



Las Calaveras

Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society

Volume XLII

October, 1993

Number 1



Another Historic Building Saved . . . See Page 7

Calaveras County Historical Society

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Las Calaveras is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society. Membership (\$10.00 per year), includes subscription to **Las Calaveras**. Non-members may obtain a copies of **Las Calaveras** from the office. The original historical material in this bulletin is not copy-righted 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 in various communities throughout the county, locations of which are announced in advance. Dinner meetings also are announced in advance.

The Society's office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4 p.m. The telephone number is (209) 754-1058. Visitors are welcome. The Society also operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10 am to 4 p.m. in the historic county courthouse at 30 Main St., San Andreas.

IN MEMORIAM

Marguerite Bartoo, Altaville, July 8, 1993
Warren Tufts, Bremerton, WA
Ernie Hauselt, Murphys, February 26, 1993
Myrtle Severy, Tracy
Harold Browning, Lodi, August 16, 1993

VOLUME NUMBERS CORRECTION

Readers will note that this issue of *Las Calaveras* is No. 1 of Volume XLII. Over the past years accidental mistakes have been made in the numbering of certain volumes, and the above correction brings our numbering in line, going back to No. 1 of Volume I, published in October, 1952. We regret any inconvenience that the past errors may have caused our members.

NEW MEMBERS

The Calaveras County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Pat Franen, Wilseyville.
David Sumney, Oxnard.
Roy McClory, Tempe, Ariz.
William Franz, Altaville.
Mr. & Mrs. Myron Levin, San Leandro.

MUSEUM DONATIONS

Calaveras County Historical Society wishes to thank the following persons who recently made donations to the Calaveras County Museum.

Lavelle Baker, Yolo, CA.: Birth records and miscellaneous correspondence from the estate of his great grandfather, Dr. Baker, of Angels Camp.
Maria Romaggie, Thetis Island, British Columbia: \$20 donation
Ed Franzen, San Andreas, CA.: \$5 donation.
Wilma DeMotte, Selma, Ore.: \$100 donation.
Randy & Sue Metzger, San Andreas, CA.: Photograph of Calaveras County exhibit at the 1912 California State Fair.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The Mountain Ranch Community Club will host Calaveras County Historical Society's October 28th meeting with a 7 p.m. dinner in the Mountain Ranch Community Hall. The program which will follow the dinner is yet to be announced.

The historic Copperopolis Armory will be the scene of the Historical Society's November 18th meeting. This will be a business meeting which will open at 7:30 p.m. There will be a guest speaker.

The Historical Society's annual Christmas party and dinner will open at 7 p.m. on December 16th in the Metropolitan dinner theater in San Andreas.

OUR COVER PHOTO

The recently restored 97-year-old Whitlock mansion at 116 Court Street, in San Andreas, adds measurably to this old mining town's historic atmosphere. (For details see this issue's architectural awards story.)

PIONEER DAUGHTER STILL ACTIVE RANCHER

By
George Hoeper

From the shaded porch of her Moran Road ranch home, Ina Davies gazes across what many have described as the "prettiest meadow in Calaveras County". She can look back with pride over a lifetime that spans 91 years of busy and productive Calaveras County living. Her accomplishments, in addition to raising a family, include operating a general store, helping her husband and uncle with the ranching operation and taking an active part in the community.

A descendant of local gold rush families, Ina's maiden name was Batten. Her father John Henry Batten, whose family arrived in the mining camp of Vallecito in 1853, and after a short stint at gold mining, became a successful rancher and fruit grower. Her mother's maiden name was Mary Malaspina, and her grandparents, Angela Pierano Malaspina and Peter Malaspina, also were members of pioneer families which after first engaging in mining, turned to farming and operation of a dairy on the outskirts of Vallecito which supplied milk, butter, cheese and vegetables for the Vallecito, Douglas Flat and Murphys area.

Most of Ina Davies' life has been spent in Murphys, where, for more than 50 years she worked in and later

became owner of her family's Corner Grocery at the intersection of Big Trees Road and Main Street, in that community. Long before most women had begun asserting themselves in the business world or striving toward making their lives easier with modern labor saving devices and living methods, Ina and her mother had established themselves as progressive minded women. They were among the first to take advantage of electricity when it was brought to Murphys. They had one of the first two telephones in town and were quite possibly the first to obtain a washing machine ("the whole family gathered to watch us do out the first load of clothes") and Ina, at age 16, was the first girl in Murphys to drive an automobile. And, as the 1920's arrived, Ina was the first girl in Murphys to wear bobbed hair. She had it cut in the then fashionable "King Tutt" style.

And even now, as she looks forward to her 92'nd birthday, Ina still drives an automobile regularly, although she admits she prefers not to drive in heavy, urban traffic unless she has to, and she still remains active in community affairs.

Today, her home on the Moran Road ranch which has been in the family for 83 years, is still a working ranch. Cattle still graze in the lush meadow which also provides a substantial hay crop which is stored for winter feed. And, with the help of her son, John and his wife, Pat, Mrs. Davies still takes an active part in its every-day operation. Ina's earliest
Please see **Ranch**, pg. 3



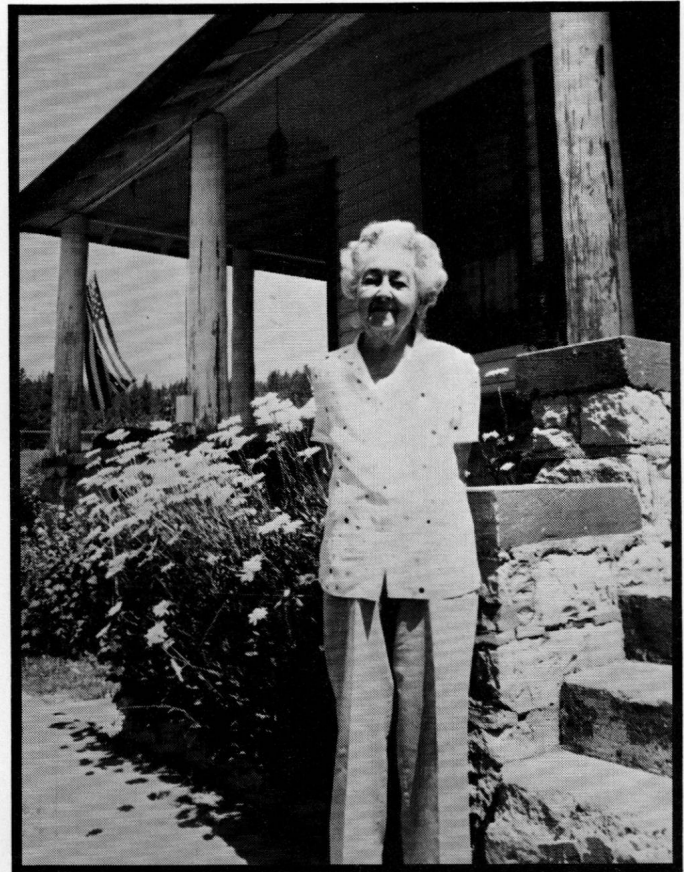
The Davies meadow ranch home, a lovely landmark on Moran Road. *Historical Society photo.*

RANCH, cont. from pg. 2

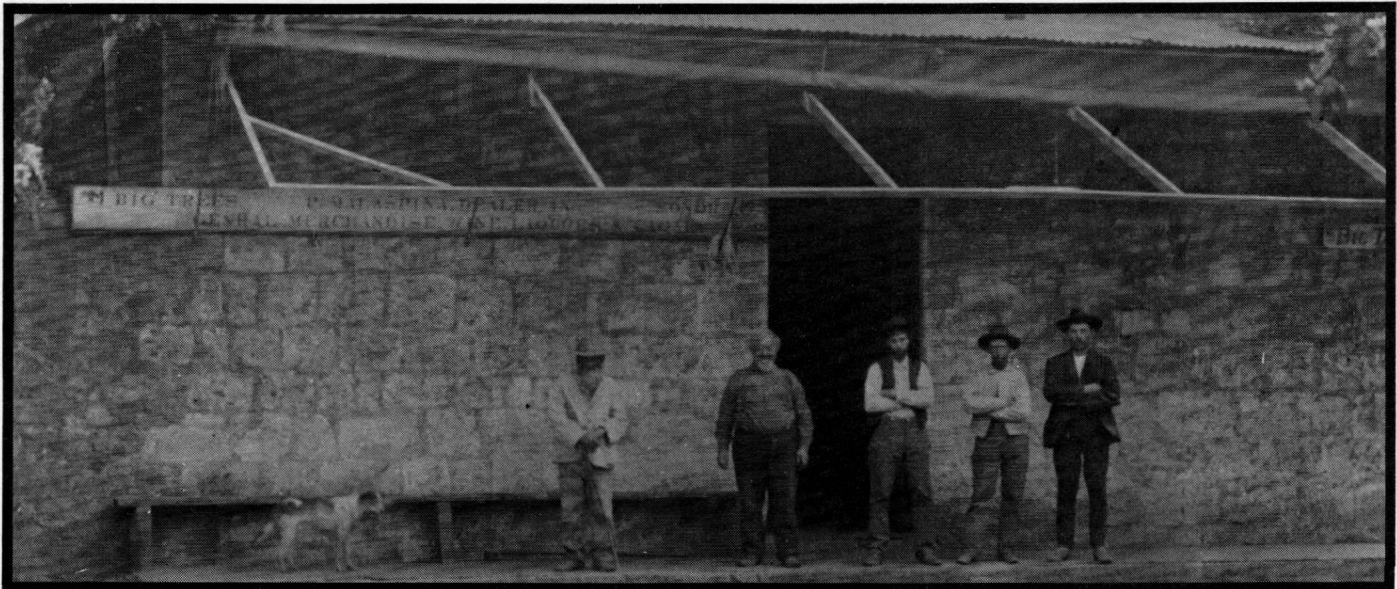
recollections include playing in and around the old store, then owned by her grandmother, Mary Malaspina, and visits to the ranch, then owned by her Uncle Louis, where in summer she swam in the creek that runs through it.

The store, which began serving the still raw mining camp of Murphys in 1856, came into the family's ownership when in 1877, Peter and Angela Malaspina seeking to break away from a life of ranching, purchased it from business partners and lumber dealers Kimball and Cutting. The store building still is owned by the family. Peter Malaspina paid cash for it and to ensure against loss of his money to bandits as he traveled by buckboard from Vallecito to Murphys to close the deal, he had his sons Joe and Tony accompany him, with the cash concealed in their clothing.

The new enterprise, which quickly became known as Malaspina's Corner Store, operated as a family affair. The Malaspinas lived in a house behind the store and all of their five children, Mary, Joe, Tony, Justine and Louis, worked in the store as they grew up. During the early years Peter Malaspina and his sons hauled their merchandise from Stockton in their own wagon or had it brought in on the huge commercial freighters drawn by jerk line teams of 14 to 16 horses or mules. However, the Sierra Railroad reached Angels Camp in 1902, and delivery of goods for the store was greatly simplified.



Ina Davies takes pride in her pioneer heritage.
Historical Society photo.



No Neon lights or fancy signs advertised Malaspina's Corner Store at the start of this century.
Courtesy of Davies family

In addition to the townspeople the store's customers included miners, trappers, owners of outlying ranches and Miwok Indians. The Malaspina family took pride in meeting their needs. They stocked everything from needles and thread to rifle and shotgun shells, potatoes, onions, beans, leather for repairing harness, nails and hardware and mining supplies. And, while their stock of foodstuffs may seem limited if compared to today's supermarkets, they did the best they could. Lacking refrigeration, grocery stores of that day carried few perishables. Milk, butter and fresh vegetable were sold by local dairies and truck farmers. In a separate building, the Malaspinas stocked hay, grain and other ranch supplies.

In 1889, the original wood frame store was replaced by the present stone and mortar building, providing more space and better fire protection.

Mary, oldest of the Malaspina children, married John Henry Batten on June 19, 1901. John had been working as a blacksmith in Mexico, but following their marriage, he and Mary agreed that Mexico would be a poor place to raise a family. They returned to the Murphys-Vallecito area where John took up work as a blacksmith and Mary worked in the family store. Their daughter, Ina, was born a year later.

During their first years of marriage, John Batten often was gone for periods of time while he worked in the oil fields around Bakersfield. Later, he and Mary, with their young daughter, lived in Jamestown where they managed the Willow Hotel. But, they soon returned to Murphys where John worked as a blacksmith and Mary again worked in the family store.

Ina grew up in Murphys as a child, and when not in school, became equally at home in the store, at the Vallecito ranch of her grandparents, and later, at the Moran Road ranch her Uncle Louis had acquired in 1910. Even as a youngster, she helped in the store and accompanied her uncles on grocery deliveries with the buckboard to outlying areas such as Douglas Flat.

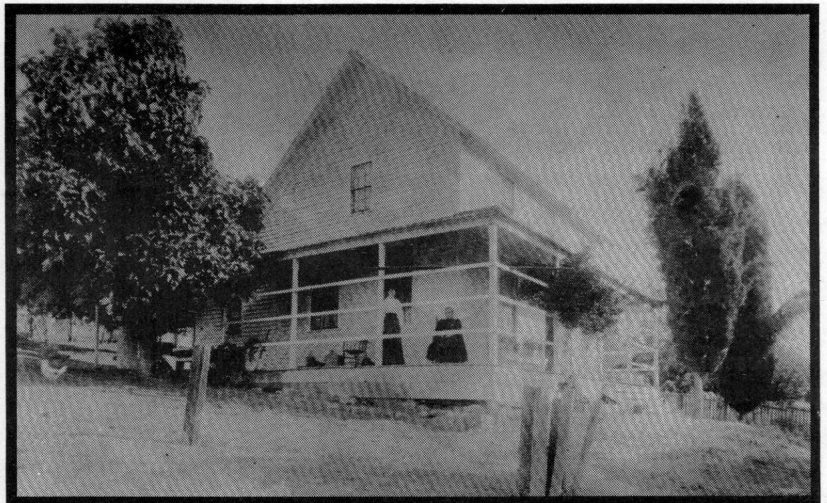
She remembers trips to Angels Camp, via Murphys Grade Road, owned at that time by the Oneto family and known as Toll House Road. "In the spring it was a beautiful ride," she said. The shaded areas were covered and maiden hair fern and all kinds of wild

flowers were in bloom."

As her mother and father had done, she attended classes in the old Murphys School, setting a tradition followed in later years by her own son, daughter and granddaughter.

Those were exciting days for a school girl. The store itself was a center of activity and there was always something happening in or around town.

Spring and fall saw great herds of cattle and sheep come through town and past the store, filling Main Street and Big Trees Road from sidewalk to sidewalk.



The Batten Home in Vallecito, built in 1867, still stands and is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. F.O. Thomsen. Pictured in this early photo are Kate Carley and Catherine Batten.

Calaveras County Archives

Old Beth, the monstrous iron wheeled, steam powered traction engine that hauled logs and lumber to and from the mills, also made periodic trips through town, attracting great attention.

But, life for Ina and her mother was not without tragedy. When she was 12 years old her father, John Henry Batten, died, following an accident. Her father's death meant that her mother had to depend even more upon the store for her livelihood, and Ina also became more closely associated with its operation.

When Ina was 16, her mother purchased their first automobile, and although Mary Batten was an expert at handling horses and driving a buggy, she simply could not get the hang of a motor vehicle. "It fell upon me to take over the driving, and I loved it," said Ina.

Please see **RANCH**, pg. 5

RANCH, cont. from pg 4

The salesman in Oakland, where they bought the car taught her to drive during the return trip from Oakland to Angels Camp. She drove the new car home without incident and the car salesman took the train back to Oakland. "The excuse for buying the car in the first place was to use it for delivering groceries," said Ina. "But I used it mostly to drive back and forth from Murphys to Bret Harte High School, in Angels Camp."

In 1925, Mary Batten purchased the store from her family. Her daughter continued to help her, then in 1928, Ina married Aldys Davies. "My husband was a mechanic, but he also helped Uncle Louis run the ranch in the meadow on Moran Road. I continued to help my mother in the store and we lived in the house behind it. The store which quickly became known as Mary Batten's Corner Grocery, continued as it had in the past years, to serve the area not only as a retail outlet, but as sort of unofficial meeting place for customers and friends."

In addition to local townspeople there were a few miners, people from up country or from the sawmills, or local ranchers, who stopped in for supplies and to pass the time of day. People weren't in such a hurry in those days. They'd stand or sit around the stove and exchange stories of hunting, fishing or prospecting and sort of catch up on the news and local happenings."

As time passed, change came to Murphys. The corner grocery, catering to the increasing automobile traffic, installed a gasoline pump and as refrigeration became available, the store began selling ice cream, milk shakes, cold drinks and more perishable foods.

The great depression of the 1930's arrived and while it may not have hit the foothills as hard as it did the cities - country people were more self-sufficient in those days - the people of Murphys and Calaveras County felt its impact. Times were tough. People sometimes were a bit late paying their grocery bills, but everyone scraped by. More and more people were prospecting for gold for a living and knowing how tough it was for them, Ina Davies and her mother sometimes

invited several of them to share a hot meal or some refreshment.

World War II came, and while economically, times were better, there was sadness and worry as the young men and women went off to war. And the war with



Ina Davies led 1986 Murphys homecoming parade in her 1919 Velie touring car. *Courtesy of Davies Family*

its shortages, also made things difficult for the store owners and their customers. With the war's end, the lumber industry boomed and in 1948, the people of Murphys felt it was time to celebrate.

Under the leadership of Ina's husband, Aldys (Cap) Davies, they organized their town's first homecoming celebration, and with Davies serving as grand marshal, staged their first homecoming parade, a tradition that has lasted, and each year grown larger, for 45 years.

In 1986, Ina Davies, received the honor of being selected the Homecoming Queen. She rode in the perfectly preserved red Velie touring car which has been in her family since 1919. Her only regret was that her husband and her mother, both of whom had passed on, could not have enjoyed the honor with her.

Ina's mother passed away in 1953, leaving Ina and her husband the corner grocery, and her Uncle Louis died in 1957, leaving Ina and Aldys the Moran Road ranch. The Davies continued to operate the store until

1959 when they turned it over to their son and daughter-in-law and moved to the ranch. For Ina, the move to the ranch was another homecoming.

"I had spent so much time at the ranch as a little girl, and I really loved it," she said. "Because, my father died when I was so young, Uncle Louis had been like a father to me. In those days what is now Moran Road was the main county road to Big Trees and Ebbetts Pass. The same big herds of cattle and sheep that caused so much excitement when they came right past our store in Murphys, each spring and fall as they were being driven to and from the mountains also traveled the road in front of the ranch. Sometimes the cowboys would turn their cattle into the fields at the ranch and spend the night there. Old Beth, the steam powered tractor, also used to go chuffing and puffing along the road right past the ranch house."

However, the old ranch house had been considerably changed from its early days when Ina and Aldys moved into it in 1959. Over the years, Louis Malaspina with Aldys' help had added many improvements, including a second story to the house, a broad, roofed porch, a new kitchen and other facilities. Certainly it bore little resemblance to the ranch house that existed there when Louis purchased the property from Ted Shannon in 1910. Shannon had obtained the ranch from James Mullonex, but just how long it existed there is unknown.

A small orchard contains century-old apple trees, and rose bushes which were growing there when Ina Davies was a girl, still add color to its yard.

Today, the corner store at Main Street and Big Trees Road, still under family ownership but leased to other operators, deals in antiques rather than groceries, but the old ranch on Moran Road operates much as it did when Ina was a girl. In summer, cattle still graze its meadow and in winter, its barn is filled with hay.

Actually, only a stone's throw from the busy, fast developing town of Avery, a feeling of solitude seems to surround the pine shrouded meadow. Wild sweet peas, their blooms a riot of color, line both sides of Moran Road where it traverses the meadow. On summer evenings coyotes raise their voices as they hunt mice in the deep meadow grass. Not long ago, a neighbor phoned Ina Davies just as dark was settling in. "Don't you folks go outside right now," he said. "There's a bear prowling around your storage shed."

NEW OFFICERS INSTALLED FOR 1993-94 YEAR

Charles Stone, of Copperopolis, member of a pioneer family of that area, has been re-elected to serve as president of the Calaveras County Historical Society for a second year. Also re-elected was Vice President Sue Smith, of Valley Springs; Recording Secretary Donna Shantz, of San Andreas; and directors Barbara Beaman, Grant Metzger and Willard P. Fuller, all of San Andreas.

Shirley Huberty, of Mountain Ranch, was elected treasurer to replace retiring Robert Perry, of San Andreas; Mary Jane Garamendi, of Mokelumne Hill, was elected membership secretary to replace Rosemary Faulkner, of Rail Road Flat, whose term expired and Duane Wight, of Lodi, was elected to the board of directors to replace Jack Geary, of Stockton, whose term had expired.

The new officers were installed during the society's July dinner meeting in Black Bart Park, in San Andreas. County Supervisor Mike Dell 'Orto served as installing officer.



Historical Society officers and directors who will serve through 1993-94 include (L to R) Charles Stone, president; Sue Smith, vice president; Donna Shantz, recording secretary; Shirley Huberty, treasurer; Mary Jane Garamendi and Duane Wight, directors. Not pictured are directors Barbara Beaman, Grant Metzger and Willard P. Fuller. *Historical Society Photo.*

MANSION AND STORE WIN ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS

A recently restored San Andreas mansion and a 133-year-old stone and mortar building constructed by one of Angels Camp's gold rush era Chinese merchants are recipients of Calaveras County Historical Society's 1993 architectural awards. Awards of merit went to San Andreas attorney Ken Foley for his restoration of the historic Whitlock House at 116 Court Street, in San Andreas (this month's cover photo) and to the City of Angels Camp for its restoration of the Sam Choy store at 1329 Birds Way, in that city.

Oddly enough, both restored buildings continue to be used on a daily basis, both serving as law offices. Foley purchased the old Whitlock Mansion with its use as a law office in mind. The City of Angels restored the old Sam Choy Store with federal grant funds, then to defray cost of upkeep, leased it to now retired attorney Thurman Gray who in turn has sub-leased it to attorney Edwin Adams. Adams says the public is welcome to visit the historic old structure and view the artifacts on display there. During its 133 years the old building, in addition to serving as a store, has housed a brothel and served as the city jail.

The awards of merit for the restoration were presented by historical society past-president Lorraine Kennedy, who serves as chairman of the architectural awards committee. In addition to Mrs. Kennedy, other committee members include her husband Jack Kennedy, Flora Meek, Ozzie and Roberta Kenyon, Larry Carlson and Geni Aguilar.

The following article outlining the history of the Whitlock House and its restoration was written by Melissa Foley, daughter of Ken and Lorraine Foley. Miss Foley, an eighth grade student at Toyon Middle School, submitted this story earlier this year as an entry in our historical society's annual students' essay contest, where it was selected as a prize winner. Because of its excellent quality, we have chosen to use it in this month's issue of the Las Calaveras.

Talented writer and newswoman Arlene Westender, who nominated the Sam Choy Store for consideration by the architectural committee, also is the author of the article containing its history. A former Stockton Record reporter, she now writes for other publications including the Calaveras Enterprise.

THE WHITLOCK MANSION

By

Melissa Foley

There is a house in San Andreas known as the "Whitlock Mansion" on grounds formerly known as the "French Garden". This house is 96 years old and has a very interesting past.

The western portion of the grounds where the Whitlock house in San Andreas now stands was bought by a French immigrant by the name of Paul Doumanc in 1871 for \$7.40. The following year, Jean Bang sold the eastern portion of the grounds to Mr. Doumanc. This portion of the grounds had been known as the "French Garden". It is thought that produce was once grown there.

In June of 1882, Paul Doumanc died and 12 years later the property was sold to C.M. Whitlock from New York for \$300.00. Mr. Whitlock mined in San Andreas until 1859, and opened a general store on Main Street in partnership with Edwin Rowerth in 1870. Mr. Whitlock ordered construction to begin on the Victorian house in 1896, and lived by himself in this house until his death in 1904. C.M. Whitlock left the property to his nieces and nephews in New York.

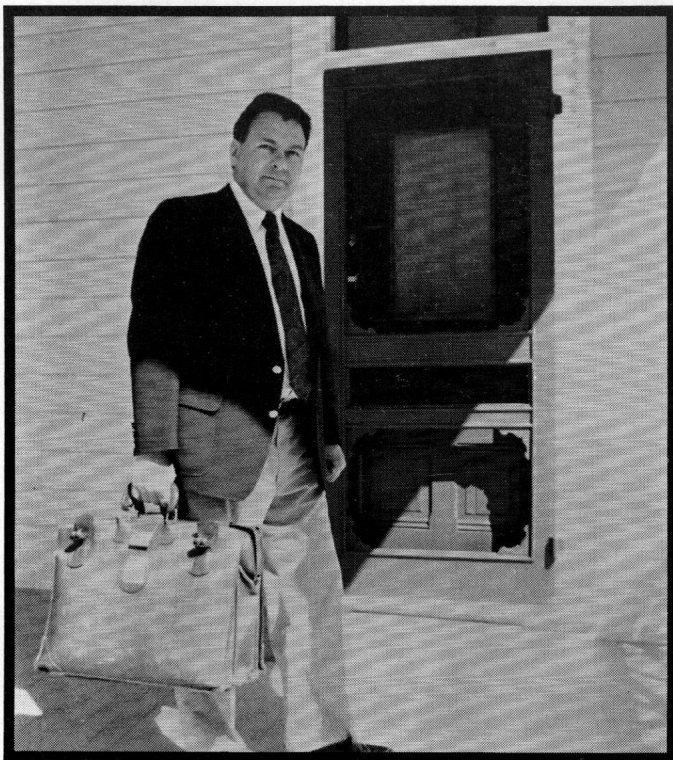
The property was sold by nine legatees to Charles and Theresa Goodell of San Andreas in December of 1911. In 1914, the Goodells conveyed the property to Mary Ann Wesson who, in 1918, deeded it to Henry Wesson, her husband. From 1933 to 1936, Mr. Wesson conveyed various interests to the Goodells' children, Charles, Lawrence, Fred, and Genevieve.

The property remained in the Goodell family until September, 1991, when Charles (Wesson) Goodell made a joint tenancy by deed to Mondel W. Darling and himself. Shortly after that, Charles died at the age of 85. The Victorian House is now owned by my parents, Kenneth and Lorraine Foley, who have fixed it up to use as my father's law offices. It is located at 116 Court Street in San Andreas, California.

The Whitlock House is a Queen Ann style mansion with an asymmetrical frame. It has a fish scale design on the front. It has a veranda on the second story, and a deck. The house has 13 rooms.

In the interior of the house there is an entry hall, a parlor which has become a waiting room for my dad's clients, and a dining room separated by a spindlework frieze which has become a secretary's office

There are two bedrooms downstairs. The first one serves as an interview room, and the second is a second secretary's room. There is a large kitchen in the back of the house which will be a disposition room, and a bathroom which remains a bathroom. The woodwork and four-panel doors in the hallway, parlor, and dining room are redwood, painted with oak wood graining. The fireplace has an overmantel of oak, with turned posts, beveled mirror, and decorative tiles. These remain as they were, except the oak wood graining will be upgraded. The only new addition to the house is off the downstairs kitchen. A small room was built off the north end, so my father will have a place to



Attorney Ken Foley -- he doesn't buy the ghost story. *Historical Society photo.*

store his files.

Upstairs, reached by a stairway from the dining room, there is a central large room, originally formed by two smaller rooms, which is lined with bookshelves and used as a law library. There is a small tower deck used as an outdoor lunch place for employees, a large closet that has become a law clerk's office, and two small bedrooms serve as attorneys' offices. There are also a small kitchen and bathroom in the back that remain the same.

THE SAM CHOY BUILDING

By
Arlene Westenrider

Among those early day Pioneers, sometimes forgotten and given too little credit by that era's historians, were the Chinese of Angels Camp. During gold rush days some 200 miners and property owners established a community along the Angels Creek and did as much for the formation of the city, as did the later residents. One of these pioneers was Sam Choy.

The Sam Choy Store, built in 1860 on Birds Way, was once the center of activity in Chinatown, as it was known then. The store was restored by the City of Angels in 1989 to its original state and although leased to Edward Adams, Attorney at Law, can still be viewed by the public.

The Chinese in Angels Camp, apparently did not suffer as much in the early days as did those in other parts of the county. In 1851, they were noted by

Please see **CHOY**, pg. 9

Every room has a decorative plaster picture molding which, now restored, has a wallpaper frieze above it. The original light fixtures remain, as do all window and door hardware.

Some people think the ghost of C.M. Whitlock still remains in the house. They believe his spirit returned to the house to watch over and protect it forever. One possible encounter with the ghost may have occurred when my mother was cleaning the downstairs rooms in preparation for a Christmas party before the restoration of the house began. She saw a fleeting, white form out of the corner of her eye. She had a feeling of dread and decided to stop sweeping the room she was in at the time. Although this account is vague, a ghostly presence has been felt on more than one occasion. Another incident occurred when Judy Hibbard, my father's head secretary, entered the bedroom, the same room my mother had become afraid in, and sensed a presence that made her feel uneasy. She left the room immediately.

My parents are currently trying to get the Whitlock Mansion accepted into historic preservation. The house is being renovated according to their requirements, and my parents are restoring the grounds as well. They hope with the renovations complete, the spirit of Mr. Whitlock will be pleased.

CHOY, cont from pg. 8

J.D. Borthwick, to number 100, all working the Angels Creek area (known as China Gulch).

"The Chinese pitched their tents on a rocky eminence by the side of their diggings. They were hospitable to anyone visiting their camps," Borthwick wrote in 1851, about his visit to Angels Camp.

By mid-1850's there were 200 Chinese squatters in the established Chinese community along both sides of Angels Creek.

In 1858, Sam Choy was already a successful merchant, having a store on Main Street, Angels Camp. He first appears on the assessments in Calaveras County in 1858, as owner of a house and lot, (value \$1,000), on Main Street in Angels Camp.

Sam Choy's original store must have been successful, because in 1860, he purchased a 60' X 90' lot from Henry Mathews for \$75. The new store building was apparently built immediately, because in May 1861, he was assessed for a fire-proof building on China Street, valued at \$1,000.

The new Sam Choy Store was a typical Mother Lode brick classical revival building with a three-bayed front of native schist stone walls. The rock used for the walls came from the Quarry near Altaville, and was held together with a simple lime mortar.

The brick front contained three sets of folding iron doors, which during the restoration were repaired and rehung. When the iron doors are open, the recessed arches still show the original brick fronts, which have been left unfinished to give a view into the past.

The fire-proofing by Sam Choy also included a barrier of dirt placed between the ceiling and the roof, which also served as insulation. This had to be removed during the restoration because, during the 40 years of non-use, water had seeped through the holes in the roof causing weakening of the rafters and joists.

Except for the electrical service, the Sam Choy Store is restored to look as it did in 1861, when the original construction was completed. The building has no permanent inside partitions except for the bathroom. Under the five year lease agreement, only movable partitions could be placed in the attorney's office.

The Sanborn Insurance Maps in 1895 and 1898 list the building as a Chinese Merchant Store. Field notes of a survey in October, 1871, shows that Sam Choy owned lots 17, 23, 24 and 30. There were 20 lots with Chinese owners.

Also included in Chinatown along the Angels

Creek, were the Chinese Gardens located along the lowlands of the creek, and a Chinese Cemetery was on the hill, near the community.

Sam Choy also owned an adobe store with a wooden second story across the creek from the Sam Choy Merchandise Store, and seven wooden buildings. His businesses included gambling houses and opium dens. He also controlled groups of Chinese workers who were contracted to work in the mines. He furnished the necessary supplies needed by the workers.

Sam Choy and his wife and children lived in a frame house west of the store. Sam Choy sent his family back to China in 1883 but he remained in Angels



The restored Sam Choy Store -- Now a law office.

Historical Society photo.

Camp until between 1905 and 1909. Not too much is known about Choy, except that he also owned property and a bar along the Stanislaus.

The store was sold, by Sam Choy, in 1892 to Walter Tryon who was the owner of the adjacent Angels Hotel. Tryon sold it to Fred Pareto in 1897, who added a second wooden-frame upper story.

No one is quite sure what it was used for, but Pareto sold the building in 1903 to A. Barry, who, six months later, sold it to Bastian Solari. In 1908 Joseph Monte Verda bought the building and constructed a fence around it to provide privacy for the prostitutes,

who occupied the premises.

The "Red Light District" was always one of the popular districts in the Mother Lode towns, and the Chinatown brothel was one of the more popular, according to some of the old timers interviewed.

The brothel's lower level had a front parlor, and a small room in the rear, converted into a dance area. A local artist had decorated the walls with murals. A landscape scene covered the south wall of the front room, and a cowboy and woman was painted on the west wall of the dancing room.

In 1912, Lawrence and Clara Monte Verda, et al, bought the property. The business prospered to 1914, when the Red Light Abatement law was passed. Early in 1915 the place closed its doors.

Clara Monte Verda became sole owner in 1924 and sold the property to Attilio Giansetto in 1928, who in turn sold it to the County of Calaveras in 1930 to be used by the City of Angels as a City Jail.

The City of Angels removed the second story and poured a slab over the rotting wooden floor and two iron cells with toilet facilities were installed. The back room became the holding tank for drunks.

Even after the jail was no longer in use, in the 1950's, the jail doors were kept unlocked so the town's characters would have a place to sleep and sober up.

When the building was restored, everything inside had to be removed, including the concrete floor, so that the building could be returned to its original state. Many artifacts were found under the building, but no one seems to know what happened to them.

The interior wall's original surface were of mud, liberally bonded with cow hair.

Replastering of the interior covered up the paintings.

The City of Angels obtained approval for the building to be recognized as a Historic Resources Project and received a \$50,000 grant to restore it in 1985.

Following an archeological investigation by Columbia College, the restoration was completed in 1989 and leased to Thurman Gray in 1990, in order to help defray some of the expenses of the project.

Mr. Adams now has assumed Mr. Gray's lease.

The City Council at the time of the leasing, expressed a desire to have the building used as a Chinese Museum at some future date, to honor those early Chinese pioneers, whose contributions to the city's growth, is sometimes forgotten.

EFFORT UNDERWAY TO SAVE IOOF HALL

by the Editor

Despite the ravages of time and catastrophic fires that have periodically reduced many of its neighboring buildings to ashes, West Point's IOOF Hall celebrates its 100 birthday this month.

On October 24, from 1 to 4 p.m., members of West Point Lodge No. 299 of the International Order of Odd Fellows, with its sister organization Blue Mountain Rebekah Lodge, No. 187, will conduct an open house in the old lodge hall to usher in its second century. But, this will be more than a birthday party. The purpose of this occasion also is to raise funds for badly needed restoration work if the old building is to survive the 21st Century.

Even now, only the constant labors of its small contingent of lodge members headed by IOOF Noble Grand Niel Bang and Rebekah Noble Grand Dorothy Burnett, enable them to keep the lodge hall functional. In fact, for more than two decades the most critical



Rebekah luncheons raise funds for restoration of lodge hall.
Historical Society photo.

problems facing lodge members has been preservation of the historic, two story building. In 1970 the Calaveras County building Department condemned the old frame structure and banned the holding of meetings there. Only through the efforts of Lavonna Mechling, of Rail Road Flat, then serving as Rebekah Noble Grand, was the condemnation order modified to allow continued use of the lodge hall's ground floor. IOOF member Bill Kran (now deceased) virtually single

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handedly, moved the complete lodge furnishings downstairs.

Over the years, vandals periodically damaged the building. Windows were broken, the upstairs kitchen damaged, and break-ins caused further damage.

"The damage, of course, was repaired," said Rebekah Secretary Patricia Bang, but the problem of providing upkeep to the old hall always has been lack of money due to our lodges' small memberships. This was as true in the past as it is now."

The West Point IOOF Lodge was chartered in 1882 when several residents of that community decided to leave the Independence IOOF Lodge No. 158, of Rail Road Flat and form one of their own. On November 3rd of that year the West Point Lodge brothers, consisting of 10 members headed by John R. Smith, moved into their new hall at the same Main Street location where the present West Point IOOF Hall now stands. In addition to Smith, who was a blacksmith and the uncle of the late Calaveras County Superior Court Judge J.A. Smith, other of the original slate of lodge officers included James McNaughton, vice grand;

Thomas R. Smith, brother of John Smith, recording secretary and John Hillary, treasurer. District Deputy Grand Master Benjamin F. Thompson, of Campo Seco Lodge No. 66, of Jenny Lind, instituted formation of the West Point Lodge.

The Blue Mountain Rebekah Lodge No. 187, was formed November 24, 1892, but less than four months later, on February 26, 1893, almost before the ladies had settled into their lodge duties, the West Point Lodge Hall burned to the ground. However, a campaign to rebuild, in which the Rebekahs assumed an active role, was immediately launched. On October 27, 1893, the lodge members moved into the present two-story hall.

During those early years with the IOOF and Rebekahs using the second story of the hall for their lodge ceremonies, the ground floor of the building at times, housed a variety of enterprises. For various periods it served as a funeral parlor, skating rink, movie theater and community meeting place.

However the IOOF and Rebekahs, active during the early part of the century, lost membership as the area's mining and lumber industries waned, and during



The West Point Odd Fellows Hall, one hundred years old this year. *Historical Society photo.*

the great depression of the 1930's and the years of World War II, the Rebekahs' membership continued to dwindle, until on May 26, 1944, the lodge was forced to surrender its charter.

But, the war ended and brought with it a resurgence of the lumber industry as demands for housing grew. West Point's economy boomed as lumber mills opened, and on August 29, 1950, Blue Mountain Rebekah Lodge with due ceremony, was reinstated.

Today, the Rebekahs with a membership of 31 and the West Point IOOF Lodge with its 10 active members are resolutely attempting to restore the old hall and rectify for its too many years of neglect when there

WEST POINT'S EARLY YEARS

West Point is located in what is recognized today geologically, as the east belt of the Mother Lode. Probably the first white men to visit that area were Hudson Bay Company trappers who during the 1830's, prospected the Western slope of the Sierra for fur instead of gold. Gold was discovered there in late 1848 or early 1849, only months after the first discoveries were made in the Melones and San Andreas areas of what is now Calaveras County and not more
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Meanwhile, the two lodges are doing what they can to complete smaller repair projects. They already have added a protective coat of paint to the hall roof and painted part of the building's exterior. A new entry porch has replaced a badly deteriorated one which at best, provided precarious footing, and Niel Bang has poured a concrete walk along the full 60-foot front of the hall. Downstairs restrooms have been remodeled and painted and a new downstairs kitchen added, complete with a range donated by Gladys Hill.

Local electrician, Richard Queirolo continues to donate electrical work, and other projects also have been completed with donated labor of lodge members. Materials used in such projects comes from fund raisers sponsored by the Rebekahs, that include monthly bingo games, sale of birthday-anniversary calendars, coffee klatches, luncheons, salad bars and other social functions open to the public.

Through these types of functions the lodge members manage to raise sufficient funds to pay property taxes on the hall and the \$700 to \$800 annual cost of utilities for the old building. Presently, under special dispensation of the Grand Lodge of California, the members are selling tickets for a raffle to be held October 24th in conjunction with the hall's centennial birthday celebration and open house.

"We know we won't raise the \$20,000 needed to bring the hall back into full repair, but we'll be quite happy if we bring in \$2,000. That would go a long ways," said Mrs. Bang.

The lodge on September 23 hosted a dinner meeting of the Calaveras County Historical Society to help focus attention on the need for continued restoration of the century-old hall. Proceeds from the dinner also bolstered the lodge's restoration fund.



Rebekah member Ruth Brown entertains with tunes on lodge's century-old piano.

Historical Society photo.

was neither the manpower or money to make needed repairs. Basically, said Niel Bang, the old building -- at least its ground floor -- is structurally sound. Its 12 x 12 foundation timbers resting on huge granite corner stones, are as solid as the day they were put into place.

"What the hall needs most at this time is a general refurbishing inside and out. The upstairs will require major work that may cost as much as \$20,000," said Mrs. Bang. "We know we have little chance of obtaining that much money at this time, so its repair will have to wait."

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than a year after James Marshall made his initial find at Sutter's Mill.

The first miners to reach the West Point area found a substantial population of Miwok Indians in permanent residence and during its first years, according to California historian Edwin Gudde, the mining camp that sprang up there was known as Indian Gulch. Louis Chicard, who had established a supply house and trading post in Stockton, was sending merchandise laden pack trains to the fast growing camp during the late summer of 1849. His mules left with valuable shipments of gold.

Among the richest placer diggings around West Point was Sandy Gulch, a mile West of West Point, and Mosquito Gulch, East of Glencoe. The long trip from the valley made prices high. Staples such as flour, sugar, salt pork and beans sold at premium prices. Calaveras historian Edna Bryan Buckbee said a cup of whiskey cost an ounce of gold and medicine of almost any kind was worth its weight in gold. Blankets sold for \$40 a pair and a clay pipe cost two dollars.

Gold seekers also quickly learned that in addition to placer gold, the West Point area was rich in gold bearing quartz veins, and as easily mined alluvial deposits gave out, they turned to hard rock mining. Notable quartz mines there included the Black Wonder, the Champion, Woodhouse Mine, Lone Star, Yellow Aster, Lockwood, Blazing Star and the Heckendorn.

Early arrivals included the Wickham brothers, Porteous family, sawmill owner Michael Schmidt, Beardsley and Harris brothers and the Herbert, Henry and Briggs families. Dr. George Fischer was the town's first physician. George Congdon was its first constable and George Bell, first justice of the peace. The West Point Post Office opened July 31, 1856.

During the late 1850's the town took on new life as it became an important stopping place for immigrants using a branch of the Carson Valley-Big Trees Road that came through it, enroute to Mokelumne Hill.

Even today, the tale persists that West Point was named by famed mountain man and frontier scout Kit Carson in the winter of 1844, as he guided Lt. John Fremont's expedition across Carson Pass. Carson is said to have operated a trading post in West Point in later years, but there is no evidence to support either claim. Fremont's journal and the notes of Charles Preuss, his cartographer, show that they traveled far north of Calaveras County after crossing the summit.

FIGHT WITH A GRIZZLY

(Related by C.M. Wooster during the 1920's)

Grizzly Bears were not uncommon in the thinly populated north-eastern Calaveras County area during the latter years of the 19th Century. Prominent San Andreas rancher Ham Luddy and other livestock owners, whose cattle summered in the Blue Creek area, reported occasional sighting of grizzlies there well into the years preceding World War I. And, like most men familiar with them, they assiduously left those huge, short tempered beasts alone.

However, trapper and mountain man Pack Hunter, who also ranged that area and for whom Hunter Creek and Hunter Flat east of West Point is named, was not so lucky in attempting to avoid one of the big bears. Hunter became one of the few humans to survive an all-out attack by a California Grizzly bear.

Hunter, with his wife and teen-aged daughter, trapped fur and hunted game for market in the mountains north and east of West Point during the post-Civil War years. On a fall afternoon around 1870, Hunter armed with only a small-bore muzzle loading rifle, was returning from a gray squirrel hunt along the Blue Creek trail when he happened upon a huge grizzly devouring a sheep. Instantly, the bear charged.

Hunter fired, and although the small caliber ball pierced its heart, the great bear kept coming. They grappled, man and beast in a death struggle. Shoving his left arm into the bear's jaws, Hunter drew his long bladed hunting knife and before losing consciousness, plunged it into the animal's chest nine times.

With darkness falling, Hunter's wife and 14-year-old daughter launched a search for the missing man. Hours later, the girl stumbled onto her father beside the dead bear. Terribly mauled, but still breathing, Hunter was hauled by wagon to the county hospital in San Andreas. He remained there for 11 months, and during that time, according to Clarence Wooster, patches of his daughter's skin were grafted onto her father's back and shoulders, in what may have been one of the earliest operations of that type.

Pack Hunter finally fully recovered, and with his family, returned to hunting and trapping and their out-of-doors life.

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