

## THE STEVENSON-McGURK BRIDGE

The Stevenson Bridge was the first bridge built across a stream in Calaveras County. It spanned the North Fork of the Calaveras River about one and a half miles westerly from San Andreas on the road to Stockton. On November 18, 1850, E. L. Stevenson and George M. Perie petitioned the Court of Sessions of Calaveras County for permission to erect a toll bridge across the North Fork of the Calaveras River at or near Moore's Branch and near the Iowa Log Cabin.

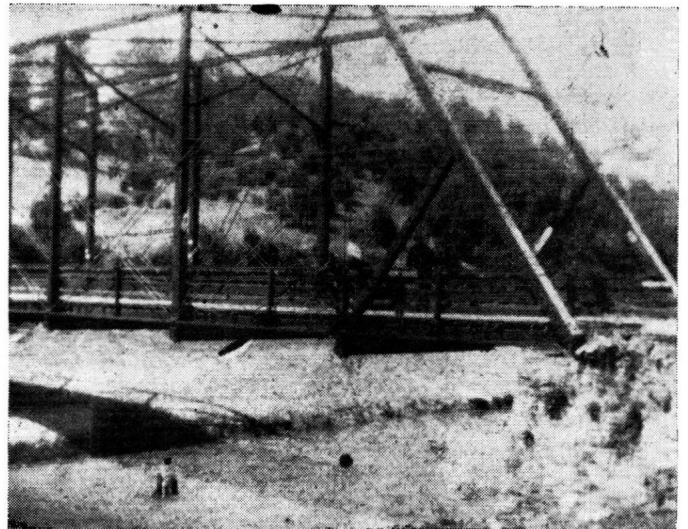
The Court of Sessions on December 6, 1850, at Double Springs granted permission to Stevenson and Perie to erect the bridge provided they post a bond in the sum of \$5,000, and complete the bridge within forty days and keep the same in good repair for a period of one year. The Court of Sessions fixed the rate of toll that could be charged and renewed the license the following December to Mr. Stevenson alone.

The first bridge was built with log pilings and piers. It had a narrow floor and no side railings.

In 1859 Stevenson and his wife Verina executed a note and chattel mortgage giving the bridge as security. The interest on the note was two per cent per month. It is evident that Stevenson had considerable difficulty in meeting his payments and on June 11, 1860, a second note and chattel mortgage was given with the bridge as security. The high water of 1861-62 swept the bridge away and Mr. Stevenson immediately constructed another bridge at the same location.

On May 3, 1865, Mr. Stevenson and his wife executed a trust in which they conveyed the bridge to one S. B. Stevens. By this instrument Stevens was to enter into possession of the bridge, collect all tolls, and pay all necessary expenses in connection with the bridge and when all outstanding debts had been paid to reconvey the property to Stevenson and wife.

On April 30, 1867, Stevenson and his wife, then living at Stockton, conveyed the bridge to one James Gorman. Mr. Gorman conducted the bridge and collected tolls until his death. On March 18, 1870, Mr. Gorman engaged in a dispute



Stevenson-McGurk Bridge, located about one and a half miles west of San Andreas. This picture was taken about 60 years ago.

with several Chinamen over tolls and during the trouble a Chinaman stabbed and killed him. John F. Beckett, the Public Administrator was appointed the administrator of the James Connelly estate and the bridge was sold at a probate sale to Henry Connelly for the sum of \$1600. The sale was completed in June, 1873.

Mr. Connelly collected tolls on the bridge until his death on May 6, 1878. About 1875, a new bridge replaced the old bridge at the same site. It had high side railings, with large trusses and was painted red. On an arch of the over-head structure was an iron plaque which gave the date of completion of the bridge and the tonnage that it was built to stand.

The will of Mr. Connelly left the bridge to his brother, Michael Connelly, and Patrick Henry McGurk was named as the executor of the will. The bridge was sold by the exe-

ctor and Charles H. McGurk bought the property in October 1878. The bridge was thereafter on March 10, 1879, conveyed by Charles McGurk to Patrick H. McGurk. P. H. McGurk was thereafter and until the bridge was purchased by the County of Calaveras on January 5, 1886, the owner and collector of tolls on the property.

The property upon which the bridge stood was sold to Guisippe Ginochio and his wife Rachele in 1899 and it has been held by members of their family ever since said date.

In 1916, the State of California made a new alignment of the highway and built a reinforced concrete bridge about one-half mile down stream from the old bridge. The old bridge was condemned and left standing for private use only. During a heavy winter storm in 1921, the double planked floor became water soaked and the weight pulled the bridge down and it settled almost silently into the river. It was dismantled and sold for junk.

In 1938, the State made another alignment of the highway and a new reinforced concrete bridge was constructed on the site of the original bridge. This is the bridge in use at this time. It is said that a ferry was used to cross the stream during high water before the bridge was first built.

This bridge is located a short distance from the Old Pioneer Cemetery.

## EARLY SAWMILLS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

It is difficult to determine who constructed the first sawmill in Calaveras County. Without doubt one of the first mills was the Willow Creek sawmill owned by Elias Field. He sold the mill to Dennis, Wylie, and Washburn, who operated the mill for many years. It was located on Willow Creek just where the Cave City road left the Mt. Ranch-San Andreas road, and a lumber yard was maintained in San Andreas.

After the timber in the immediate vicinity was cut, Dennis sold out to Wylie and Washburn and they moved the mill to O'Neill Creek. Oxen were used to transport logs to the mills. The early mills whipsawed the lumber. This method required a saw somewhat similar to a cross cut saw with teeth slanted in one direction. It was usually operated by two men, one above a platform and one below. The cutting occurred on the downward stroke. Water power was sometimes used.

Wylie and Washburn sold the mill to a man named Armstrong, but after a short period of operation it was destroyed by fire. The oxen were sold by Armstrong to McKay who operated a mill on the headwaters of Love Creek for many years.

There were probably sawmills in the Murphys region as early as 1850 because visitors to the camp tell of the buildings constructed of sawed lumber. There were certainly mills there by 1852, because the San Joaquin Republican, November 13, 1852, stated that the amount of pine forests in the vicinity of Murphys New Diggins was inexhaustible and that there were two steam sawmills in the camp. One was owned by Brown, Gilman, and Knapp and was located on Mill Street with lumber yards at Vallecito, Douglas Flat, and Albany Flat.

Old-timers state the first sawmill at Murphys was located about one half mile south of Murphys, near the site of the present Ed French home. It is claimed that the first person to be buried in the Protestant Cemetery was a man who was sawed in two at this mill. The mill was probably



Manuel logging tractor.  
60 years ago.

the one owned by John and J. K. Doak. It may have been purchased from Knapp because it was mortgaged on February 23, 1853, to Knapp and Turner for 84.17 ounces of gold dust or its equivalent in coin at \$17.25 per ounce with interest at four per cent per month.

This property was conveyed by the Doaks on March 5, 1856, to John Marath. It was described as being a lot used for milling and lumbering purposes and located a half mile south of Murphys, near Spanish Gulch which runs from Central Hill to Angels Creek. It was known as Doaks' Old Mill.

In the fifties there were three mills on the Big Trees Road or adjacent to it. Captain Hanford had a sawmill in the vicinity of Hanford Hill. One description places it on Mill Creek where the Utica Ditch now crosses it. Another places it at the foot of Hanford Hill where the old Javeaux Ranch was located.

The Calaveras County Records (Book "D" of Deeds, p. 389) states that William H. Hanford, doing business as W. H. Hanford and Company, together with his wife, Elizabeth, conveys to John Kimball, Ephriam Cutting, Daniel H. Dickinson and Elijah Dickinson, for the sum of \$12,000, one steam sawmill known as Wm. H. Hanford and Company's Mill and located on Mill Creek, a tributary of the Stanislaus, about 7½ miles northeast of Murphys and about 1½ miles south of the mill owned by the Union Water Company. Lumber yards were located at Vallecito and Angels Camp. He may have had mills in several locations.

The Union Water Company had a mill also on Mill Creek, located a short distance above Hanford Mill. It was near the head of the Utica Ditch or Union Water Company aqueduct and cut lumber for the construction of the five mile flume as well as other flumes along the ditch.

In 1856, Albert Sleeper and a man named Hoyt built a water-powered sawmill near the Calaveras Big Trees on a branch of the San Antone Creek known as Cowell Creek. On January 18, 1860, a half interest was sold in this mill to Freeman Dunbar. For a time it was known as Sleeper and Dunbar's Mill and was powered by a large overshot water wheel. Dunbar bought out Sleeper's interest for \$5,000 and continued to operate the mill as Dunbar and Sons until 1871. This purchase apparently included the Dunbar Ranch, now known as Meadowmont, which is owned by Bob Romaggi, as well as thirty-two oxen, lumber yards at Murphys

and Altaville, two logging wagons, and six lumber wagons. The lumber yard in Murphys was located in the flat just south of the monument on the Dunbar place. The property is now owned by Dr. Woodrow Cole and the large white house, occupied by the William Reidels, is the Dunbar home.

The combined output of these sawmills in the 'fifties was about 250,000 board feet per month.

Kimball and Cutting operated the sawmill bought from Hanford and Company until 1880. They had a lumber yard a short distance up the Big Trees Road with two sheds; one was 160 feet long and the other was 100 feet long in which 400,000 feet of lumber could be stored. The large barn which is still standing on the Ernie Hauselt property was built by them to house the teams used in lumbering.

Kimball died in 1878 and the partnership was broken up. The lumber business and the teams were sold to John Manuel, who had been operating the Wild Goose Mine in Douglas Flat. For the next twenty years, until his death in 1899, Manuel was known as the lumberman of Calaveras. The Manuel family milled at several locations above Murphys, with yards at Murphys and Angels. The Manuel Estate Company was the first company to haul lumber in Calaveras County with a traction engine.

## **SAWMILLS AROUND WEST POINT**

The first sawmill around West Point, Calaveras County, was owned and operated by Dr. Fisher on the old Emigrant Road about 3 miles easterly of the town. This early mill whipsawed the logs into lumber. Milling was carried on at this location for many years.

In the early eighties, Warren Rose (later of Angels Camp) was a partner of Joel Rowe and Thomas Jenkins in a sawmill built in connection with their stamp mill on Mott's Gulch. After he sold his interest to his partners, Rowe and Jenkins carried on the sawmill business, which later was moved to Bear Creek and the operations were carried on in the name of Eureka Mill and Lumber Company, a corporation. This mill was a short distance northerly from the present sawmill of the Stockton Box Company.

Warren Rose then operated a sawmill near the James Porteous home. This mill came into the hands of Woodcock Bros., who later moved the mill to the Licking Fork of the Mokelumne River, a short distance above the Sandoz Ranch. Thereafter, they again moved the mill further up on the same stream. The mill was last operated by W. H. Mitchell Lumber Company.

J. K. Doak had a steam power mill on what is now the Hawver Ranch in Canadian Valley about 4 miles northerly from the town of San Andreas. This mill became the property of David McCarty who moved it to Rail Road Flat and cut lumber there. Later he moved the mill to West Point and operated it until his death, at a site about one mile easterly of town, for many years. Later his son, Allen McCarty, and George C. Bruce ran the mill. Afterwards, Mr. Bruce had a mill on the Middle Fork of the Mokelumne River about 4 miles above the present dam of the Calaveras Public Utility District on the stream.

These West Point mills cut lumber for the Gwin Mine, the Amador Canal and the Mokelumne Hill Ditch. When the Mokelumne Hill Ditch was being built the Company had a sawmill at Glencoe that cut the flume lumber.

## **McCARTY SAWMILL**

By JUDGE J. A. SMITH

David McCarty first had a sawmill at Rail Road Flat. He afterwards moved this mill to West Point and continued

to operate about one mile east of the town of West Point for many years. Thereafter, McCarty and Bruce operated a sawmill on the same premises. George C. Bruce later had a sawmill on the Middle Fork of the Mokelumne River about three miles above the Schaad place.

Warren Rose came from Jackson to West Point. He had been mining at Jackson and mined at West Point with Rowe & Jenkins. He had a sawmill on the Blue Mountain Road near the place where the Water Ditch belonging to Calaveras Public Utility District crosses the road. This mill was sold by Warren Rose to the Woodcock brothers who milled at the place for quite a number of years. They kept oxen for hauling logs. After cutting the timber in the vicinity of the mill they moved their mill to the Licking Fork just above the Sandoz Place. Later they moved the mill a little further up on the Licking Fork and operated from this location for some time. The mill was afterwards secured by the W. H. Mitchell Lumber Company of Valley Springs and the mill was last operated by the Mitchell Lumber Company.

Warren Rose was engaged in mining near West Point with Joel Rowe and Thomas Jenkins as partners. The latter two men had come to West Point from mining at Bodie, Mono County.

Warren Rose sold them his interest in a ten-stamp quartz mill and some mining claims. Rowe and Jenkins then built a sawmill in connection with their stamp mill. After sawing at this place for a few years, Rowe went to Grass Valley and organized a corporation known as Eureka Mill and Lumber Company. This company acquired a tract of timber near Bear Creek and built a mill on Bear Creek near where the road to the Stockton Box Company's mill crossed Bear Creek. They had a rail track up Bear Creek and logged on the road. They did not continue in business for many years and finally closed down. Thereafter, Clarence Berry built a sawmill on Tiger Creek where the Stockton Box Mill is now situated. Berry had a mill on his place at Glencoe prior to moving to the West Point location. Thereafter, Berry's moved to Amador County.

Schaad Bros. had a sawmill on the Middle Fork of the Mokelumne River a short distance below the Schaad Ranch. During the terrible flu epidemic, the family was practically wiped out by the dread disease.

Barnhart at one time had a sawmill at Skull Flat.

Nixon Bros. had a mill at the foot of the Wilson Hill on the old Emigrant Road.

The earliest mills around West Point whipsawed the lumber. One of the earliest of these mills was owned by Dr. Fisher and later by a man named Mentzel.

## **SAWMILL OF MOKELUMNE HILL CANAL & MINING COMPANY**

When this company was building the canal from South Fork of Mokelumne River, they had a sawmill near Glencoe where they sawed lumber for the flumes. This was in the early fifties.

The mill was located above the Three-Way Station on the West Point Road.

## **COSGROVE SAWMILL**

Chas. Cosgrove had a steam power sawmill on Joaquin Creek, between Ross Reservoir and Dogtown. This mill was afterwards moved to Taylor Creek and placed on the property there belonging to George Taylor's father and uncle.



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San Andreas, California

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

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### EDITORIAL

The Calaveras County Historical Society wishes to congratulate Mr. Demarest for his fine work in writing up his memories of an active life in the most important of all the industries in Calaveras County—mining. We enjoyed his sharing some of these memories with us at the October dinner meeting in Mountain Ranch, and we wish him the best of luck in getting his manuscript published.

The Calaveras Society would like to raise its voice in indignation at the proposal of the Elk Grove Irrigation District and the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation to build a dam site at Coloma for the purpose of creating a reservoir which would flood the historic spot where James Marshall picked up the flakes of gold on January 24, 1848. We join with the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce and the many other civic and historical groups in urging that all efforts possible be made to find an alternate location for the dam. The event that occurred there started a great migration that was felt in all parts of the world and is only exceeded in size by the Crusades. This spot should be preserved as a historical shrine so that future generations can more fully appreciate our heritage.

More people in Calaveras County should be enjoying the meetings and membership in the Historical Society. The Siskiyou County Historical Society is the largest local historical society in California with a membership roll of about eleven hundred. The county has a population of 31,000. Calaveras County is one-third the size of Siskiyou and yet we only have a membership of about 125. At our dinner meeting at Mountain Ranch we had 106 people in attendance and judging from the enthusiasm with which everyone was disposing of Mrs. Mudd's macaroni and the attention given Mr. Demarest in his talk, everyone had a fine evening. Let's tell others about the work of the society and invite them to join.

### J. K. DOAK SAWMILL

J. K. Doak, an early day resident of Calaveras County, built a sawmill in Canadian Valley, on what is now known as "The Hawver Ranch." David McCarty was his bookkeeper and sawyer. Doak became so much in debt to McCarty that McCarty took the mill in payment of his debt and moved it to Rail Road Flat. After completing milling at Rail Road Flat, McCarty moved the mill to West Point and set it up about one mile easterly of West Point. The mill continued in occupation of Mr. McCarty for years and was afterwards run by his son, Allen.

### MODOC SAWMILL

This sawmill was located in Tuolumne County, near the North Fork of the Stanislaus. It was built by the Union Water Company for the purpose of cutting flume lumber for their canal.

Water was taken from Beaver Creek and the mill was operated by water power.

### EL DORADO SAWMILL

This sawmill was in the town of El Dorado and was operated by Wm. Irvine. It was a steam power mill, and was located not far from the sawmill operated by Joe Josephsen recently.

Mr. Irvine maintained a lumber yard at San Andreas when he had the sawmill.

### SAWMILLS AROUND MOKELUMNE HILL

A man named Henri Charbonnel owned several sawmills around Mokelumne Hill during the fifties. He had a mill at Buckeye, one at Jesus Maria and one at Independence, near Rail Road Flat. He logged with oxen and maintained a lumber yard at Mokelumne Hill. On November 5, 1852, he conveyed a half interest in a sawmill about 3 miles east of Mokelumne Hill with 6 yoke of oxen and lumber yard at Mokelumne Hill.

### WIGGINS SAWMILL

George Wiggins had a sawmill on Jesus Maria Creek between Mountain Ranch and Rail Road Flat at an early date. When the Comstock boom occurred he went over the mountain and lumbered at Lake Tahoe for several years. Thereafter, he returned and again milled on the Jesus Maria. After his death his widow, Sarah Wiggins, carried on the business for many years. Logging was done with oxen. George Getchell, being the principal driver of the ox teams. They maintained a lumber yard at San Andreas.

### SAWMILL ON SAN ANTONIO CREEK

Spencer & Benson had a water power sawmill on San Antonio Creek just below where the Indian Creek enters the San Antonio.

This mill was operated with one of the earliest water rights taken up on San Antonio Creek.

There was an early sawmill at Reynolds Ferry in the early days in Calaveras County.