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THE STEPHEN BOX FAMILY

By EDNA STANLEY LANE

One of seven children, Stephen Boysden Box was born to Benjamin and Nancy Box on February 14, 1830, at their plantation home in Tennessee. At the age of seventeen his only ambition was to go west.

One of his sisters and her husband were preparing to join a wagon train leaving for California, so Stephen's father outfitted him with two oxen, a covered wagon, and supplies enough to last him through the long journey.

When a little more than 200 miles from home, disagreements arose in the wagon train; some, including his sister and her husband, deciding to turn south toward Texas. They proceeded to relieve the young man of all his belongings, leaving him stranded with those remaining in the original group.

Stephen's urge to go west was so strong that, instead of returning home, he chose to work his way for the wagon train, taking care of the stock and other duties on the difficult journey. They arrived in the central part of California, at Hangtown, in 1849. Stephen stayed for awhile in that area, and later in what is now Calaveras County, mining. He also served in Calaveras as deputy sheriff under Henry Schrobel, collecting poll taxes from the Chinese miners there.

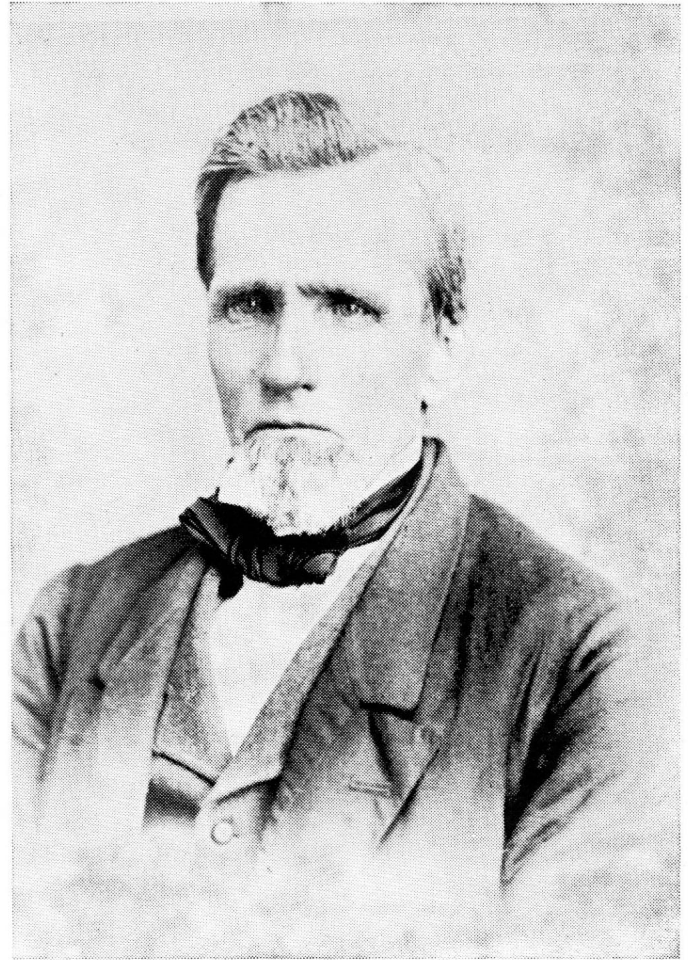
On December 22, 1863, Stephen was married to Melissa Abbott, daughter of Joshua and Elizabeth Abbott, who, with their family of seven children, had arrived in California via Utah and Nevada and into Calaveras County by the Big Trees route. They had left Belden County, Arkansas, in 1857. The Abbotts moved to Tulare County in 1861, but after the big floods there in '62, returned to Calaveras to stay.

Henry Schrobel, of Bear Mountain, married Eliza Adeline Abbott, sister of Melissa. The other Abbott girl, Catherine, married Jesse Burns and lived in Oakdale.

Stephen and Melissa Box were the parents of eight daughters and two sons: Nancy Elizabeth (Loney); Virginia Lee (Fagan); Priscilla Ann (Stanley); Emma Isabelle (Bollinger); Sarah Caroline (Bollinger); Mary Emaline (twin sister of Sarah); Hannah Laura (Biedinger); Benjamin Joshua; Stephen Boyce, and Melissa Adeline.

All of the Box children were born at the ranch home near Milton, on Rock Creek (this was known as the Abbott Ranch). Farming and stock-raising, as well as bringing up the large family, kept Stephen busy.

In the fall of 1882, the family moved to Copperopolis where they had purchased a 340-acre ranch from J. M.



STEPHEN B. BOX

1830 - 1903

Very stern, as this portrait shows, Box was a good and just man, and an outstanding example of those pioneers who, in spite of many hardships, successfully settled in the far west during the mid-1800's.

Baker of that place. They lived there until 1902. The ranch was maintained by one of the older daughters, Belle, and the two sons, as Stephen was an invalid, confined to bed or wheelchair the last ten years of his life.

In 1902, the ranch was sold to Edwin L. Flower, and the family moved into town, so Stephen could be nearer medical attention. He passed away on December 4, 1903, survived by five daughters and two sons. His wife had died in 1896, at the age of 55.

Emma Isabelle Bollinger passed away on December 13, 1964, at 96 years of age. Her sister, Hannah Laura Biedinger, died on August 21, 1966, at 93. They were the last surviving children.

At the present time, the living grandchildren of Stephen Box are: Alta Fagan Dorroh of Angels Camp; William S. Fagan and Melissa Fagan Reddick of Altaville; Edna Stanley Lane of Copperopolis; Benjamin S. Box and V. Cleo Box, of Sacramento.

Many of the Abbott family descendants live throughout California, and the Box descendants in central California and Nevada.



NORTH BRANCH

One of the more completely equipped stops and the center of the small communities of North Branch, Petersburg, and Central Hill, this station was built at the foot of the long Gold Hill grade, in Latimer Gulch, in 1876. The original North Branch stop had been located about a mile closer to San Andreas, between Neilsen's and Genochio's ranches. Macchivella was the first owner of the new es-

tablishment. John Raggio, former stage driver and owner, bought him out in 1883, and two years later sold to Henry Masters. Later, Milan Dragomanovich owned and operated the business, closing it down in 1927 and dismantling the buildings. In the foreground is the Valley Springs-San Andreas - Angels Camp stage. — From a photo loaned by Mrs. Frances Bishop.

CALAVERAS STAGE AND TEAMSTER STOPS

One of the fast-disappearing sights in rural Calaveras is the old stage and freighter stop. Closely-spaced along the traveled routes, these were located either at intersections, or at the outskirts of the larger communities, or so situated as to provide a convenient stopping point in an otherwise open and inhospitable section of the road. Some of the better known stops were those at toll stations and at ferries or bridges.

One by one, these structures have fallen down, burned or been dismantled. Fortunately a few, here and there, have been preserved and modernized and are still performing their services in a new day and age. Others have been converted to residences.

These roadhouses were almost always privately owned and operated. The stage and freight lines, however, would generally contract with them for stabling their animals and for other services. The fast-moving stages would require frequent changes of horses. The slower freight teams were more apt to make longer stops, and rest their

teams rather than change them, especially if their schedule permitted an overnight stop.

The close spacing and large numbers of these houses or stops testifies to the heavy volume of traffic. This was especially true along roads into the Mother Lode, where many relatively isolated but populous communities and booming mining districts had to be furnished with supplies and provisions, all by team. And although we might think today that Mother Lode people rarely traveled in that horse-and-wagon era, there was, none the less, a substantial passenger traffic, considering the transportation methods of the times.

There was great variety in the completeness of the roadhouses or way stations. Some were merely ranches close to the road, whose energetic owners made their establishments available, in the effort to pick up some needed cash income. Others existed solely on the services they performed to the travelers, be they afoot, on horseback, or with stage or team. Such a roadhouse would be equipped with eating facilities, the ubiquitous bar, a small store, overnight accommodations, perhaps a post office,

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NORTH AMERICA HOUSE

One of the early stops on the Jenny Lind - Valley Springs road, this building stood close to the recently constructed house across the road from the entrance to the new Rancho Calaveras subdivision. In 1854, North America House was owned by David F. Ramsbottom. It was operated by James A. Cole in the '60s, and later by Tracy Stroud. Mr. and Mrs. Stroud may be seen on the porch.

with a friend, Mrs. Sarah Tetherington (left). Note the "mounting steps" in the foreground. These were for the convenience of lady passengers. The ell on the right was the saloon, appropriately on the opposite side from the Strouds' living quarters, which were in the rear of the hotel, left side. — From a photograph loaned by Mrs. Frances Bishop.

Stage and Teamster Stops

(Continued From Page 2)

corrals, and large barns capable of stabling a number of teams and stage horses at the same time.

These stops were sometimes named after the locality, such as Mountain Gate House, North Branch, and Dogtown. Often they were called after the owner, as were Poole's Station, Dunbar Ranch, Blood's, Forman's, McGurk's (tollbridge), Binum's Bridge (run by a freed Negro family, at Willow Creek), McCarty's, Tower's and others. Some had more picturesque names, as did North America House, Kentucky House, Alabama House, and Hawkeye. Others were called by mileage intervals or ferries.

Forthcoming Meetings

- November—Date to Be Announced.
The Gwin Mine at Paloma.
- December—Date to Be Announced
Christmas Party.
- January 25th—Dinner Meeting, Location to Be Announced. Program by Mr. and Mrs. Drew Garland.

Invite a friend to join the Society.

RICHARD MCGARY

Richard McGary was descended from the frontier settlers in Kentucky and Arkansas. His grandfather was an English soldier who stayed in America after the Revolution. Richard came from Benton County, Arkansas, in 1890, to Lockeford where he worked for a brother, Simpson. He then moved up to Rail Road Flat, about four years later, where he drove freight teams up from Valley Springs for a few years. Then he opened a butcher shop, and also raised cattle. In 1903 he moved to Jackson and opened a dry goods store. He came back to Rail Road Flat in 1915 and resumed cattle ranching until his death in 1935. The Richard McGarys had four daughters.

Richard's sister, Hettie, who married Cy Thompson, left Arkansas about 1868, and settled near French Camp. In 1880 they bought a ranch at Rail Road Flat, adjoining the one that Richard later purchased. They sold out in 1931 and retired to Lockeford. The Thompsons both passed away in 1947.

New Members

- Mrs. Marjorie M. Vliet, Linden
- Miss Hazel B. Pampel, Lodi
- Mr. Oliver Dibble, Jr., Woodside
- Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce, San Andreas
- Mrs. Dorris Faull, Angels Camp

OFFICERS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

San Andreas, California

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Editor of Las CalaverasW. P. Fuller, Jr., San Andreas

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The Calaveras County Historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Grange Hall in San Andreas—except for dinner meetings which are held each quarter at different places in the county.

EDITORIAL

A good architect, when commissioned by a client, first studies the community in which the new structure will be built. He does this so that his external design will blend in well with the established traditions of the area, and so that it will preserve and augment the good features of past architectural efforts. This can readily be done without losing the advantages of modern efficiency and comfort in its internal portions.

We can all see how often this basic principle has been ignored, and how countless ugly, grotesque, or out of place edifices have arisen, destroying the architectural harmony of the immediately surrounding area. Presently, however, in our region, there has been a strong trend toward perpetuating the Mother Lode design, fortunately at the very time when there is also a tremendous erosion of the original buildings from one cause or another.

There are many who would point out that these buildings, born of the gold rush, are crude, uncomfortable, have no beauty at all, and that the type is unworthy of preservation. But, on the other hand, they were very functional, practical as to materials used, and completely accepted from one end of the Mother Lode to the other. They are almost the only "living" vestige of that exciting and significant era of history, and are truly representative of the people and problems of that day. If we no longer had evidence of this architectural heritage with us, most of the historical charm of the Mother Lode would be lost.

The Society commends those far-sighted individuals, and indeed, corporations too, that are endeavoring to save this heritage, both with restorations of old structures and with design of new ones.

SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES

July Meeting

The annual meeting was held at Masonic Hall in Murphys, where dinner was served by the Rainbow Girls to some 50 members and their guests. Mrs. Helen Lewis installed our new officers. Mrs. Alice Eldridge, on behalf of the Society, presented retiring President Poore with a red rose bush, and Mrs. Sadie Hunt, retiring Secretary, with a Peace rose. Sadie, it should be noted, has missed only three meetings in fifteen years, an enviable record in any organization. Dr. Jack Hobson and his wife Dot, of Murphys, gave an excellent program of colored movies of the New England states and Virginia.

August Meeting

In accordance with Society tradition, the officers, directors and friends gathered together at Double Springs Ranch to assemble the prize-winning essays. The work session was followed by an Executive Committee meeting. It was decided to have a series of programs built around the subject of Calaveras mining history, with emphasis on the post-1900 period.

New committee appointments included Mrs. Margaret Des Jardin as Publicity Chairman, and Drew Garland, Ed Leonard, and George Poore to the Historical Sites Committee.

Membership Dues

Our Secretary requests that members send in their dues, to Calaveras County Historical Society, San Andreas, if they have not yet done so.

September Meeting

Departing from its normal routine, the Society held this meeting at the commodious residence of the George Poores in San Andreas. A social hour preceded the business meeting and program.

The essay study committee recommended that our annual essay contest be made a bi-annual event, and that it be held in the fall, rather than in the spring. Mrs. Hazel Garland and Miss Bessie McGinnis were appointed co-chairmen of the new essay committee. Mr. Al Gross reported on the coming membership drive. Mr. Poore stated that over 6000 people have visited the new county museum since it opened in May. Museum staff, under Mr. Poore's direction, have prepared a very complete card index to "Las Calaveras." Dr. Coke Wood presented a plan for preserving our Mother Lode architecture, similar to that used by Tuolumne County. This would consist of presenting certificates of merit for outstanding examples of restorations and new construction along Mother Lode traditions. A committee of Willard Fuller, Drew Garland, and Hattie Hertzig was appointed to study this plan and make recommendations.

Following the business meeting, talks were presented by George Poore and Mrs. Martha O'Byron on the Indians of Calaveras.