



Las Calaveras

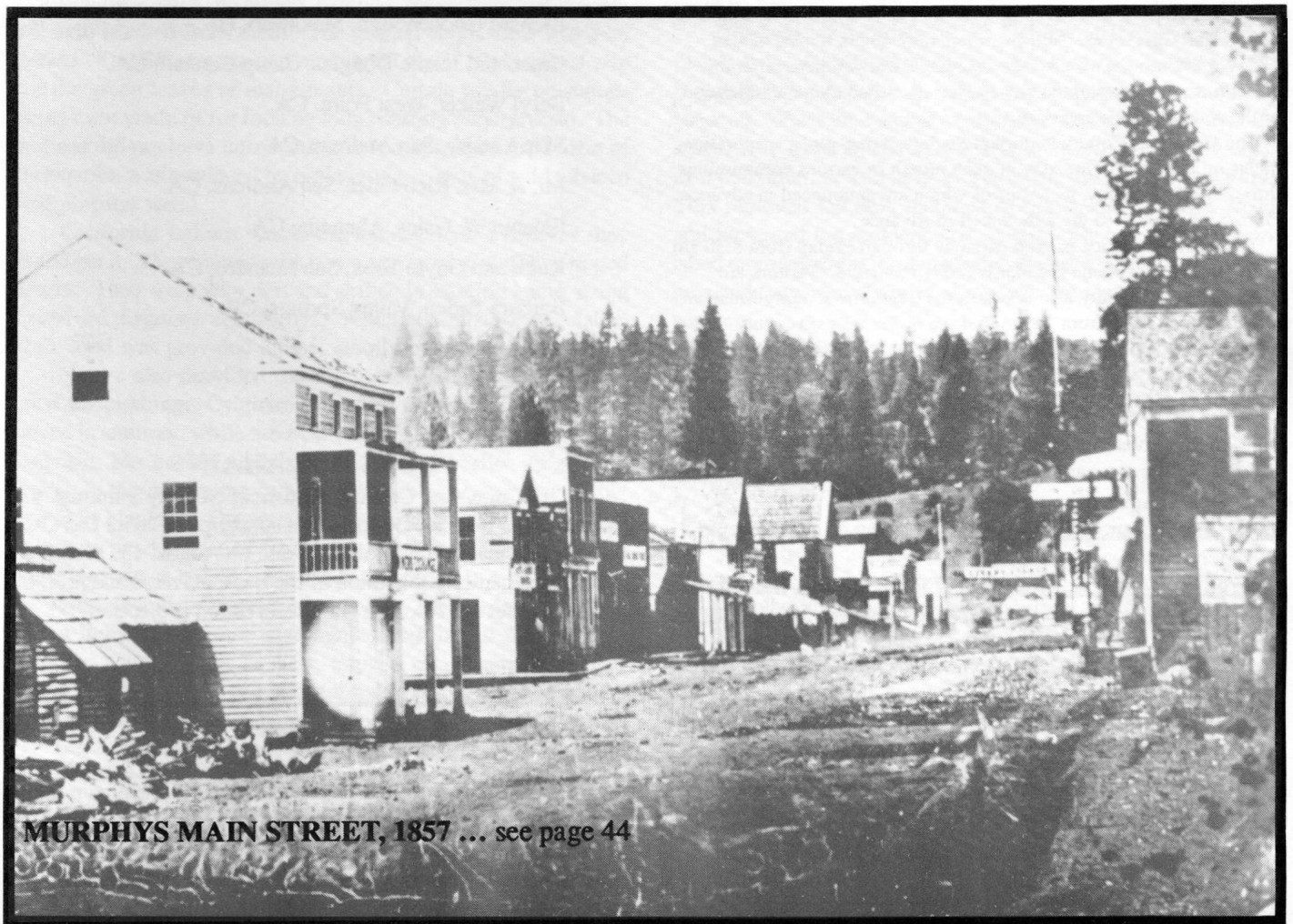
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Volume XLV

Quarterly Bulletin of the Calaveras County Historical Society  
July, 1997

Number 4

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## Calaveras County Historical Society

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

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**Las Calaveras** is published quarterly by the Calaveras County Historical Society. Membership (\$10.00 per year), includes subscription to **Las Calaveras**. Non-members may obtain copies of **Las Calaveras** from the office. The original historical material in this bulletin is not copy-righted and anyone is invited to use it. Mention of the source will be appreciated.

The Calaveras County historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in various communities throughout the county, locations of which are announced in advance. Dinner meetings also are announced in advance.

The Society's office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4 pm. The telephone number is (209) 754-1058. Visitors are welcome. The Society also operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10 am to 4 pm in the historic county courthouse at 30 Main St., San Andreas.

## MUSEUM DONATIONS

The Calaveras County Historical Society wishes to thank the following persons who recently made donations to the Calaveras County Museum.

**Betty Ascheman, Mountain Ranch, CA:** Eight photographs of Emery Reservoir taken, circa 1917.

**Darrell H. Brandon, Mountain Ranch, CA:** A framed color drawing by Brandon, which provides an over-all view of the historic Rico City complex on San Antone Ridge.

**Richard Casey, Lockeford, CA:** Certificate election of Richard J. Casey to post of Constable, in 1934. A bullet bould and a cash donation.

**Patricia F. Kissel, Pilot Hill, CA:** A 1904 letter to the Melone Mining Company, in Calaveras County from the Stillwell-Bierce & Smith Vaile Company

### IN MEMORIAM

Kathleen R. McCartney, Mokelumne Hill, May 22, 1997

## MEETING SCHEDULE

This month's meeting of the Calaveras County Historical Society will feature a barbecued dinner in Black Bart Park, in San Andreas on July 24, followed by installation of officers for the coming year. The 7 p.m. dinner will be preceded by a social hour.

The society holds no meeting in the month of August and details concerning its September meeting will be announced at a later date.

## NEW MEMBERS

The Calaveras County Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Kristin Anne Hilde, San Andreas, CA.  
Frank and Judy Brockman, Stockton, CA.  
Richard Goodenough, Makawao, HI.  
Bruce and Jeanie Douglas, Camp Connell, CA.  
Beryl Walker, West Point, CA.  
Skip Landry, San Andreas, CA.  
Mr. & Mrs. Rico Oller, San Andreas, CA.  
Eleanor W. Gales, Alameda, CA.  
Keith and Gayle Toon, San Leandro, CA.  
Barbara Paden, Valley Springs, CA.

## DUES DUE AGAIN

The Calaveras County Historical Society's annual \$10 membership dues which include a subscription to its **Las Calaveras** historical bulletin, become due on August 15. Members' dues help finance publication of the **Las Calaveras** and promote various historical research and preservation projects.

## COVER PHOTO

By 1857, Murphys by Mother Lode mining camp standards, had become a metropolis. Stages reached it daily from both East and West, mining operations continued to prosper and the town was growing rapidly. By 1857 a system of ditches and flumes had been completed that assured the area of an adequate water supply.

## THE MURPHY BROTHERS' NAME LIVES ON IN LODE

By  
The Editor

Visitors to the Mother Lode today find the Calaveras County town of Murphys among the most picturesque and better preserved of all gold rush communities. However, few tourists and too few local county residents are aware of the role played in the growth and development of early California by the family for which this old mining camp is named.

The Murphys who made their way to the United States via Canada, arrived in California in 1844 not as gold seekers but as farmers in search of a better life. They were busily engaged in agriculture when James Marshall discovered the first flakes of yellow metal at Coloma in 1848. Martin Murphys Sr., 35, and his wife, Mary, weary of religious oppression and harsh economic conditions, in 1820 left their Wexford County farm in southern Ireland with their four youngest children and emigrated to Quebec, Canada. Their eldest son, Martin Jr., and oldest daughter, Margaret, remained in Ireland until young Martin, at age 21, could sell the farm in 1828, just before onset of the potato famine.

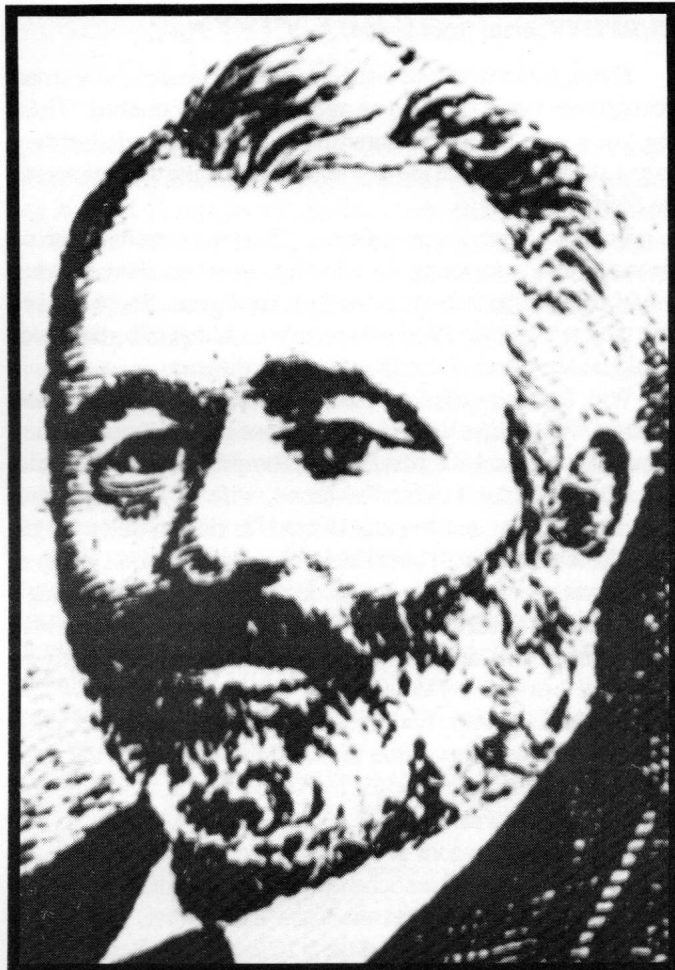
In Quebec, Martin Jr. married Mary Bolger, also a native of Ireland. He took up farming and by 1836 had fathered four sons. The elder Martin Murphy had also added to his family. John Murphy was born in 1825, Daniel in 1826, and Ellen Murphy, a year or two later.

But life in Quebec was not easy. Poor climate, crop failure in 1836 followed by a depression in 1837, prompted the Murphy clan to look southward. In 1840 they migrated to Holt County in western Missouri, north of present day Kansas City. Although the Missouri soil was productive, malaria was endemic. In 1843 Martin Senior's wife, Mary, and Martin Junior's six-month old daughter died of it.

Grief stricken and fearing that more family members would succumb to the disease, the Murphys again began considering a move.

As they sought a new area in which to settle they became increasingly aware of glowing accounts of opportunities in Oregon and Mexican held California, that were drifting back to Missouri. Particularly they were attracted to California where it was said the climate allowed two crops a year and the soil was so rich that wheat never produced less than 70 bushels to the acre and oats grew head-high. Furthermore, the Murphys being Catholic, felt that in California under Mexican rule, Catholicism would be the dominant religion.

On May 18, 1844, as part of a California-Oregon bound wagon train, a group of 51 men, women and children in 11 wagons which history identifies as the Stevens-Murphys-Townsend



Daniel Murphy with brother, John, gave town its name.

Party, left Council bluffs for the West.

Of the 51 people, 26 were members of the Murphy family, but the group's Captain was single minded, taciturn Elisha Stevens, blacksmith and former frontier trapper. The third man who lent his name to the party was Doctor John Townsend, a physician and farmer. Their pilot was lean, ageless mountain man Caleb Greenwood, who had prowled the Rockies and the West for more than 30 years.

The Murphys included the elder Martin Murphy, 59, his younger children Daniel, Bernard, Ellen and John; Martin Jr., 37, his wife and sons James, Martin, Patrick and Bernard; James Martin's family and several in-laws and children.

The California bound wagons left the Oregon train at Fort Hall where old Greenwood led them into uncharted country. For a time they followed the 1841 tracks of the Bartelson-Bidwell Party, but then branched off to follow Mary's (the Humboldt River) across Nevada to the eastern wall of the Sierra.

Please see MURPHYS, pg. 45

MURPHYS, cont. from pg. 44

There, with the mountains before them, Greenwood learned through sign language from an aged Indian they dubbed "Truckee," of a pass across the summit. With that knowledge they forged ahead to become the first emigrants to take wagons across the Sierra.

But the crossing was not easy. They were running late as they made their way along the winding, torturous shore of what would come to be known as the Truckee River. Snow fell before they reached the lake on November 14, that two years later would be the scene of the Donner Party disaster.

With the rock walled pass towering above them they paused to find a way to take their wagons across it. As insurance they dispatched a horseback party of six, comprised of John, Daniel and Ellen Murphy, Louise Townsend, wife of Dr. Townsend, Ollivier Magnent and Francis Deland, to ride to Sutter's Fort for help, if necessary. These riders became the second group of Americans ever to view Lake Tahoe. (Fremont reported seeing it from a distance earlier that year.) They crossed the mountains via what is now Barker Pass and followed the Rubicon and American Rivers, arriving at Sutter's Fort December 10.

Meanwhile, after finding a route through the sheer cliffs that guarded the eastern side of the summit, Stevens, the Murphys and Townsend succeeded by November 25, in getting five wagons to the top of the pass. But, with further storm threatening, they left the remaining wagons at the foot of the pass with Townsend's brother-in-law, young Moses Schallenberger, to guard them. With their five wagons they followed the Yuba River West, but on November 28, deep snow forced them to halt at Big Bend. Leaving the women and children and the older Martin Murphy in this temporary camp, Martin Murphy Jr., and 17 men started for Sutter's Fort, which they reached on December 13. Their intentions were to return immediately for their families, but John Sutter had other plans.

Sutter was forming a military force to help Mexican Governor Manuel Micheltórena put down a revolt led by former Governor Alvarado. He impressed the new arrivals into his ranks. Not until well into March, after the comic opera war ended with Captain Sutter's humiliating capture and release, were the Murphys and other members of the emigrant party able to return to their families in the mountains. It had not been a pleasant interlude for those in the camp at Big Bend. Although there was no starvation such as was to haunt the Donner Party two years later, it was a trying and lonely ordeal. When the men arrived they found the camp's population had increased by one. Martin Jr.'s wife had given birth to Elizabeth Yuba Murphy, the first non-Hispanic child born to emigrant parents in California. Another child, Martin D. Murphy, was born to James and Mary Martin Murphy shortly after they arrived at Sutter's Fort.

While not wealthy, the Murphy clan was far from poor.



**Martin Murphy Jr. became one of West's wealthiest men.**

Martin Murphy Sr. apparently was well funded when he left Ireland in 1820, and he had prospered in Quebec. The sale of his land in Ireland had added to his finances and apparently, his other family members had done well in Canada. Nor does it appear they lost money in the sale of their Missouri holdings.

Martin Sr. with his son, Bernard, purchased land in the Santa Clara Valley and operated ranches around the present day towns of Gilroy and San Martin. Bernard assisted in development of the Santa Clara properties, married Catherine O'Roole, but was killed in 1863 in the explosion of the San Francisco Bay steamer Jenny Lind.

James Murphy and his family settled in Marin and from Corte Madera provided lumber for buildings and docks in fast growing Yerba Buena (San Francisco). Later, he took up ranching in Santa Clara, where his Ringwood Ranch became one of the show places of the valley. Ellen Murphy married Capt. Charles Weber, founder of the City of Stockton.

Martin Murphy Jr. purchased two square leagues on the Cosumnes River southwest of Elk Grove, where he raised cattle and wheat. It was on the Murphy Ranch on June 10, 1846, the first overt act of California's Bear Flag Rebellion occurred. There a band of firebrand Americans, quite possibly abetted by Capt. John Charles Fremont and led by Ezekial Merrit and William B. Ide, captured 150 head of horses from Mexican Army Lt. Francisco Arse, who was taking them to Santa Clara to serve General Jose Castro's cavalry. The revolutionaries then rode on to

Sonoma where they captured General Mariano Vallejo on June 14 and raised the Bear Flag.

Martin Murphy took no part in seizure of the horses nor did he try to defend the Mexican flag. His was a passive role in the Bear Flag Revolution. Lt. Arse simply had stopped at the Murphy ranch to rest his men and horses when they were overtaken by the party of Americans. Four years later Martin Jr. sold half of his Cosumnes River holdings and 3,000 cattle for a reported \$50,000, then moved to Santa Clara. During the gold rush he took no part in the mad scramble for gold, finding it far more profitable to supply emigrants and miners.

John Murphy, 23, and his brother, Daniel, 22, were engaged in their family's cattle and wheat trade and with merchandise imported by their brother-in-law, Charles Weber, when James Marshall discovered gold at Coloma in January, 1848. Quick to take advantage of the discovery, Weber with John Murphy in charge, opened a trading post on what became Weber Creek, southwest of Hangtown. He also formed the Stockton Mining Company, of which John and Daniel were members.

However, by mid-summer Weber Creek was crowded and the rich placer mining there was playing out. Members of the Stockton Mining Company which included the Murphy brothers, former Sgt. James Carson, of the Stevenson's Regiment; Dr. I.C. Isbel, and man named Douglas, for whom Douglas Flat was named; Henry Angel and others, started from Knight's Ferry area up the Stanislaus River where Weber had learned rich gold deposits had been discovered.

At what is now Melones they found Mexican miners had made a rich strike. James Carson and several companions began taking up to 80 ounces of gold per day from the creek that still bears his name. Henry Angel after a time, gave up mining. On a meandering creek he established a canvas topped trading post that was destined to grow into the City of Angels Camp.

Leaving the main party, John and Daniel Murphy moved a few miles east to discover rich diggings on Coyote Creek, near the present community of Vallecito. They mined successfully there for a time at what was to become known as Murphy's Old Diggings, then moved again to a small valley near the head of Angels Creek. There, where a man named Staudenberg had been mining, the brothers found rich placer gravels. Then, as word of their strike attracted increasing numbers of miners, the Murphys set up their own trade center. Living in the valley when the Murphys arrived was a sizable encampment of Miwok Indians.



By start of the Civil War in 1861 the Perry & Sperry Hotel (Mitchler Hotel) had become an institution in the town of Murphys.

However, unlike the majority of gold seekers in other areas who through force if necessary, ousted the Native Americans, John and Daniel Murphy befriended them and induced them to mine gold. In exchange for their gold the Murphys gave them clothing, blankets, tools, provisions and trinkets. To gain the Indians confidence and cooperation John Murphy brought in cattle and killed two animals each day for them. And, to further solidify the alliance, John Murphy reportedly married the local tribal chief's daughter.

Please see MURPHYS, pg. 47

MURPHYS, cont. from pg. 46

Flour, sugar and other staples sold at premium prices in the gold camps in 1848-49. A ten-cent clay pipe sold for two dollars. A shirt cost \$40 and a good blanket, twice that much. But, according to various observers and a report some years later in the San Andreas Independent, the Murphys charged the Indians double the amount paid by emigrant miners.

The mining camp's population was increasing rapidly, but during the first months at least, John Murphy protected his interests by strictly maintaining order in the camp. The Rev. Walter Colton reported that in October, 1848, when an entrepreneur brought in a barrel of whiskey, Murphy gave him exactly five minutes to decide whether to leave or have the head of the barrel knocked in.

Murphys' New Diggings, as it was known at that time, continued to yield vast amounts of gold to an ever increasing horde of miners. However, the Murphy brothers' stay in the camp named for them was relatively short-lived. With a fortune in yellow metal, Daniel Murphy departed the diggings in late 1848 or early 1849. He had spent little more than six months in the gold fields. John Murphy left in December of 1849. According to California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft and to C.B. Glasscock, who reportedly was there at the time, John took with him 17 hides (rawhide pouches) of gold valued at about \$1,500,000--all that six mules could carry. Another observer, Henry Walsh, set the value at \$2,000,000. One of his acquisitions that John Murphy did not take with him was his Indian wife.

By the time Murphy had left the diggings it had grown into a sprawling tent city of 1,200 or more inhabitants. The early orderliness Murphy had encouraged had broken down. The rich placers, in addition to miners, had attracted gamblers, opportunists of every sort, along with female camp followers and outlaws. The somewhat mythical outlaw Joaquin Murietta is said to have gotten his start there, first as a miner, then as a gambler who turned to robbery and murder.

From the gold country Daniel Murphy at end of 1848 returned to Santa Clara Valley where he began buying land. He assisted his father with his ranch holdings, and upon Martin Sr.'s death in 1865, assumed ownership of the older Martin's Rancho Las Llagas. Daniel married Mary Fisher who bore him five children, Julia, Mary, Diana, Dianne and Daniel Jr. He acquired cattle and vast tracts of land in California, Nevada, Arizona and in Mexico, where one ranch encompassed 1,500,000 acres. When he died in Halleck, Nevada, in 1882, he was considered one of the largest livestock owners in the world.

John Murphy settled in San Jose and in 1850, married Virginia Reed, daughter of James Frazier Reed, of Donner Party fame. John and Virginia raised eight children. He served at various times as Sheriff, Recorder and Treasurer of Santa Clara County and served on the San Jose City Council. He died in 1892.

## SHERIFF LED CALAVERAS LAW INTO A NEW ERA

By  
George Hoeper

No local lawman ever experienced greater change during his administration than did Sheriff Russell Leach during the nearly 30 years he carried a Calaveras County badge. "Russ" joined Calaveras County's tiny contingent of law enforcement officers as constable during the post-war years of World War II, served as a deputy sheriff and finally for 20 years, as Sheriff. At war's end the Mother Lode counties, including Calaveras suddenly found themselves emerging from half-a-century of quiet pastoral life--pushed into a new and turbulent era of population growth and burgeoning industrial demands.

Russell Leach, 26, recently discharged from the Army after serving in the Aleutians and South Pacific, was employed as a diver at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in 1946 when he decided to visit friends in the Calaveras County town of West Point. The nation's building boom already was underway. The demand for lumber was increasing and in West Point the mills were working round-the-clock.

"I guess it was the smell of sawdust that got me," said Russ recently. "As a kid I had worked in a mill at Loyalton. Suddenly, I wanted to get back into it. John Parmeter was the boss man for the company in those days. We looked him up and he put me to work as a faller in the woods."

West point was a busy, brawling, roisterous town when Russ arrived. Not only was it crowded with mill workers and lumberjacks, PG&E had a major tunnel project going in nearby Amador County. The town was full of miners who proudly called themselves tunnel stiffs. Those miners and lumberjacks didn't get along. "All you had to do to see a fight on Main Street on Saturday night was step outside and look to the left or right."

Russell Leach's first association with law enforcement came in 1950. He had moved from his job as a faller in the woods to the mill, where after graduating from planer's school he was operating a planer on the night shift for the Associated Lum-

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Martin Murphy Jr., eldest son of the Murphy clan, also accumulated large ranch holding that extended as far south as San Luis Obispo. He was one of the principle financial benefactors of Santa Clara College and is considered the founder of the City of Sunnyvale. At the time of his death in 1884, his wealth was set a \$5,000,000--one of the wealthiest men in the west. His wife, Mary Bolger Murphy, remained in San Jose until her death in 1892. Their son Patrick W. Murphy, was California's first adjutant general and later served as a state senator.

Descendants of the family were prominent for many years in California.

ber Company at what is now Wilseyville. That was when West Point Constable Clarence Kenyon suddenly resigned. Upon the recommendation of County Supervisor Stephen Teale, Russ was appointed by the county board of supervisors to replace Kenyon.

At the time Russ was appointed Constable, Calaveras County's entire force of lawmen consisted of ten men and a woman clerk-dispatcher-Jill-of-all-trades. The sheriff had three deputies and the female clerk-dispatcher. There were five constables, one in each justice court district, and the Angels Camp Police Chief.

Technically, a constable is an officer of the court whose duties are to serve summons and other court papers, and when court is in session, to keep order in the courtroom. However, a constable also is sworn to keep the peace and in the absence of sheriff's personnel--particularly in places such as remote, fast growing West Point--the new constable was often called upon to uphold the law. Mostly, the trouble involved drunkenness and/or fighting or disturbing the peace.

West Point had a long unused jail, a tiny-two-celled concrete structure with iron doors, built in 1921. "It stood in a low spot beside Spink Road," said Russ. "When I inspected it there was about two inches of water on its floor with frogs sitting in it. Well, I poured concrete, raised the floor four inches and put the jail back into use. After that, many a drunk ended the night in there. Depending upon how much trouble they had caused, some went before the judge and others simply went home."

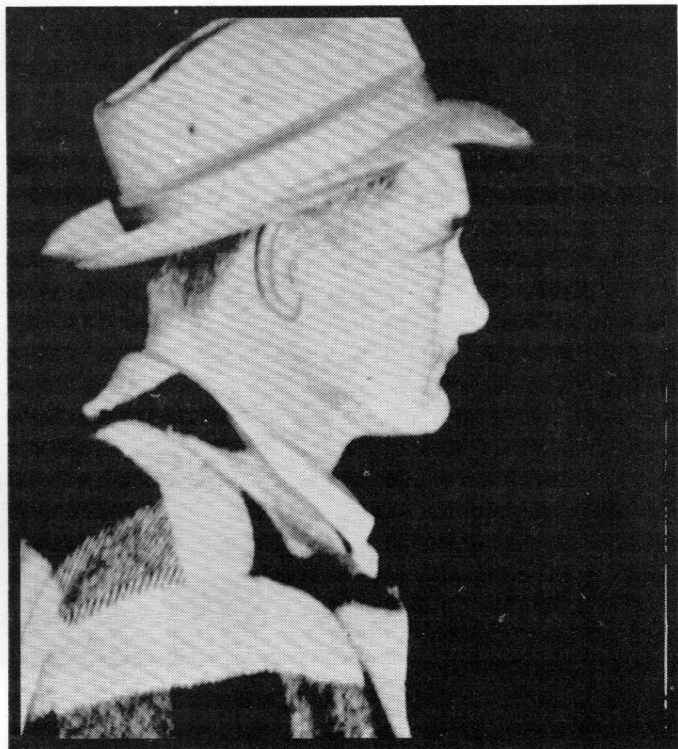
Russ continued to serve as constable until 1955 when he resigned to take the full-time job of deputy sheriff at the request of newly elected Sheriff Lester McFall. At that time the Calaveras Sheriff's Department personnel consisted of just four officers--Sheriff McFall, and deputies Greg Sanchez, Stanley Lombardi and Russell Leach. Because he did not want women in the sheriff's office, McFall eliminated the clerk's position held by Jane Finch. The department still was using its century-old jail, had no radios, deputies used their own automobiles and for communications, depended upon the area's scattered telephones.

Crime in Calaveras County in those days was confined largely to misdemeanors--Saturday night fights and disturbances, minor burglaries and petty thefts. Major crimes included cattle rustling, but armed robbery was virtually unheard of. Homicides were rarities and Calaveras never had a bank robbery.

But, there were exceptions--and one of those--that for a time held the attention of Central California, will live forever in Russell Leach's memory. On the quiet fall evening of November 27, 1955. Russ was off-duty, at home when the phone rang. The caller was Sheriff Les McFall.

There's three suspicious kids hanging around Mokelumne Hill," said the Sheriff. "Banged up their car--ran it into a ditch--asked a mechanic if he could fix it right away and when he couldn't, offered him \$50 to rent a car from him. Pick me up at the sheriff's office. Let's go talk to them."

The three young men were standing in front of The Well, a



**Russell Leach was a young deputy sheriff in 1956.**

Mokelumne Hill drinking place on Highway 26, when Leach stopped the patrol car beside them. They identified themselves as James Woosley, 20, Ronald Garrett, 18, and Louis Cervantes, 22, all of Sacramento. They told McFall they were on their way to jobs in the mountains, cutting Christmas trees.

"Come on, you better get in the car and take a ride with me," said McFall. What he had not told Russ Leach or the three young men was that he had received a phone call from Amador County informing him the trio were suspects in a burglary there.

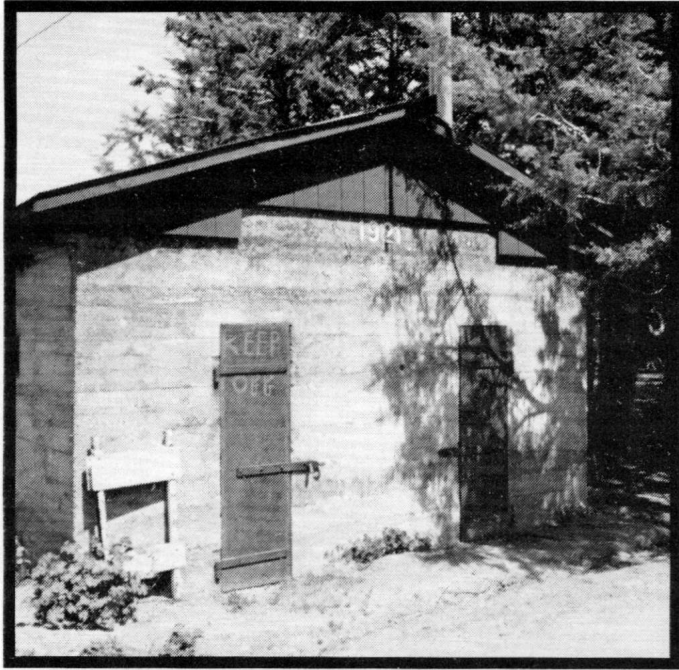
McFall got out of the car, searched two of the men and found no weapons. Leach searched the third man and took an ice pick from him. All three men got into the patrol car without protest. McFall told Russ to drive to the Sheriff's office in Jackson. Not until they entered the Amador Sheriff's Office and were met by Deputy Sheriff James Fregulia and Constable Gildo Dondero did James Woosley, who appeared to be the leader of the youths, ask why they were being detained.

Burglary--you're burglary suspects," replied McFall. "But you'll have to wait until Undersheriff Babe Martin gets here. He's the one who's handling the case," said McFall.

How you gonna' hang a burglary rap on us?," sneered Woosley.

Fingerprints," replied the Sheriff. "If your fingerprints match those at the crime scene, you take the fall."

Please see **SHERIFF**, pg. 49



**Constable Leach lodged prisoners in West Point Jail**

**SHERIFF, cont. from pg. 48**

That was when the situation suddenly changed. The next instant McFall, Russell Leach and the two Amador officers were staring into the muzzles of a pair of .38 revolvers in the hands of Woosley and Garrett, whom McFall had earlier searched.

With McFall's and Leach's handcuffs the gunmen manacled Fregulia and Dondero, but Dondero, a huge man, was so big that a handcuff wouldn't fit around one of his wrists. In frustration they hooked the handcuff under the band of Dondero's wrist watch, then shoved him and Fregulia into a closet and locked the door. With guns drawn they marched Russ Leach and McFall back to their patrol car and had just entered it when Under-sheriff Babe Martin came walking down the street.

"Babe didn't notice us," recalls Leach, "but the gunman sitting beside me said: 'Here comes another cop!' "He drew a bead on Martin and was going to shoot. Babe was in Civilian clothes.

Hey!...Hey!...That's not a policeman," I said. "What do you want to shoot him for?"

The fellow beside me, I think it was Garrett, lowered his gun and said, "let's get out of here." "With Cervantes in the driver's seat we roared out of town, through Sutter Creek and Amador city, toward Highway 16."

As they reached Highway 16 and turned toward Sacramento the car radio began to crackle. Russ had just installed it and it was not coming in clear, but he learned that a search was underway for an escapee from Preston School and there were police cars in the area. The information added to the anxiety of McFall's and Russ Leach's kidnapers.

They kept speeding westward, Russ in the back seat between Woosley and Garrett, McFall in front beside Cervantes. Near Slough House Leach noticed the lights of an automobile behind them.

There's a patrol car back there tailing us," he told the kidnapers, "and there's liable to be trouble." Indicating the sheriff, he said, "Why don't you let this old man out? He's recovering from a heart attack and if he has another one because of this excitement, you guys are going to face a murder rap."

The three argued for a few moments. "Let's shoot both of 'em right here," said one of the gunmen. But Cervantes stopped the patrol car, reached over and opened the door.

"Get out, Pop," said Woosley. He shoved McFall out onto the shoulder of the road and vehicle sped away.

Up ahead a red light glowed in the darkness. "You fellows have had it now," said Leach. "That's a road block and you've got another car coming up behind you." Again Cervantes stopped. Woosley and Garrett got out.

"Give us time to get up to that road block, then drive up slowly and we'll take those cops from the Dark." They both carried revolvers and the shotgun from the patrol car. To Russ Leach they said, "One false move and you get the first bullet."

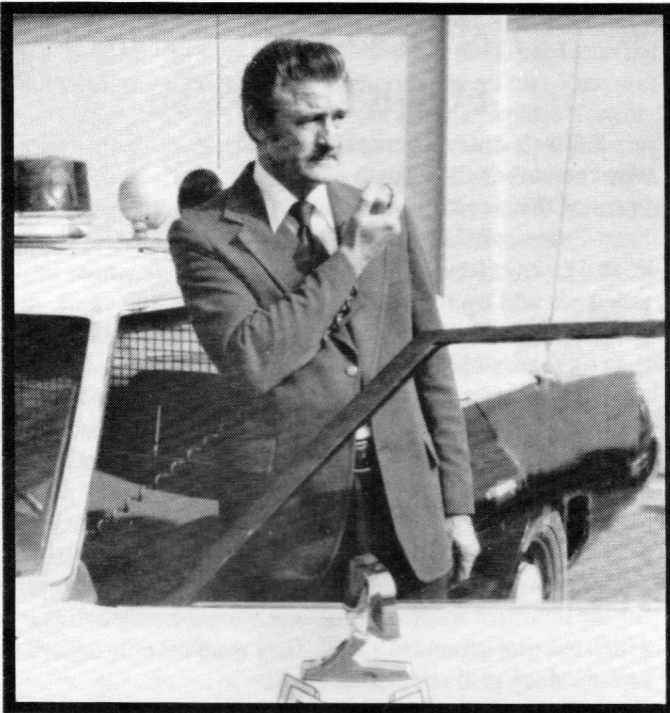
The road block turned out to be nothing more than a red warning light at a minor road repair project, but Cervantes never reached it. Leach, alone in the rear seat of the car, located a heavy flashlight on the floor. He gripped it tightly and swung. Cervantes, unconscious, slumped against the car door. Russ grabbed the steering wheel and kept the vehicle on the road until it rolled to a stop. Then, using the patrol car radio, he reached other law enforcement agencies and apprised them of the situation. Armed with a pistol that had been in the car's glove compartment, Leach waited for Woosley and Garrett whom he believed were headed his way.

But Woosley and Garrett, frightened and dangerous, had



**Calaveras County Sheriff Lester McFall (right) tells Sacramento County Sheriff's Capt. Ton Howard (center) and Amador Sheriff Carl Jones (left) of his kidnapping.**





**Russell Leach was a working sheriff.**

changed their plans. After leaving the patrol car they had seen the lights of a nearby farmhouse, home of Mr. and Mrs. George Montoya. Montoya, wary of their manner, refused to open the door, but they kicked it in and took the keys to Montoya's pickup truck. However, as they fled down the ranch road they were driving so fast they overshot the highway intersection and wrecked the truck in a ditch. The pair escaped into the night, toward Sacramento.

Meanwhile, Sheriff McFall flagged down an automobile driven by Robert Hoffman who took him to a telephone where he could put other lawmen on the trail of the fugitives.

The Sacramento Sheriff's and Police Departments and California Highway Patrol came to the assistance of the Calaveras and Amador County officers. Nevertheless, Woosley and Garrett managed to reach Sacramento. Cervantes, in custody, holding his aching head, asked Russell Leach, "Why did you hit me so hard? I was ready to give up anyway. I never wanted any part of this."

For five days a round-the-clock manhunt continued throughout the Sacramento area. Woosley and Garrett, whose criminal records included burglary, car theft and other crimes dating back to their juvenile days, were looked upon by police as desperate men. Three days after the kidnapping of the Calaveras officers, they robbed a north Sacramento service station owner of \$120. For a time they held a man and wife prisoners in an apartment. Both men surrendered without a struggle.

Woosley and Garrett pleaded guilty to robbery and kidnapping charges that brought them sentences ranging from five years,

to life imprisonment. Robbery and kidnapping charges against Cervantes were dropped after it was determined he had been coerced into the crime spree by his cohorts and had acted out of fear.

Lester McFall was not a particularly popular sheriff, nor was he easy to work for or with. In June, 1957, Russell Leach resigned as a deputy sheriff and January, 1958, urged by friends, filed as a candidate for Sheriff of Calaveras County. People liked Russ Leach's unruffled, laid-back style. He narrowly missed being elected in the 1958 June Primary and in the November run-off, defeated McFall by 1,250 votes.

When Russ took office in January of 1959 Calaveras County had seen little change in its sheriff's office operations in 30 years. The county's population stood at something less than 10,000. The sheriff's office itself was a single, poorly lighted room in the rear of the old courthouse. Prisoners still were lodged in the antiquated jail that had been in use nearly 100 years. The department's personnel still included only the sheriff and three deputies. There was no clerk-dispatcher, but Russ quickly remedied that by rehiring Jane Finch. He appointed Don Callison, undersheriff.

I guess you might say that when I took over in 1959 Calaveras still was in the dark ages of law enforcement." Sheriff McFall had not required deputies to wear uniforms. He had continued the practice of deputies using their own automobiles and being paid mileage. There was no radio equipment and if a deputy installed a radio in his car he did so at his own expense. He could talk to neighboring county lawmen but not to his own office. The sheriff's office closed at 5 p.m. There was no night

Please see SHERIFF, pg. 51

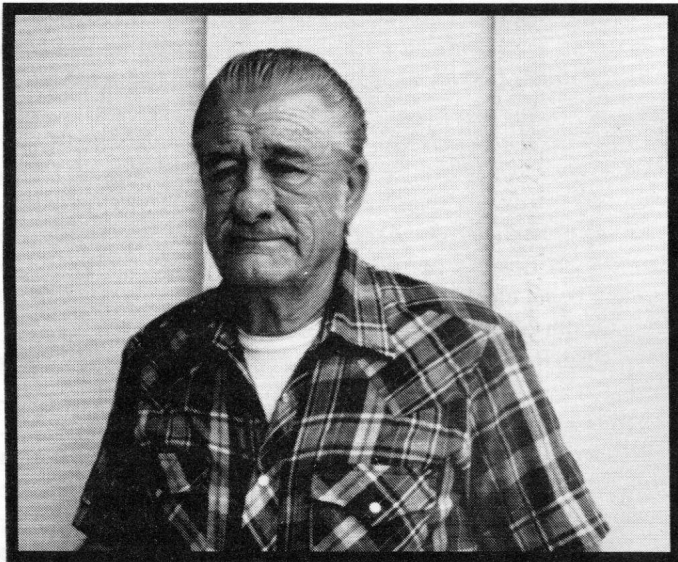
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## RUSSELL LEACH WAS NOT AN ARMCHAIR SHERIFF

Russell Leach is proud of the fact that during the 20 years he served as Calaveras County Sheriff he never once asked a deputy to perform a task that he, himself, wouldn't do. In fact, when a dangerous situation arose, it was Leach, more often than not, who placed himself in the danger spot.

Sheriff Leach was the one who was lowered on the end of a cable from a helicopter into the narrow gorge of the Stanislaus River canyon to lift out a fisherman or hiker, injured in a fall. He led countless search and rescue operations, including a snowmobile expedition under blizzard conditions into the snowbound Blue Creek area to bring out a stranded family with a critically ill child. And, for years Russ did virtually all of the diving involved in recovery of drowning victims from local lakes and streams.

It was he, also, who often flew as observer on hunts for downed aircraft. Then, after locating the crash site it would be he who on foot, would lead the recovery party through rugged, mountainous terrain, to the actual crash scene.



**Retired in San Andreas, Russell Leach leads an active life, enjoys prospecting for gold and the outdoors.**

**SHERIFF**, cont. from pg. 50

clerk or jailer. The sheriff took phone calls at home. After midnight, a person had to go to the telephone operator's home to wake her up in order to make a long distance phone call.

Russ initiated a 24-hour patrol, added a night clerk-jailer, put deputies into uniform and talked the county into providing a radio communication system and county-owned, radio equipped patrol cars. When the sheriff's Department moved into its new office and jail in 1962 Russ installed a teletype which carried the latest crime reports, and adopted the standard FBI crime reporting and filing system.

Aided by state funding, he set up a sheriff's boat patrol and helped form a volunteer sheriff's mounted posse to assist in search-rescue and other operations. All deputies were required to be graduates of the state's Peace Officers Standard Training School.

Quickly, after taking office, Russ set up a jail kitchen that saved the county money and assured adequate meals for prisoners. A garden tended by jail trusties provided vegetables not only for the jail but also, Mark Twain Hospital. Russ also initiated the county's first prisoners' work furlough program.

Calaveras, during the years between 1959 and 1979 experienced some of its fastest growth. Its population increased by some 20,000, and with that growth had come more problems and demand on law enforcement.

Russ Leach took office as sheriff with three deputies and himself. When he retired 20 years later there were 22 people in his department and he could have used more. But he brought law enforcement in Calaveras County into the modern era. Today in retirement Russ and his wife, Bonnie enjoy a bit of traveling, and Russ, ever an outdoorsman, when not busy around their home on the outskirts of San Andreas, enjoys prospecting for gold in the nearby hills.

## AN OLD FASHIONED FOURTH OF JULY

**Editor's note:** There still are Calaveras County natives who remember the Fourth of July celebrations of the early years of this century. Hayden Stephens, of Sheep Ranch; Fred Cuneo, of Calaveritas; Charley Stone, of Copperopolis and Larry Getchell, now of San Francisco, whose aggregate ages add up to something in excess of 350 years, have graciously recalled memories of Independence Days when they were small boys.

With the exception of Christmas, no event around turn-of-the-century was awaited with greater anticipation by Mother Lode residents than Independence Day--the Fourth of July. It provided fun and entertainment for young and old; parades, games, races, picnics, dances, fireworks--never forget the fireworks--and orators filled with patriotic fervor.

In Calaveras County and its neighboring gold country counties the Fourth of July and Christmas were the only holidays on which industry ground to a halt. They were the only days of the year the deep gold mines shut down.

Months of planning by community leaders and organizations preceded the Independence Day celebration. Residents of the larger towns mutually agreed to joint promotion of a single major July Fourth event each year. The celebration moved annually, each town having its turn at playing host. By holding the single event they could put together a larger parade and obtain greater participation in other events that ranged from horse racing to pie eating contest for the kids. No Fourth of July celebration was complete without its guest speaker--usually an out-of-town dignitary--some member of the state legislature or visiting judge. There was another advantage to the multi-community celebration. The larger the gathering the greater the chance of obtaining a really prominent speaker for the day.

For weeks prior to the Fourth those who planned to enter the parade or take part in the various competitions busied themselves with practice and preparation. Most towns, including San Andreas, had bands and uniformed womens' drill teams. They practiced regularly, preparing for the big day. Those who planned to ride horses or enter floats or other rolling stock in the parade groomed their mounts and polished harness and carriages until they shone.

Virtually every town had its race track and Fourth of July brought out the county's fastest horses, upon whose prowess their owners and supporters were willing to wager sizable sums. Two of the leading baseball teams would meet for an afternoon game. There would be horse shoe pitching contests and in the mining towns, usually a rock drilling contest. For the kids there would be games and races and a pie or ice cream eating contest.

Hayden Stephens, who grew up in Sheep Ranch when the famous gold mine was operating there, recalls the greased pig

contest for the boys. The kid who finally caught the pig got to keep it as the prize. The first one to make it to the top of a greased pole got the \$10 bill pinned there.

Stephens and Fred Cuneo who also recently celebrated his 90th birthday, remember when in almost every community the Fourth really started with a bang. Almost invariably at day-break a dynamite blast, set off by miners on some hill near town, would rattle windows and shake local inhabitants out of bed. For the kids--and more than a few grown-ups--there was fireworks that began popping before breakfast and continued well into the night.

Larry Getchell, also in his early 90's, recalls the "Chinese" firecrackers, the kind that had Chinese lettering on them, that cost five cents per pack. There were tiny firecrackers called Lady Fingers and larger ones called Salutes that went off with quite a bang. Then there were the really big ones--four or five inches long--called Cannon Crackers, that exploded with a report as loud as a rifle shot. Placed under a tin can, one of them would blow it a hundred feet into the air.

In San Andreas, the games and races were held during the morning on Coulter Flat, on the south side of San Andreas Creek, at the foot of California Street. They were followed by the parade which included bands, womens's lodges, volunteer firemen

and their equipment. There were floats, groups of mounted horsemen and dignitaries in fancy surreys and carriages pulled by matched pairs of high stepping horses.

The noon picnic and barbecue which in addition to a great variety of food, provided kegs of beer for the men, soda-pop for the kids and lemonade and iced tea for the ladies, closed with the speech by the guest orator who never took less than an hour for his presentation. As an example, in 1900, when the celebration centered in the mining town of Hodson under the auspices of its volunteer firemen, guest speaker Walter F. Lanigan, Esq., devoted one hour and twenty five minutes to his address. He was followed with a reading of the Declaration of Independence by Miss Hazel Shepherd. The ceremony closed with singing of the Star Spangled Banner.

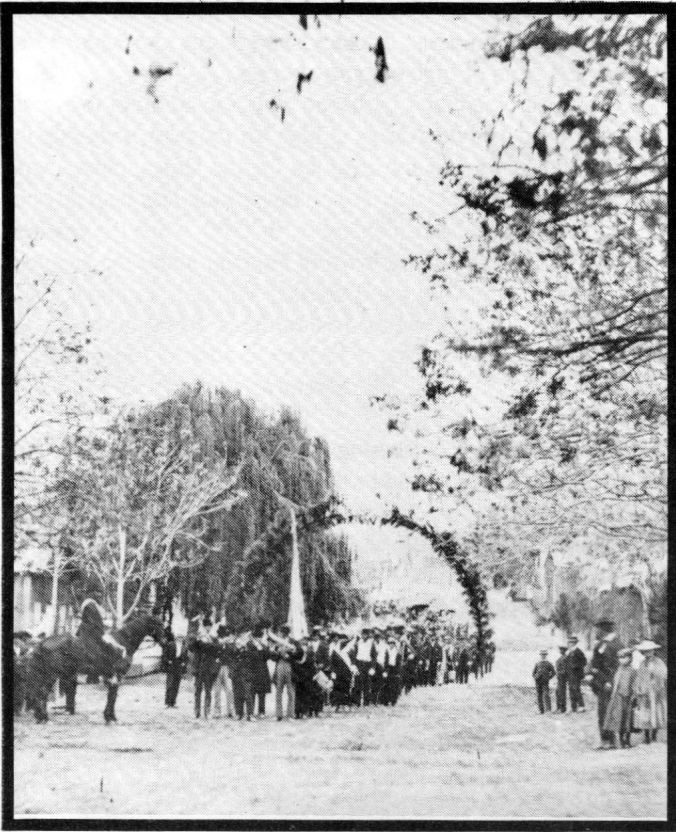
The afternoon was taken up by a baseball game, horse racing and a trap shoot. Winner of the shooting competition was awarded a new shotgun. The Sixth Regimental Band from Stockton presented a late afternoon concert. There was dancing on the pavilion, supper at the Hotel Royal, followed by dancing late into the evening.

Every town took great pride in its baseball team. Competi-

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The San Andreas Cornet Band as it prepared for a Fourth of July parade in 1900, was an essential participant in every parade and celebration of that era.



Angels Camp's Fourth of July parade of 1885 was led by members of the IOOF Lodge and its band.

**JULY 4**, cont. from pg. 52

tion between the teams was stiff and community spirit ran high. More often than not, before a game ended, an umpire's disputed call, a remark between players of the opposing teams or a pitched ball that seemed too close to a batter's head, ended in fisticuffs if not a general brawl with bloody noses and black eyes.

Horse races also were the basis for hard feelings and dispute. The late Superior Judge J.A. Smith, historical society past-president, Las Calaveras Editor and Mother Lode historian, told of an ore cart horse at a West Point mine, widely known for his laziness and slothful ways. Miners there some weeks prior to July 4 found a very fast horse which in size and looks, was almost a twin for the ore cart steed.

Weathering the derision of the other horse owners and on-lookers who mistook him for the ore cart horse, the miners entered their find in the July 4 races. Needless to say, the new horse showed the other entries his heels. However, when the other horse owners and bettors found what had happened, the miners and their horse hurriedly left town.

Certainly, not everyone in the county attended the main celebration. Local communities still held their own smaller gatherings, usually foregoing a parade or formally planned program.

## THE POCKET HUNTERS

Remote, forgotten by all but a few in the Glencoe-Rail Road Flat area, the mine lies hidden deep in the Mokelumne River canyon. But there still are those who remember Henry Gobleman and his partners who took from it a small fortune in raw gold during those bleak years of the Great Depression, around 1932.

Gobleman drifted into northern Calaveras County during the early depression years, mined local creeks and streams without marked success, barely making enough to buy bacon and beans. Gradually he became acquainted, and those familiar with gold mining recognized that he was a knowledgeable and experienced gold prospector. His problem was that without funds, he was forced to placer mine on a day-to-day basis in order just to eat. He had no time for quartz prospecting (pocket hunting) that often meant weeks of labor without seeing more than a few crumbs of gold.

Gobleman particularly attracted the attention of two Calaveras native--ranchers and part-time prospectors--impressed by his knowledge of mining and mineralogy. Brief discussions with him at the Post Office and the general store led to longer talks. They told Gobleman of the potential of the Mokelumne River canyon as a pocket hunting area. He was interested. Dollars were hard to come by in those days, but they agreed to grubstake him on a month-to-month basis to prospect the canyon area.

Under terms of the agreement--it was strictly verbal--his backers would provide Gobleman food and basic neces-

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Charley Stone said Copperopolis always had its Fourth of July observance, but many families when he was a boy, hitched up their buggies or climbed into the "Model T," and headed for a picnic at Salt Spring Reservoir. There they could swim, enjoy their picnic with friends and it was a safe place along the shoreline for youngsters to shoot firecrackers without starting a fire. They returned home in the cool of the evening.

Fred Cuneo remembers quiet Fourth of July in Calaveritas. "They were largely days of rest with a small barbecue and picnic enjoyed by family and friends. Everyone had a good time," he said. The kids usually shot a few firecrackers, but mostly it was a day for resting and visiting and enjoying the company of friends."

Larry Getchell remembers San Andreas Main Street decorated with banners and red, white and blue bunting. He remembers the ice cream stands set up by the ladies who ladled out big bowls of home-made ice cream, and watching and listening to the San Andreas Coronet band, of which his father was a member.

Those were great days," he said, "and everyone enjoyed them and had fun. And through them ran a strong current of patriotism."

sities. He had his own tools. If dynamite was needed, they would supply that.

A month went by with no positive results. Gobleman kept his grubstakers informed during their infrequent meetings and a second month passed with no worthwhile prospect found.

Gobleman was prospecting deep in the river canyon. A third month was drawing to a close and his backers were seriously considering ending the grubstake agreement when Henry Gobleman arrived one afternoon. In his knapsack were chunks of rust colored quartz rock flecked with gold.

He had located the vein near a large, fern filled natural spring. The deeper he dug, he said, the better the prospect became. Gobleman's partners joined him, the vein grew wider and they found more gold. However, as their excavation deepened, water from the nearby spring flowed into it. And finally at a depth of 12 feet, they were forced to abandon it. There was only one thing to do -- go down the hill and drive a tunnel to intersect the quartz vein at a greater depth. The tunnel would drain itself.

Gobleman was camped near the spring. His partners walked each day the several miles from their homes to the mine in the canyon. With primitive tools, picks, shovels, hand held drill steel and a hammer they drove what was to become a 90-foot-long tunnel. Water soaked them constantly.

With winter coming on they quit mining briefly to build Gobleman a small, one-room cabin with lumber carried down the hill on their backs to replace his open-air camp.

Slowly the tunnel lengthened. They intersected the quartz seam only to find it had pinched down to virtually nothing. The gold it carried near the surface had disappeared. Refusing to give up, they decided to begin following the vein upward, toward the surface. Their first blast proved them right. The seam widened, its values returned. Within days they were taking pieces of gold flecked rock from a strip of quartz nearly two feet wide. They had blasted into a deposit of milling ore.

Down the steep hillside, in pieces, they skidded a small, two-stamp mill and gasoline engine. It was hardly larger than a sample mill, but it did the job, crushing pieces of hand-sorted ore.

Productive mining ended when the quartz vein abruptly intersected a reef of Barren country rock. Weeks of exploratory digging that grew into months failed to pick up the lost vein. Their pay streak gone, the partners divided between them, nearly \$80,000. Gobleman quietly disappeared. His partners, close mouth concerning their good fortune, returned to ranch life and other ways of making a living.

The Gobleman cabin, roof caved, walls leaning, victim of 60 years of neglect, still stands beside the caved mine workings. The mill, stripped and vandalized, also has fallen. Little now remains to tell those who might stumble onto it that this spot once provided three men, during the depression years, with what amounted to sizable fortunes.

## SOCIETY AWARDS 1997 ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Honors in the Calaveras County Historical Society's 1997 historical essay contest went to two students attending Angels Camp area schools. Cash prizes of \$150 each, plus certificates of merit, went to Skyler W. Waid, an eighth grader at Mark Twain Elementary School and to Jonathan Radford, a ninth grade student at Bret Harte High School in Angels Camp. Each received a cash prize of \$150. The awards were presented during a May 22 dinner meeting in Wendall's, on Highway 49, at Mokelumne Hill.

Skyler Waid, son of Mr. and Mrs. William C. Waid, of Angels Camp, chose for the subject of his essay, "The California Indians," on which he wrote in detail. He was a student in the class taught by Mary Cosgrove.

Winner in the high school category was Jonathan Radford, son of Daniel and Norene Radford, of Arnold. This was the third year in a row that Jonathan was the winner in his grade level in the essay competition. In 1995 and in 1996, while a student at Avery Middle School, he took first place with essays titled "The Miwok Indians of Calaveras," and "The history of Camp Seco."

This year's essay contest was chaired by Joan Donleavy, of Paloma, a member of the Historical Society's board of directors.

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### THE ORIGIN OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

By Jonathan Radford  
9th Grade  
Bret Harte High School

The first white man to set foot on Calaveras soil was also the one who gave the county its name. Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga of the Royal Spanish Army led an expedition into the area in 1808. Moraga and his men found many bones and skulls of Indians in and around caves on a river down stream from San Andreas. The cave contained over a hundred skeletons, but the Indians of the area said they did not know how they got there. Many people thought they were the remains of an ancient Indian battle. Many Indian skeletons were also found outside of the cave along with primitive weapons. On December 12, 1883, the Calaveras Weekly Citizen, a local newspaper, made a comment about the skeletons. It said that the "place had a death-like appearance and anyone who goes there will never want to go there again." Moraga named the river "El Rio de Las Calaveras", which is Spanish for "The River of Skulls". Calaveras County was named for the river.

The very first people in Calaveras County were the Indians.

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## ORIGIN, Cont. from pg. 54

They lived in villages the Spaniards called rancherias. The Indians staple food was acorns, and fish, worms, insects, as well as bear meat and venison.

Back in March of 1771, Father Juan Crespi, a missionary, was one of the first white men to see the Sierra Nevada range. He described it as "some high mountains....very far distant.." Then in April of 1776, missionaries Pedro Font and Francisco Garcés saw the range and placed it on the maps for the first time. Font wrote in his diary, "...we saw a great snowy range--una gran sierra nevada - whose trend appeared to me to be from south-southeast to north-northwest." The name stayed with the mountain range. The Spanish did not go into the mountains for another thirty years!

In the summer of 1827, Jedediah Strong Smith, a mountain man and fur trader, led a party of trappers into the mountains. Using his bible, he named the Sierra Nevada Mount Joseph. It took him and his men eight days to cross, because of the four to eight feet of snow. They lost two horses and a mule, but the last slope into desert. He was the first white man to conquer the range. He also explored the area near Mountain Ranch.

California gained a population of trappers and traders, because of its good climate, large supply of game, and great farming possibilities. The first Sierra mountaineers blazed trails across the passes. There was a western emigration in 1841. The Bartleson-Bidwell party claimed to be the first to see the Calaveras Grove of Big Trees.

The United States engaged in the war with Mexico in the spring of 1846. Peace came with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. California was now part of the United States. Many of the men who fought in the war stayed in California. Soldiers who had been stationed in Monterey headed for the Sierras. They were guided by James Carson and John Robinson. They went their different ways when they reached Melones. James Carson discovered Carson Hill, Henry Angel founded Angels Camp, John and Daniel Murphy founded Vallecito, then later established a rich mining camp known as Murphys Diggings.

The treaty allowed citizenship and property to everyone including foreigners. Many of the Mexican and Spanish land grants were not properly drafted. A large number of the rancheros did not meet the requirements for the housing. They did not have the required farm animals. Some grants were obtained illegally. Many of the newcomers wanted to buy land grants. There were many Americans who wanted the land, too. They challenged the Mexican grants. Officials had to clear up the disputes. For four long years the Land Commission hear all the arguments over the land claims. An average case with all the appeals lasted over seventeen years, because it could be appealed to the Federal District Court or the U.S. Supreme Court by either the land owner or the government. The land owners often lost all they had fighting to keep their land.

Before the Mexican War, on December 23, 1843, The Mexi-

## THE CALIFORNIA INDIANS

By  
Skyler W. Ward  
Grade Eight

Mark Twain Elementary School

The California Indians were of a simple general culture, but had no peers in certain specialized activities which included their intricate basket designs, acorn-leaching operation, and their skill in flint chipping. While their dependence on acorns as a basic food discouraged interest in organized agriculture, their excellent basket work possibly accounted for their neglect of pottery which was a high achievement by tribes living elsewhere.

The California Indian, living close to the soil were relatively isolated from other North American Indian cultures by mountain barriers and deserts. They developed a society suited to their own geographic needs, forming a culture built around food gathering and fishing.

The California Indians were short in stature but some were quite tall with fine facial features. Chief Solano of the Suisunes, for whom Solano County is named, was six feet, seven inches in height. They were not dull-witted as shown by their quick ability to acquire use of the Spanish language. They not only learned to speak it, the Spaniards taught them to read music, sing church chorales, and intone Latin, which they did with astonishing accuracy. The remains of California missions testify to the Indians ability to learn impressive mechanical arts. In the missions, the Indians became fairly skillful carpenters, weavers, farmers, and excellent cattle herders.

The California Indians had relatively few crafts and arts. Basket making was their chief industry. They also were experts in dressing skins and in weaving rush mats for beds. California's coastal Indians built dugout canoes with nothing but wedges of

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can government issued a land grant in Calaveras County. Jose Antonio Castro and Francisco Rico became the owners of Rancheria del Rio Estanislao. The land grant located Calaveras and Stanislaus counties, about eleven leagues. The official survey was 48,887 acres. President Abraham Lincoln sighed the patent and said, "My what a big farm!" The American owners recorded their ownership in the early 1850's.

An interesting note to this is that Jose Castro married Maria del Merced Ortega, and they had twenty four children. Several of the children married Americans who came to the gold rush. Carmelita Castro married Andy Jordon of Murphys. The Jordons of Arnold are descended from them.

Indians were the first people to live in Calaveras County. Soon the trappers, traders and mountainmen came. They were followed by the soldiers, miners and gold seekers. Our county has many stories to tell, but it all began with the mystery of the skeletons in the cave.

elk horn and adzes with mussel shell blades. Their household utensils included basket pots, stone mortars and pestles, horn and shell knives, flat spoons or paddles for stirring, and wooden trays and bowls. They also had looped sticks for cooking, nets of vegetable fiber for fishing and carrying small objects.

The California Indian dwelling varied in accordance with the climate. In the northwest and central California, the Indians some times excavated portions of their houses, with sides and roof of wool slabs. The Mountain Indians, as in Calaveras County, preferred bark or wood-slab abodes. The Santa Barbara coast Chumash dwellings were built of poles drawn together and tied at the top. These were covered with thatched grass, foliage, or wet earth. The Sierran Indians sometimes practiced cave habitation while, in the warmest parts of California, the native Americans were satisfied with a thatch or brush shelter.

The food of the California Indians was mostly vegetable, with the major food staple being the acorn. Acorns were stored in raised cylindrical cribs and, with dried salmon and pine nuts, provided the basic provisions for winter. Before acorns could be eaten they had to be hulled, parched, pulverized, and the tannic acid leached from them. The ground acorn meal was then boiled. The Shastas roasted moistened meal. The Indians also ate the green leaves of many plants. Certain mildly poisonous roots were made fit for food by long roasting underground. The Indians did not have intoxicating beverages, but a mild form of inebriation was produced by prolonged smoking of wild tobacco and jimson weed.

California Indians would eat animal flesh whenever they could get it. They hunted with bows and arrows, and flint-tipped lances. They were very deft and skilled in stalking game, using contrived disguises and decoys. Whether animal or vegetable, their food was provided almost wholly by nature.

Nature also provided the California Indian with the items used for clothing. Originally most all the men went virtually naked in summer, while the women wore aprons of grass or animal skin. Moccasins, sandals, and (in the north) snowshoes were worn. In the winter, the Indians used rabbit or deerskin cloaks and skin blankets. On ceremonial occasions the Indians used elaborate headdresses of feathers and beads, while some wore basketry hats or bound their heads with hair nets.

Women and children did most of the work among the California Indians, while the men hunted and fished. The women gathered acorns, wove baskets, trapped small animals, hauled water and firewood, scraped animal skins, fashioned robes, cooked and constructed dwellings.

California natives gave a friendly welcome to the coming of most white men. They were fond of dancing and singing. It formed a significant part of the lives of the Indians, and they did it not only for amusement but in connection with ceremonial by which they celebrated every important public or private event in their lives.

In Northwestern California a wife could be purchased for strings of shell money or deerskins. Polygamy was practiced by

some who could afford the purchase of more than one wife, but a man was disgraced if he got his wife for nothing.

With the California Indians, each family was a law unto itself. Atonement for injury was not unknown, although there was no systematic punishment for crime. A murderer could pay the family of the deceased in skins or shells as atonement for the crime.

California Indian religion and mythology is too extensive and complex to detail here. Suffice to say, the Indians, religion was primitive with a well-defined system of shamanism designed not only to cure disease, but also to serve a formulated religious purpose.

The Indians possessed no less than twenty-two linguistic families of language that are indentifiable. Within the California boundaries, there were 135 regional dialects. California counties--Colusa, Modoc, Mono, Napa, Shasta, Tehama, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba--have been taken from the language of the California Indian. The counties of Inyo and Siskiyou are thought to be possible native origin. These names remain the only monument to the first California natives.

The earliest estimate of the California Indian population places it at 100,000 to 150,000. After the Spaniards brought disastrous disease to the Indians, their numbers were drastically reduced. When the Indians entered the confinement of the missions, they gave up the habit of burning down their "houses" every so often, as well as abandoning the use of the sweathouse. This removed the only methods of sanitation the Indians had, and increased the incidence of disease. Their numbers diminished more severely as the American conquest for California brought new and numerous diseases along with the loss of land and food sources.

History has seldom seen such destruction of human life through famine, disease, killing and most of all, through the confiscation of land, as was practiced upon the California Indians.

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## EVA ROSE SORACCO

All who knew her were saddened by the April 2 death of Eva Rose Soracco, a native of the San Andreas area and descendant of a pioneer Calaveras County Family.

Mrs. Soracco, 93, was one of the founders of the Calaveras County Historical society and among its staunchest members.

A daughter of the Antone Genochio Family which settled at North Branch in the early 1850's, Mrs. Soracco over the years contributed a wealth of information concerning the history of her family's activities and happenings in the local area during the 19th and early part of the 20th Century. Even in her latter years Mrs. Soracco remained active in historical society affairs and regularly attended its monthly meetings.

We shall miss this woman of pioneer heritage.

## MINER'S CABIN HOME FROM MINT MUSEUM

The Calaveras County miner's cabin on exhibit for the past 20 years in the U.S. Mint Building Museum in San Francisco, has returned home. Dismantled so it could be transported back to San Andreas, the old board and batten structure and its furnishings presently are in storage, pending a decision concerning where it is to be located.

Typical of the abodes of miners and prospectors during the early gold mining era, the one-room cabin and its contents were donated by the late John Huberty in memory of his mother, Mary Ann Donnallan Huberty and his aunt, Nellie Donnallan Nuner, daughters of John and Ellen Donnallan, who settled in Central Calaveras County in 1861. The cabin furnishings include an ancient iron cook stove, kerosene lamps, iron framed bed and hand-made quilts, old cooking utensils, tin wash tub and scrub board, a table containing drawers and flour bin, old dishes, tools, mining equipment and a variety of other artifacts.

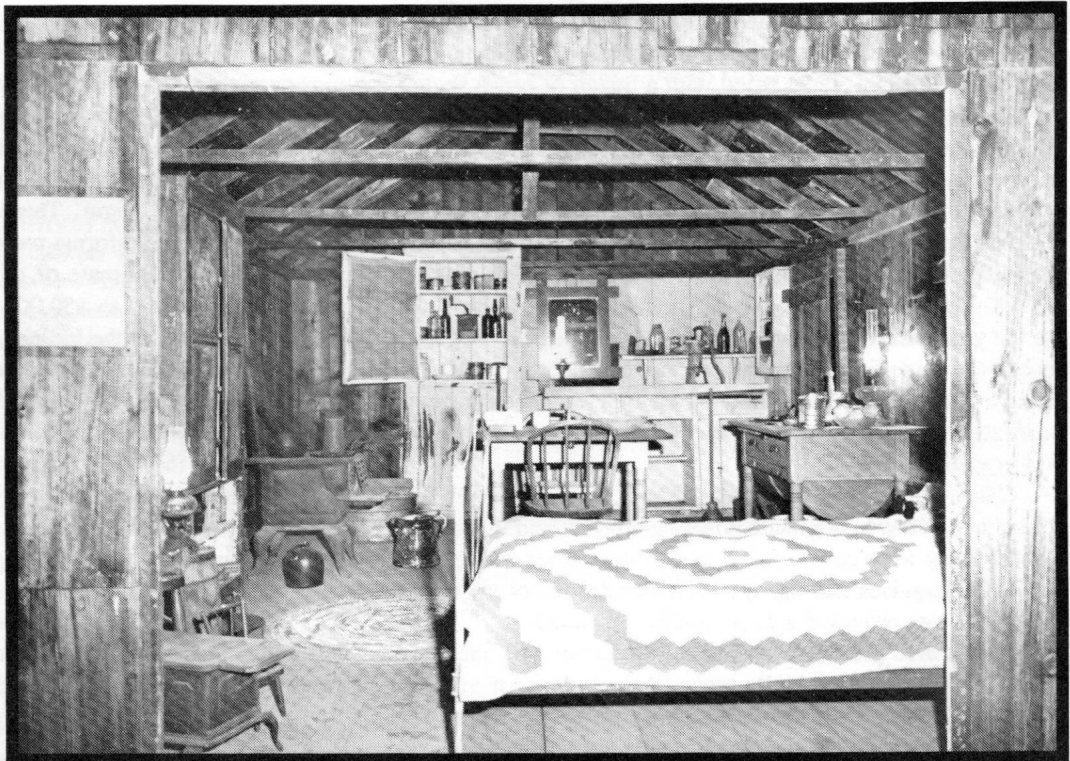
Huberty offered his donation during the 1970's in response to a published request by federal curators for a miner's cabin to become an exhibit in the old Mint Building at Fifth and Mission Streets in San Francisco, which was being turned into a Western gold mining era museum.

The museum officials after viewing the cabin on the North Fork of the Calaveras River, gladly accepted it and its contents. After dismantling it board-by-board they returned with it to San Francisco where it was rebuilt inside one of the huge steel vaults on the ground floor of the granite walled Mint Building. There, for a score of years the old, weather beaten cabin and its rustic furniture attracted the attention of thousands of museum visitors annually. However, a decision by officials of the U.S. General Services Administration, in charge of the old Mint Building, to close the museum as of December 30, 1994, threw new light on

the situation.

Learning of the closure, Calaveras County Historical Society officials led by Eloise Ponte and her husband, Gloyd "Bud" Ponte, began negotiating for return of both cabin and artifacts to Calaveras County. Finally, culminating nearly two years of discussion, federal officials agreed to release the cabin and its contents, plus other valuable artifacts from Calaveras, back to the home county.

Three recent trips to San Francisco by Historical Society volunteers have resulted in return not only of the cabin and its



Interior of the prospector's cabin as it appeared in exhibit housed in San Francisco's Mint Building. Now returned to local county it hopefully can be placed on exhibit here.

furnishings, but also the other artifacts which in the future, will go back on display here. They include books, a century-old iron wheeled foundry cart, a huge iron kettle believed used by a company of gold rush era Chinese miners in which to cook rice, pieces of period furniture and many smaller items.

Those who helped return the cabin and artifacts from San Francisco included Historical Society President Barbara Beaman and her husband, George; the Society's Office Manager Sheryl Waller with her son, Jess and Historical Society Board member Duane Wight. Others who donated their time and labor included Fara Noble, Dan Dowdin, Dean Gray, Ron Fuller, Tim Palacek, Charles Joiner and George Hoyer.