



Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society
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CALAVERAS PROFILES

With this issue, at the suggestion of Mrs. Helen Giorgi, we are including profiles of several prominent Calaveras residents of earlier days, along with their photographs. We are doing this not only to record information that is not readily available, but also some that would otherwise be lost forever. We hope, too, that this will stimulate others interested in Calaveras history to do more research and come up with additional information on these and other noteworthy Calaverans, for inclusion in the pages of further issues of "Las Calaveras".

"ROD" TERWILLIGER

by Helen Giorgi

Calaveritas rancher Lorenzo Parsons ("Rod") Terwilliger came to Calaveras County in his youth, and his mischievous pranks during his early years were undoubtedly a source of annoyance to the residents in the county who were of the sober tongue-clucking variety.

A native of New York state, born in 1832, Terwilliger crossed the plains in 1850, and with his friends commenced mining at San Antone Ridge. The men would work energetically to accumulate a sizable supply of gold dust, then with an easy-come-easy-go attitude would ride into San Andreas for a week of celebrating. Continual gambling, with brief catnaps in chairs, would soon exhaust their supply of gold dust, whereupon they would take off for San Antone Ridge to fill another poke full of gold.

Evidently Terwilliger ventured out of the county occasionally; he was seen in Sierra County in 1851, when a young woman was lynched there. He claimed credit for the renaming of Mosquito Gulch to Glencoe at the time



he was working there during the 'Fifties at the Mokelumne Hill Ditch Company's sawmill.

One of his most notable pranks occurred in 1857 in San Andreas. A dancing teacher, J. F. Cronk, rode into town one day, bent upon getting up a horse race. Unfortunately, he stopped to pass the time of day with Rod Terwilliger and Charles Brown, and the two men decided to play a trick on Cronk. Charles invited him into the saloon, and Terwilliger tied firecrackers to the horse's tail—and lit them. The horse galloped wildly all the way to Kentucky House before running out of popping firecrackers and fear.

Gradually the impetuous young man settled down and began directing his energy into more acceptable channels. With Hosea Allen, Terwilliger joined the Odd Fellows in 1857; and in 1858 he set out for the Fraser River gold rush, but when this was perceived to be a humbug rush, he returned to Calaveritas to establish a home and raise a family.

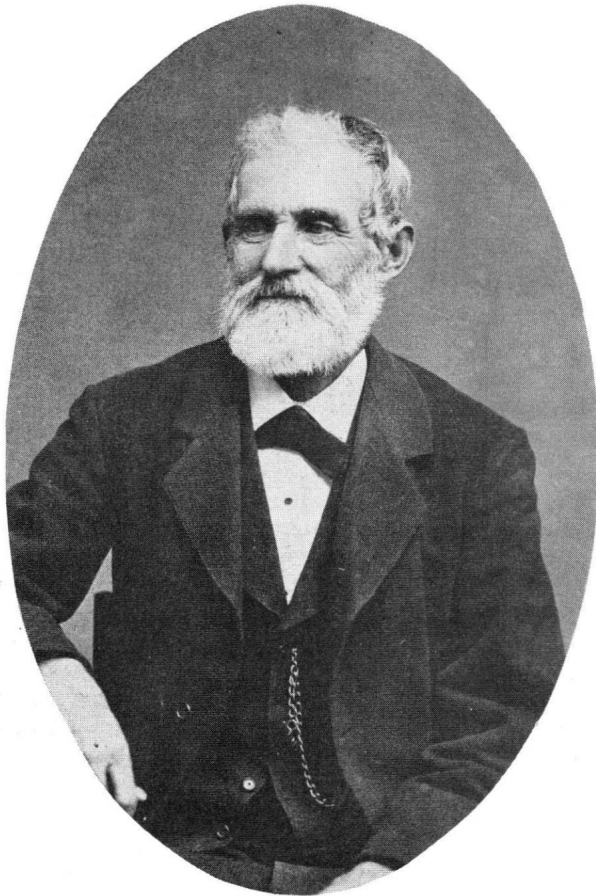
Terwilliger must have possessed considerable business acumen. He and Herbert ("Hub") Ide were the first men to hold water rights to the San Antone Ditch that carried the water from San Antone Creek to Sheep Ranch Mine. They formed a company to raise \$5000 for the purchase of the water rights and later added the ditch to their holdings for \$1400. Sometime in the early 1900s Desire

“Rod” Terwilliger, Con’d.

Fricot bought the ditch from Terwilliger for \$7500.

When Terwilliger died on January 21, 1922 at the age of 90, he had acquired a substantial enough estate to warrant the hiring of attorney Joe Huberty of San Andreas by his administrator and the publishing of a creditor claim notice in the January 6th, 1923, issue of the *Calaveras Weekly Prospect*.

Editor’s Note: For further information on Terwilliger, see “Las Calaveras”, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 3; Vol. 18, pages 6, 9, 20 & 27; Vol. 19, pages 3 & 29, and Vol. 21, page 5.



“CAP” FERGUSON

Captain Amsa Parker Ferguson was a prominent member of the gold rush community in Calaveras County, and is remembered especially for his part in opening up the Sheep Ranch mine in the early 'Seventies.

Cap Ferguson was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1816. He came to California in 1849 from Illinois, and subsequently located in San Andreas. He is mentioned frequently in the “Wade Johnston Talks” (Las Calaveras) and was a mining partner of Johnston’s in the Willow

Creek area. He lived in Johnston’s cabin when the latter joined the copper boom at Telegraph City.

On his return, he and Cap mined together successfully for about a year at Willow Creek until Ferguson went up to Sheep Ranch with Tom and Billie Smith to prospect. There they opened up the vein discovered by Harve Childers and turned it into an operating mine.

In 1872, William Wallace bought out the Smiths, and the following year, John Early, Cap’s nephew, bought in as a partner. The mine became so successful that in 1875 George Hearst and his associates Haggin and Tevis bought the Ferguson-Wallace-Early partnership out and turned the operation into one of the best known California gold mines of that day.

After selling out to Hearst, Ferguson moved back to San Andreas, married “the widow Oliphant”, then moved to Stockton where their two daughters were born. Cap, unfortunately, died at 62 in 1878 of a stomach ailment.

We are indebted to Miss Amy Edwards, Cap’s granddaughter who has supplied us with this portrait and other information about her grandfather. The widow Oliphant, she says, was Mary Adams McNeill, whose brother-in-law, James Caven, ran the Metropolitan Hotel in San Andreas at that time.

“Las Calaveras”, October, 1958, and January, 1959, contains articles on the early days at Sheep Ranch, and the “Wade Johnston Talks” (especially the 7th Installment in the October, 1972, issue) refer to Cap Ferguson and his activities. William M. “Pony” Denig entitled Cap’s obituary “Death of a Worthy Man” in the December 14th, 1878, issue of “The Commercial Record”, at Stockton.

EFFIE ENFIELD JOHNSTON

Effie Johnston would hardly have been described or recognized as a prominent person in her long lifetime; in fact, quite the opposite was the case. Yet, she single-handedly assembled more community history about San Andreas and in particular the Willow Creek area than has any other person, group, or organization in our county done for this or similar areas.

This wealth of material through the kindness of Mrs. Ruth Lemue, came several years ago to the archives of this Society. Portions of this legacy provided the material that became “The Wade Johnston Talks,” published in seven very interesting installments in “Las Calaveras” during the period 1969-72. A large number of Effie’s scrapbooks, diaries, boxes of notes, manuscripts, and other personal items are currently being inventoried and indexed at our Society office at the old Hall of Records, 30 Main Street, San Andreas.

Effie was born at Paradise Gulch, near Yaqui Camp, San Andreas, in 1868, and lived to the ripe old age of 98.



Longevity is a characteristic of her family. Her father, Wade Johnston, lived to be 95, and her sister Martha to 96.

Wade came to Calaveras County in 1855, and between his excellent memory and his daughter's own lifetime experience, Effie acquired an extraordinary knowledge of the history of the San Andreas community. She had a very keen sense of what makes history and became a custodian of all sorts of information which she preserved.

At a relatively early age, Effie left home to make her singular way in the world, serving as a waitress in a number of hotels and resorts. She kept close touch with her father and with San Andreas, returning for stays between her jobs.

Effie came home for good during the last few years of her father's life, and retired at the family home at the Abdullah Mine at Willow Creek. During those years when her father was still living, she repeatedly interviewed him and wrote down his comments about early days in San Andreas. It was her fervent hope that she could someday complete these for publication.

Although excellent at penmanship, Effie had received only a very limited education. This became a serious handicap to her literary aspirations. Further, she had to

live on a very slim budget and often had no funds for adequate writing materials. Yet in spite of these handicaps, she worked and reworked the transcripts of the "Talks", writing them on butcher paper, package wrappers, and anything else suitable that came her way. She picked the title "Wade Johnston Talks to His Daughter" sagaciously, for that was how the history came about.

Unfortunately, Wade Johnston died before she had proceeded more than a dozen years or so though his Calaveras experiences. It was in her own scrapbook and diaries that she accumulated much more for the record in later years.

Effie Johnston deserves to be remembered with much appreciation and gratitude for the rich legacy of local history she left, and for her lifetime devotion to this subject.



ETHEL WILLARD ADAMS

One of the few Calaveras women to be included in the pages of the "Memorial and Biographical History of Central California," Mrs. Ethel Willard Adams operated a ranch near Murphys for forty years. She came from Boston to Carmel, California, with her parents in 1884. Her father, Zabdiel Willard, grandson and son of well-known clockmakers of Boston, had acquired gold-mining

Calaveras County Historical Society

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

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Ethel Adams, Con'd.

interests in Colorado and California.

Once in California, Ethel soon acquired a mining engineer husband. This, however, did not prove to be a permanent liason, so Zabdiel purchased and enlarged the Table Mountain Ranch for her. This also served as a convenient stopping place for him when visiting the Oro y Plata mine at Murphys.

In later years, the Willards spent most of their time back in Boston, while Ethel built up the ranch. For many years this was the source of dairy products for Murphys and the surrounding area, and its owner-manager, Ethel Adams, was one of the well-known women of the county. She was fond of animals, and, in fact, of every phase of ranch work.

For recreation, riding and hiking in the high country was one of her favorite pastimes. Her large ranch home was beautifully and tastefully furnished with family possessions from New England and was set off by Oriental items collected by her brother Jack.

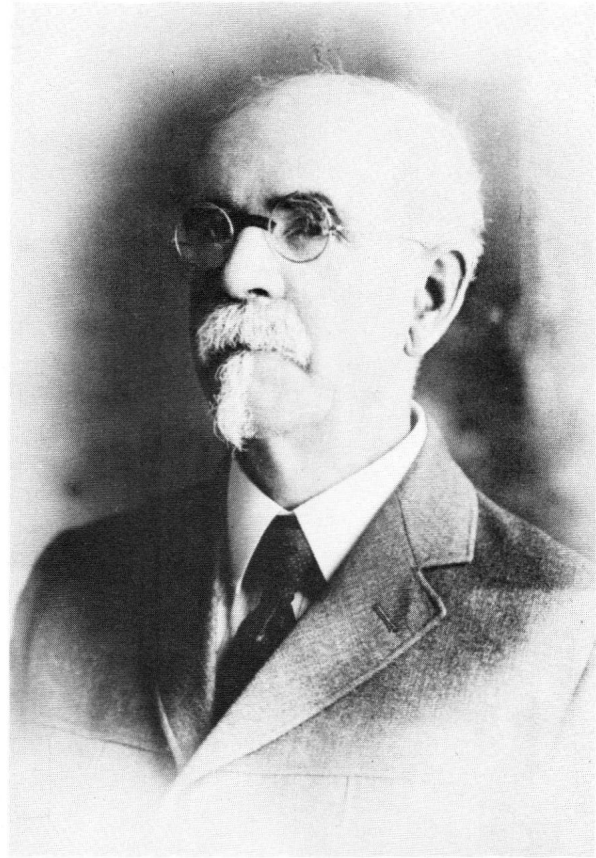
In 1920, Fred Kenney, another New Englander, took over as foreman for Mrs. Adams, and upon her death seven years later, inherited the ranch. He and his sister Bertha continued operating it until the 60's. For more details about Mrs. Adams and the Table Mountain Ranch, we refer you to "Las Calaveras" for January, 1975.

IN MEMORIAM

Virgil M. Airola
Sadie Hunt
John E. Kent

Georgia Zumwalt

Henry Marquering
Charles A. Stone
Irene Van Hemert



BEN JOHNSTON

Here is a formerly well-known Calaveras man of whom we seem to know very little today. We first hear of him in "Las Calaveras", January, 1968, as the bookkeeper at the Gwin Mine during the Thomas-McClure period (1894-1908). The late F. F. Thomas, Jr., whose father was general manager of the Gwin, used to visit the mine on school vacations. He fondly recalled Ben Johnston and referred to him as a fascinating storyteller. Ben was said to be at his best with young audiences.

When the Gwin closed, Ben moved to Copperopolis and went to work at the Calaveras Copper Company's office for Manager John "Mac" Ross. "Mac's" son Jack would visit his parents at "Copper" during his vacations, and when in college, would work there as a "summer boy". That was when he got to know Ben Johnston. Ben made a wooden "BB" gun for Jack which he treasured for many years.

But that is all we know about Ben Johnston. If there are any amongst our readership who knew him, we would like to hear from you. He was not related to Effie Johnston, as far as we know.