

## ERNIE VOGLIOTTI LOOKS BACK ON 100 YEARS

By  
George Hooper

Ernie Vogliotti will celebrate his 102nd birthday on November 19.

For most of this century he, his sister, Josephine and her husband, Louis "Sharkey" Queirolo, have shared the same San Domingo Creek ranch home. There, in a natural basin where his cleared fields hold the encroaching woodland at bay, Ernie, with his sister and brother-in-law wrested a living from the land.

Vogliotti came to the ranch beside the Murphys-Sheep Ranch Road in 1903 as a boy of 14, and has never left it. Neither has he ever worked for wages at a job away from the ranch. He raised cattle, hogs, and each year cultivated a huge vegetable garden along the creek bottom. He sold the produce in Angels Camp, Murphys and at the Sheep Ranch Mine. A vineyard of mission grapes produced wine for home use and for sale.

Ernie's father, Vincenzo Vogliotti, bought the ranch on San Domingo Creek in 1903, from Carolyn



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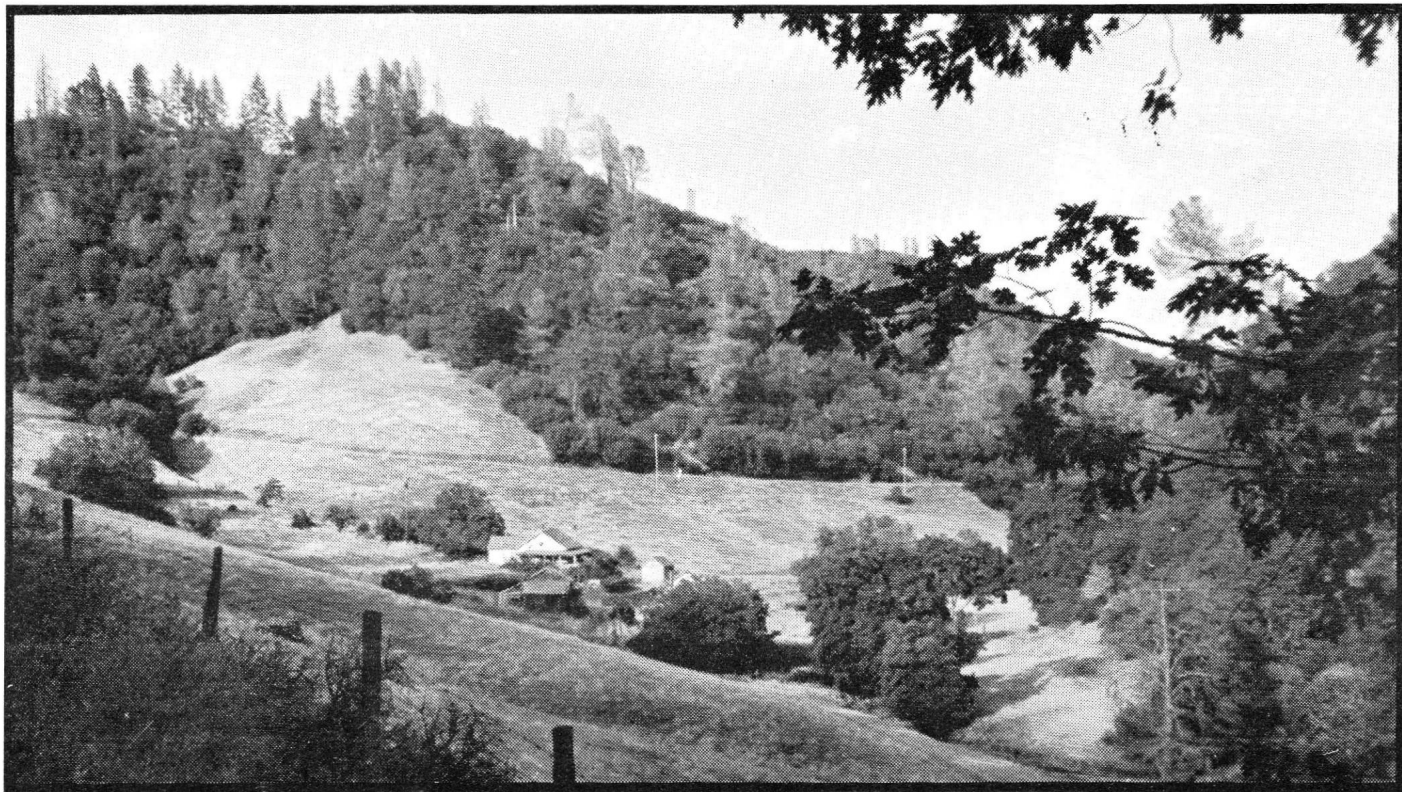
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Cassady Hahn for \$1,250 in twenty-dollar gold pieces. The elder Vogliotti had come to America from Turin, Italy, on the Poe River, in 1885 and settled in Angels Camp to work in the mines. He worked in the Utica Mine for 18 years—10-hour shifts at \$3 per day.

Twice, he narrowly escaped death, once in 1889 when a cave-in killed 19 men, and, in 1890 when a hoist cable broke and 17 men fell to their deaths shortly after Vogliotti had gone off shift. His father's narrow escapes turned young Ernie Vogliotti against working underground and he never once sought employment in the mines.

Please see **ERNIE**, pg. 2



The Vogliotti Ranch on San Domingo Creek basks in afternoon sun.

*Photo by Sharon Daniels*

**ERNIE**, cont. from pg. 1

Ernie's mother, the former Mary DeVeggio, died of typhoid fever when he was very young. After his wife's death, Vincenzo Vogliotti moved to the old DeVeggio place on Angels Creek so their grandmother could care for Ernie and his sister, Della.

The Vogliottis lived on the DeVeggio ranch for seven years and while there, their father grew a large garden each year and sold vegetables, in addition to working in the mine. Later, after Ernie's father married Maria Raffetto, of Angels Camp, the family lived on Finnegan Lane.

Ernie attended classes in the old elementary school at the lower end of Raspberry Street and knew both Lincoln and Charlie Raspberry, descendants of Ben-neger Raspberry who discovered the first ledge of quartz gold in Angels Camp. His step-mother made lunches in a boarding house for miners for 50-cents per day. With that money and what they saved from his father's wages, they bought the San Domino Creek ranch.

One of the reasons for purchase of the ranch was that after 18 years in the mine, Vincenzo Vogliotti's health was beginning to fail. The ranch transaction took place in the Murphys office of Notary Public James Stephens. Mrs. Cassady had two daughters, Vera and Dolly, who for many years after the sale, stopped by from time to time to visit the Vogliottis.

With some cattle purchased from Mrs. Gardella, a few hogs and their garden, the Vogliotti family made their living on the ranch. Ernie's half-sister, Josephine, now, 86, was born to Maria and Vincenzo Vogliotti in 1904. Vincenzo Vogliotti lived until April 7, 1930. He and Maria are buried in Angels Camp.

When they moved onto the San Domingo Creek ranch, there was never any shortage of chores. Although not large of stature, all his life, Ernie has always had a tremendous capacity for work. There was fence to fix, wood to cut, and at least once and sometimes twice-a-week Ernie rode out on horseback to check on their cattle which ranged loose in the hills. Gardening began in March when tomato and other summer plants were started from seed in the hot house.

The summer vegetable garden lasted until the first frost, then there was the winter garden to plant. Onions, garlic, cabbage and root vegetables.

"People always said we raised the best onions in



Josephine and "Sharkey" Queirolo, married 67 years.

*Photo by Sharon Daniels*

the foothills," commented Ernie, recently.

"I got the onion seed from my uncle in 1903—Red Weatherfields—they called them. They were last listed in Burpees Seed Catalogue of 1898. Each year we saved the seed and we're growing those same onions here today."

"During the summer," said Ernie's sister, Josephine, "we used to sleep out there under the apple tree beside the garden to keep the deer and raccoons away. The deer would come into the garden at night so often that the dogs got tired of chasing them and just ignored them, so in order to save things, particularly the beans and tomatoes, we had to sleep outside."

One reason the Vogliotti garden was so successful was the good quality of its soil which they always kept well fertilized. Luckily for them, that part of San Domingo creek where their ranch is located, carried little mineral value and had never been mined. Thus, the flat bottom land along the stream bed had not been washed away.

Sale of vegetables was the Vogliottis' primary source of income and during the years when they were at the height of their operation, they put in 300 tomato plants annually. In addition they occasionally butchered a calf or steer and sold the meat. A calf would bring in about \$16 and a steer would go for three cents per pound—\$30 for a 1000-pound steer. Every fall they butchered several hogs for sale, and of course, made their own hams, bacon, sausage and head

cheese.

"We were pretty much self sufficient in those days—pretty nearly all of our living came from the ranch. We had our own butter and milk and about the only things we needed from the store was flour, sugar, salt, rifle and shotgun shells," said Ernie.

In the fall there was deer and quail hunting. His friends say that Ernie was a deadly wing shot on quail. There also were wild mushrooms to gather after the first fall rains, and Ernie recalled that in the spring, "we could fill a milk pan with trout caught right there in the creek."

The drought years have dried San Domino Creek and dust blows where pools of water stood. "If we get a few wet years the creek will come back," he said. They still see deer now and then, along the edge of the fields in the early morning or at dusk.

The original ranch house was torn down in 1910 and rebuilt. It remains basically the same today as it was when rebuilt, except for enlargement of the kitchen during the 1940's and the later addition of a bathroom. The water supply comes from a spring up on the hill and it also during the years they were gardening commercially, supplied irrigation water. A holding tank was built up on the hill in 1924 and water was piped into the house in 1925. Electricity didn't reach the ranch until the 1950's.

In addition to the garden produce, their vineyard of mission grapes provided wine which was made each fall. During the early years it sold for 35 cents per gallon, or, Vogliotti also would deliver it by the barrel.

During his youth, Ernie delivered his produce to the markets and mines with horse and wagon, but switched in the early 1920's to his first "Chevy" truck. It was also, in September, 1923, that 19-year-old Josephine Vogliotti married Louis "Sharkey" Queirolo.

During the 1930's, at the request of the State Department of Water Resources, Ernie accepted the responsibility of becoming an official rainfall recorder for his area.

Today, nearly 60 years later, but now with a bit of help from his brother-in-law Sharkey, Ernie still performs that task. Each morning after a rain he dutifully measures and records on charts supplied by the state, the amount of precipitation that has fallen during the previous 24 hours. He sends the records



**Ernie Vogliotti, rancher and gardener at heart.**

*Photo by Sharon Daniels*

to Sacramento each month.

Several times during the nearly six decades he has been keeping track of the annual rainfall, he says he has recorded in excess of 50 inches of rain in a single year.

"We could use some of that rainfall this coming winter," he said.

Sharkey Queirolo was born February 8, 1900 in  
Please see **ERNIE**, Pg. 4

**ERNIE**, cont. from Pg. 3

the Costa home in Calaveritas. As a boy he lived in what is now Fricot City and attended Esmeralda School. As a young man, he worked for the Utica Water Company and at the Raggio Sawmill, in Avery. While working at the Raggio Mill, Sharkey and Fred Cuneo shared a cabin and boarded with the Raggios while working at the sawmill.

As a youth, Sharkey also worked at the Washington Mine and at the Calaveras Cement Plant, in San Andreas, but he still was a young man when he went to work for the Calaveras County Road Department, a job he held for 44 years.

Josephine Vogliotti Queirolo attended Murphys Elementary School when William Redding was the teacher. She recalls walking to school with Angelina Tramontini who lived on Indian Creek and with young Pete Dragoni whose family had a ranch further down San Domingo Creek. She also remembers well, having to light her way down the road with a kerosene lantern as she started off for school in the early morning winter darkness.

Josephine and Sharkey have one son, Lester, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Josephine has lived her entire life on the San Domingo Creek ranch and her life and that of her husband's has been as closely tied to its operation as has that of her brother's.

World War II with its shortages of gasoline and tires finally brought an end to Ernie Vogliotti's deliveries to the areas stores and markets.

"There just wasn't enough gasoline, the roads ate up the tires and with automobile parts becoming increasingly scarce, it was hard to keep the truck running," he said.

But, Ernie and his sister and brother-in-law continued each year to raise large gardens along the creek bottom to supply their customers who regularly arrived to buy fresh vegetables. It was not until the start of the 1970's that Ernie began to curtail the gardening operations. And, even then for quite a number of years, he still grew enough to take care of preferred customers who still came to the ranch.

"They were old friends," he said. "They liked the tomatoes and the onions I grew."

Even now, at age 102, Ernie's uniform of the day usually is the same as it has been for the past fifty years—blue Levis, blue work shirt, and on chilly days, maybe a light jacket or cotton sweatshirt. Only

recently did he begin giving up his cowboy boots for slippers.

Blessed with excellent health and exceptional eyesight, Ernie read without glasses until well up into his 90's. Only a few years ago his sister, while talking with friends, turned the conversation to the subject of Ernie's eyes.

"He won't wear glasses," she said. "Can't see a thing."

But, as she commented on his vision, her brother who was sitting on the couch near her, picked up a newspaper and began reading easily without any visual aid.

As he has been all his life, Ernie Vogliotti is aware of and interested in the land.

"The country around here has changed," he said, "and not necessarily for the better. We still see deer, but not like we used to. And the quail are gone. Right now you could walk up this canyon for three miles and hardly see a living thing. I blame it on the forestry. They cut out the burning. The brush has come in and taken everything. No feed for the deer or the cattle, or the quail.

In the early days my Dad burned the country around here every fall. I did the same thing. Not big roaring fires, just enough to keep the brush down without hurting the trees. It was all open and each spring the grass and the new browse came, and in the fall the hills were full of mountain quail."

For Vogliotti, his life has been good if not always an easy one.

"I've worked," he said, "and when I went to bed at night I never had any trouble sleeping."

Maybe because he was too busy to get married, Ernie has remained a bachelor all of his life.

He'll admit he's slowed down in recent years, but he still is up early each morning. The garden has shrunk to one only large enough for home use and his brother-in-law, Sharkey takes care of that. Ernie just is not spending as much time as he used to, out of doors these days. Yet, he still manages to remain busy and take an interest in life.

In all of his 102 years, Ernie has spent time in a hospital only once in his life. That was back in 1943 when he underwent a hernia operation.

A few years ago when he visited a local doctor's office for one of his rare physical check-ups, the nurse commented that the doctor hadn't seen him for a long time.

"Yes," replied Ernie, "And I've been getting along just fine without him."

## SADIE HUNT RECORDED SOCIETY'S EARLY HISTORY

*Thirty eight years ago this month a group of local citizens, most of them descendants of pioneer families, attended a dinner in the historic Murphys Hotel to become charter members of the Calaveras County Historical Society.*

*One of those persons was the late Sadie Hunt, whose Double Springs home still stands at the site of the Original Calaveras County Courthouse. For 15 years she served as the historical society's secretary, from its first organizational meeting in 1952 until her retirement in 1967.*

*The task of secretary in those days was not a small one. With no paid staff the society depended on its secretary to handle all correspondence, send out dues notices and take care of membership lists. Sadie and her husband, Percy, took part in every historical society project.*

*Following her retirement, Mrs. Hunt at the insistence of her friend and fellow historical society officer Bessie McGinnis, compiled her recollections of the historical society's first 15 years. She wrote it in flawless, flowing long-hand and later, Miss McGinnis put it in typewritten form with her manual typewriter.*

*Following, is the text of Mrs. Hunt's remembrances:*

Formation of the Calaveras County Historical Society in 1952 under the leadership of Dr. R. "Coke" Wood, was sponsored by Calaveras Grange No. 715.

The first organizational meeting, attended by Dr. Wood and a small group of interested Calaveras residents, was held in the Calaveras High School library, in San Andreas. It was Dr. Wood and Covert Martin who took the lead in setting up the organization and drafting its by-laws. Marcella Kelling recorded the minutes.

On July 8, 1952, with nine persons present and Coke Wood serving as acting president, a nominating committee was appointed. Committee members included George Poore, Fred Perkins, Amon Tanner, Ella Thompson and Sadie Hunt. A month later on August 19, the following officers were elected: Calaveras County Superior Judge J. A. Smith, president; Coke wood, 1st vice president; Sadie Hunt, secretary; George Poore, John Squellati, Elgin Hittell, all of San Andreas; Amon Tanner, of Murphys and Frances Lombardi, of Mokelumne Hill, members of the board



Sadie Hunt

*Historical Society photo*

of directors. Later, Elgin Hittell resigned and James Valenti, of Angels Camp, was appointed to replace him.

Ninety three people signed the society's register at an October 23 dinner meeting in the Murphys Hotel and became charter members. Twenty five years later, when Mrs. Hunt compiled this history, she noted that fewer than 25 of those 93 original members were left.

Guest speaker that charter night was Dr. Rockwell Hunt, University of the Pacific historian, who later held the title "Mr. California." Place cards at the tables each contained a square nail from the town of Murphys, ties with yellow yarn and gilded nuggets of popcorn. There was considerable amusement during the dinner that evening when the bench, on which most of the newly elected officers were seated, suddenly broke, sending most of them to the floor.

At the December 18 meeting it was suggested the county's two newspapers be kept on file and each year, be bound into volumes.

A second dinner meeting, January 29, 1953, was held in the old Copperopolis Armory. Elsie Flower, of Radio Station KGDM, a native of Copperopolis, was the speaker. The Copperopolis meeting was not without incident. As the meeting got underway, an electrical

Please see HUNT, Pg. 6

**HUNT**, cont. from Pg. 5

fuse in the armory suddenly blew out. The building was plunged into darkness and food, which was being kept warm in electric ovens, had to be taken home until a new fuse could be found and installed.

The Society's fifth bulletin was distributed at its October, 1953 dinner meeting in Mark Twain Elementary School, in Altaville, and "Las Calaveras" became the bulletin's official name. Dr. Rockwell Hunt was present and announced formation of a statewide organization called the "Conference of California Historical Societies." The Calaveras County Historical Society was the second one to join this statewide organization and Coke Wood was selected as chairman.

In January, 1954, during a dinner meeting in San Andreas Town Hall, biographical forms were distributed for the compiling of early family histories. Printing of the Matteson Diary was discussed.

That same year a float was entered in the Murphys Homecoming Parade. The society submitted entries for several years and several first prizes were won. In July, during an outdoor dinner meeting at Double Springs, George H. Harlan Jr. spoke on Jedediah Smith and at a Mountain Ranch dinner meeting, Clarence D. Demarest spoke on "Memories of the Mother Lode."

In July, 1955, Judge J.A. Smith was again elected president. Coke Wood was 1st vice president; Amon Tanner, 2nd vice president; Sadie Hunt, secretary and Ella Thompson, treasurer. Directors were Archie Stevenot, James Valenti, Percy Hunt, Ruby Taylor and Elizabeth Kaler. Guest speaker was Air Force Col. Wadell F. Smith, great grandson of U.B. Wadell, one of the organizers of the Pony Express.

On December 15 the first of the society's annual Christmas parties was held in the basement of the Hotel Treat (Black Bart Inn) with Hattie Hertzog and Alice Eldridge, co-chairmen.

In 1956 the society expended \$75 for an historical marker at the old town of Camanche. Frank Genochio was chairman of the project. When the town was flooded by Camanche Reservoir the marker was moved to high ground.

The first historical essay contest for Calaveras County School children was held in 1956 with Hattie Hertzog as chairman. The contest has become an annual event. Mrs. Hunt said, "the contest has been very special for me as they always met in my home in Double Springs on my birthday to assemble the essays

in book form. I will always remember the beautiful birthday cakes and the fellowship."

In 1961 the society purchased its first tape recorder. A Norelco, with battery recording capabilities and battery charger, that cost \$471.70. That same year due to the long stairway to the courtroom in the old county courthouse, the society's business meetings were moved to the Grange Hall on Russells Road.

On July 25, 1963, the position of historian, held by the secretary for 11 years, was turned over to Alice Eldridge.

Judge J. A. Smith died in February, 1964 and his position was taken over temporarily by Coke Wood, who then was succeeded by Paul Lewis.

During a special meeting in the San Andreas home of Paul and Helen Lewis a Judge Smith Memorial Fund was established at the United California Bank. Willard Fuller, in February of that year, was appointed editor of Las Calaveras, succeeding Coke Wood who had edited it for 12 years.

On July 22, 1965, George Poore, of San Andreas, was elected president of the society. Coke Wood was 1st vice president and Alice Eldridge, 2nd vice president. Marian Brandt was elected treasurer and Sadie Hunt was retained as secretary.

A ranch family album started by Calaveras Grange No. 715 was taken over by the historical society.

Mrs. Hunt also noted that during the 15 years she served as secretary of the historical society, it erected and dedicated five historical markers. These included:

**Town of Comanche, May 6, 1956;**

Frank Genochio, chairman.

**Mountain Ranch, June 17, 1956;**

Paul Lewis, chairman.

**Rail Road Flat, August 4, 1957;**

Ruby Taylor, chairman.

**Stage Robbery, January 20, 1963:**

Louis Domenghini, chairman.

**Fourth Crossing, October 23, 1965;**

Kenneth Castro, chairman.

In closing, Mrs. Hunt stated, "My 15 years as secretary was a part of my life I shall never forget. I am proud to be a part of the Calaveras County Historical Society."



## ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS GO TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Two historic Calaveras County buildings and a recently completed 19th Century replica structure are recipients of Calaveras County Historical Society's 1990 architectural awards.

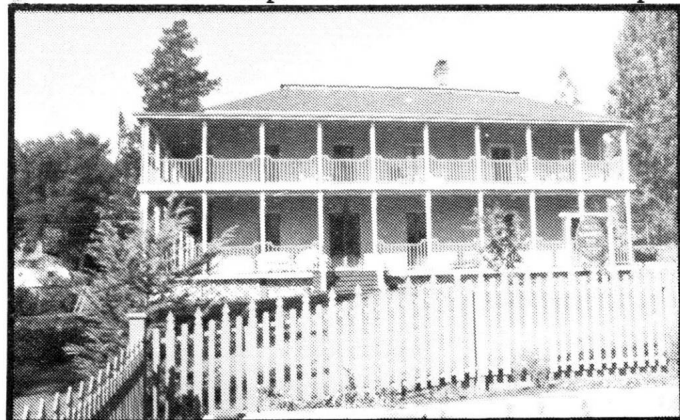
Tad and Cheryl Folendorf, owners of the Utica House at 1090 Utica Lane in Angels Camp, have been presented the society's Award of Merit for preservation of that fine old Victorian dwelling.

Awards of Recognition went to Lee La France for his refurbishing of the old Dragomanovich Store, now renamed "Country Collectables," at 40 East Saint Charles St., in San Andreas, and to Betty Weider for construction of an authentic appearing two-story office building of the post-gold rush era, at 1131 South Main St., in Angels Camp.

The Utica House, now operated by the Folendorfs as a bed and breakfast inn, still retains its 19th Century authenticity and contains much of its original furniture, including an ornate chandelier. The original federal style house, constructed of dressed rhyolite block, was built in 1882 by Robert Leeper, owner of the Utica Mine, the largest and most profitable of Angels Camp's deep mines.

Leeper came to California in 1853 and 1863 found him in Angels Camp where that same year he married Susan Stevens. In November, 1884, the Leepers sold the mine and their mansion to Charles D. Lane, son of a Knights Ferry pioneer. In the early 1890's "Capt. Lane" added two wooden wings to the house, nearly doubling its size and bringing about much change in its appearance.

In 1895 Lane departed for Alaska where he oper-



Utica Mansion Inn

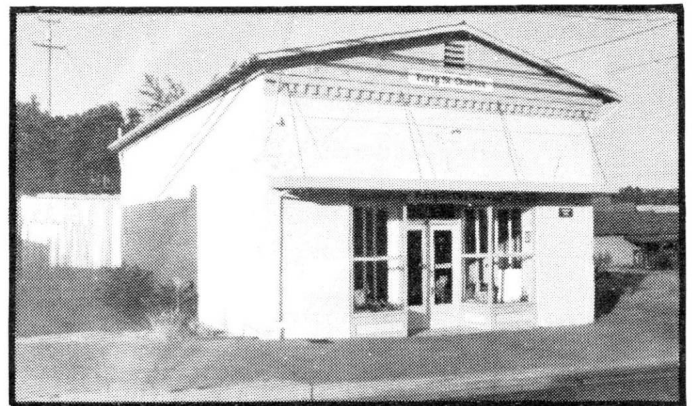


The Weider Building, scene from the past.

ated the Wild Goose Mining and Trading Company which ran steamers between Seattle and Nome.

From the time of Lane's departure until the Utica Mine closed at the end of World War I, the mansion became the office and home of a succession of mining superintendents. After that, managers of the Utica Power Company lived in the house until well into the 1940's when the company, which supplied water to Angels Camp, sold to Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

For a time, then, the State Division of Forestry occupied it as a boarding house, and in 1952, it was sold to Kenneth Briggs, who partially refurbished it



Dragomanovich Store building as it appears today.

and made some interior alterations. Briggs owned it until it was purchased recently by the Folendorfs.

Architecturally, the Utica mansion is unusual for the region in that it is constructed of stone, only one of two such structures in Angels Camp. The house was designed with many elements which were to make it  
Please see **AWARDS**, Pg. 8

**AWARDS, cont. from Pg. 7**

one of the grandest in the county. Its walnut balustrade, elaborate moulding and trim as well as its hardware, all are of superior quality.

The interior alterations and refurbishing carried out by the Briggs family, and more recently by the Folendorfs, have only added to the old mansion's elegance. Today it is one of Angels Camp's show places, a monument to days past.

The Architectural Committee, headed by Roberta Kenyon, also selected the former Dragomanovich Store at 40 East Saint Charles St., in San Andreas, for one of the society's Awards of Recognition.

Present owner Lee La France has refurbished the interior and exterior of the old brick building using its original materials including its original floor, and retaining its fine early-day appearance.

The store was originally built in 1861 by a man named Washburn who owned a lumberyard across Saint Charles Street from it, and for many years it was known as the Wyllie and Washburn Storehouse.

On the east side of the building where a local jeweler now is located, stood a wheelwright's shop.

The building apparently changed hands a number of times before it was sold by Emil McFall in 1926, to Milan Dragomanovich who opened a general mer-



**Milan Dragomanovich at his store's gas pump, 1926**

chandise store there. Mr. Dragomanovich operated the store for 30 years, until it closed in April, 1956. Between that time and its purchase by La France, the building was occupied by several businesses.

For many years the exterior of the building was painted gray, but La France has removed that paint, revealing the natural brick which has been treated and stabilized. Presently, it is one of the more attractive historic buildings on Saint Charles Street.

The second Award of Recognition went to Betty  
Please see **AWARDS**, Pg. 12



**Interior of Dragomanovich Store, 1937. Milan Dragomanovich in white frock.**

*Courtesy of Marshall Dragomanovich*



## THE WIDOW MAKER TRULY EARNED ITS NAME

*Much of the information for this article was supplied by the late John Ross, of Mountain Ranch, whose lifetime in mining included ownership of the Starlight Mine. He served as superintendent of several Mother Lode mines and he was the son of the superintendent of the Virginia Consolidated Mine in Virginia City's Comstock Lode...The Editor...*

The hard rock miners of a century ago called them "widowmakers," but they revolutionized the mining industry throughout the west.

Their thunder echoed through the tunnels and stopes from California's Mother Lode to Virginia City, Bisbee and the Coeur d' Alene. They drilled the holes for the charges that blasted railroad tunnels through the granite backbone of the Sierra and allowed the first Central Pacific locomotives to cross Donner Summit. Introduction of the big machines allowed Adolph Sutro to complete his five-mile tunnel into the heart of Gold Hill and drain the flooding mines of Virginia City's silver-rich Comstock Lode.

Now, those giant drills are silent and the men who operated them are gone. Today, major museums including the Smithsonian, are searching early day mining areas, hoping possibly that another of those

old, steam powered drills which brought the machine age to underground mining, may be found.

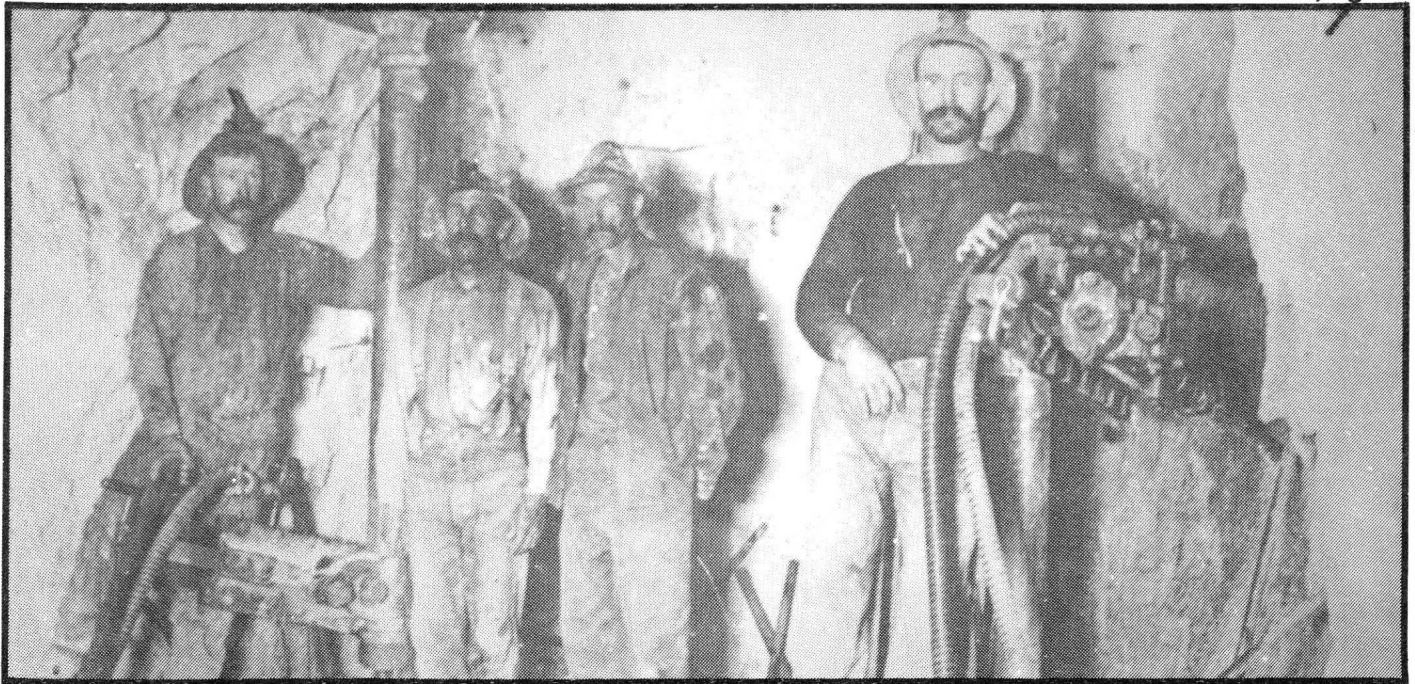
Built of cast and forged steel, their manufacture began during the late 1860's under the name of "Burleigh Drill." A huge machine, weighing in excess of 400 pounds, it required three men to set one in drilling position and two men to operate it. But, despite their weight and bulk, the big machines bored blast holes into quartz or slate or granite at then, unprecedented speed, and brought to an end the era of the hand-held drill and double jack.

The job of drill operator was a prestigious one and the men who ran the big Burleigh drills quickly became known in miner's parlance as "machine men." They were proud men who walked tall.

But, it was not only the miners from Angels camp, Grass Valley or Virginia City who learned to operate the Burleigh drills. During the late 1860's as the Central Pacific Railroad pushed its tracks eastward to create a transcontinental rail line, the company hired Cornish miners from Virginia City to run the drills in the railroad tunnels being driven through solid granite at the Sierra summit.

The drills could penetrate the rock but it was so hard that the black powder used for blasting would not properly shatter it. Construction Superintendent J.H. Strobridge solved that problem by importing a

Please see **DRILLS**, Pg. 10



Miners and chuck tenders with Burleigh Drills in Angels Camp's Lightner Mine. *Historical Society Photo*

## DRILLS, cont. from Pg. 9

chemist who mixed nitroglycerin on the spot, to charge the drill holes. The new explosive, powerful, but dangerously unstable, pulverized the hard granite, but then the Cornish miners went on strike. That problem was solved without loss of precious construction time when Chinese "muckers," who shoveled up the blasted rock, stepped forward to take over operation of the Burleigh drills. And, when the chemist got drunk and disappeared, they calmly took up the task of making nitroglycerin and went on with their drilling and blasting.

Numerous replicas and modifications of the Burleigh drill were built in various places. The Pacific drill, a smaller model of the Burleigh, was manufactured in the latter years of the 19th Century in the Altaville foundry which still operates under the name of California Electric Steel.

The Burleigh drill was later modified to operate on compressed air instead of steam, but its life span in the mining industry was relatively short. And, for good reason, the old Burleigh and its kin were abandoned for more modern rock drills of the type still in use in western underground gold mining.

The old drills used solid steel bits and the holes they cut into the hard quartz veins were "drilled dry." Miners operating the big machines in the dimly lighted tunnel headings and drifts worked in a constant, smothering cloud of rock dust. Each breath they inhaled was laden with tiny particles of silica. Each particle was like a tiny piece of glass with a cutting edge that bit into delicate lung tissue.

Husky young men came to the mines and a decade later—or even sooner—they left, gaunt and gray faced. When they coughed they spat blood, and the phrase, "miners consumption," was coined. The Burleigh Drill truly earned the name of widowmaker.

And, even those underground miners who did not fall victim to the silica dust could, however, count at least on suffering impaired hearing.

At full throttle the roar of the big pneumatic drills, reverberating off of solid rock walls, reached a crescendo that seemed to create a solid wall of sound. The machines drowned out even the loudest human voice and miners and their chuck-tenders in order to communicate, worked out a series of intricate hand signals to use while the machines were running.

Such protective devices as ear plugs or soundproof



Miners and chuck tenders with Burleigh Drills in Angels Camp's Lightner Mine.

*Historical Society Photo*

ear muffs still were half-a-century in the future and damaged hearing was accepted as simply another hazard that was part of the hard rock miner's life.

Around turn of the century came the "water Leiner"—the name Leiner taken from that of its inventor. It was a lighter, faster cutting drill, but most important, it employed hollow drill steel through which shot a constant stream of water to quench the lethal clouds of rock dust. It reduced the danger of silicosis—that killer of young men—but its roar, louder, if anything, than the slower cycled Burleigh drill, still deafened the men who used it.

The day of the Burleigh drill is ended. Modern-day miners work in uncontaminated air pumped to them from the surface. Their ears are protected by sophisticated, sound-proof hearing protectors that reduce noise of their drills to a whisper.

Today, few models of the famous and lethal old Burleigh drills still exist. One of them is the property of the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado. Museum curators still hope that in some old mining camp or long neglected mine or blacksmith shop, another of the old Burleigh drills may be located.

Search centers mainly around mining areas of the West, including the Mother Lode.

True, there are copies of the Burleigh drill such as the Pacific Drill, built in Altaville, now on display in the Angels Camp Museum, but a true Burleigh drill remains an illusive goal.

## MUSEUM DONATIONS

Calaveras County Historical Society thanks the following persons who have donated or loaned artifacts or other historical materials to the Calaveras County Museum.

**Lillian Browning, Lodi:** Old Chinese jewelry box.

**Mrs. Dixie Johnson, Galt:** A Mokelumne Hill notary seal and three documents.

**Mrs. Richard Harris, West Point:** Fourteen snapshots of West Point.

One copy of "My Life and Boyhood Days in West Point."

One copy of Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike.

One copy of O'Byrnes Ferry covered bridge.

**Charles Stone, Copperopolis:** Geological reports on Emery Baldwin Mine, Confident-Reliance Mine, Davidson Gold Property, History of the Big Sandy Mine and Kate Hardy Mine.

**Richard Casey, Lockeford:** .38 Smith & Wesson Revolver. Leather powder horn, leather billy club, handcuffs W/ keys, bullet mold and long stemmed tobacco pipe once owned by Deputy Sheriff Jim Casey. Also pack saddle, mercury, chit good for one drink at Courthouse saloon and other items.

**Ruth Lemue, Angels Camp:** A drawing by Effie Johnston.

**Carmenne Poore, San Andreas:** Copies of Las Calaveras.

### Loaned for Display at the Museum

**Doris Barger, Murphys:**

Crocheted and embroidered table cloth.

**Lorrayne Kennedy, San Andreas:**

Silver napkin rings and damask linen napkins.

**Larry Getchell, San Francisco:**

Pair of gold bearing quartz cuff links.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Kat Anderson, representative of the National Park Service, in Yosemite, will be guest speaker at the historical society's October 26 dinner meeting in the Murphys Hotel. Anderson's subject will be "Food, flowers and Folk-Lore of the Sierra Miwok Indians."

Dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

On November 15 the historical society will hold a business meeting and its annual pie social in the courtroom of the old Calaveras County Courthouse at 30 North Main St., in San Andreas. The meeting will open at 7 p.m.

The historical society's annual Christmas party will be held Dec. 20 in the Metropolitan, in San Andreas. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

## 1990-91 OFFICERS INSTALLED

President Don Cuneo began his second term as head of the Calaveras County Historical Society on July 26, during a dinner meeting and installation of officers at the Utica Mansion, in Angels Camp.

Others who took the oath of office administered by Calaveras Justice Court Judge Douglas Mewhinney and who also will serve second terms include Vice President Linda Cline, Treasurer Bonnie Miller, Recording Secretary John Gomes and Directors Gail Nordby and Charles Stone.

Newly elected to the board and installed during the same ceremony were Membership-Financial Secretary Ruth Matson and directors Ray Garamendi and Glenn Wasson. Retiring directors were Jack Kennedy, Richard Barger and Sharon Eglin.

Wasson is a retired U. S. Air Force officer, who has lived in San Andreas for the past several years and has taken an active part in historical society and community affairs.

Ray Garamendi, Mokelumne Hill area rancher and local historian, is a longtime historical society member and during the past year served as chairman of the historical society's annual school historical essay contest.

Ruth Matson, also a longtime historical society member, is former curator of the Calaveras County Courthouse Museum which is operated by the historical society.



Historical Society officers for 1990, (L to R), include Director Ray Garamendi, Membership Secretary Ruth Matson, Director Glenn Wasson, Recording Secretary John Gomes, Treasurer Bonnie Miller, Vice President Linda Cline and President Don Cuneo. Installing officer (holding microphone) was Judge Douglas Mewhinney. Not in picture are directors Gail Nordby and Charles Stone.

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**Calaveras County Historical Society**

30 Main Street • P. O. Box 721  
San Andreas, California 95249

**Officers and Directors**

President .....Don Cuneo, San Andreas  
Vice President .....Linda Cline, Murphys  
Treasurer ..... Bonnie Miller, Mt. Ranch  
Recording Secretary ..... John Gomes, San Andreas  
Membership-Financial Sec'y.....Ruth Matson, San Andreas  
Directors .....Glenn Wasson, San Andreas  
Ray Garamendi, Mokelumne Hill  
Gail Nordby, San Andreas  
Charles Stone, Copperopolis

**Staff**

Office Manager .....Dolores Tipton  
Editor, Las Calaveras .....George W. Hoeper

**Las Calaveras** is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society. Individual memberships (\$6.00 a year), Family (\$8.00) and Junior Memberships (\$2.00) include subscription to **Las Calaveras**. Non-members may obtain copies of **Las Calaveras** from the secretary. 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 AM to 4 PM. The telephone number is (209) 754-1058. Visitors are welcome.

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**AWARDS, cont. from Pg. 8**

Weider, for her construction of the late gold rush era replica building at 1131 South Main Street, in Angels Camp. In presenting the award, Mrs. Kenyon commended Weider, commenting that she has done more architecturally to retain the gold country look of Angels Camp than any other individual.

The two story structure beside Angels Creek at the intersection of Highways 49 and 4 is so authentic that few visitors to Angels Camp ever realize that it is not one of the town's original buildings.

Beside Mrs. Kenyon, other committee members included Shirley Huberty, Winnie Alexander, Vera Fuller and Historical Society President Don Cuneo.

**IN MEMORIAM**

William "Bill" Messer, Angels Camp, April 7, 1990  
Harvey Mullen, Stockton, May 27, 1990

**NEW MEMBERS**

The Calaveras County Historical Society welcomes the following new members listed by Membership Chairman Ruth Matson:

Lynn Russell, Arnold.  
Neona Shipp, San Andreas.  
Jack & Ruth Kuhl, Valley Springs.  
Susan E. Foster, Murphys.  
Ben Boardman, Jackson.  
Richard J. Casey, Lockeford.  
Mike Cano, Vallecito.  
Harley & Sandy Winkler, San Andreas.  
Robert & Darlene Donahue, Murphys.  
Carol Kennedy, San Andreas.  
M. Kat Anderson, Berkeley.  
Tawny Tesconi, Angels Camp.  
Jeanine Taylor Realty, Murphys.  
Steve & Holly Olson, San Andreas.  
Floyd & Ila Norrie, San Andreas.  
Leonard & Nancy Baxter, Angels Camp.  
L. F. Hunt, Rancho Murietta.  
Carl & Johnnie Brooks, Altaville.  
Jeff St. Louis, Murphys.  
Thomas & Florence Kelly, Altaville.  
Sheila Peterson, San Andreas.  
Milton and Molly Gordon, Glencoe.  
Carol Pease, Murphys.  
Robert Mills and Family, Sacramento.  
Nat Lane, Stockton.  
James and Wanda Griffin, Fair Oaks.  
Harold and Nadeen Womble, Stockton.

**EDITORIAL**

Organized nearly four decades ago, Calaveras County Historical Society has continued to grow and gain stature as a legitimate Mother Lode history source. Since the days of "Coke" Wood, Judge J. A. Smith and Sadie Hunt, who helped set its course as a serious, history gathering organization, the historical society has always had strong and dedicated leadership.

At our last meeting two of this organization's most dedicated members, Jack Kennedy and Richard Barger, who between them had 16 years of service, retired from the board of directors. Their places have been taken by two other capable and hard-working long-time members, but Kennedy and Barger deserve a special thanks for the years of hard work and leadership they have given our historical society.