

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society

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October, 1977

Number 1

The Lagomarsino-Werle Family

By Norman Lagomarsino (as told to Ida Long)

In the early 1850's the Italian government was conscripting young men into the army. One such young man was Andrea Lagomarsino, who had been born in Lovi (near Genoa) on July 4,

This, our 25th Anniversary issue, is dedicated to the founders, the directors and officers, and to the many members of our society. We particularly salute those of our charter members who are still with us.

Although we are proud of the progress that we have made and the records built up over the past quarter of a century, we see, looking ahead, much more to be done. We especially need active members to continue this work.

1838. However, Andrea had other ideas than to serve in the army. He borrowed \$200 from a family friend in Stockton and sailed from Italy to Panama. He then traveled by mule across Panama and boarded a ship to San Francisco. This was around the year 1856.

By 1857 he had arrived in Calaveras County and entered into a mining venture with two partners. They mined on the Calaveras River and hit a bonanza netting them \$30,000.

Andrea took part of his share of the money and invested it in 80



PLOWING THE FIELDS FOR NEXT YEAR'S CROP

The Italian gardens, as they were to be known, were the pride of partners Andrea Lagomarsino, John Queirolo

and John Solari. They all looked on as the soil was plowed in readiness for a new crop.



THE DELIVERY

Once the vegetables were harvested they were delivered to homes and stores all over the northern end of Calaveras County. The Blur of the horses' heads in

indicate they were eager to run as the photographer recorded this piece of history on film.

acres in Mokelumne Hill and 80 acres near the Calaveras River.

But the lure of gold was too much for Andrea and his partners, and they packed up their gear and took off for the Frazier River strike in British Columbia. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful (like many others in this "Humbug" strike) and returned home much lighter in the pockets than when they left.

On his return, Andrea decided to develop the property he had bought in Mokelumne Hill. He joined with two partners, John Queirolo and John Solari, and the three ventured into the vegetable garden business. They terraced the property and put in stone retaining walls. There were acres of peas, lettuce, beans, onions; in fact, they grew almost any vegetable you desired. Deliveries were made in Mokelumne Hill and up to West Point, Sheep Ranch, Paloma, Whiskey Slide, Rich Gulch and many other areas. The business was thriving.

Andrea was 32 when he decided to return home to Italy and select his bride. At the time he left, there had been a girl he liked, but upon his return he found that she had married, but had a daughter, 14 years old, named Angela Solari. He married Angela and they returned to Calaveras County.

When Andrea's partner, John Queirolo, saw the lovely young bride, he questioned his partner about the other girls in his home town. He learned that Angela had a sister, so off went John, married Angela's sister, returned to Mokelumne Hill with her, and

for a time they lived as one large family. But soon the house got too small, and the Lagomarsinos bought a home on Prospect Street. It had been built in 1852. They added more rooms about 1872.

Andrea and Angela Lagomarsino had four children: Rosa, Joseph, Victor Immanuel and Louis Andrea. Louis is still living and will be 101 years old in November of this year.

The gardens continued to flourish, and deliveries were constantly being made. On one trip to West Point, Andrea decided he should stay overnight and continue his deliveries the next morning. The barn where he stabled his horses caught fire in the middle of the night, and Andrea, while trying to save the horses, severely scorched his lungs. He saved the animals but it cost him his life. Within six months of the tragedy Andrea Lagomarsino was dead. The year was 1897.

His widow, Angela, continued the partnership in the gardens for a while, but gradually bought out the partners and operated the business herself for several years. Eventually she persuaded a friend from Sardinia, Italy, to come to California and help her with the gardens. His name was Maredda (also spelled Maretta). She finally sold to Maredda who operated the gardens for many years. You can still see the remains of the beautifully terraced gardens as you drive through Mokelumne Hill, southeast of town off Maretta Street.



THE LAGOMARSINO FAMILY

Victor and Louis Lagomarsino stand behind their parents, Andrea and Angela.

Nine years after Andrea Lagomarsino's death, Angela married Severino Gobbi, a Mokelumne Hill businessman. Mr. Gobbi owned the Rojas Ranch near Mokelumne Hill. He also owned and operated the Oasis Saloon and later the Club Saloon, which was on Main Street next to the Courthouse. Card games were popular and gambling was not unknown. The Club Saloon was known for the Pedro games that were played there. The stakes were high and the tables always full. If you wanted to indulge in a game of Klondike, the Hotel Leger was the place to go. You could also talk some of the boys into a hand or two of Solo, if the stakes were right. Mr. Gobbi ran his saloons until his death in 1911. Angela Lagomarsino Gobbi lived in the home on Prospect Street until 1942.

Victor Lagomarsino, son of Andrea and Angela, was born in 1874 in Mokelumne Hill. He worked in the family's gardens with his brother Louis and then went to work in the mines. He worked the McSorley hydraulic mines, the quartz crystal mines, the Easy Bird, and the Hardenburg near Middle Bar. When the mines

closed down he turned to prospecting with his pal, Dave Queirolo, at the Rojas Ranch. After mining all day he would come home and tend bar at the Club Saloon in the evening.

Victor's home was just up the hill from where the Werle family had their home and Soda Works. One day he was gazing at the window of their house when Emily Rosalia Werle appeared, looking up the hill at him. He couldn't help but admire her long golden curls, and soon they met. Victor and Emily Rosalia were married in 1896. They had four children: Louis, Norman, Cyril and Francis. They were all born in the Lagomarsino home on Lafayette Street. This home later burned in 1915.

Victor decided to leave mining and open a brewery. He established the "Mokelumne Hill Brewery" in the buildings formerly owned by Suesdorff and Heminghoffen. He purchased unpasteurized beer from Wieland's Brewery in San Francisco in 600 pound kegs, pasteurized it, bottled it, and sold it throughout the county. The bottles were embossed "Mokelumne Hill Brewery, V. Lagomarsino".

Victor was a very popular man in the county and was always



MR. AND MRS. SEVERINO GOBBI

SCHOOL DAYS

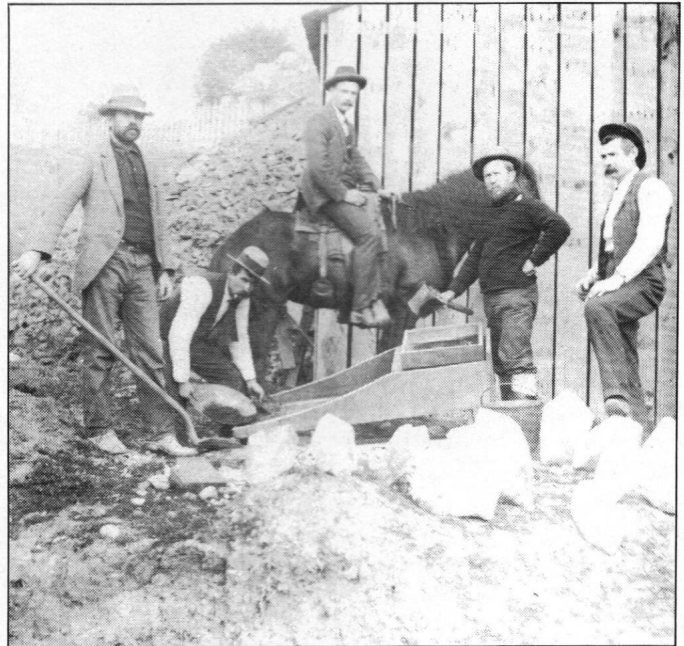
Mr. Frank Day was the principal and teacher at Mokelumne Hill School when Victor Lagomarsino attended. Victor is the large boy in the third row.



HERE COMES THE BAND

The Mokelumne Hill Juvenile Brass Band was always ready for a concert or parade. Pictured here on the steps of the National Hotel in Jackson are (front left): Tom Peters, Fred Suesdorff, Will McCarty, Allan Peek. (Right side) Victor Lagomarsino. (Third row) Charles Burce, Louis Lagomarsino, Will Mastey. (Back row) John Sauve and Will Peterson.

helping in some project. He worked to build the Town Hall in Mokelumne Hill, and was well known for calling quadrilles and square dances throughout the area. He learned a dance called the "Texas Tommy" one time and shocked everyone in town when he showed them how it was done.



QUARTZ CRYSTAL DISPLAY

Victor Lagomarsino worked at the quartz crystal mine known as the Green Mountain mine at Chili Gulch. Pictured here with an impressive display of crystals are (left to right) Mr. Maguire, John McSorley, Tom McSorley (on horse), John Burton (who financed the operation) and Hugh McSorley.

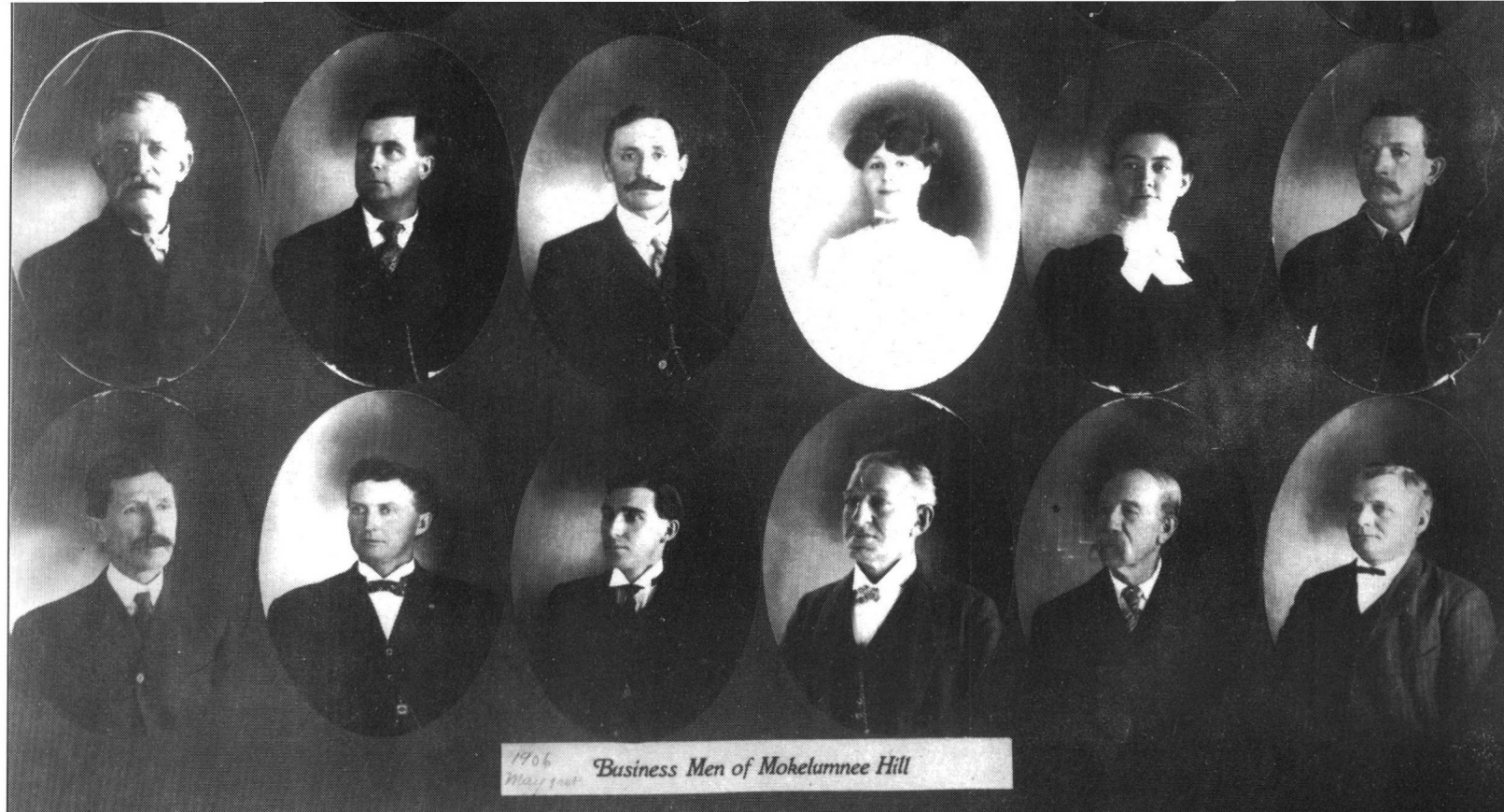


OLD HORSE PUT OUT TO PASTURE

Progress soon made itself felt at the soda works, and the old horse-drawn delivery wagon was put to rest and a new automobile took its place. The people in the above photo are unidentified, but you can tell from the look on their faces that they are really proud of the new addition; that is, except for the dog, who doesn't seem to care one way or the other.

Photo courtesy Hotel Leger





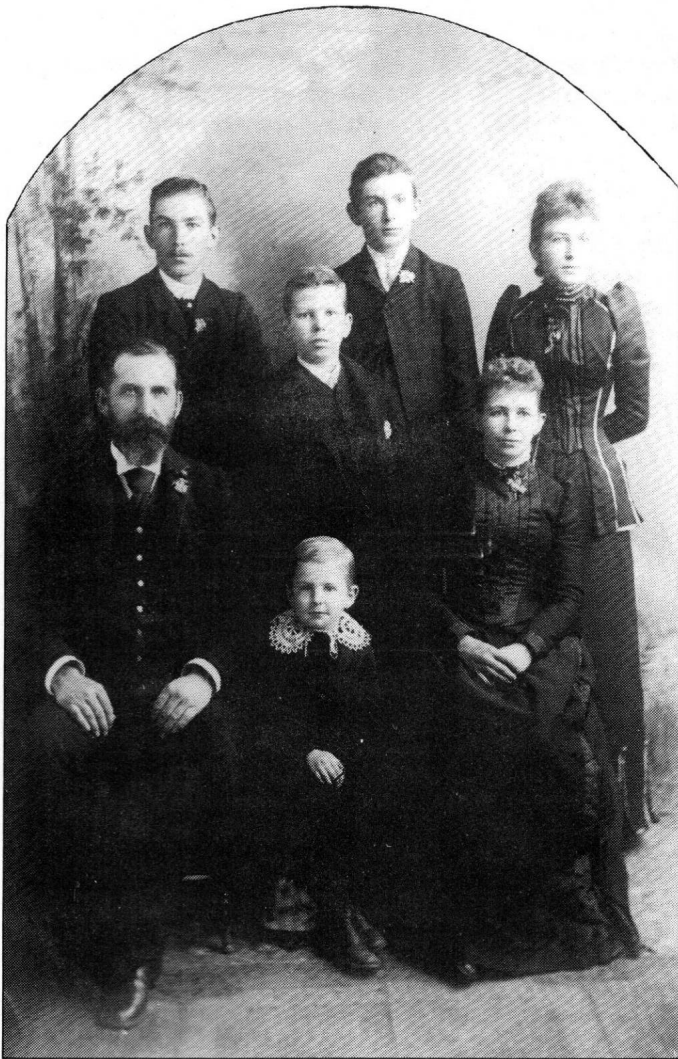
MOKELUMNE HILL BUSINESSMEN - 1906

These gentlemen and ladies posed for the photographer on May 1st, 1906. Left to right, starting from the top row are: H. Krim, G. Rice, S. Gobbi, owner and operator of the Oasis Saloon and Club Saloon; William Laughlin, saloonkeeper; A.E. Siegel, blacksmith, and J. Suave. Second row: F. Nuner, grocer; D.A. Nuner, E. Leblanc, shoemaker; F.W. Suesdorf, owner and operator, Hotel Leger; C.E. Prindle, Superintendent of the water ditch; C. Gardella, undertaker. Third row: E.J. West, S.L. Davidson, owner, mercantile store; C.M. Burlison, A.F. Merrill, W.T. Robberson, mining promoter; L. Everett. Fourth row: G. Giufre, E.P. Congdon, A.H. McCarty, grocer; Blanche McCarty, telephone operator; Mrs. M.E. Coudry, F.W. Peek, grocer. Fifth row: F.H. Day, principal, Mokelumne Hill School; S.F. Stuckey, M.D., local doctor; T.C. Peters, druggist; L. Baldwin, hotel owner; William Brown, veterinarian; H.R. Greve, livery stable owner.



EASYZ BIRD GOLD MILL

Victor Lagomarsino worked at the Easyz Bird mine about 1900, when they were recovering the gold from this stamp mill. This was during the mine's first period of operation, from 1898 to 1907. Victor worked there again when the mine reopened during World War I. After another shutdown, the mine ran from 1931 to 1942. A new mill, using the flotation process, was installed during that last period of operation. (Easyz Bird mine was also spelled "Easy Bird").



WERLE FAMILY

Charles, Herbert and Emily are seated in the front row. Standing in the rear are William, Frank, Lee and Rosalia.

Victor eventually moved the brewery to the Werle Soda Works, owned by his father-in-law. When the Soda Works sold, Victor went back to work at the Easy Bird mine, and later moved his family to San Francisco. He and his wife returned to Mokelumne Hill and spent the last seven years of their life there. They celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1946 at the Town Hall in Mokelumne Hill. Two hundred and seventy-five people attended, including members of the original wedding party. Victor died on October 4, 1954.

Emily Rosalia Werle Lagomarsino's family emigrated to America from France. Michael Werle was born March 22, 1827 in Paris. His wife, Mary Rosalia Baumgarten, was born February 7, 1828, in Alsace-Lorraine. They came to Buffalo, New York, where they were married about 1853 or 1854, and later made their way west to California. They bought a ranch in Chili Gulch where they lived and raised their children, Charles Armand Werle, born 1859 in Buffalo, New York; Estella Werle, born 1861 and Mary Werle, born January 31, 1864. Both girls were born at Chili Gulch.

Charles Armand Werle worked on the ranch with his father and also worked in the Buffalo mine, which was owned by his father. It was named for Buffalo, New York, where Michael Werle first arrived on American soil. Charles' father later sold the mine to an eastern company.

There always seemed to be too much work around the Werle ranch for Charles' mother to keep up with. She convinced her husband that she needed help running the house so they hired Emily Rosalia Frye, whose mother ran a store at Petersburg (now inundated by Lake Hogan). Emily is said to have been the second white child whose birth was recorded in Calaveras County. She was 14 years old when she came to the Werle Ranch.

After a few years Charles Armand Werle and Emily Rosalia Frye were married. They had six children: Rosalia, William, Frank, Lee, Elma and Herbert.

In 1887 Charles decided to give up ranching and mining and with a partner, Josh Albright, went into the soda business. He built the home and soda works on Lafayette Street, which was mentioned earlier. The soda works was on the north side of the building



SOCIAL GATHERING

An afternoon meeting of the local artists' society, judging by the artist's pallet pinned to each lady's dress. The children in the front row are Bessie Werle, Norman Lagomarsino, Hilda Peters, Gracie McCarty and Harriet Fisher. The home belonged to William Burleson, who had purchased it from A.P. Hotaling Co. in San Francisco in 1903.

where the syrups were mixed and the soda bottled. The bottles were washed on the back porch. Grandmother Werle was in charge of mixing the syrups for each flavor of soda, and was very particular about her flavorings. She imported most of her syrups, the lemon, for example, came from Spain. They bottled the very popular sarsaparilla, creme soda, mineral water, root beer, lemon soda, and a tonic called "iron brew". The iron brew was the best seller they had, but, unfortunately, they had to discontinue the sale of it as a soda water because it had too high an alcoholic content. (There were probably some very disappointed people in town when it was taken off the market).

The soda was delivered by wagons and carts and distributed all over the county. Norman Lagomarsino was a small boy at this time, but can remember going along on the deliveries. It was always fun for him, because he got to go into the stores while his

father was delivering merchandise. One time they were making a delivery to McCarty's store in Mokelumne Hill and Norman went inside while the storekeeper and his father were outside. There on the counter was an open cookie jar and the temptation was just too much. Norman liberated some of the cookies and when his father found out, he suffered a severe spanking that he still remembers.

Mr. Werle eventually expanded his operation and built an icehouse across the street from the soda works, and Victor Lagomarsino moved his brewery operation to the soda works. In 1909, Mr. Werle exchanged the Soda works, icehouse, and brewery for some property in Oakland, with the Massbergs. Victor stayed in Mokelumne Hill until the home burned in 1915 and then moved to San Francisco.

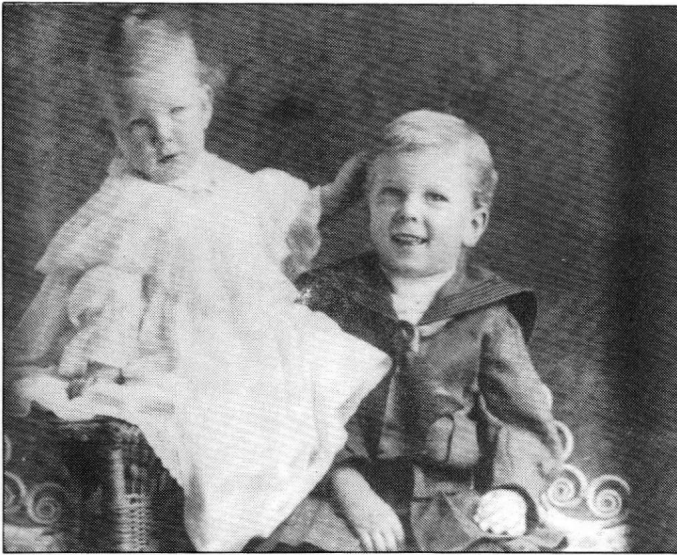
Victor's son, Norman, had attended school in Mokelumne Hill.



SODA WORKS

The Werle Soda Works and residence on Lafayette Street in Mokelumne Hill as it appeared during the late 1890's. The delivery wagon was constantly on the road,

stopping at almost every store and barroom in the county with supplies.



CYRIL AND NORMAN LAGOMARSINO

His teacher was Florence Moser, who taught first, second and third grades. Maggie McCallan taught fourth and fifth, and Mr. H.M. Moffitt the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth. There was a total of approximately two hundred children attending the tiny school at that time.

When Norman's family moved to San Francisco, they entered him in St. Ignatius Grammar School, and later high school. His tuition was five dollars per month. He always spent his summer vacations in Mokelumne Hill and in his third year of high school he got a job at the Easy Bird mine, making three dollars per day. This was big money for Norman. His only other job had been delivering the Call Bulletin for which he earned eight dollars per month.

He left high school after his third year, but later completed his high school and college education. He took a job as a messenger boy for the Bank of Italy, earning twenty dollars a month. The bank had three offices at that time.

Norman then was promoted to the clearing house at a salary of forty dollars a month. He later advanced to the bookkeeping department and handled 1190 commercial accounts. He worked six days a week, the hours were from 8:00 a.m. until sometimes 11:00 p.m. at a salary of ninety dollars per month.

He eventually went to the Banca Popolari Fugazi where he installed the first automatic bookkeeping system in their main bank in San Francisco and their branches in Oakland and Santa Barbara.

In 1923 Norman married Winnifred Mary Connell in Palo Alto. They lived in San Francisco, but Norman was constantly returning to Mokelumne Hill. He would spend weekends working on the family home and property, and visiting with his grandmother until her death in 1942.

He retired from the insurance business in 1967 and moved back to Grandmother Gobbi's home on Prospect Street in Mokelumne Hill, where he is still constantly working on the property.

Like his parents before him, Norman and his wife Winnifred celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Mokelumne Hill in 1973. They had 275 guests to help them in the festivities, which turned out to be too many to fit in the tiny church in Mokelumne Hill. So, Mass was held at St. Andrews in San Andreas. Seven priests attended to assist in the Mass. A reception was held at the Town Hall in Mokelumne Hill with members of the couple's original wedding party attending. Later in the evening 101 friends and relatives were hosted at a dinner in the Lagomarsino home. They said there were people in every room of the house.

Winnifred Lagomarsino has always been interested in poetry and shared the following poem that she wrote especially for her husband.

FOR NORMAN

A Christmas wish is coming
To a heart that is tried and true

Bringing all the blessings
From a little Babe to you.

For all the love and all the care
You've given me, my dear,

Our lady and her Infant Son
Will take away your fear.

They'll leave with you a singing heart
No work nor care will tire

And precious gifts to bring you joy
And peace that men admire.

All photos are from the collection of Norman Lagomarsino except where noted.

The Society was launched in 1952 with 92 charter memberships (including five organizations). Today we are happy to have twenty individuals and three organizations of this original group still on our roster. They are listed below:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Helen Lewis Baker | James B. Poore |
| Helen Belmont | Eva Soracco |
| Madelon Jack Carley | Adeline Squellati |
| Doris Treat Daley | Ellen Thompson |
| Naomi Dick | James Valente |
| Olivia Harbinson | Eunice Van Winkle |
| Sadie Hunt | R. Coke Wood |
| Cecille Vandel McMillian | Ethelyn Wood |
| Cord Moller | ORGANIZATIONS: |
| George Poore | Calaveras Grange No. 715 |
| Carmenne Poore | Murphys Community Club |
| John W. Poore | Ruby Parlor, NDGW No. 46 |

Officers of Calaveras County Historical Society

16 Main Street
San Andreas, California

President Tad Folendorf, Angels Camp
 First Vice-President George B. Poore, Jr., San Andreas
 Second Vice-President Miss Bessie McGinnis, Angels Camp
 Treasurer Drew Garland, Murphys
 Secretary Mrs. Cheryl D. Smith, West Point
 Directors Mrs. Grace Alford, Angels Camp
 Francis Queirolo, Stockton
 Robert Rosenthal, Mokelumne Hill
 Milton B. Smith, Murphys
 Mrs. Eva Soracco, San Andreas
 R. Coke Wood, Stockton (Honorary)

LAS CALAVERAS

Editor W.P. Fuller, Jr., San Andreas
 Associate Editor Mrs. Ida Long, Mokelumne Hill
 Assistant Editor Miss Anne Richard, Angels Camp
 Production Editor Mrs. Zelma O. Altmeyer, San Andreas

Las Calaveras is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society. Individual memberships (\$5.00 a year). Family (\$7.00) and Junior memberships (\$1.00) include subscriptions to Las Calaveras. Non-members may obtain copies of Las Calaveras from the Secretary. The original historical material in this bulletin is not copyrighted and anyone is invited to use it. Mention of the source will be appreciated.

The Calaveras County Historical Society, 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.

Address correspondence to the Society at P.O. Box 721, San Andreas, CA. 95249.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. C.D. Anderson, Stockton
 Adeline L. Crabtree, San Ramon
 Sharon L. Daniels, Murphys
 Gene Deaver, Altaville
 John Hancock, San Francisco
 Sandra Lawrence, Stockton
 Mrs. T.W. Shepherd, Hacienda Heights

MEETINGS

November 17: 8:00 p.m., Grange Hall, San Andreas "Captain Hiram Messenger" Talk given by Willard Fuller, Jr., Editor of "Las Calaveras"

December 15: 7:00 p.m. Black Bart Inn, San Andreas
 Christmas Dinner Party Musical Entertainment by Local Schools

IN MEMORIAM

Dante Oneto
 Mrs. Margaret Smith

The First Officers of Calaveras Historical Society - August 1952 to July 1953 were:

President - Judge J.A. Smith
 Vice-President - Dr. R. Coke Wood
 Secretary - Mrs. Sadie Hunt
 Treasurer - Mrs. Ellen Thompson

Board of Directors:

George Poore, San Andreas
 Amon Tanner, Murphys
 Frances Lombardi, Mokelumne Hill
 John Squellati, San Andreas

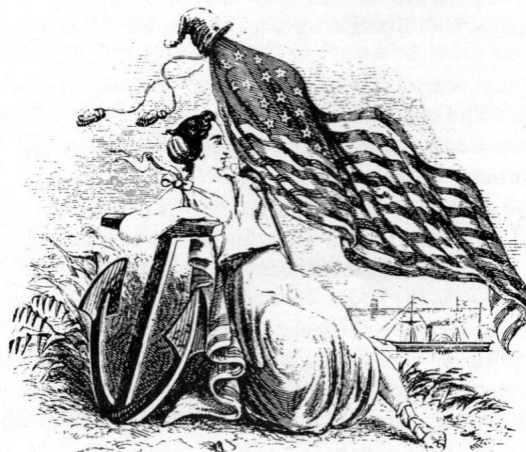
In July 1954 Goerge Poore was elected 2nd Vice-President. Directors were: Archie Stevenot, Sonora; Amon Tanner, Murphys; Frances Lombardi, Mokelumne Hill; John Squellati, San Andreas and James Valente, Angels Camp. Since that time, the Society has had both 1st and 2nd vice-presidents and five directors.

Judge J.A. Smith served as President of the Calaveras County Historical Society from its beginning to the time of his death, January 27, 1964.

Dr. R. Coke Wood was editor of our quarterly bulletin, "Las Calaveras", from October 1952 when the first issue was published, to July 1964. Mr. W.P. Fuller has been editor since October, 1964. Much Calaveras County history has been gathered but it is a continuing process and all of us must make an effort to record historical events of our communities of the present time.

Sadie Hunt was secretary of the Society for fifteen years and missed just two meetings.

Ellen Thompson was treasurer from 1952 to 1957 when she moved away from the county. She has been a member ever since.



MEMBERSHIPS

Family:	103
Single-Organizational:	358
Junior:	1
Library:	15
Exchange:	17

Member of the California Conference of Historical Societies