calaveras County Courthouse on historic Main Street in San Andreas, now is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., seven days a week.



New officers (L to R) Gloyd A. "Bud" Ponte, president; Don Cuneo, vice president; Sandie Cuneo, recording secretary; Ruth Matson, treasurer; Lillian Filippini, membership financial secretary; and Directors Richard Barger, Carmenne Poore, Charles Stone and Jack Kennedy.

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It was the Chilean War that spurred the state Legislature, in May, 1850, into adopting its "Alien Miners Tax," which forced all foreign miners to pay a license tax of \$20 per month in order to mine. The legislation caused further ill feelings between foreign and American miners all along the Mother Lode.

By the late 1850s Mokelumne Hill had street lights, a town hall and its own school district. But as the rich alluvial gravels gradually played out, the Mokelumne Hill area's population, once estimated at 15,000, steadily diminished.

By turn of the century it was just another half-forgotten gold camp, dozing in the Mother Lode sun.

But today, Mokelumne Hill is finding new life in the Lode's growing tourism industry and in its value as a gracious rural living area.

1946 TRAGEDY REMAINS A MOKELUMNE HILL MYSTERY

By George Hoeper

While employed as Mother Lode News Bureau Chief for the Stockton Record, George Hoeper, some 15 years ago interviewed the persons whose accounts of this incident are recorded in this story.

The shimmering mid-day heat of foothill summer was already beating down on weathered buildings and sun drenched streets of Mokelumne Hill during those late-morning hours of July 18, 1946.

"Gonna be another hot one," commented oldtimers as they gathered at the general store or wandered down to the Post Office to pick up the morning mail.

Inside the building on Center Street shared by the Post Office and the local telephone exchange, phone operator Olive Moffit sat at the switchboard over which she could see out the window onto the covered porch and dusty street.

She finished connecting a call and looked up to observe Richard and Dora Queirolo and their nine-year-old son, David, approach the Post Office Building.

She smiled and waved, then her attention was distracted by the insistent buzzing of another incoming phone call.

The mail already had arrived, been sorted by Postmaster Ivy Dahl, and most of the waiting people had drifted away.

It was Thursday, and Queirolo, 37, normally would have been working at the Calaveras Cement Plant in San Andreas, except that a few days earlier he had switched to night shift.

He had worked the night before, arrived home in the early morning hours. Then, with his sleep out, Richard had decided to walk downtown with his wife to pick up the mail.

David, bored with remaining home alone, tagged along on the prospect that his Mom or Dad might provide a dime for a soft drink or an ice cream bar.

Among those who met them at the Post Office was Richard's nephew, Jack Queirolo, 21, recently discharged from the Navy, and Flossie Sabatini.

John Gardella was just leaving and Patsy Peek and Ralph Zumwalt, enroute to pick up their mail, were only a short distance away. Gardella paused to talk for a moment, then sauntered on up the sidewalk, away from the Post Office building.

Jack Queirolo was waiting for his buddy, the postmaster, also recently discharged from the Army Air Corps, to take his lunch break. Neither of the young war veterans were married and they planned to drive to Jackson to pick up laundry they had left there.

Disinterested in adult conversations, David Queirolo spotted a small stone in front of the Post Office porch,

picked it up and with typical small boy reaction, flung it at a tree in the vacant lot (today the Mokelumne Hill Park) across the street.

The rock curved, narrowly missed its target, and it was then young David noticed the small, imitation leather traveling bag lying a few feet from the tree.

“Hey, Dad, look! . . . A suitcase over there . . . I wonder who left it . . . who it belongs to . . .?”

Richard Queirolo looked to where his son was pointing. It was a small, zippered overnight bag and from the some 20 yards distance it appeared to be nearly new.

“You know, that’s a funny thing,” said Jack Queirolo. “That bag has been there for two or three days. Ivy and I saw it there Monday or Tuesday. Nobody seems to know who left it, but it looks brand new.”

“That’s a heck of a place for somebody to leave a good bag,” replied his uncle, “Must have gone off and forgotten it . . . Somebody should at least bring it over here and put it in the Post Office or phone office. We oughta’ see if there’s a name on it or in it . . .”

“Here, I’ll get it Dad,” called David, who was already half way across the street.

The boy grabbed the small case, and Olive Moffit, who could look out upon the whole scene, recalled later that it seemed light and he had no trouble carrying it.

David sat the bag on the concrete porch in front of the phone office.

There was no name or identification on the outside, and when he tried to slide open its zipper, it appeared to be stuck.

Richard Queirolo, his interest now aroused, leaned over to help his son. David was on one side of the bag, his father on the other.

Jack Queirolo was not more than three steps away and Dora Queirolo was behind her husband, looking over his shoulder as he bent down to open the bag.

Richard gripped the zipper fastener, pulled, and it came partially open . . .

There was a flash — an ear-splitting blast. The explosion hurled the bodies of Richard Queirolo and his son into the street. It shattered the porch roof and the front of the building; sent Jack Queirolo sprawling with blood gushing from wounds in his body and face.

Father and son were dead. Dora Queirolo, partially protected by her husband’s body, was knocked unconscious but suffered only superficial wounds and severe shock.

Force of the blast wrecked the telephone switchboard but Olive Moffit escaped with only minor cuts and scratches.

The switchboard which stood between her and the explosion protected her. She was struck in the legs and scalp



The Mokelumne Hill Post Office building as it appeared during the 1930s. The top floors were removed after 1946 explosion and fire.

(Photo courtesy of Mokelumne Hill History Center)

with bits of flying glass, but a dog sleeping on the porch in front of the window was killed.

“The force seemed to lift me out of my chair and push me against the wall,” said Mrs. Moffit, recalling the scene several years later.

“I wasn’t sure what had happened, but my first thought was for the safety of my two-year-old son. He was all right — had been up the street in another shop with my sister.”

Ralph Zumwalt was knocked down by the concussion, as was Flossie Sabatini. She escaped injury because just an instant before the blast she had stepped into the Post Office.

Ivy Dahl was slammed across the room and half stunned. Still half dazed, his first act after looking out the wrecked door was to lock the Post Office safe.

“I looked up and it seemed like a horde of people were headed toward us from all directions,” he said.

Bertha Dell 'Orto was another of the townspeople less than a half-block from the blast.

“I had come downtown and probably would have been right there at the explosion had I not stopped to talk in front of the store. I don’t really remember the noise — just the smoke and the dust and the terrible scene — the blood and torn bodies.

It was gruesome . . . terrible . . .”

Wes Fischer, now Undersheriff of Amador County, was 12 years old at the time and saw and heard the explosion.

“Several of us kids were sitting on the hill by the town reservoir when suddenly, there was a big boom. A cloud of black smoke and flying shingles shot 200 feet into the air. We thought a shed with dynamite in it had blown up and

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Post Office, cont. from pg. 7

began running to see what had happened.”

By the time Wes and his buddies arrived, his father Al Fischer, who was constable, and Sheriff Joe Zwinge were there.

Not only had the explosion shattered the wooden portions of the porch and front of the building, it had damaged the switchboard so badly that Olive Moffit could make no outgoing phone calls.

An automobile was dispatched to Jackson, seven miles away, to summon a doctor, and another was sent to San Andreas to bring Dr. E.W. Hill.

Dora and Jack Queirolo were sent by ambulance to a Sacramento hospital, but despite efforts there, and later at Oak Knoll Hospital in Oakland, Jack was to lose the sight of one eye.

Sheriff Zwinge called in FBI and state investigators.

Postmaster Dahl summoned postal inspectors, whom he recalls, were miffed when they arrived to find the only real Post Office loss was 10 envelopes ruined by an overturned inkwell.

The real damage had been to the telephone office, but there was little to be determined from the blast scene.

Military explosives had been used, said State Investigator Owen Kessell, and the booby trap inside the traveling bag apparently had been detonated by flashlight batteries. One of the batteries was embedded in a beam in the porch roof.

It also was determined that in addition to the explosive device, the bag contained few other items except a May 31 copy of the Stockton Record and a June 2 San Francisco Examiner.

Coroner John Gardella who had escaped the blast only by moments, conducted the inquest a week later.

But the inquest, at which nearly a dozen people testified, could furnish little information not already known.

Mrs. Queirolo, back from the hospital, told the jury her husband had unzipped the bag and was reaching into it to pick up a paper or cloth covered object when the explosion occurred.

The jurors ruled that Richard Queirolo and his son, David, died “accidental deaths from explosives placed by a person or persons unknown.”

Many believed that the traveling bag had been placed under the tree to kill a man who tied his horse there when he came to town.

Olive Moffit disputed that theory. She said the bag sat for a day or two beneath a bench on the telephone office porch before someone moved it to the location under the tree.

Some said a man who later was believed to have commit-



Mokelumne Hill's old post office building complex as it appears today houses beauty shop, history center and cabinet shop.

ted suicide in San Francisco, did it. There was even talk that some disgruntled Nazi sympathizer set the booby trap for revenge.

It was generally agreed that the person who built the bomb was familiar with use of electrical devices and explosives.

Slowly, the excitement subsided and the investigation ground to a halt, as one by one, each meager clue led to nothing. The Post Office building was repaired and the phone office permanently closed, as the phone company changed from the switchboard system to dial telephone.

The town was returning to normal when a month later, on the night of August 21, the newly repaired Post Office building suddenly erupted in flames.

Firemen fought not to save the post office complex, but to keep the fire from spreading to the remainder of the town.

Although no evidence ever has linked the fire to the explosion that a month earlier took the lives of father and son, the blaze, in the minds of many, has added greatly to the mystery of the Post Office blast. Cause of the fire officially was listed as unknown, but there were more than a few who swore that it was an act of arson somehow connected with the fatal blast.

Today the explosion and fire still rank high among Calaveras County's unsolved crimes.

ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS GO TO FOUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Dorrington Hotel, the old Russell house and store on North Main Street in San Andreas, the Cooper home at 1184 Church Street in Angels Camp and the Angels Camp Mercantile on South Main Street, are winners of Calaveras County Historical Society's 1988 architectural awards.

Plaques and certificates of merit were presented at the Society's July 28 dinner meeting in the Metropolitan in San Andreas, to owners of each of the refurbished 19th Century properties.

Oldest of the structures to receive one of this year's awards was the Dorrington Hotel on Highway 4, some three miles east of Big Trees State Park, which has served as a stopping place for travelers since early Gold Rush days.

This hostelry, originally known as Cold Springs Ranch, was built by John Gardner at the edge of a lush mountain meadow beside the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike shortly after he acquired the property in 1852. Ice cold water flowed from a spring in the meadow — water so cold that a sign beside it offered \$5 to anyone who could gulp down a cup of it without stopping.

Shortly after it was constructed, the original hotel burned, but Gardner rebuilt it and this is the two-story structure now fully refurbished and restored, that has won the architectural award.

By turn of the century Cold Springs Ranch, still a favorite stopping place for travelers, had acquired a general store, a post office and served as the western gate of the Big Trees-Carson Valley Toll Road operated by Harvey Blood.

But, in 1902, the U.S. Postmaster General objected to the name "Cold Springs Ranch" as too long. He also refused to allow use of "Gardner's" since there already were post offices in California with similar names.

John Gardner then chose the name Dorrington — the maiden name of his wife, Mary Rebekah Dorrington, as the new name for ranch, hotel and post office.

Since then the old, rough sawed board and batten building has changed ownership many times. Today it is believed by its owners to be the only building east of the Mother Lode in Calaveras County that has been in constant use for more than a century.

Until its present owners, Bonnie and Arden Saville and Wayne Renaud began work on it, the old hotel apparently had never undergone a major restoration. Inspection revealed that its foundations consisted of rocks and stumps. Walls sagged, windows stuck, plumbing and wir-



Dorrington Hotel — serving the public since 1852.

ing was considerably less than adequate.

Today the now fully restored Dorrington Hotel stands as a monument to more than three years of hard work and seemingly endless expenditures by Renaud and the Savilles.

They have taken pains to retain the old structure's architectural authenticity while at the same time providing all of the modern comforts and conveniences for its guests.

From its completely modernized and immaculate kitchen to its dining room, warmed by a stone fireplace and mellowed by judicious use of redwood paneling and old fashioned wall paper, the old hotel extends an atmosphere of friendly hospitality.

Each bedroom is individualized with its own 19th Century decor. Comfortable antique furniture, period bathroom fixtures and old fashioned lace curtains give visitors the feeling of somehow having stepped back into an earlier time.

Roark and Elizabeth Weber, owners of the historic Russell home and adjacent store building at 60 and 62 North Main Street, San Andreas, received their plaque for this year's best commercial building restoration.

As a result of the Webers' work the two buildings now appear much as they did a hundred years ago when they housed the office and print shop of the weekly Calaveras Prospect newspaper.

Today the front building houses the law office of attorney Michael Arkin and the rear building is the office and headquarters of Roark Weber's engineering company.

The exact age of the front building, which is the older of the two structures, is not known.

Records show that it was purchased in January, 1884, by Clarence W. Getchell from R.W. Russell. However, Getchell may have rented the building before then to publish the Prospect which he and Louis Salcido founded in 1881.

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Awards, cont. from pg. 9

Apparently Getchell's purchase of the building was followed by extensive expansion or remodeling, for county records show that taxes on it increased from \$350 in 1884 to \$420 in 1885.

In 1886 a 20x20-foot tank house and windmill was added to the rear building, then in 1894 a second story also was added to the building in the back.

Over the years the two buildings served both residential and commercial purposes, housing various families and enterprises. The building which fronts on North Main Street once served as the millinery shop and residence of Mary L. Hopkins. It was during that period that a bungalow facade was added to the old structure.

The Webers made every effort to retain authenticity of the old buildings and return their appearance to that of the late 19th Century. As an example, although they had to replace the original windows in the front building, they retained their original style and configuration.

Windows in the tank house were retained and used again even though the project involved removing the glass and routing the frames so they would accept dual paned glass.

Now restored and totally refurbished, the old buildings add measurably to the early-day atmosphere of the San Andreas Main Street.

The 78-year-old George D. Cooper home which recently became Angels Camp's first bed and breakfast inn, was another of our historical society's 1988 architectural award winners.

Simply known as the Cooper House, this old mansion at 1184 Church Street, was built in 1910 and later an addition to it served the Dr. George Cooper family as both home and office for his dental practice. His son, Dr. George Cooper Jr., continued dental practice there for many years.

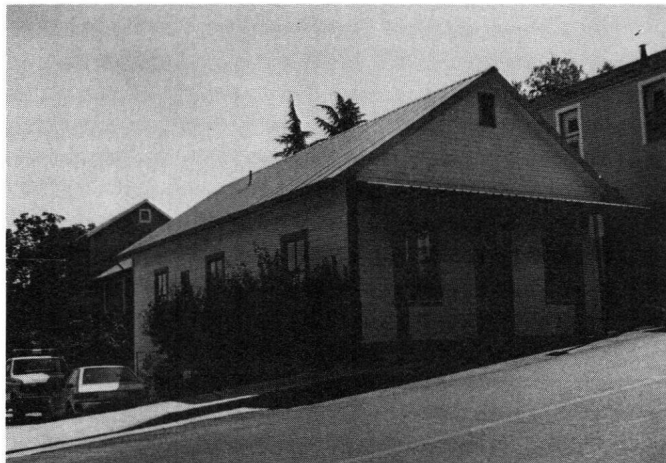
The style of the old house which long ago came to be regarded as an Angels Camp landmark, is known as "California Craftsman Bungalow."

Now the property of Cornelia and Barden Stevenot, the beautiful old building has been completely and carefully restored.

The Cooper House consists of three suites, two of which have their own parlor or sitting room. All have their own baths with brass fixtures and large, old fashioned four legged tubs. Each bedroom is tastefully furnished to convey the feeling of the early 1900s.

The living room is especially interesting with its huge, natural greenstone fireplace and massive door with stained glass insert, leading to the main hallway.

The antique furniture in the old house came from the Archie Stevenot home.



Immaculate inside and out, the old mansion greets visitors with attractive landscaping and a gazebo. A large deck has been added where guests can relax and admire the scenery of this old gold rush town.

The fourth and final 1988 architectural award went to the Angels Camp Mercantile, at 1267 South Main Street, which is owned by Betty Weider.

This old store, built in 1869, is reportedly the first in Angels Camp to do business on a strictly cash basis.

During its 128 years it has housed a variety of businesses, including a hardware store, bowling alley, stationery store and pool hall.

Presently, the main floor of this attractively restored structure is an antique shop while upstairs it has been turned into an art gallery which features the works of many of the Mother Lode's better known artists.

Like so many structures in the early day Mother Lode gold camps, the Angels Camp Mercantile was partially

destroyed by fire during the latter part of the 19th Century, but was rebuilt.

Since then the old building has undergone numerous changes, many of them in relatively recent years, in an attempt to give its interior a slick, modern-day look.

But, Mrs. Weider, a native of Angels Camp whose grandfather had worked in the Utica Gold Mine there, was determined to return the old store as nearly as possible to its original appearance.

The store's balcony-mezzanine at the rear of the building originally had been only 15 feet deep, but in 1951 hardware store owner Tony Zanardi, using cement blocks and concrete slab floor, extended it an additional 40 feet. He also installed an acoustical drop ceiling with neon light fixtures and modernized the stairway, hand rail and balcony balustrade to reflect the stylings of the 1950s. During the 1970s the original tongue and groove walls were covered with pecky cedar, again to reflect the fashion of the day.

Weider removed the 1950s handrails and balusters, replacing them with turnings and hand rails that were reflective of the past century. The acoustical ceiling and neon light fixtures were taken out and authentic turn-of-the-century pressed tin ceiling was installed. The concrete slab floor was covered with Douglas fir to replicate the original downstairs flooring.

The concrete block wall was covered with tongue and groove to duplicate the original walls.

In the downstairs area the pecky cedar was ripped out and termite and dry-rot damaged walls were replaced.



Gracious old Cooper Home at 1184 Church Street, Angels Camp's first bed and breakfast inn, is shown off by manager Jeannette Chandler.



Angels Camp Mercantile, on South Main Street, now fully restored.

The dry rot and termite damage was so bad that many contractors advised Betty Weider to raze the old building — particularly after she found that the historic old structure had no foundation.

Nevertheless, she chose to save it, and as a result, ended up with a major project that involved replacing two side walls, removal of the old, rotted floor, pouring of new concrete foundations and installation of fire walls. The rusted, pressed tin facade was removed, front of the building rebuilt and then the original tin, sandblasted and repainted, was put back in place.

Using old photographs as a guide, the front of the building, complete with awnings, now appears as it did around turn of the century or earlier.

This is the second time in two years that Betty Weider has been the recipient of a Calaveras County Historical Society architectural award.

In July, 1986, she and her brother, Will Brosemer received a plaque for restoration of the historic Brosemer Building at 1265 South Main Street, which stands beside the now restored Angels Camp Mercantile.

Again this year the historical society's architectural awards committee was chaired by Roberta Kenyon.

Serving on the committee with Mrs. Kenyon was her husband, O.L. Kenyon; Jack and Lorraine Kennedy of San Andreas; Shirley Huberty, of Mountain Ranch; George and Lucy Schwoerer of Valley Springs with as ex-officio members, Historical Society President Gloyd A. "Bud" Ponte and his wife, Eloise, of Double Tree Ranch at Fricot City.

STORIES OF OLD CALAVERAS AT OCTOBER DINNER MEETING

Tales of people and incidents during the early years of Calaveras County will be the highlight of the Calaveras County Historical Society's October 27th dinner meeting.

The stories are to be related by members of the historical society, many of whom can trace their roots back to California's Gold Rush era. If by chance, any members have such a story they would like to share with other members of the organization, please contact Historical Society President Bud Ponte.

The October meeting will be held in the La Contenta Golf and Country Club banquet room. A chicken dinner will be served at 7 p.m., preceded by a 6:30 p.m. no-host cocktail hour.

Reservations must be made at least three days in advance. They can be arranged by phoning Jack Kennedy at 754-1259; Eve Soracco, 754-4105; Madeline Cavagnaro, 754-3306; or Bessie McGinnis at 736-2189.

Cost of the dinner is \$9.50 per person.

Calaveras County Historical Society

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San Andreas, California 95249

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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.

NEW MEMBERS

Calaveras County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Doug & Joey Brown, Avery.
Mary Conway, Stockton.
Elizabeth Petithomme Alford, Angels Camp.
Frank & Reba Mannix, Linden.
Dave & Laraine Gerber, Los Angeles.
Richard L. & Robert J. Matteoli, Sacramento.
Roy & Marilyn Pence, Sacramento.
Edward Fischer, San Carlos.
Katherine Geiszler, San Andreas.
Bob Hadley, Belvedere.
Mr. & Mrs. Roy McKindley, Copperopolis.
Ruth June Koehler, Murphys.
Jane Hochstetler, San Andreas.
Arthur W. Prindle, Walnut Creek.
Mrs. Emily Stemler, Angels Camp.
Helen M. Raggio, Angels Camp.
Mrs. Realto Malspina, Farmington.
Toyon Middle School, San Andreas.
Ben Cator, Sacramento.
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Petithomme, Fresno.
T.A. Moran, Farmington.
Mrs. Fred Lombardi, Stockton.
Thresa Powell, Studio.
Peggy Joyce Richards, Stockton.
Tom Tryon Family, Angels Camp.
Verona Wenger, Stockton.
Senior Center, San Andreas.
Virginia Landreth, Rail Road Flat.
Will & Sher Pierie, San Andreas.
Mac McKimens, San Jose.
Robert & Marlene Bach, Altaville.
Gertrude Queirolo, San Andreas.
Dan & Yvonne Dowdin, Mountain Ranch.
Jacqueline McDonald, Reno, Nev.
Mrs. C.E. Oliver, Napa.
Mrs. Edna P. Jack, Sacramento.
Donna McCarty Walraven, Murphys.

IN MEMORIAM

T.A. Moran, Farmington, August, 1988
W.C. Franzen, San Andreas, September, 1988
Horace Cooper, Copperopolis, September, 1988