

Copper Centennial Edition



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One Hundred Years in Copperopolis

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of San Andreas

Copperopolis dreams of the past—
And ghosts go by on the old stage road!—
Of men and decades that could not last,
Faded, and yet of the frontier code.

—Gordon W. Norris,
Poet Laureate of California

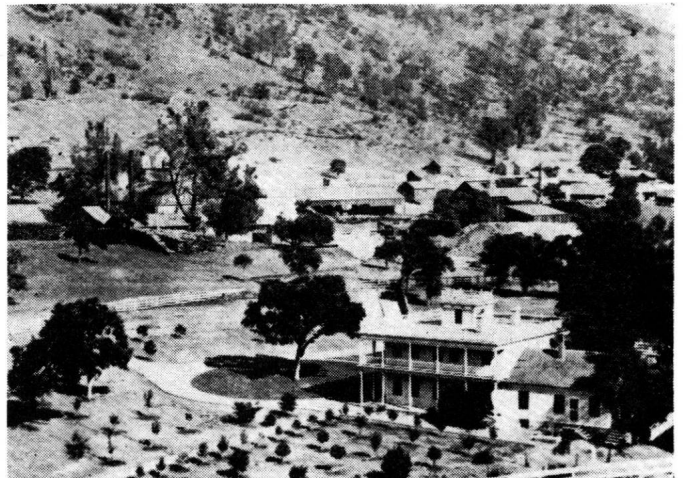
This charming little village of Copperopolis today retains a fragment of its one-time importance in the fast disintegrating smelters, shafts, and chutes of the old mines; in the handful of brick stores standing along the highway; and in the pioneer Congregational Church, now the I. O. O. F. Building, a substantial brick structure with beautiful Gothic windows.

A small triangular valley, hemmed in by steep and rugged mountain slopes covered with chaparral, still enfolds this picturesque little settlement. Situated between the slopes of the Bear Mountain Range on the east and the broken Gopher Hills on the west, it dreams of the days in the past when it was one of the greatest copper mining camps of all time, for, in the sixties, it held the distinction of being the principal copper producing community in the United States and boasted a population of more than ten thousand inhabitants.

The camp, located in the southeastern corner of Calaveras County, is thirty five miles east of Stockton on Highway 4. It is twelve miles west of Angels Camp, home of the Jumping Frog of Calaveras County made famous by Mark Twain, and is seven miles north of the canyon of the Stanislaus where that river cuts through Table Mountain.

The name, "Copperopolis," was derived from the word "copper" plus the Greek word "polis" meaning city. Apparently there was some dissatisfaction with the name which had been selected by the residents of this camp, for we read in one of the early-days newspapers of the state of Califor-

(Continued on Next Page)



This scene, taken from a stereopticon slide dated 1865, shows the Meader Hotel and, in the background, the Union Mine.

Congratulations to Copperopolis

One hundred years ago this year copper was discovered at what is now Copperopolis in the southern part of Calaveras County.

For many years thereafter Copperopolis was the principal copper producing community in the United States. It was fortunate that this copper deposit was discovered at a time when copper was so vital to our country which was embarking on the great Civil War.

The town grew as if by magic. Hundreds of people came in and soon Copperopolis became a very large town with all the business places common to mining communities at that time.

(Continued on Back Page)

nia the following item:

The discovery of copper in a portion of Calaveras County has proved to be of vast importance—far more than was imagined would be the case. A settlement has been formed, which quite likely will soon become a large town. It now bears the absurd name of "Copperopolis" but we are informed that a respectable name will soon be substituted for it. . . .

Although little has been recorded concerning activity in this portion of Calaveras County prior to the discovery of copper there, we do know that a man named Henry Stanzig farmed the lands in and around the area where Copperopolis later was located.

According to the report of the Assessor of the County of Calaveras for the year 1861, published in the "Calaveras Chronicle," Hiram Hughes was the original discoverer of copper in this county. However, an interesting account is told of some Mexican miners who had discovered native copper near Campo Seco many years before. They sold it to a storekeeper near Lancha Plana for gold. Upon discovering that it was not gold, the storekeeper had the Mexicans arrested for swindling him. At the trial the Mexicans testified that they thought the metal was gold, whereupon the judge required them to return the money they had received from the sale and dismissed the charge against them.

Hughes, who had had little luck in finding gold in Calaveras County, was caught up in the rush to the Comstock area near Virginia City, Nevada, where luck continued to elude him. In fact, copper might have long remained undiscovered in Calaveras County if he had not possessed the vital quality of persistence. Being impressed with the marked resemblance between rock formations in the Washoe area of Nevada and those in western Calaveras, he returned to look for silver. In November, 1860, he struck ore at Quail Hill, six miles southeast of the present site of Copperopolis, without being aware that he had found the gossan cap of a rich copper lode.

This lode, which had the appearance of a body of "iron rust" in a frame of quartz, proved to be moderately rich in gold. While on a new search for this "iron rust," Hughes discovered and located the Napoleon Mine. As there was less gold and more of the "iron rust" in this new claim, he decided to send a shipment of ore containing this unknown mineral to San Francisco to be assayed, where its true mineral content was discovered.

For an account of the early operation of this mine we turn to an early Calaveras County newspaper, where we find that Robert Dowling, County Assessor, in submitting a report to Honorable H. A. Higley, Surveyor General, makes the following comments:

I propose to append here an extract of a letter written to me by Hiram Hughes, an intelligent miner and the original discoverer of copper ore in this county.

"Gopher Mines, October 24, 1861.

Our 'Napoleon' lead on Hog Hill is proving No. 1. We are down thirty five feet on a level of copper ore varying from 2 to 3 feet in width. . . . Two men raise two tons per day, besides doing the timbering. . . . The assays from the different qualities of sulphurets up to the best ore, run from 16 to 20 85/100



Main Street—Early day scene in Copperopolis, taken from a stereopticon slide dated 1865.

of metallic copper, five dollars in silver and a trace of gold per ton. . . . We have shipped 66 tons of copper ore from this claim and have forty more ready for sacking. . . ."

News of the discovery of the "iron rust" soon spread throughout the valley and prospectors flocked to the area where they found indications of it at nearly every point in the Gopher Hills. Mrs. Ada B. Campbell, describing the spread of news concerning this copper discovery for the "Calaveras Citizen" at an early date, writes:

And it came to pass in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty that the inhabitants of a certain hamlet, situated in the land of Calaveras, were aroused from the even tenor of everyday life by strange and exciting rumors, being none other than tidings of great joy had befallen the dwellers in a neighboring hamlet called Hog Hill. . . .

In 1860 William K. Reed and Thomas McCarty, some of whose descendants still reside in this community, discovered and located the Union Copper claim, which at first was referred to as Reed's Claim. The ore proved to be very rich and the growth of the town stemmed from discovery of this mine. Because of the demand for copper to be used in the Civil War effort, the mine was rapidly developed by Reed and McCarty and became a large producer. In 1864 the principal vein developed to a width of 40 feet of solid sulphuret ore of 15 to 20 per cent purity at a depth of 250 feet thus giving the mine a world-wide celebrity, so that in 1865 it was valued at \$2,000,000 and shares sold on that basis.

Although the Union, and the Keystone, which had developed quickly thereafter on the north of the Union, were considered the best, there were a number of other mines in operation during the boom years. In fact, by 1864 twenty-two copper mining companies had filed articles of incorporation in the office of the county clerk of Calaveras County most of which were organized to mine in the Copperopolis district.

Apparently the people of the town were anxious that all the copper mines of that region receive proper recognition for we find the local newspaper, which publication by 1865 was being wildly circulated, carrying the following

item: "Some in San Francisco think the only mines in Copperopolis are the Union, Empire and Keystone. There are a score or more in operation and prospects are bright." This newspaper lists the Table Mountain, Mountain Top, Scorpion, Kentucky, Index, Inimitable, and Harlem and goes on to state that many claims are idle because they are in the hands of poor men unable to work them.

Boundaries of the "Copper Canyon District" were established on August 3, 1860, and a set of mining laws adopted for the use of the miners of the area. The district was to be bounded on the north by the Angel's Trail, east by Empire District, south by the O'Byrne Ferry District and west by Black Oak, Four Spring Run and Four Spring District. Each miner was to be entitled to one claim by location on a lead of 150 feet in length and 300 feet in width. However, any miner discovering a new lead or vein, was to be entitled to an extra claim of the same extent. According to Article 7 of the mining laws, one day's work was to be done on each claim, or company's claim, once a month, commencing on the first day of May, and terminating on the last day of December.

A recorder was to be elected whose duty it was to keep a correct copy of all claims in the district, to visit the claims in person, and give an accurate description designating landmarks and also "names of company" occurring therein. His fee was to be paid at the rate of 50 cents per claim. W. K. Reed was elected recorder of this district; Thomas Hardy, President; James McCreight, Secretary; Henry Stanzig, E. W. Campbell, James Lewis, Thomas McCarty, Timothy Lewis, W. K. Reed, Robert Mullen and Josiah Hosmer, trustees.

In an effort to forestall litigation over claims, Article 10 was included which provided that when any dispute arose respecting claims in the district, each party was to select a disinterested miner to act as arbitrator to settle the matter in dispute. If this arbitrator were unable to settle the matter, then another miner or referee was to be selected "whose decision shall be final."

In spite of all the precautions taken to adopt this set of laws for the protection of the miners' interests, the curse of all newly selected mining grounds did not escape them. The "San Francisco Bulletin" reports a pending lawsuit between the Keystone Company and some parties whom they charged with having jumped a portion of their claim. The ground in dispute was 325 feet upon the main lead. The same article also reports that the Consolidated Company, which embraced all the claims of the Hope and Phoenix Companies, had been encroached upon by a company that "had located side claims to the eastward."

Such action called for legal aid and we find a notation in the same publication to the effect that "there is an opening for the lawyers as well as other people at the copper town."

An advertisement by J. J. Stoddard, attorney-at-law, in Volume 1, Number 1, of the "Copperopolis Courier" assures us that lawyers found their way to this thriving community and established practice there.

The "San Francisco Bulletin" of May 22, 1861, furnishes a good account of the early activity at the camp. From it we learn that "a new hotel is in progress of erection by J. W. Bean, which will accomodate visitors to any extent



This lovely old brick church was built by the Congregational Society in 1862. Also used for Presbyterian services, it was later acquired by the Odd Fellows Lodge, and is now used as a community center.—Photo by Chas. Bloch.

in good style." The same article also describes the new-found prosperity in the following manner:

The want of a good hotel has been much felt, very much, at the new town. Pike and Brothers have a good store, and a billiard saloon will soon be completed. There are several other buildings in the town which is now regularly laid out upon a beautiful flat, upon which there is a liberal number of large oak trees. Great activity prevails at the town, and it is quite probable that 1000 tons of copper per month will be shipped from the vicinity to Stockton, during the coming summer 250 men will be constantly engaged.

By the fall of 1861, several stores were doing business there in addition to Pike and Brothers. Honigsberger, and Hiltz and Morrison were other business firms listed. We learn, too, that there was a large assortment of billiard and drinking saloons, barber shops, restaurants, meat markets, apothecaries, stables, in fact everything that goes to make up a thriving town, "not omitting a first-class hotel, kept by Gardner and Stockwell where from one to two hundred take seats at a table groaning with the good cheer of the mountains."

On April 15, 1865, the people of this community could boast of a weekly newspaper, "The Copperopolis Courier." Although the actual printing was done in Mokelumne Hill, it had a wide circulation throughout the county. The editor, in this first issue, inserts the following editorial which gives us his impressions of the new community which he had selected as the site of his future home:

For nearly three years the editor of this paper has been searching diligently for a suitable place in which to settle down and become a "useful citizen" and "A more valuable member of society." He has traveled by railroad, steamer and stage, on horse and mule back, and frequently on foot, like a "strapped" miner returning from a wild goose chase, but has found no place like Copperopolis. There are towns in California quite as beautiful and healthy as Copperopolis, but few so lively and promising—none containing more valuable mines. It is situated in a handsome valley, the timbered mountains surrounding which rise in majestic lov-

liness, and afford retreats for lovers, food for stock, game for sportsmen, and wood for all purposes. . . There is a bright future before Copperopolis. It is steadily advancing in population and wealth, and will soon rank with the largest and most prosperous towns in California.

He had every reason to have faith in the future development of this area for already many business firms and professional people had become well established since the discovery of copper in 1860. Among those advertising in this first issue of the local newspaper were: R. Fowler, Books, Stationery and News Depot, connected with Wells, Fargo and Co.'s Express Office, west side of the Plaza; Variety Store, Union Street, opposite Copperopolis Hotel, J. C. Crawford, Prop.; Raffo Brothers, Union Street, Dry Goods, Clothing; M. Rosenbaum, Ready Made Clothing, Coats, Pants; Kelly and Gilliland, Druggist; four hotels, "The Globe," "Franklin," "Union," and "Keystone"; three saloons, "The Copperopolis," "Jack Faxon's," and "Exchange"; one Bowling Alley and Saloon, Thos. Blesch, proprietor; S. Morris, At Reed's Brick Building, north side of Plaza, Dry Goods, Clothing, Ladies and Children's Shoes, Carpets, Oil Cloths, Blankets, Millinery Goods, Etc., "All of which will be sold at San Francisco Prices to make room for new goods"; E. A. Gates, Union Cigars, Tobacco, Toys; Union Market, south side of the Plaza; Copperopolis Livery Stable; Union Restaurant; S. S. Abbott, H. McDonald, Harness, opposite the Armory Hall; G. W. Rogers, Justice of the Peace; and Dr. McLean, Physician and Surgeon.

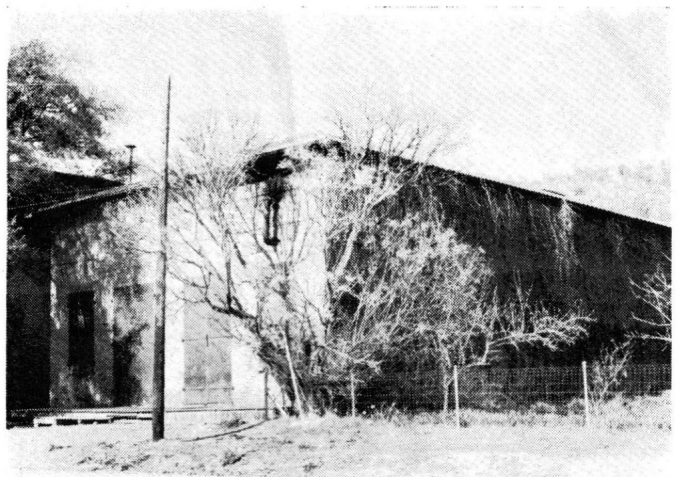
In a very interesting advertisement inserted by George Berke, proprietor of a "Shaving and Hair Dressing Saloon," the following comments are made concerning the excellent service received at this up-to-date establishment:

He is an old "Forty Niner" and has shaved acres of beard since his arrival upon the Pacific Coast without making a scratch upon the face of a single customer. Give him a call, if you wish a shave that will set you to dreaming in the chair, and make you think you are courting angels through the lattice of heaven.

Although we find no mention of the great future in store for Copperopolis as late as 1893, Husted's Directory of this date informs us that the famous "Copper Mine and Smelter Works" were still in operation as well as the "Pine Log Quartz Mine" close by. In addition, we learn that the town was still in possession of a post, express and telegraph office as well as a number of other business establishments.

Listed in the Directory for this period as conducting places of business in Copperopolis were: Copperopolis Trading Co., H. D. Ranlett, prop; W. J. Masterson, mg., gen. mdse; The Pioneer Store, Mrs. A. Fontana, prop., Charles D. Fontana, manager; Union Hotel, George W. Hayes, proprietor and sheep raiser; Moore and Hunt (E. B. Moore, and M. L. Hunt) butchers; Old Corner Saloon, E. B. Moore, proprietor; Mrs. Laura May, dressmaker; Arthur B. Morgan, musician; and Milton L. Gann, stagedriver.

A perusal of the occupations of the various inhabitants of the town at this time discloses the information that most of them were either in the employ of the Union Mine or, in some other capacity, contributed to its operation, although some farmers and stock raisers are listed as being residents there.



Copperopolis Armory—Built in 1861 by public subscription for the Union Guard, local militia group, it was used for training and enlistment purposes during the Civil War, and is still in use for dances and social gatherings.

Late in 1863, Reed and McCarty sold their interests in the Union Copper Mine to Meader, Solon and Company and Thomas Hardy. With the money Reed received from the sale, he developed the so-called "Reed Turnpike," a toll road running southwesterly of Copperopolis and uniting with a road leading into Stockton. Much of the copper ore produced in the mines was now transported over this road by ox and mule teams. This ore had earlier been carried down to Stockton on the backs of humble pack animals and the tinkle of their harness bells made familiar music for the people along the way.

From Stockton the ore was shipped by riverboat to San Francisco where it was reloaded and sent by sailing ship around the Horn to Atlantic ports and to Swansea, Wales, to be smelted and refined where much of it was used in the manufacture of paint.

The Reed Turnpike was considered an important feature in the development of Copperopolis. It was considered one of the best roads in the state with no heavy losses reported and good watering places located along its route. During the rainy season it received practically all of the Stockton travel. It extended to the plains for a distance of twelve miles. Teams from Stockton for Chinese Camp, Sonora, and Columbia, came through Copperopolis by this route, then went on to cross the Stanislaus River on Union Bridge at O'Byrne's Ferry, and, returning by the same route, they loaded with copper for Stockton. Teamsters reported that the trip by this route was a much easier one and that a day's travel time was saved.

At a meeting of the stockholders in this road, held at Stockton on the evening of April 5, 1865, C. T. Meader was elected president; J. Littebrant, secretary; and T. R. Anthony, the treasurer.

Rates of toll established for travel over this road were as follows:

Buggies, 50c
Two-horse wagons, 75c
Four-horse wagons, \$1.00
Each additional span, 25c
Returning unloaded teams, half-price

It was not until March, 1885, when the franchise to collect tolls had expired that the "Turnpike" was declared a free public road by the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

In spite of all the efforts being made to speed the process of keeping the stream of copper ore flowing to Stockton, the rich mines early appeared to demand the aid of the iron road. Thus, E. S. Holden, pioneer businessman and ardent promoter of all that might aid the development of Stockton, proposed to build a rail line between the two cities. The Stockton-Copperopolis Railroad Company was organized in 1862 with a capital stock of \$1,500,000.

The California State Legislature of 1863 authorized the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras and Tuolumne to subscribe funds in aid of this railroad. On completion of a survey conducted by R. P. Hardy, it was estimated that it would cost \$1,181,000 to construct the road and equip it with rolling stock.

In May, 1863, San Joaquin County citizens went to the polls at a special election to vote bonds of \$100,000 for aid in its construction. Although the measure carried in the city of Stockton, it was defeated in the county. Linden, as well as many other farming districts, expressed the conviction that agriculture would be destroyed if rails superseded the freight wagons drawn by horses and mules "with such voracious appetites for the luxurious grains produced in San Joaquin County." Thus, a great hue and cry was raised against ruining well-established business to bring to life a new mechanized industry.

In spite of obstacles, the railway company reorganized in 1865 and a new and less costly line surveyed. Just as plans were under way to put on an intensive promotion campaign, the richest copper deposits became exhausted, the bottom dropped out of the market and the prosperity of the region declined. Although twelve miles had been graded along the right of way by the contracting firm of Ivers and Nagle, all operations ceased.

In March, 1867, however, Congress was induced to grant a subsidy of five sections of land per mile of road to encourage its construction. This grant was conditioned upon a subscription of \$200,000 upon which five per cent was to be paid in and work commenced before March, 1869, ten miles to be completed annually until the road should be extended to Copperopolis. The company failed in its venture, however, and, in order to save the franchise and land grant, was forced to transfer its rights to the Central Pacific Railroad Company which company constructed the road as far as Milton, a distance of thirty miles, completing construction on December 14, 1870.

The "Pacific Coast Business Directory" for 1876-78 makes mention of the fact that mining, agricultural and horticultural interests in Calaveras County would have been greatly advanced by the completion of this railroad to Copperopolis.

By 1888 the mines of this region had been idle for nearly twenty years. But an advance in the value of copper at this time again directed attention to their rich deposits. The water was pumped out of the Union Mine and it was placed in working order. It gave employment to about thirty men and the shipments of ore averaged a carload a day. It was freighted by teams to Milton from where it was then shipped to Stockton by rail. Again there was agitation for extension of the railroad to Copperopolis and



Vital Statistics of Copperopolis today.—Photo by Chas. Bloch.

indications pointed to the possibility of its completion but work on the project was never realized.

Copperopolis exhibited great prosperity at the time this railroad was proposed and for a few years the mines poured forth wealth in great profusion. By 1864 the price of town lots had risen from ten dollars to as high as three hundred dollars for choice locations. The town extended for a mile and a half along its great thoroughfare and construction of new homes was commenced every day. A thousand people called this their home and three livery stables, two places for teams and twenty other establishments graced the streets of this fast-growing metropolis.

As early as the summer of 1861, Mrs. S. Friedman writes to the "Alta California" from Copperopolis that the town is growing rapidly. Four stages were already running to the place, two daily from Stockton and one every other day from Sonora and Mokelumne Hill.

By 1865 the mines had turned out a million and a half dollars worth of copper. William H. Clary and John H. Steinberger had sold their mine on Quartz Hill for \$80,000. The Napoleon was fabulously rich and during the years 1861-65, from its shafts many thousands of tons of rich ore were prepared for shipment to European markets.

The Union Mine, typically a miner's dream, declared its first dividend in December, 1862, in the amount of \$11,000 per share. The following year these same shares were selling at the staggering sum of \$20,000. By 1863 it had three shafts working with 125 men on the payroll. Ore was so rich that stockholders were selling shares by the foot. William Dana, William Jones, Thomas Hardy, Pedar Sather and William Ralston were among the original stockholders. During the month of June alone, in 1865, this company paid teamsters \$29,000 for hauling its ore to Stockton. Since the temperature for June 19th of that year registered a sizzling 112 degrees, we have no doubt but that the watering places along "Reed's Turnpike" were a welcome sight to these perspiring travelers and their animals.

Shipments of ore from this mine for a six-day period from June 9 to 15, 1865, amounted to more than a million and a half pounds or in excess of 826 tons, with enough copper in sight to keep their force of 500 employes engaged

for a period of ten years. Originally the mine had consisted of only thirteen shares of 150 feet each or a total length along the lode of 1950 feet.

During the first three months of 1861, 400 tons of ore containing 33 per cent of metal were taken from the mines. Under date of April 15, 1865, the "Sacramento Union" comments: "We judge they have no equal elsewhere in the known world." On the U. S. Grant Claim, copper was found three feet below the surface with every prospect of a well-paying mine on the horizon.

Due to a lack of financing, not all companies prospered, however, as did the Union, Keystone and others. The "Sacramento Union," in reporting a message from a mining correspondent who had written from Copperopolis in 1864, had this to say:

There are several companies who have been compelled to stop work through want of means. The fact is, poor men cannot do well by copper claims unless they sell. There is the Inimitable, within a hundred feet of the Union, and lying abreast: they too, have been compelled to stop, because there are too many men connected with it that have no money.

It was during the Civil War that the town assumed its greatest importance for it was during this period that the mines, running full tilt, furnished most of the copper used in the struggle. There were many indications, too, that Union influence was very strong. Thirteen Calaveras County volunteers from Copperopolis joined the Union Army.

On Saturday, October 22, 1864, there was a great meeting of Unconditional Surrender held in the town by the Union men. Large delegations came from Murphys, Angels, Altaville, Campo Seco, San Andreas, Jenny Lind and Mokelumne Hill. Each delegation carried its appropriate banners, transparencies, mottos and design. They marched into town in one solid column, "presenting as fine an array of patriotic men as was ever before seen in one body in the county."

The firing of a brass six-pounder was the signal for the various delegations to fall into line under the supervision of Thomas Hardy who had been selected to serve as grand marshal. As each company took its position, its torches were lighted and, keeping step to the music of the Campo Seco Band, it marched up the principal street. Never before was there displayed as magnificent a sight in Copperopolis as the eight hundred men, marching to music, carrying banners, mottos and burning torches.

There were many other occasions when the Union Guard, the local militia, took an active part in providing entertainment for the people of the community. The "Copperopolis Courier" of April 15, 1865, contains the following notation:

A grand military civic ball will be given in this place on Wednesday evening April 19, by the Union Guard. The ball will be held in the new Armory Hall. A beautiful American flag is to be presented to the company on the occasion by the ladies of Copperopolis.

The ball given on that Wednesday evening must have been a great success for we find the following account of the evening's entertainment in a later issue of the local newspaper:

The ball given by the Union Guard on Wednesday evening in the Armory Hall was a brilliant affair. There was dancing from 9:30 to 5 a. m. . . . Copperopolis can boast many, many beautiful ladies. Of the hundred and ten who went to supper, a majority were good looking and a majority of the majority "sweet enough to eat."

The ladies of Copperopolis presented the flag to Captain Oliphant of the Union Guard. The presentation was made by Mrs. G. W. Rogers, an address was given by Reverend Mr. Starr, and a reply by Captain Oliphant.

On the following July 4, another grand military ball was given by the Union Guard at which the "music was superb, ladies sweet and numerous, and gentlemen agreeable and happy."

A relic cannon, cast in 1837, was used by the Union Guard at Copperopolis in Civil War Days. Twice in later years the cannon was stolen. The last time it was found in a gondola car loaded with junk about to be moved out of Milton when it was recovered by one of the patriotic citizens of Copperopolis. It is now set in concrete in the school yard.

The Civil War Armory Hall was built in Copperopolis in 1861 by public subscription for the Union Guard. During the Civil War the Armory was used extensively for enlisting and training troops. Of brick construction, it still stands today in good condition boasting huge iron doors and barred windows. Due to the failure to pay taxes, it was lost to the Guard and the Copperopolis townsites. A deed to the building, patented by the Calaveras County Judge on February 26, 1875, conveyed the property to Mineral Lodge, International Order of Odd Fellows. The building again changed hands in 1939 when it was transferred to the Campo Seco Lodge of Odd Fellows in Jenny Lind. The Copperopolis Community Center which was organized in 1940 regained possession of this historic building for the people of this community and once again they could point to it with just pride.

There are other interesting old buildings in Copperopolis which are worthy of note. The Congregational Society of Copperopolis had commenced erection of a church upon a lot opposite the Union Mining Claim when C. T. Meader decided that a better location should be obtained. So he purchased a lot for \$1200 fronting on Union Street, adjoining the residence of J. M. Pike, and presented it to the members of the Society who built a beautiful structure upon it, sixty by thirty feet in size. During the time the building was under construction, services and Sunday School classes were held in the Armory Hall with Reverend Mr. M. B. Starr serving as pastor.

We note in an earlier issue of the "Courier" that M. B. Starr was holding divine service at Cardinell's Hall "every Sabbath a. m. and eve., except the morning of every 4th Sun. from April 16 on which morning Reverend Mr. Curry, Methodist, will preach."

During the summer months Reverend Mr. Starr must have preached elsewhere or have invited visiting ministers to occupy the pulpit, for we find a notation in the June 29, 1867, issue of the "Courier" to the effect that J. T. Nulls would conduct church service at 3 o'clock and 7 o'clock p. m. and that Sunday School classes would meet at 3 p. m. These services were conducted in a building, not named, opposite the residence of J. N. Pike. Episcopal-Methodist

services were conducted in the town by Reverend Mr. Hanby each Sunday.

In 1861 the first Catholic Church was constructed, but it burned not long thereafter, and in 1863 Father Ignacio Yzquierdo, a refugee priest from Mexico, established a second one. Although this church survived the great fire which destroyed most of the town in 1867, it, too, was burned sometime later. With the revival of the copper mining industry during World War I, Copperopolis experienced another surge of activity at which time the need for a new church became apparent. In 1916, Father James Vaughn, who was then pastor of the Angels Camp Church, with the help of people of the community, constructed the white, wood-frame church of St. Ignatius which is still standing.

The fire of 1867 which spared the little Catholic Church was the most disastrous conflagration ever suffered by the people of Copperopolis. The "San Andreas Register" for Saturday, August 28, of that year reports that on the preceding Wednesday practically all the principal portion of the town was laid in ashes. At about 10:30 p. m. the fire broke out in the Copperopolis Hotel owned by Luke Kelly and reputed to be one of the most sumptuous of the Southern Mines area. It spread with amazing rapidity to adjoining property although a dead calm prevailed at the time. It crossed the street from the hotel, burning all establishments on that side of the street, including a tin shop, Cutler and Emery's Store, the telegraph and express office, the Wedge Saloon, and Person's Stables. It then crossed Union Street where it burned all on that side from Hornesburger's store to Cardinell's Hall. From the hotel it swept on to engulf the "Courier" newspaper office and Braid's dwelling and to singe the blacksmith shop.

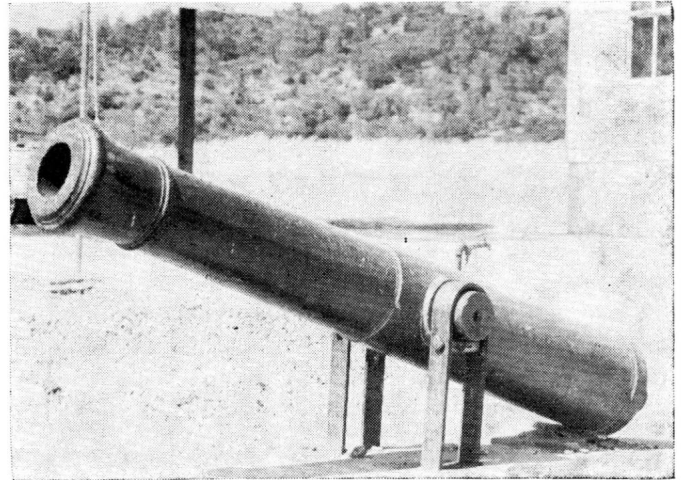
In commenting on the seriousness of the disaster the newspaper apologizes, also, for the inaccuracy of its account as follows:

This account of the fire is naturally inaccurate from the fact that we are compelled to pick up from third parties the best we can. The most lamentable part of the calamity is yet to be told. A stranger arrived the evening of the fire to enter the employ of the Union Company and was burned to death while sleeping.

From this blow the community never fully recovered, although copper mining has given it a stimulus during all of this country's wars and at other times when there was a demand for copper. As far as we can learn, however, there has always been an elementary school there with children in attendance.

The Copperopolis School District was established on September 27, 1862. No records seem to be available as to where the children were housed prior to 1865. An election was held in April of that year to determine whether a tax of \$1000 should or should not be levied upon the taxable property of the school district "For the purpose of furnishing school facilities for said district, by removing the debt and furnishing the new house, furnishing pump, etc." This election resulted in favor of levying the tax for the purpose described. The contract for construction of the new school building was awarded to Messrs. Angel and Challoner.

The children of the community, as well as the grown-ups, were happy, of course, when work was suspended and



Relic Cannon—This old cannon, cast in 1837, was used by the Union Guard for training purposes during the Civil War at Copperopolis. Twice stolen for junk, it was recovered by George Thompson, Copperopolis native, and now rests in the school yard.—Photo by Chas. Bloch.

gatherings of various types were the order of the day. Horse racing became an early pastime for these people. A three day race meeting over the Copperopolis Race Course was held starting on June 8, 1865, with purses ranging up to \$150.00.

The first Calaveras County Fair was held on the old Flower Ranch in Copperopolis where there was a quarter mile track. McCarty and Davis had race horses entered at this event.

On June 17, 1865, plans were instituted for a Fourth of July Celebration at which time there would be a salute of one hundred guns. Men serving in various capacities during the holiday were as follows: Thomas Hardy, president of the day; Honorable William H. Badgley, Orator; Reverend M. B. Starr, Chaplain; J. Hatch, Reader of the Declaration; and J. M. Pike, Grand Marshal. The Union, Keystone, Empire and Table Mountain Companies were particularly invited to "turn out" for this celebration as well as the Salt Spring Valley Quartz Mining Company and the Napoleon Company.

By 1867 mining activities had begun to decline in Copperopolis. During this year the Union Mine had been but partially worked. Its owners found it more profitable to place it in a condition for future operations, than to extract ore at prices prevailing at the time. Consequently, little ore was being removed, only such as it was necessary to move in making explorations. The number of men employed had been reduced to 150 where as late as 1866 nearly 400 were on the payroll. The chief work being carried on was keeping it free from water and making necessary repairs to the equipment above and below ground.

Explorations in the main shaft at this time showed that great quantities of ore were still available. These explorations extended to 500 feet perpendicular depth, where the lode on the north, near the line of the Keystone ground, was fifteen feet in width. In the same shaft at the 400-foot level, a hundred feet above, the lode had decreased to six feet in width. This increase in the pro-

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Editor of Las Calaveras Coke Wood, Murphys

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The Calaveras County Historical Society meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Courthouse in San Andreas. Dinner meetings are held each quarter at different places in the county.

portions at lower levels was a favorable indication of permanence.

Like the Union, a decline in price, rather than the exhaustion of the mines, also caused suspension of mining activities in the other mines of the region. Since that time the mines have had periods of activity and inactivity, depending upon the demand for copper. During World War I and World War II there was considerable activity due to the great demand for copper for use in the war effort. A large smelter was built at the Union Mine in 1882 but was later burned as were many of the other buildings of the town.

Today there is no mining activity at this once thriving community, but do not write it off as dead for there is a new mineral on today's horizon. Geologists have located great deposits of asbestos in the area and already the Jefferson Lake Sulphur Company is mapping plans for a huge multi-million dollar plant for the extraction of this mineral to be located on a 480-acre site adjacent to Copperopolis.

A lavish celebration is scheduled for the week-end of October 22nd of this year, when attire of the copper-boom days will be featured, not only to mark the centennial anniversary of the discovery of copper there but to highlight the rebirth of the area through location of this new mining industry. Best wishes for good luck and great prosperity are extended to the fine people of this community.

Editor's Note: This history of Copperopolis was written by Mrs. Lewis for a seminar in California History at the College of the Pacific in June, 1960. The instructor of the course, Professor Glen Price, was impressed and submitted the paper in the annual Kirkbride Original History Essay Contest and Mrs. Lewis won the first prize of \$25.00. The Calaveras County Historical Society is pleased to present most of the essay as this Centennial Edition of "Las Calaveras."—Coke Wood, Editor.

Congratulations to Copperopolis

(Continued From First Page)

The mines were worked on a large scale and great amounts of copper were produced. Much of the ore was shipped to Wales for reduction.

Like other mining communities, the buildings were of flimsy construction and the town suffered from disastrous fires. However, more permanent buildings were erected that still stand.

Over the years, Copperopolis has held a unique and interesting place in the romantic history of California.

Its older citizens recount the exciting days of the past, ever remaining firm in the conviction that the mines contain as much wealth as has ever been taken out.

To-day, Copperopolis has only a small part of the population it had in its hey-day, but these men and women, descendants of pioneers, have an appreciation of the history of the community and of the wealth produced by its mines. Therefore, they have set aside October 22-23 for a celebration to observe the centennial of the discovery of the copper lodes. Those leaders planning the events are determined to make the observance one of the outstanding centennial celebrations in the history of Calaveras County.

Therefore, we salute you, people of Copperopolis, and extend to you our best wishes for a successful celebration. May your community soon return to its former important place as a leading mining community in the State.

JUDGE J. A. SMITH, President,
Calaveras County Historical Society

Postmasters at Copperopolis

Jacob Pike, December 19, 1861; Richard Fowler, April 18, 1864; Matthew Armstrong; October 12, 1865; Aaron Barker, November 21, 1867; William H. Case, October 12, 1870; Calvin Honey, February 17, 1874; Milton Honey, January 5, 1887; Charles D. Fontana, March 27, 1890; William M. Vickery, July 24, 1893; Miss Etta Lieginger, January 19, 1895; Miss Maggie Egan, April 3, 1896; Milton Honey, March 5, 1898; Susie Callahan, January 17, 1913; Fenton E. Moore, November 30, 1921; Edna M. Lane, November 1, 1933; Ines L. Doe, October 27, 1943; Lillian C. Lemmon, November 23, 1944; Edna M. Lane, May 7, 1950.

This information was obtained from Paul E. Lewis and Edna M. Lane. Lewis used photostatic copies of original entries by clerk of the P. O. Dept., National Archives, Washington, D. C., and Mrs. Lane used local records.

Society Officers Re-elected

At the annual election which was held at the July meeting, the Society unanimously re-elected all the incumbent officers for another year.

EXPERT SAFE-CRACKERS ARE AT WORK IN CALAVERAS COUNTY

Stockton Mail, May 23, 1892

Last Monday they robbed the Post Office at San Andreas, but did not get much coin. Thursday night they visited Murphys and went through the safe in the Post Office, securing about \$400. They also opened a till in the hotel and obtained a small sum of money.