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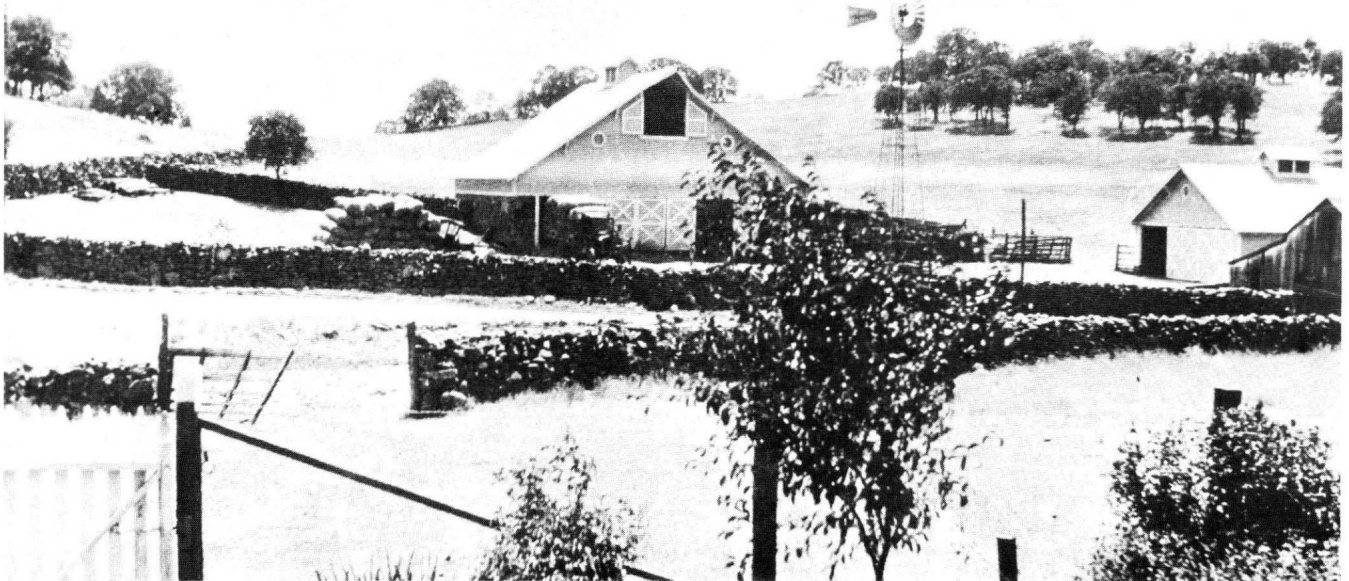
## RANCH FAMILIES OF THE SOUTHWEST CORNER

In our last issue we briefly described the principal access routes through the Southwest Corner of our county. This was followed by an article on our only Mexico land grant, El Rancharia del Rio Estanislao, and one on the Alta mine, a hardrock gold mine on the Grant. We now turn our attention to the group of ranching

families that lived just north of the Grant, generally near the Reed Turnpike (now State Highway "4"), on the slopes of Gopher Ridge, and in part of the upper valley of the Littlejohn. The latter was in early days considered the southern part of Salt Spring Valley, and more recently has been referred to by mining people as the West Belt Valley.

We have only meager information as to who were the first of these residents of the Southwest Corner, but by the 1860's there were a number of well-established ranches and farms. Traveling eastward up the old Stockton road towards Copperopolis in the mid-60's the first ranch one found across the Calaveras line was that of Adam Shafer. He ran a store in early days about a mile below Telegraph City. The Shafer Ranch eventually was acquired by the Murphy brothers. At Telegraph City was the Parks Ranch, which was also acquired later on by the Murphys.

In "Las Calaveras" for January, 1972, Wade Johnston describes the Telegraph City vicinity during the copper boom of Civil War days. About a mile above the "City" on Telegraph Creek was the ranch of Stephen Decatur Suits and his partner Hadley. This later became the headquarters of the Gardner-Beardslee Ranch. In Gopher Gulch, north of Suits & Hadley were the ranches of



**THE BARN AT TELEGRAPH CITY**

**This was the home ranch for the Parks and later the headquarters of the extensive Murphys Brothers Ranch. Here we see part of the 1925 wool clip from Walter's band of nearly 10,000**

**sheep loaded onto two trucks. Chester had charge of the large herd of cattle.**

*Courtesy of the Murphy Family*

Henry Boucher, John Williams, James Horseman, and H. McFarlin. South of Telegraph City were a number of ranches including those of the Shoemake brothers, Herman Donner, and of H. H. White who operated the Mineral Springs Hotel. The latter was also run at one time by Major Lane of Knights Ferry.

Proceeding up along upper Shirley Creek, past William Pope's place, over the Ridge, and down into the valley of the Littlejohn, one came to the "Log Cabin Ranch" of Thomas McCarty ("Las Calaveras," January, 1967). Close by were the ranches of R. N. Dean and I. H. Shirley. On the road from the Log Cabin towards O'Byrnes and Reynolds ferries were the Saunders & Holden, Vickery, Box (later Flowers), and Egan ranches. Another road from the Log Cabin, heading south towards the Grant, passed the Moores, Oxendines, and Brassfields places. After crossing Littlejohns, one came next to the Getzman's.

There were a number of early day ranches in the southern part of Salt Spring Valley, along Black Creek, surrounding the present site of Copperopolis, and extending up into the main part of Salt Spring Valley. These, however, are beyond the scope of the present issue.

Telegraph City was a town of some importance only during the copper boom. In addition to the various business establishments right at Telegraph, there were more buildings nearby on the slopes of Hog Hill, referred to as Napoleon City, next to the mine of that name. Although nearly all of the residents and business proprietors of Telegraph City left when the boom collapsed, the post office, one store, and the school continued to about the turn of the century.

The earliest ranchers could acquire title to their land only by the Pre-Emption Act. Later, land could be taken up under the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862, or by outright purchase from the Land Office. The bigger the families, the more possibilities for homesteading, as the requirements of the Act could be relatively easily met. Those more energetically acquiring acreage also resorted to staking their hired hands and others to homesteads, and then conveniently buying them out after patent was issued. Thus well before the turn of the century essentially all the vacant land was taken up, and a number of substantial ranches put together.

With just a few families in the area, generally with numerous children, it is not surprising that there were frequent marriages linking these families together. This later was one of the factors affecting land ownership patterns. Ranches that were considered self-sufficient in early days proved to be too small to continue to provide a

good living for a growing family in the latter part of the 19th and in the early years of the 20th centuries. Younger members by necessity looked elsewhere for a livelihood, either in the mines or in the growing communities in the San Joaquin Valley. The older ranches were consolidated into fewer and larger ranch units. The families in residence shrank to only one or two by World War II. After the War, the Southwest Corner was nearly deserted. Even Copperopolis was beginning to be described as a "Ghost Town". But today, large subdivisions have completely reversed this trend, at least along Johnny Creek, Black Creek, and in the valley of the West Belt.

Now let us go back to the early days and meet some of these pioneer ranchers and their families. There are a number of their descendants living today within the county, and many more elsewhere, particularly in the Valley communities. Space requires that these family stories be much briefer than we would like.

## BEARDSLEE

The brothers Beardslee — Walter, Robert, and Andrew Jackson — sons of Robert and Phoebe Kimble Beardslee of Bethany in Wayne County, Pennsylvania, joined the gold rush and arrived in San Francisco on May 21st, 1852, on the "Golden Gate" from Panama. They, unlike many of the gold miners, remained in California and settled in Calaveras County.

Robert was the first to be married, in October, 1854, to Maria P. Reed, also of Bethany. She had come out to California the year before by way of Boston, taking passage in the clipper ship "Queen of the Seas", arriving in San Francisco on March 11, 1853, 127 days out from Boston. After Maria's death (they had one daughter), Robert married Martha A. Reed, eldest daughter of Edmond and Amanda Reed, another Bethany family. To this union were born a son, Marvin (who never married), and a daughter Ella (later Mrs. Richmond Gardner).

Beardslee, with a farming background, soon forsook mining for ranching. He became acquainted with George Green(e) Gardner, who had come out from Rhode Island with his wife Hannah. Gardner and Beardslee became partners, using the brand "GB". They consolidated several of the earlier ranches, including the "Telegraph Ranch" of Suits & Hadley in the upper part of Telegraph Creek (a small tributary of Shirley Creek), about a mile east of Telegraph City. Robert Beardslee and George Gardner established their homes here, and the stone walls that surrounded the houses and barn and the foundation may still be seen if one takes the old turnpike down Telegraph Creek towards Telegraph City. It was



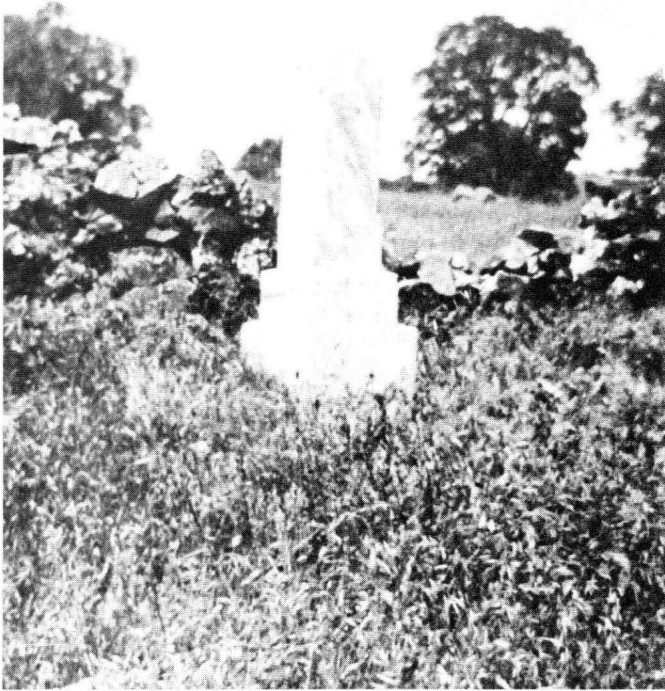
Left

**LUCY KENDALL  
BEARDSLEE**  
(Mrs. Andrew  
Jackson Beardslee)

*Family pictures  
loaned by  
Mrs. R. L. Beardslee, Jr.*



**MR. & MRS. ANDREW  
JACKSON BEARDSLEE**



**THE GRAVE IN THE FIELD**

Several of the pioneers in the Southwest Corner are buried in the little cemetery at Napoleon City and in lonely graves on family ranches. This is the grave of pioneer Robert Beardslee on the Gardner-Beardslee Ranch.



**ROBERT L. BEARDSLEE, SR.**



**ROBERT L. BEARDSLEE, SR.**

said that the Gardner-Beardslee Ranch eventually consisted of some 7000 acres. They were also associated with the Hugh Gerlach Ranch in northwestern Nevada

After George Gardner died, Robert Beardslee, then a widower for the second time, married Hannah Gardner. Ella Beardslee, daughter of Martha, later married Hannah's son, Richmond L. Gardner. Robert, who died in 1888, was buried at the ranch in the field below the house, where his grave is marked by a marble monument in a stonewall enclosure. After Robert's death, Hannah moved to Alameda to live with her daughter Rose.

Walter D. Beardslee, one of the three brothers, married Mary Jane Hackshaw from Hancock, Illinois, at Copperopolis in 1886. Beardslee operated a livery stable there for a number of years. They moved to Lodi where five children were born, only two of whom survived childhood.

The third brother, Andrew Jackson Beardslee, then living in Stanislaus County, married Lucy Emeline Kendall in September, 1865, at Six Mile Bar, on the

Calaveras side of the river. Lucy's mother, Elizabeth Tudor Kendall, had come west from New Orleans with her second husband Francis McKenzie and children Lucy Kendall and Frances McKenzie in the early 1850's to California, first to Amador County and then to "Table Mountain Villa" in Calaveras County near Six Mile Bar. The McKenzies raised a large family, with four children born while they lived at Clinton in Amador County, and three more at Table Mountain Villa.

Lucy Kendall Beardslee and her two young daughters caught one of the dreaded childhood diseases. Lucy died in the fall of 1870, and the two little girls the following spring, thus leaving Andrew to raise little Robert Lewis Beardslee, then one year old. Father and son thereafter lived much of the time with the Robert Beardslees and Andrew taught school at Telegraph City. Robert Lewis Beardslee married Edith Hammond in 1904 at Pacific Grove. He was city attorney in Stockton, and in 1907-8 was Speaker of the State Assembly. Their son, Robert L. Jr., and his wife, Margaret M. Beardslee, live in Stockton.

Part of the extensive Gardner-Beardslee holdings were subsequently acquired by Edward Parks, and after the turn of the century, most of the old "GB" Ranch was incorporated into the Murphy Brothers Ranch.

## GARDNER

George and Hannah Gardner came out from Rhode Island, probably several years before 1860. They first settled, briefly, in San Francisco, where they operated a hotel. One family story tells of the Gardners moving to Nevada and running a hotel for a while there. By 1860 they were in Copperopolis area, with their daughter Rose. In 1861, a son, Richmond, was born, and it is said that he was the first white child born in that place.

George Gardner soon became associated with Robert Beardslee, as we have mentioned elsewhere, and together they built up a large ranching and cattle business. The two families were very close, and Richmond married Ella Beardslee, Robert's daughter. After George's death, his widow, Hannah, married Robert Beardslee.

Richmond L. Gardner continued to operate the ranch after his father and then Robert Beardslee passed on. He and Ella reared four children, including Fleta (Liscomb); Royal; Verle (Monroe); and Rosella (Pendergast; Mac-Millan).

A small gold mine was developed on the Gardner-Beardslee Ranch in Buckhorn (Buckram) Gulch, and was named after Richmond's daughter Rosella. The Rosella Mining & Milling Company was formed to operate this



**RICHMOND L. GARDNER**  
With his son Royal  
*Mrs. R. L. Beardslee, Jr.*



**ROSE GARDNER**  
*Allin Copp*

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property (prior to 1914). R. L. Gardner was president and R. L. Beardslee, Sr., was secretary. A tiny, miniature bull, symbolic of the "GB" Ranch, was cast from gold produced from the mine, and is said to be still in possession of one of the family.

Rose Gardner married Franklin Pomeroy Copp (see below), and after his death, Daniel McKenzie, son of Francis and Elizabeth Kendall (see Beardslee family). Rose's mother, Hannah, moved to Alameda, and then when Rose remarried, to Stockton with the McKenzies, where she lived to the ripe old age of 94.

## **COPP**

Nathaniel and Fanny Copp came to San Francisco in the 1850's with their five children, the youngest being Franklin Pomeroy, born in Albany, New York, in 1852.

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After growing up, Frank Copp came to Calaveras County where he married Rose Gardner.

The Frank Copps had two boys, Gardner Pomeroy, born in 1873, and Fleet Frank Copp. These boys first worked on the "GB" ranch and also at the Gerlach Ranch in Nevada. After they were married, the Copp brothers bought the Bruske Ranch near Copperopolis, and for many years supplied meat to markets at Copperopolis and Farmington in which they had an interest. At one time they operated two mining claims (Tibo and Barnyard) in Black Creek.

Gardner Copp married Tom McCarty's daughter, Mary Caroline, who was teaching school at Telegraph City. The Copp's children included: Arline (Arthur); Geraldine (Baker); Allin, and Dorothy (Castle).

Fleet Frank Copp married Laura Drew ("Las Calaveras," October, 1978), and they had two sons, Adelbert and Richmond.



**COPP RESIDENCE  
AT ALAMEDA**

**Grandma Hannah Gardner Beardslee on the porch, Rose Gardner Copp standing below in the yard, and her two sons, Frank by the fence and Gardner on horseback.**

*Allin Copp*

**LANE**

Major Thomas W. Lane and his large family were amongst the first settlers at Knights Ferry. The Major was the son of Robert G. Lane and Mary Whitelaw, and was born in 1804. He was married to Janet Tulloch in 1826 and their children were Mary Ann (1827), Andrew Jackson (1830), William Franklin (1833), Sarah Benton (1835), Hardage Crenshaw (1837), Charles David (1840), James McHatton (1844), and Thomas Martin Lane (1848). The Tullochs also moved to Knights Ferry in early days and were a prominent family there.

Major Lane and his Family operated the Mineral Springs Hotel, at one time, in the Southwest Corner in Mineral Springs Gulch just North of the Grant Boundary and a short distance east of the county line. During the copper boom, when the hotel was in operation, this area was known as the Cornwall mining district, and today is called Church's Spring.

Charles D. Lane married Anna Garrard in 1864, and their children were Frank Garrard, Tom Francis, Ila



**MARY CAROLINE McCARTY COPP**

*Allin Copp*



**WILLIAM FRANKLIN LANE**  
*Kathleen Supinger*



**EDNA STANLEY LANE**  
*Kathleen Supinger*



**UNCLE AND NEPHEW**

**Richmond L. Gardner (right) and Gardner P. Copp, about 1927.**

*Allin Copp*

Elano, Paul Garrard, and Louis. Ila and Paul were born when the Lanes were living in Nevada (1870-73). Charley Lane came into prominence when, with Alvinza Hayward and Walter S. Hobart, he took over the Utica property at Angels Camp and developed it into one of the leading and most profitable gold mines along the Mother Lode. He later became involved in mining and shipping in Alaska.

Tommy Lane, the youngest of the family, married Evelyn Gillespie in 1877, and their children were Andrew Bradley, Ina Blanche, and William Franklin Lane. Tommy worked as a druggist in the Stockton area until 1882, when he became involved with mining. He first attempted to develop the Plymouth Rock mine at Brushville, near Jenny Lind, and then with his brother Andrew took over the Madison mine at Angels. In 1902, Tommy bought out Fitch & Britt at the Alta mine, and went into partnership with Captain Wright. He also went to Alaska for a while.

Frank Lane, Tommy's son, learned the gold-milling trade from Jonny Greenhalgh at the Alta mine. Later on he worked at mills at the Royal Consolidated at Hodson, the Penn mine at Camp Seco, the Longfellow at Tuttle-



**GEORGE BLAZER  
FAMILY**

George and Mary Jane "Granny" Blazer were joined in 1931 by their children (l to r) Bertha, Earl, Dolly, Tom, and Bessie, on the occasion of their fiftieth anniversary.

*Yvonne Tiscornia*



**ANNIE POPE BLAZER**  
*Chester R. Murphy*

town, and the Ranch mine at Salt Spring Valley. In 1916, he married Edna M. Stanley, and they spent their first year together at the old Alta mine. They then moved to Copperopolis. Their children are Kathleen (Supinger) and Ina (Steffen).

**BLAZER**

George Wesley Blazer first came to Calaveras County in 1879 from Ohio with a rail carload of sheep for the Tarpey Ranch, just north of the Grant, near Hog Hill. Returning to Ohio in 1881, George married Mary Jane McMullen. The young couple then came back to the Tarpey Ranch where George continued to work. Their three eldest children were born at this ranch. Later they moved down onto the Stanislaus River, near Knights Ferry, and George worked at the Parks Ranch at Telegraph and also at the Quail Hill mine (No. 2). He prospected in his spare time, and was said to have discovered the Alta lode on the Grant in Scorpion Gulch about 1886.

The Blazer children included Thomas M., 1882; Bertha (Olsen), 1887; Dorothy (Nims), Earl, 1893, Bessie (Tinney); and George, Jr. Dorothy was born at the Quail Hill, where the Blazers lived for a short time, and Earl was born "down on the river."

When Fitch & Britt opened up the Alta mine in 1895, George went to work for them, running the mill. The Blazers moved up to Scorpion Gulch and lived right at





Left  
**WALTER AND SOPHIE  
 MURPHY**

They lived at Telegraph City until 1928, when they moved with their children, Roy and Doris, to Milton.

Right  
**CHESTER AND ELLA  
 POPE MURPHY**

The Chester Murphys lived at Telegraph City until the early 1940s. They then moved to Farmington. Their children are Chester R. "Bud" and Lucille (Hatler).

*Murphy Family*



**POPE CHILDREN**

The younger Popes at the Ranch near Telegraph City in 1902. Left to right, Ella, Annie, Margaret Olive, Helen (Birdie), and Walter. The Pope girls raised turkeys to provide funds for normal school expenses.

*Yvonne Tiscornia*



the mine. Young Tom went to work in the mill at sixteen, working for Johnny Greenhalgh. George left the Alta in 1902 to go to work for Jack Kempvancee, running the old Pine Log mill at Hodson. The mill had been enlarged, and ore was trammed from the Royal shaft up on the hill down to the mill with a three-car mule train — down, loaded, on the brakes, and back, empty, by the mules! Later the big mill was built up on the hill and the Pine Log mill was shut down.

George then worked at several gold mills including the Lightner (down on the River near O'Byrnes Ferry), the Shawmut in Tuolumne County, the Utica at Angels, and then back to Hodson at the big Royal mill when it was running, and at the Gold Knoll.

Mary Jane Blazer, affectionately known by all as "Granny", was much admired, and was often called upon to act as midwife in and about Hodson and Salt Spring Valley. Among the babies she delivered were the J. D. McCarty children, the Womble children, and, of course, some of her own grandchildren. In those days, when few doctors practiced in the county, and transportation to the outlying communities was difficult, a midwife like "Granny" was much needed.

Tom Blazer married (first) Bertha, and (second) Annie Pope. Tom and Annie had four children, Elinor (Mabbett), Marjorie (Sola), Eunice (McCarty; Asselin), and Eugene. Tom worked at a number of mines and mills, mostly along the West Belt, including the Alta, Shawmut (Tuolumne County), Napoleon, the Copperopolis mines, Royal Consolidated, and others.

Bertha married Carl Edwin Olson, and their children included Thelma, Myrtle, Mildred, and George. Ed Olson was a miner and worked at the Alta, and later at the Royal, Napoleon, Ranch, and other mines.

Earl married Elsie Womble, daughter of his boss at the Gold Knoll mine. They had one daughter, Valerie (Eggelston; Moore). Earl worked for awhile for Jim Stone at the blacksmith shop at Copperopolis. Then he moved to the Valley where he engaged in grape growing and farming, and also in machine work. He owned the Stockton Spring Works from which he retired some years ago.

George Blazer, Jr., was married to Fred Poole's daughter. George and Fred ran a garage at Valley Springs until George died in the flu epidemic of 1918. They had one daughter.



**TELEGRAPH CITY SCHOOL 1900-01**

**Back row, l to r: Ella Pope; Olive Pope; Ethel Bates; Annie Pope; Lester Tinney. Front Row: Daisy Wear; Roy Tinney; Irene McCarty; Zela**

**Wear; Walter Pope; Roy Parks; Wm. Parks; Birdie Pope; Gertrude Tinney.**

*Chester R. Murphy*



**WALTER & BIRDIE POPE**  
*Chester R. Murphy*



**WILLIAM H. POPE**  
A hard-working rancher, as Bill Pope was,  
spent a lot of time on horseback.  
*Loaned by Chester R. Murphy*

**ROBERT PARKS  
RESIDENCE**

This was the home of Robert and Agnes McCarty Parks at Telegraph City, taken shortly before it burned down about 1912. The Murphys Brothers took over the Parks Ranch in 1910.

*Chester R. Murphy*





**THOMAS McCARTY**

In addition to raising nine children, building up a large ranch, operating a store and travelers' stop at his "Log Cabin Ranch", he is also credited as the co-discoverer of the Union copper lode at Copperopolis, and was involved in the building of Reed's Turnpike. Some of the members of his large family are shown on this and the following page, from the collection of his grand-daughter, Ella McCarty Hiatt.



**AGNES DEAN McCARTY**

Mrs. Thomas McCarty with her daughter-in-law, Emma (Mrs. Will McCarty) and grand-daughter Irene at the Log Cabin Ranch about 1900.



**MARGARET AGNES  
McCARTY**  
(Mrs. Robert B. Parks)



**LEIGH HUNT  
and  
DEBORAH ANN McCARTY  
HUNT**



**EDWARD McCARTY**



**WILLIAM B. McCARTY**



**MRS. JACKSON D. McCARTY**  
(Helen Hunt)



**JACKSON DEAN McCARTY**

## Calaveras County Historical Society

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San Andreas

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### BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

We have just retired from a full-time job, and hope to use some of the free time that retired persons are supposed to have to catch up the publication dates of "Las Calaveras", now some months behind.

Editor.

## POPE

One can look down from the Vista Point on Highway "4" into upper Shirley Gulch and only see a watering trough at the site of the Pope Ranch. William H. Pope, who came west with the Shoemakes and William Oxendine in early days, was ranching here as early as 1856, and it was here that he and his wife Susan raised their five children: Ella (Murphy), Annie (Blazer), Margaret Olive, Walter, and Helen "Birdie".

Walter Pope, who never married, worked with his father on the ranch. He entered the U.S. Army before World War I and served for four years, part of this time in the army of occupation in Vladivostok, Russia. After his retirement from the army as a lieutenant, Walter was hoist engineer at the Keystone shaft at Copperopolis.

## NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the new members listed below:

Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Beghtel, Stockton  
Neil & Linda Cline, Murphys  
Mr. & Mrs. Fredrick A. Dole, Copperopolis  
Mrs. Elaine Pfortner Ferrero, San Francisco  
Mr. & Mrs. John V. Geary, Stockton  
Mae Glasser, San Andreas  
Alice Lee, Altaville  
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Katherine E. Oster, Mountain Ranch  
Presley & Florence Peek, Mokelumne Hill  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Phillips, Fremont  
Erven & Naomi Reher, Murphys  
Kathy Zancanella, Burson

### IN MEMORIAM

Sally Ward  
George Cooper

## THE ALTAVILLE SCHOOLHOUSE

The task of saving, moving, and restoring this priceless building, so symbolic of the one-room schools of the Mother Lode a century and more ago, is proceeding very satisfactorily under the able and determined leadership of Eldred Lane's Historical Society Committee and with the help of the State Forestry and Conservation agencies.

However, funds are urgently needed by the Committee to keep the project going and to bring it to a successful conclusion. The Society is acting as sponsor as well as manager of this very worthwhile effort, and will be pleased to receive donations (a tax deductible expense) for the Altaville School fund.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish especially to thank Ella McCarty Hiatt who compiled much of the information in this issue. Individuals who assisted include Charles Stone, Margaret Beardslee, Eric Gragg and his mother, Mrs. Lloyd Gragg (Gardner descendants), Mrs. Gardner Monroe, Allin Copp, Kathleen Lane Supinger, Yvonne Mabbett Tiscornia (a Blazer descendant), Earl and Elsie Blazer, Marjorie Blazer Sola, Chester R. "Bud" Murphy, Doris Murphy Barger, and the staff of the County Museum and Archives. We thank those persons who supplied the pictures and indicate the source below the caption.