



Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society

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STORIES IN STONE PART III

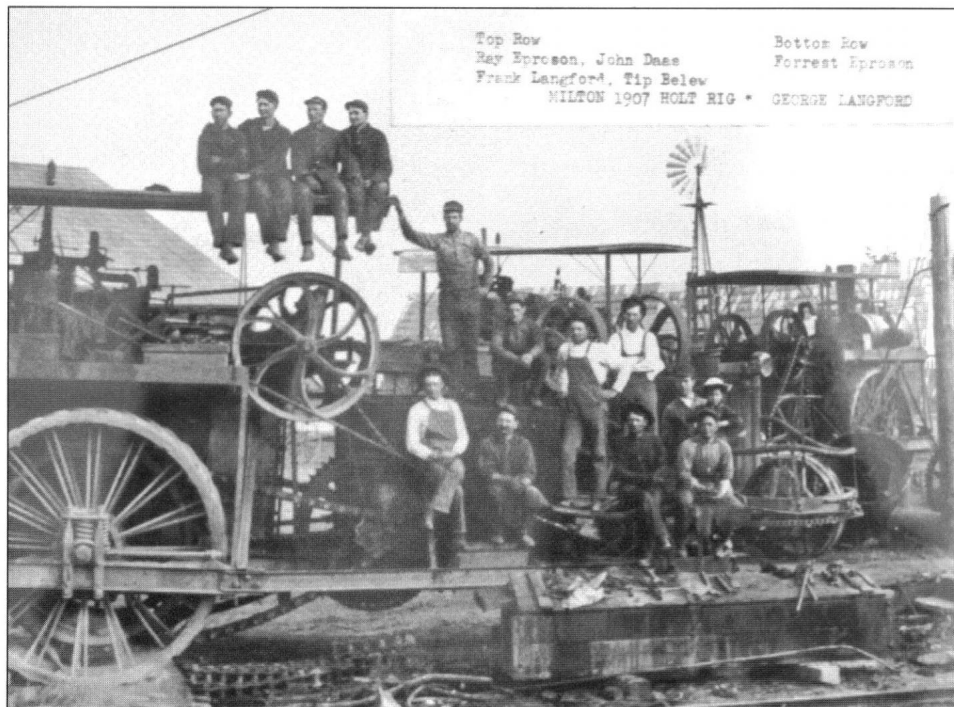
by *Charity Maness*

This Las Calaveras edition continues our trek through the historical markers dotting our beautiful county and the rich history behind each one. I hope you enjoy the journey.

California Historical Landmark No. 262—Milton:

The town of Milton sprang to life when the Stockton-Copperopolis Railroad Company, which later became part of Southern Pacific Railroad in 1888, came to town in 1871 bringing with it jobs, workers and an express route to move copper from the booming copper mines of Calaveras County. The town garnered its name from one-time California Governor Milton Latham.

Latham, a native of Columbus, Ohio, was born May 23, 1827. He graduated in 1845 from Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania. After being admitted to the bar in 1848, Latham held the position of circuit court clerk for Russell County, Alabama until his move



*Photo taken of a photo displayed in the Milton Masonic Lodge
by Charity Maness 2015.*

to California in 1850 where, one short year later, he was appointed to the position of District Attorney of Sacramento.

On January 9, 1860 at the young age of 32, Latham became the 6th Governor of the State of California; a position that would last a record mere five days. Latham resigned his position to be appointed by the California legislature to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by the death of David C. Broderick. Broderick had been killed in a duel by David S. Terry; former Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. Latham was the Senate's youngest member at the time.

After one term in the U.S. Senate, Latham became manager of the London and San Francisco Bank and began investing heavily in railroads and steamers. However, according to the California office of historical preservation Latham was more than a rail 'baron' as he was credited with being a construction engineer who helped to build the railroad to Milton.

While some may argue that Milton is a ghost town, Milton was a hub of business for many years.

Though the railroad began business to Milton on May 1, 1871, Milton was not intended to be the last stop. The tracks were to extend all the way to Copperopolis, however with the copper mining declining and the cost of grading increasing, the project became financially prohibitive and left Milton as the end of the line.

Stage lines with mule teams were used from the Milton depot. The Angels Camp stage took passengers and goods to Murphys, Angels Camp, and Mokelumne Hill while the Sisson's stage served Copperopolis, Tuttletown and other towns in the neighboring county of Tuolumne. Mule teams with up to 18 mules would carry the copper from the mines in Copperopolis to Milton for transport to Stockton then on to San Francisco. At times the loads were so heavy it would take up to two days to deliver to Milton.

Gold shipments which made their way success-

fully to Milton, not stolen by Road Agents or stage robbers, were transferred from Wells Fargo Company strong boxes in their stage coaches to awaiting trains.

With the coming of the railroad to Milton, crime soon followed. To deal with this some residents organized into a Vigilance Committee with the intention of protecting themselves from "unprovoked and barbarous assaults of the class of roughs who infest the town and to deal out justice to miscreants". However, some of the citizens disagreed with the committee seemingly taking the law into their own hands and a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Sheriff were appointed to reside in the town.

The town's population swelled and a public schoolhouse was built in 1873 and by 1875 a total of 33 students were enrolled.

As with many mining towns Milton was not impervious to the fury of Mother Nature and was victim of her destructive force in December 1873.

The story was retold by the Californian on December 30, 1937, "*About one o'clock of the afternoon Tuesday last, the town of Milton in this county was visited by a tornado that resulted in the injury of several persons and the destruction of a considerable amount of property. Several buildings were destroyed, others unroofed and a number moved from their foundations.*"

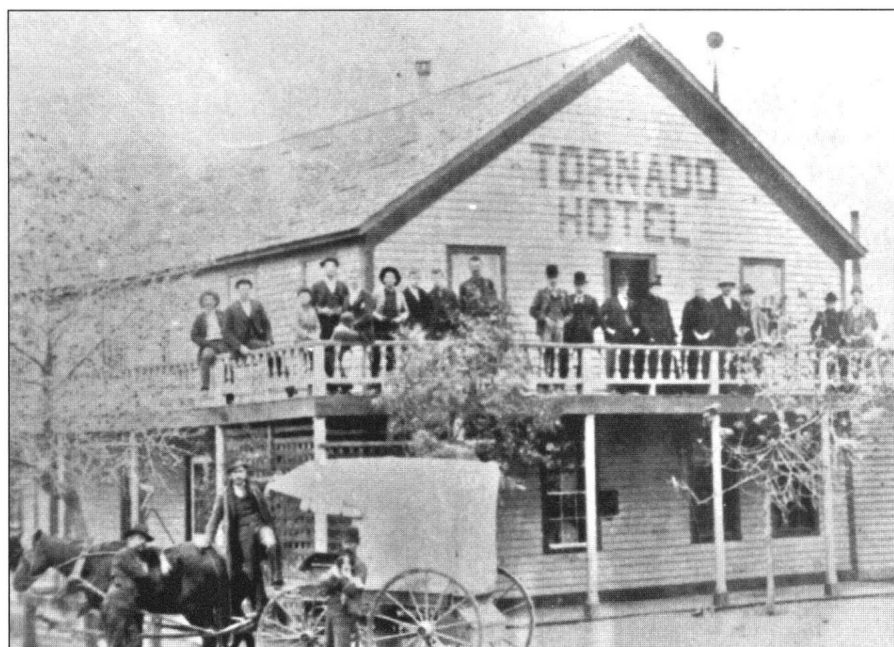


Photo courtesy Calaveras County Historical Society.

The tornado was estimated to be a quarter mile wide and was said to have left *“half the town in ruins”*. The scene described by those who witnessed it told of the air being filled with flying timbers and winds at speeds never witnessed before. The force of the storm seemed to divide the town leaving Milton Hotel, McDonald’s Livery Stable, Bund and Hendrick’s Store and the Big Tree Saloon uninjured.

Yet by August 1875 business was booming.

Ads in the August 5, 1875 Foothill Democrat read (in part):

Tornado Hotel—*“The proprietor of the Tornado Hotel respectfully informs the public that having fully recovered from the effects of the cyclone he is now prepared to furnish first class accommodations to travelers.”*

J. G. Pollard—*“Justice of the Peace and Notary Public. Particular attention paid to collections. Office, Milton, Calaveras County, California.”*

**Milton Masonic Lodge—
Keystone Lodge #161.**



Photo by Charity Maness, 2015.

Though the once proud Keystone Lodge #161 in Milton was destroyed by fire January 23, 2016, its history lives on; a one-time tribute to the early miners and their godly beliefs.

According to the dedication plaque which rests where the lodge once stood,

“Keystone Lodge No. 161, F. & A.M., instituted in Copperopolis Dec. 19. 1982, at the height of the copper mining boom. Moved to 1881, to Milton, the terminal of the Stockton & Copperopolis Railroad, which, because of the collapse of copper mining, never reached its intended goal. Dedicated to those who sought to perpetuate the moral teachings of Freemasonry. To them we gratefully acknowledge our debt.”

The Keystone Lodge was founded in 1862 in Copperopolis. On April 12, 1881 the Mason’s held their last meeting in Copperopolis as they had all agreed to sell their lodge in Copperopolis and purchase the Milton Hall from M. W. Hendricks for \$600.00. The lodge also bought the neighboring cemetery in April 1885 from B. F. Foster and J. W. Oildick for \$200.00.

A saloon operated on the first floor of the lodge, run by proprietor W. C. ‘Bulldog’ Smith.



Photo by Charity Maness, 2015.

Milton Cemetery:

The Milton Cemetery is located off Rock Creek Road near Milton Road with headstones dating back to an era long forgotten.

Little Hellen Abbott, born March 30, 1867, was laid to rest in the Milton Cemetery just 5 months later on September 12, 1867.

Some souls in residence at the Milton cemetery were born prior to California becoming the 31st state on September 9, 1850:

James DeWitt Beckwith enjoyed a fairly long life for the times; born February 1, 1824 in Ohio, he passed away at the age of 84 on December 20, 1908.

There is a gravesite listed at the Masonic Cemetery, as the final resting place of one Rebecca Langford, born 1810, died June 11, 1894.

Another, Sally Reed, must have witnessed massive changes in her life being born in January 1800 and passing away August 26, 1866.

California Historical Landmark No. 255—Calaveritas:

Calaveritas is located 4.5 miles from San Andreas on Calaveritas Road

The historical marker reads: *Calaveritas: Settled in 1849 by Mexicans, was a flourishing mining town complete with stores, saloons, gambling houses, and fandango halls, the latter two said to be frequented by Joaquin Murieta. The town was destroyed by fire in 1858.*

Translated as “little skulls” this is the site of a small placer mining town that once boasted a diverse population of about 800 at its height in 1857.

Lower Calaveritas was founded along the banks of the Calaveritas River in late 1849 by Mexicans seeking their fortune in gold.

By the early 1850s, Upper Calaveritas was founded about a mile upstream from the Mexicans location along the creek and soon boasted a livery stable as well as multiple stores, gambling halls, restaurants, saloons and fandango houses.

Early Calaveras pioneer Wade Johnston recalled a visit to Upper Calaveritas in his memoir titled “Wade Johnson Talks to his Daughter.”

“One time when the boys were in Upper Calaveritas,” wrote Johnston, “we saw a terrific fight between two Mexican women at a fandango house. First one then the other would have the best of it. The boys refused to interfere, finally

one got the other by the hair and was twisting her head down on the banister and she was taking aim behind her ear with a revolver when one of the men present rushed in, threw up her arm and separated them just in time to save the woman’s life.”

During its short existence Calaveritas was rated among the top two roughest towns in the mining area, sharing that distinction with Vallecito.

On Aug. 3, 1858, local lore passed down through generations tells of a malicious gambler named Shelton who had lost his gold dust in a card game and then set fire to a vacant building next to the gambling hall. The fire was disastrous for the little town and destroyed most of the businesses. Only a handful of establishments were able to evade the flames fanned by heat and dry lumber.

Judge J.A. Smith recalled the night in a newspaper column “The Days of Old in Historic Calaveras County” from an article originally in the *San Andreas Independent* dated August 8, 1857:

“The fire broke out at half past 2 o’clock in the morning, and when first discovered by Mr. Hatfield the north end of the building in which the fire originated was entirely enveloped in flames. In a moment everything was confusion and all hands were busily engaged in saving their property and themselves. The fire originated in a vacant building owned by Mr. Freidberger and was no doubt the work of an incendiary. The flames spread rapidly up and down the street, destroying everything until the entire camp except Mona Comeres’ fireproof building was in ashes. Fifty-one buildings were destroyed at a loss of over \$35,000.”

At the time of the destructive fire, many of the mines were no longer productive, many miners moved on and the majority of the burned-out buildings were never rebuilt. Those that remained faced another destructive fire in 1865.

Calaveritas never fully recovered.

After Luigi Costa lost his store on the south side of the creek in the 1857 fire he partnered with Antonio Palma to purchase a burned out store on the north side of the creek. In 1866 he bought Palma out and ran the general store until 1905. He raised cattle and goats and had a small vineyard with which he made wine and brandy to sell in his store.

In a memoir by Fritzi Cuneo Dorroh she tells of stories passed down through generations that the “Indians sometimes camped on the hill above town and traded their hand woven baskets for wine”.

Today all that remains of the once booming town are a few old buildings and the crumbling adobe remains of the Luigi Costa Store; the second building erected in the small mining town.

California Historical Landmark No. 266—Jenny Lind:

Located just between the towns of Milton and Valley Springs lay the historical placer mining town of Jenny Lind.

A historical marker erected on April 4, 1987 by the Native Daughter's of the Golden West, Joaquin Parlor No. 5 reads, "*Settled in the 1840s as a flourishing gold mining, cattle ranching, and farming community.*"

Located on the north bank of the Calaveras River Jenny Lind was predominately a placer mining town with much of the mining done along the hillsides above the river. As time went on the river itself was mined with dredgers.

The town, founded in the late 1840s, carried many names before the name of Jenny Lind stuck.

The town originally held the name of Dry Diggins due to the lack of water to wash its gold bearing gravel. It also was rumored to hold more creative names such as Slumgullion and Hell's Half Acre; names which were held at other camps.

One story is that the town garnered its name from the Swedish songbird Jenny Lind, also known as the Swedish Nightingale. After gaining great attention and fame in Europe as the Swedish Nightingale, Lind was approached by the famous American showman Phineas Taylor Barnum, who offered Lind a contract of one thousand dollars per night for 150 nights if she would come to the United States to perform, which she accepted. Records show, however, that Lind never had a performance on the west coast. In a 1954 correspondence to the Calaveras County Historical Society from the California State Library comprehensive research regarding Jenny Lind's various performance locations in the United States confirmed that "*there is no evidence that she was out in California.*"

Yet another tale passed down through generations recounts a different story:

"I was reading a new book just the other day," said D. C. Demarest, "about the names of places in California and it emphasized the statement that Jenny Lind was never in the state. I know she was

here, for my father told me about her appearance at Stickle's Opera House in Angels Camp. There she was presented with the largest gold specimen or nugget of all that were showered upon her triumphal tour of the early mining camps."

D. C. Demarest was born in Altaville on September 5, 1866. He attended college studying engineering and returned to Calaveras in 1890 where he succeeded his father D. D. Demarest in operation of the Altaville foundry.

It is possible that a great 'con' may have been performed in lieu of an actual performance by Jenny Lind as an imposter carrying the name of Jenny Lind may have graced the stage at the opera house in order to collect a large fee as well as gifts bestowed upon her.

Another theory is that the town was founded by Dr. John Y. Lind, an active member in the California Democratic convention and Senator of the 8th District in the early 1850s, who was said to have ultimately left the community in June of 1854 for an appointment as assistant surgeon to the Chief of the United States Marine Hospital.

Whether it was named after the songstress or after early resident Dr. John Y. Lind depends on which historical document is being referenced.

By 1856 Jenny Lind had four General Stores, two billiard halls, two hotels, a ten-pin alley, blacksmith shop, saloons, churches and many dwelling houses. At the time the town residents were listed by Jenny Lind native Fred D. Realy in the Stockton Daily as: "*Bill Dennis Sr, Louis Dennis Sr, Chester Jenkins, Bill Fenton, Joseph Realy, Captain Tyler, Max Rosenberg and brother George Conrad, Claus Lowden, Dave Paxton, Tom Sullivan, Charley Perrine, Celeste Ugo, Jimmy Thompson, Pat Barry, William Wolf, Hiram Tyrre, Mr. Kennison, Mr. Boss (the only Negro in town, who was killed by bandits at Stone Corral when they burned down the hotel), Jake and John Meyers and about 500 Chinese, 50 Mexicans and 50 Yaqui Indians.*"

Fred's father Joseph Frederick Realy relocated to Jenny Lind in 1856 from Ann Arbor, Michigan and opened a general blacksmith shop creating hand forged wagons. It is rumored Mr. Realy won the land that is Jenny Lind in a raffle.

Jenny Lind's mining district was a very active gold mining area into the 1940s producing approximately 100,000 ounces of gold.

California Historical Marker

No. 257—*Campo Seco*:

The Campo Seco registered landmark monument inscription reads: *Settled in 1849 by Mexicans who worked placer on Oregon Gulch. Rich Copper deposits discovered in 1859. Largest living cork tree in California planted here 1853. Ruins of the Adams Express building with iron doors still standing.* The monument was dedicated September 1950; placed by the California Centennials Commission with the base furnished by the Campo Seco Community Club.

As with many early mining camps the actual settlement dates and names vary in historical references.

One story has the town settled in 1848 by hopeful miners from Oregon who named the camp Oregon City. In a short time the town began to receive a large number of Mexicans from Sonora, soon their numbers were greater than the Oregonians and the town was renamed Campo Seco, Spanish for “dry camp”.

Another has the area founded by Mexican miners in 1849 who named little mining camp Dry Diggin’s due to the lack of water to wash the gravel with the name soon changed to Campo Seco.

By 1850 the town had grown and was flourishing yet the constant lack of water had many of the miners returning to various river bars in the area and the town began see a decline in its population.

The Mexicans, however, had skill with extracting gold from dirt without the need for water.

For thousands of years before the Gold Rush in California, indigenous people of South and Central America had been extracting gold from the ground using large wooden, flattened bowls called bateas. The miners would fill the shallow wooden bowls with fine dirt and toss them into the air allowing the wind to carry some of the dirt away while catching the heavier falling gold and dirt back in the pan. They would repeat this process again and again until they were able to pick the small gold nuggets from the dirt left in the batea.

The camp continued to prosper with many large lumps of gold being found in 1853 and 1854. Yet, as with many early mining camps and towns, fire was seemingly an unavoidable fact of life.

On August 17, 1854 a fire destroyed the town in just a few short hours.

As reported by the Calaveras Chronicle, *“The fire commenced about half past twelve o’clock, this day, Thursday, August 17, in Campo Seco Exchange, an unoccupied house and is supposed to be the work of*

an incendiary. A man known as Scottie, is suspected to have committed the felonious deed, and parties are now out in search of him, as he decamped immediately on seeing the success of his hellish deed.

The principal sufferers are the Messers. Root, who had just erected a large house and laid in a very heavy stock of goods, estimated at \$10,000.00. The Washington Hotel, a large building, \$5000.00. Arnold and Co, a hotel, just finished, \$8000. El Dorado Saloon, lately enlarged, \$3,500. Snyder & Woolly’s Restaurant, \$3,000.

A lot of the goods which had been carried to the chaparral for safety were also burned up, the fire having communicated with the bushes in the rear of the town.

About fifty good substantial frame houses, with their valuable contents, have thus been destroyed, not a vestige remaining. A large number of canvas houses were also destroyed.

The loss estimates are at \$100,000, at the lowest calculation.

The office of Adams & Co. suffered with the other buildings, but their treasure is secure in the safe.”

As the European and American miners vacated the area Chinese soon began to move in developing a Chinatown with stores, a gambling hall and other businesses.

The town was almost completely destroyed by fire once again in August 1859 leaving the town with a population of about 300 the following year including approximately 50 Chinese and some Mexicans.

While it looked as if the town was headed for demise in 1859 rich deposits of copper were found and the town was reborn. Copper was the new gold.

On April 14, 1865 the Stockton newspaper reported that 50,000 pounds of copper had arrived, on muleback, from the mines in Campo Seco.

With the closing of the largest copper mine, the Penn Mine, in 1919, the town began yet another slow decline. Another fire in 1928 left much of the business district in ruins and little hope for the town to ever fully recover. Though the Penn Mine was reopened for a time during World War II it doors closed permanently in 1957, thus effectively closing the doors on the existence of Campo Seco.

Campo Seco IOOF:

Campo Seco IOOF was originally instituted January 23, 1857 in Camp Seco, yet the Odd Fellows Lodge #66 called many locations home.

In 1870 local site maps showed that the lodge owned property on the south side of Campo Seco Road, however, it is not known if a lodge was ever built there and locals believe the crumbling rock wall located across the street is what remains of the actual foundation of the original hall.

By 1873 the population and membership began to drop in Campo Seco. As many of the remaining members were from Jenny Lind the lodge was moved and by 1874 an adobe brick building was built in Jenny Lind on Odd Fellow Street.

Once again, in 1885, membership declined and since the majority of the members were now coming from the Milton area the lodge was relocated to Milton in 1887. The old adobe building was sold to the local school district and used as a school until 1950.

As per the lodge's habit of following the population, the lodge moved again in 1904 back to Jenny Lind. In 1905 a new hall was built on land donated by Francis and James Monroe Sinclair. This hall is still in use today.

Jenny Lind is also home to the Odd Fellows Lodge #66 cemetery located at the end of Main Street in Jenny Lind.

Interestingly, according to Helen Lewis in the October 1960 *Las Calaveras*, on February 26, 1875

the Union Guard who owned the Copperopolis Armory failed to pay the taxes on the building and the Calaveras County Judge conveyed the property to the Mineral Lodge, International Order of Odd Fellows. In 1939 the Armory was transferred to the Campo Seco Lodge of Odd Fellows in Jenny Lind. By 1940 the newly organized Copperopolis Community Center regained possession of the building.

There are over 125 historical markers throughout Calaveras County, but they all have a story to tell.

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The Calaveras County Historical Society wishes to thank Jerry Howard and Danielle Ballard for all of their hard work and faithful service.

Jerry and Betty Howard will be starting a new adventure in their lives, while Danielle has moved to Reno and has taken a position with Tesla Motors. We wish them the very best!



Calaveras County Historical Society

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The Calaveras County Historical Society is a non-profit corporation. It meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in various communities throughout the County. Locations and scheduled programs are announced in advance. Some meetings include a dinner program, and visitors are always welcome.

The Society operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10:00 to 4:00 in the historic County courthouse located at 30 Main Street in San Andreas; and the historic Red Barn Museum at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, also in San Andreas, which is open Thursday to Sunday, 10:00 to 4:00.

The Society's office is located in historic San Andreas, the Calaveras County seat. Visitors are always welcome to stop by the office for assistance with research, and are encouraged to visit the museums while in the area. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:00, and the telephone number is (209) 754-1058, or contact us at: CCHS@goldrush.com; Red Barn Museum (209) 754-0800.

October–December 2018

New Members:

Jeremy & Ashley Herd—San Andreas
James & Janet Respass—Converted to Lifetime Membership
Nicole Barela—San Andreas
Matt & Asha Brock—San Andreas
Governor Jerry Brown—Honorary membership
Kathleen Brown—Honorary membership

Donations:

Peter Pike, Jr.—Copies of his book, California Bound
Weber, Ghio & Associates—Cash donation
Judy Gunder—handmade, white cotton dress
Bill Wennhold—Calaveras County Airport Dedication commemorative envelope
Marina McClary—Artifacts from the Baudin/Meyer/Cahn Family of Mokelumne Hill (assorted items)
Phil Alberts—Mark Twain Celebrated Jumping Frog Centennial Coin 1865–1965
Benny & Marilyn Troedel—motorized apple press
Steve Cilenti—photos of the Patio Drive-In (San Andreas)
Pickle Patch Deli—Cash Donation
Erle & Raelyn Winkler—Cash Donation in memory of Luellen Del Papa
Margaret O'Drain—Cash Donation
Bill & Beverly Burton—Cash Donation in memory of Luellen Del Papa
Kelly's Drug Store—large collection of pharmaceutical artifacts and memorabilia from Kelly's Drug Store