



VALLEY SPRINGS

By EDNA BRYAN BUCKBEE

(Stockton Record, April 22, 1935)

The townsite was laid out in 1884 of 18 blocks. George Late, who came around Cape Horn on the "Kirkland" reached San Francisco August 22, 1849. There is no doubt that he was Valley Springs first permanent settler. Miss Rebecca C. Shafer was his girl friend in the East, and in 1853 he went back and married her on February 24, 1854. The youthful couple embarked for California on June 22, coming out via Panama and arrived in Valley Springs the following August.

The house of limestone quarried from a hill near the town, which served the Lates for so many years, is still in an excellent state of preservation.

John Doak, a pioneer of 1847, located on Lunch Hill near Valley Springs. Lumber not being available, he erected a canvas hotel large enough to accommodate 100 persons.

The two Lillie brothers reached this place in the spring of 1850 and opened a blacksmith shop. It was said that the elder brother, an expert horseshoer, nailed shoes on the hoofs of Joaquin Murietta's buckskin stallion and received not only gold but the Mexican's praise for his skillful and rapid work.

Bernardo Reyna, a native of Mexico, reached Stockton September 30, 1849, and a few days later left for Valley Springs. Ramona, his daughter, married Guadalupe Celaya and became a neighbor of her parents. Her son, Nativo Celaya, was born and reared in Valley Springs.

Marcelino Granados, born on the Calaveras River near the historic adobe of the Rancheria del Rio Estanislao, now under water, was Valley Springs' oldest citizen. His brother, Lincoln, the butcher of the town was his neighbor and they both remembered many of the old guard of Calaveras County.

Miss Maggie McAllen of San Andreas taught the village school.

Valley Springs had saloons aplenty. Thomas J. French and F. L. Johnson were the first merchants in town when it

boasted a Protestant Church, a school house, a town hall, a hotel and several dwellings.

Frank Pattee, while still a boy, peddled meat in the town and its immediate vicinity. Within a short time, as an accommodation to his customers, he was carrying more groceries from Tom French's store than he was meat from Pattee's ranch.

John Pattee, his oldest brother, noting this, concluded that the business of general merchandising might prove a more profitable business than stock-raising. A short time later, under the banner of Pattee Brothers, John, Joseph and Frank Pattee, opened a store in Valley Springs, where for many years, they conducted one of the most profitable businesses in the southern mines.

In the early days this place received water from the Mokelumne Hill Canal Company, and when water no longer flowed from this concern's ditch, John Pattee supplied the town with water for all purposes from his reservoir which was west of Wheat's ranch at Double Springs.

Hiram Ashley Messenger, discoverer of copper in Calaveras County, was one of those pioneers who believed in the iron horse. He was one of the original promoters of the San Joaquin and Sierra Nevada Railroad, the terminus of which was Valley Springs. As contractor for the roadbed construction in 1883, he did an admirable piece of road-building.

No sketch of the history of Valley Springs would be complete without some mention being made of "Pop" McClellan of Woodbridge, who, for long years, acted as conductor on the narrow gauge train running between Lodi and Valley Springs. Small, slim, wiry, with gray pointed beard, "Pop" McClellan was ever popular in Calaveras County.

In the eighties, Valley Springs was proud of "Casa Blanca" the palatial home of Hiram Messenger. This house, fashioned after a famous Mexican resort below old Fort Buchanan in Arizona, stood at the head of a beautiful valley, two miles from Valley Springs. Surrounded by 600 acres of land, it was one of the show places of the county.

Editor's Note — Articles in this issue of "Las Calaveras" are largely taken from photostat copies of early issues of the "Calaveras Chronicle," first newspaper published in Calaveras County, now on file in the collection of Judge J. A. Smith at San Andreas.

From the Calaveras Chronicle of February 14, 1852, the following news items are taken:

DIED: February 8, at the house of Don S. Simons, on the Middle Fork of the Calaveras, James Price, aged about 22 years. He said he was the son of Simon Price of Newton County, Missouri, and had a brother in this country. California and Missouri papers please copy.

On the Calaveras Rich Gulch, of apoplexy, E. C. Reynolds from Texas, aged 60 years.

MINER'S MEETING - ADVERTISEMENT

At a meeting of miners held at Carson Hill, Friday, December 12, 1851, it was Resolved: That the rules and regulations passed in August last governing the quartz mines in Carson Hill be the only laws which the meeting do recognize. That forasmuch as the lives of the miners now working claims on Carson's Hill have been threatened by Alfred Morgan and others, we consider him and them as disturbers of the public peace and acting in violation of the laws of the said Hill; and are thereby a nuisance and pest in the said community. That the sense of this meeting being that we insure peace and quietness to this community, while the said Morgan and company reside in this Camp, and that the said Morgan and company, his aiders and abettors be requested to leave this camp within one hour after being notified of this resolution. That if the said Morgan and company refuse to leave within the time specified that a Committee of the Whole shall peaceably as may be eject them from this camp. That all the property belonging to the said Morgan and company, in their cabin on Carson Hill, be held sacred.

WILLIAM LOING, Chairman

ROBERT PACKARD, Secretary

The following letter was adopted to be addressed to Capt. Morgan of the Consolidated Mining Company:

Carson Creek, December 10, 1851

Sir:

In consequence of the threats you have expressed toward us and our partners now holding quartz claims on Carson's Mountain, and finding that you will carry those threats into execution, we have organized ourselves into a Committee of the Whole and have resolved to reciprocate those threats of violence; and believing our lives are in jeopardy, we hereby notify you that we shall shoot down the first man who attempts to drive us off the Hill.

We are Sir, yours, etc.

J. BONNEY, President

J. H. MOSS, Secretary

To Captain Morgan, Carson Hill.

CALAVERAS CHRONICLE—December 20, 1851

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1851

Christmas Day, 1851, at Mokelumne Hill was described as follows in the Calaveras Chronicle of December 20, 1851:

"Next Thursday will be a grand holiday among all our friends at home. We, in the mines, however, must content ourselves with but a few of those pleasures which make this day so anxiously looked for in the Atlantic States. A diversity of amusements, however, are in the topics for the holidays, among which we will mention a Grand Fancy Dress Ball will be given on Christmas Eve at the saloon of our friend, M. Theale, which will be under the management of J. R. Lynch. Another Fancy Dress Ball, on the same evening will be given by R. Meyers at Shear's Mokelumne Exchange. Messrs. Cuttrell and Mitchell will exhibit their large grizzly bear, General Scott, which will fight a wild bull on Christmas Day, in the spacious arena they have erected at the base of Negro Hill. We think that upon the whole, we will not lack amusement on this time honored holiday."

To build the arena 160,000 feet of lumber was ordered.

FOR SALE

The subscriber offers for sale the well known Cherokee House situated on the Stockton Road about one and a half miles west of Angels Camp. A small stock of liquors, provisions and clothing will also be disposed of at very favorable terms.

The house has a first rate run of customers at present, and teams going to Murphy's Diggings make this house their stopping place.

WILLIAM BEAN

CALAVERAS CHRONICLE — December 20, 1851

NEW ROAD

At a meeting held at Durkey's Ranch relative to the construction of a new road from Mokelumne Hill to Double Springs by way of Chilean Gulch, C. Davis was appointed Chairman, and J. B. Moore, Secretary.

The Chairman stated that a road can be constructed from the Hill, by the route which will shorten the distance two miles and will give nearly a perfect level on the whole road. It was therefore Resolved: That a committee of four, consisting of Mr. Hadlock, F. D. Goll, L. P. Hanson, and Mr. Davis be appointed, and that immediate action be taken to open the said road.

That said road being nearer and more easily traveled than the one now in use and being through a fertile valley that affords an abundance of water and grazing the whole season round, and nine ranches being now upon it, therefore, each individual owning a ranch thereon be required to give one week's labor toward the construction of the said road. That said road be opened by the way of German Ranch and Hadlock's Ranch.

We are pleased to see that, at least, a step has been taken towards making the egress from this place less difficult. No doubt exists in our mind that a level and good road can be constructed from this place to the Double Springs, avoiding the steep, uneven and fatiguing road that is now traveled.

This enterprise will certainly prove of great benefit to those who have hauling to do to and from this place, and from our personal knowledge of the several gentlemen owning ranches near the projected road, we are sure that if it proves a failure, the cause will not be want of perseverance.

CALAVERAS CHRONICLE — December 20, 1851

ANOTHER VEIN

Considerable excitement prevails at present on the Stanislaus, relative to the recent discovery of an extraordinary rich quartz vein at mouth of Squinrel Gulch on the river above named. Specimens obtained from the vein are said to be of unexampled richness. The ground is staked off in the supposed direction of the lead for several miles.

CALAVERAS CHRONICLE — December 20, 1851

WATER PROJECT

The people of Mokelumne Hill held a public meeting in that town, November 29, 1851, for the purpose of discussing the practicability of introducing a stream of water into this place for mining and other purposes. A committee was appointed to make a preparatory survey of the country intervening between Mokelumne Hill and the most suitable point on one of the forks of the Mokelumne River.

Unable to secure suitable instruments to make the survey, the matter was delayed. Mr. Marlette, a surveyor, sent to San Francisco for instruments and promised that upon receipt of the instruments a survey would be made immediately. This was a forerunner of the old Mokelumne Hill and Campo Seco Canal, which was completed in the early fifties, and is now the source of water for Mokelumne Hill, San Andreas, and the Calaveras Cement Plant.

MURDER AT SAN ANDREAS

From Calaveras Chronicle, December 20, 1851:

"A disgraceful affair came off at San Andreas a few days ago, which resulted in the death of a man named Woodruff. The circumstances as we heard them grew out of a gambling operation in which Brown, the murderer, and Woodruff were mutually interested; the former having taken some money from the bank to play against another party, as he said, to win enough to buy a horse. Not winning enough money, Brown borrowed what he lacked from a person standing nearby, and purchased an animal; which he subsequently sent to a ranch from which place Woodruff had him brought, without Brown's consent, and refused to give any account of the horse. Upon this, Brown sued Woodruff; the suit being set for the 8th, at six o'clock P. M. About four o'clock, however, of that day, Brown was standing in Epley's Hotel conversing with Mr. Epley and several other individuals when Woodruff was seen coming out of the dining room with a pistol by his side. He went directly up to Brown presenting the pistol within one foot of his breast and fired, the ball, striking a button of Brown's coat on the left breast and glancing, passed out of the door. Woodruff immediately retreated into the dining room, cut through the canvas at the back of the house and ran for the gulch, but was stopped by some Frenchmen and brought back to the crowd who were in pursuit of him. Brown met him and they exchanged some angry words. They again retreated; Brown returning to the Bella Union and Woodruff, accompanied by a friend, going to the Miner's Home. When Brown saw that Woodruff was not arrested, he followed after him and on entering the hotel said if Woodruff had not been arrested, he would do it himself. Brown, then inquired if Woodruff was in the house and was answered in the negative, upon which he asked the proprietor the liberty of going upstairs, which was granted.

When halfway up the stairs, he was seen to draw a pistol and then advancing into the chamber was heard to say, "Charley, (meaning Woodruff), come out of there!" Brown states that Woodruff was lying on the bed, but immediately got up, and appeared to be in the act of drawing a pistol, when Brown shot him twice; one ball taking effect in the breast and the other in the shoulder, causing almost instant death.

Brown was immediately taken into custody by the people who seemed determined to take the matter into their own hands. The next morning a Chairman and jury of twelve were chosen and the prisoner arraigned. The evidence for the people was heard, together with that for the defense and the jury returned a verdict that the prisoner was not guilty of murder, but should be delivered up to the civil authorities.

Brown was accordingly given into the custody of the Constable and an examination took place before Justice Porter, who committed him to the County Jail, on the charge of murder to await the action of the next Grand Jury."

MINING LAWS

At a meeting of the miners of Middle Bar and vicinity held on the 2nd day of December, 1851, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1. That each tunneling company shall be allowed forty feet front on a hill and running into the hill as far as they choose and that within fifteen days after commencing work (on said tunnel) the company shall have the right to mark out thirty feet on either side of said tunnel for each member of the company.
2. That each company of quartz miners shall be allowed one hundred and twenty running feet to each member thereof running with the ledge and as far on each side thereof as may be necessary to control and work the same and one hundred and twenty feet be allowed the company as a discovery claim.
3. That each miner be allowed twenty feet square on bar and flat diggings.
4. That each miner is allowed thirty feet square in gold diggings.
5. That persons having earth thrown up on the banks of gulches cannot hold the bank on which the earth is thrown, if it extends beyond the limits of the foregoing resolution.
6. That any person who discovers new diggings shall be allowed two claims.

GEO. BELL, Chairman

CHAS. S. ROUSE, Secty.

Calaveras Chronicle, December 20, 1851

MEETING OF MINERS

Miners of San Andreas and vicinity called a meeting of the miners for December 28, 1851. A few of the original settlers of the placers have established regulations granting to each miner one hundred feet square of diggings which just about made an equal division of the richest portion among the first discoverers and their assigns. The object of the meeting is to reduce claims to a reasonable area of territory, say thirty feet square.—Calaveras Chronicle, December 20, 1851.

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San Andreas, California

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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.

EDITORIAL

Mrs. Alice Eldridge and her committee deserve a big hand of applause for the lovely Christmas party held in December at Blewett's Cafe in San Andreas. The decorations were beautiful, the music of Ralph Treat was thrilling, and the fun and fellowship was very satisfying. This was our third Christmas party, and I think all who attended will agree that this meeting is one of our most enjoyable of the year.

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Congratulations to our talented member, Miss Lirrel Starling, "Poet of the Mother Lode," on the publication of her book of poetry entitled, "The Little Foxes and Others." This is a collection of the delightful poems we all enjoyed so much in the original printings of newspapers and magazines. There is an interesting jacket commentary by Gordon W. Norris, Poet Laureate of California. The publishers are Royal Publishing Company of Dallas, Texas. The price, \$2.50.

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The annual proceedings of the Conference of California Historical Societies is now available for \$3.00. It includes the papers read at the annual meeting in San Diego last June. These papers when considered as a whole make a satisfactory handbook on how a historical society should function. Send orders to R. Coke Wood, College of the Pacific.

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Apparently the efforts of over energetic and loyal member, Archie Stevenot, "Mr. Mother Lode," and Mrs. Corneau and the Copperopolis Community Club, have been successful in saving the O'Byrne's Ferry Bridge. Pictures taken of the framework, half submerged in the water of the reservoir, makes one wonder if the bridge can be reassembled across a

canyon on the side of Tulloch Reservoir. However, these are the plans for the old bridge which was built in 1863 as a toll bridge. In 1902 it was purchased by Tuolumne and Calaveras counties and opened for public use. The bridge was recently sold at auction for \$250.

* * * *

Don't forget the California History Foundation Institute on March 7-8 at the College of the Pacific. Mr. R. R. Stuart, director, has announced a very interesting program and all members of the Calaveras Society are invited. Reservations should be made for the Friday evening dinner and the Saturday luncheon.

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The new inter-county high level bridge, costing \$400,000 and located up stream one-half mile, was opened for traffic in November.

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Congratulations to Archie Stevenot on receiving the well-deserved award from the Golden Chain Council for his work on behalf of the counties of the Mother Lode and the Golden Chain Highway.

FIRE AT MINES

Stockton Mail — March 30, 1892

The Keystone works at the Union Mine, Copperopolis, were burned yesterday morning. The loss will amount to many thousands. It is feared that the Union Mine will now fill with water, as, since the fire at the mine a few months ago, the Keystone pumps have been used to keep the water out.

Saturday, March 26, 1892

SAN ANDREAS, March 25 — Fire last night near midnight destroyed the entire plant of the Union Shaft Placer Mining Company, including the mill, hoisting works and buildings. The loss is about \$8,000.

The fire is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary, but there is no clue to work on. The matter is in the hands of the Sheriff.

The mine is situated about three miles from here near North Branch. Up to about four months ago the property was worked, paying large dividends. Lately no work has been done in the mine, and there is a dissension among the stockholders.

C. D. Demarest states that Thomas Hardy, discoverer of copper at Copperopolis, sold the Union Mine for over a million dollars and became the first millionaire in Calaveras County. How many millionaires has Calaveras County produced?

VOLCANO

A team left Volcano for Sacramento on Sunday last containing gold dust to the amount of \$150,000. A guard of mine men, owners of the greater portion of the precious freight, accompanied it. — Calaveras Chronicle, December 20, 1851.

A piece of pure gold weighing 13 ounces, was taken out of the Rich Gulch on Wednesday last. It was a remarkably beautiful specimen for which the owner refused \$300.—Calaveras Chronicle, December 20, 1851.