

The Sierran

— A Publication of the Sierra County Historical Society —

Margaret Elaine Blasdell Lambert: Her Life In Sierra County

By her daughter Margaret Dodgson,
granddaughters Marilyn Clothier, and Peni
Morris, as well as other family members,
compiled by Virginia Lutes

Mrs. Lambert, a native of Sierra County was a well-known personality who accomplished a great deal. She was born in 1892, to a daughter of County Pioneers Charles and Margaret Perry. Margaret spent her youth in Sierraville on a homestead located on what is now known as the Old Truckee Road (the Carnell's now own the property). Margaret's connections range from Sierra Valley to Downieville. Mrs. Lambert became a long time Sierra County Treasurer.



Mrs. Lambert spent many happy hours volunteering at the Downieville Museum.

Margaret and her siblings were born to Amanda Theresa Perry and Theodore Harvey Blasdell. There were seven sons and one daughter Margaret. Life growing up was full of adventure for young Margaret Elaine.

In 1975, she was at the old homestead with family and related many stories about the area and the people she knew. She shared that she “was born on a ranch above here, and came to this place when six months old”. When the Perry's sold their ranch, they purchased this property for their daughter Amanda and her children to live.

Her mother whitewashed an old chicken house inside and made her daughter a playhouse, where Margaret spent many enjoyable hours.

Each of the children had daily chores, and took turns helping to clean the barn, get in the wood, pick fruit in the fall, and bring in the cows from the railroad springs. Her mother would do the milking. The family cared for a very large garden. Margaret Elaine worked along with her brothers helping to build fence, dig postholes, stack wood, and helped their mother with ironing.

Each day big teams hauling freight used to come from Truckee, during the apple season the children would climb the trees and toss apples to the freighters.

Margaret was very fond of her mother, and had memories of her taking them places. In the winter, they hitched two horses to a sleigh, and would wrap up in heavy quilts that were made from the boys' overalls and old blankets. The children enjoyed coasting; they would heat bricks to take for warming after the sledding. During good weather, they would travel to Reno to visit the Blasdell family.

One by one, the boys left home to find their own way, as did Margaret. A young man by the name of Mark Veck traveled to Sierraville from Texas to visit his sister Lottie Veck Coates.

Margaret Elaine Blasdell Lambert - (Continued on Page 3) —

The Sierra County Historical Society is an organization of people interested in preserving and promoting an appreciation of Sierra County's rich history. The Society operates a museum at the Kentucky Mine in Sierra City, holds an annual meeting, publishes a newsletter and conducts historical research. Members are sent notices of Society activities, receive THE SIERRAN, and are admitted free of charge to the museum and stamp mill tour. If you would like to become involved in these activities or would just like to give your support, please join us!

Officers and Executive Board of The Sierra County Historical Society

President: Mary Nourse, Sierra City

Vice President: Joleen Torri, Sattley

Secretary: Judy Lawrence, Sattley

Treasurer: Bill Copren, Sattley

Board members in addition to those previously mentioned are Maren Scholberg (Emeritus), Sierraville; Elda Faye Ball, Loyalton; Suzi Schoensee, Sattley; Bud Buczkowske, Alleghany; James Connolly, Sierra City; Eli Scholberg, Sierraville; Jane Cooper, Loyalton.

Museum Curator: Virginia Lutes

Assistant Curator: Judy Lawrence

If you have any suggestions or comments, feel free to contact any board member.

Become a Member! Dues for 2012 Payable Now!

Membership in the Sierra County Historical Society is open to any interested person, business or organization. Members need not be residents of Sierra County. Dues are due and payable each January for the calendar year.

Membership categories are as follows:

INDIVIDUAL.....	\$20.00
FAMILY & INSTITUTION.....	\$25.00
BUSINESS & SUPPORTING.....	\$35.00
SUSTAINING.....	\$50.00
LIFE (per individual)	\$300.00

(The board increased membership fees commencing in June of 2008)

Please send dues to: S.C.H.S. Membership Chairperson, PO Box 54, Sattley, CA 96124

New Historical Society Website Now Online!

The Kentucky Mine website is now online with a new look and a new name. The new website: SierraCountyHistory.org is more flexible and broader in scope than the old website. This will allow the SCHS to add more county history, provide visitors with a way to sign up for email notices of events, the newsletter and a calendar of meetings among other exciting new features. So... what would you like to see or contribute to the website? New information and features will be added as time allows so share your ideas by emailing webmaster@kentuckymine.org

John Geiger of Fox Parlor in Sierra City worked on this project with Cindy Ellsmore, volunteer webmaster. A new email list will help reduce SCHS communication costs so signup at <http://eepurl.com/kPaH1> to get SCHS news online.

Museum News and Announcement of Oral Interviews

Virginia Lutes will be returning to the Kentucky Mine Museum as Curator this season, along with assistant Judy Lawrence and volunteers including Fran, Don, Phil, Glenn and Irmke. Other volunteers who do maintenance are Larry, Cal and Karen. Numerous directors of the Sierra County Historical Society also give their time and energy at the museum. All are much appreciated, and there is always room for more dedicated docents at the Kentucky. Mark your calendar now to visit the Kentucky this summer. A reminder: our opening is Memorial Day Weekend, closing Labor Day Weekend, closed Monday and Tuesday. You can visit our website at kentuckymine.org for hours and music events.

Announcement a work day at the Kentucky will be Saturday May 19th at 9am, tables need to be sanded and stained, objects moved to storage container, and general clean up and maintenance, if you would like to be involved, just show up!

Margaret Elaine Blasdell Lambert - (Continued from Page 1)

Margaret fell in love, and she and Mark married in 1909. Mr. Veck was a Sierraville businessman. They moved to Arizona to live, where Margaret's oldest boy was born. She later returned to Sierraville. Margaret Elaine Lambert had five children, Gaines, Carmen, Mary and Merritt Veck and Margaret Lorraine Lambert.

Margaret Elaine was working at the Henry Dotta Ranch (at the end of W. Willow Road), when the County Treasurer E.L. Case, died in Downieville. His office was vacant, and Mr. Copren, Margaret Elaine Lambert's teacher, suggested her. This was the winter of 1926, she reported for office to Downieville January 1, 1927. She hired a wagon, driver and a team of horses to move her to Downieville. The snow was deep and the horses had to wear snowshoes. All she could take at this time were her children and their clothes.

Margaret Elaine was re-elected 9 times and served 36 years as Country Treasurer. She was the first woman to hold an elected public office in Sierra County. At that time, the office was Treasurer/Tax Collector so Margaret served as both. While treasurer in the 1950's, the supervisors asked her to find a fund where they could borrow to buy the "Best Gold Mine Collection", from the Ruby Mine. Margaret found the funds and told the supervisors they would have to pay interest back to the fund. They paid \$35,000, for the collection. There are 153 pieces, 1,000 ounces. (The replica of this collection is located at the County Courthouse in Downieville).



Mrs. Lambert served as president of the California State Treasurer's Association, and was a lifetime member of the Chamber of Commerce and first Chairman of the March of Dimes in Sierra County, for which she was honored with a gold pin from President Franklin Roosevelt. She was awarded a medal, which represented over 2,000 hours of plane spotting during WWII. Margaret also served as chair of the Red Cross for many years and would take food into the hills to families during the depression. She joined the Native Daughters in 1935, was a member of the Historical Society, active with her church and taught Sunday school for years. While her children were young, she was active with PTA, and she was very involved with school activities. After the 1937 flood, she volunteered for the Salvation Army.

Some thought of Margaret Elaine as opinionated, and that she may have been, she wrote a letter to every president of the United States while in office giving them her reviews.

Margaret had friends who lived in the hills, once or twice a month she would go check on them walking 2-3miles one way. She would wear high top lace up boots and carried her rifle for safety since it was bear and lion country. Her daughter Margaret would go with her.



Mark Merritt Veck, Sr. Margaret Elaine Blasdell Veck (Lambert) Amanda Theresa Blasdell, on street in front of house. - Sierraville

Margaret Elaine Blasdell Lambert - (Continued on Page 4)

Margaret Elaine Blasdell Lambert - (Continued from Page 3) —

When the courthouse burned in 1947, none of the country records were lost. Every day before going home, she placed all the records in the large vault attached to her office. The walls two feet thick were made of rock with steel doors. All of the money was protected in a large safe in her office. Several days after the fire when the safe was cold, she opened it on the first try.

Margaret Elaine retired, January 1, 1963; this poem was written for her and read to her.



Native Daughters Imogen Left to Right: Eha Small, Sophronia Perry Dearwater, Jennie Copren, Margaret Elaine Blasdell Veck Lambert, Minnie Wolf Olive Dubordeu, Julia Strang, Stacy Perry Slipner

*We really hate to have you go,
You've been here quite awhile you know
You've been in all the county planning
And done your praising and your panning
And when the going got real rough
You Stand your ground and did your stuff
Your county interests were sincere
Your records surely made that clear
You've served us faithfully for years
With work, success and sometimes tears
In everything you did your part
And we really "thank you" from the heart
So please accept this little token
That means the things that can't be spoken*

Retirement did not slow down Mrs. Lambert; she continued to volunteer at the Downieville Museum as curator. She knew her county history well, and loved to share it with visitors.

Margaret Elaine Lambert died in Roseville, California in 1989, age 96 years, and is buried in the cemetery at Sierraville, California.



The safe which survived the 1947 courthouse fire is on display at the Kentucky Mine Museum.

Music Is In the Air at the Kentucky Mine!

A warm summer night, a star-filled sky, and music that enchants the spirit and sets the body in motion! You're invited to join in the revelry this summer as the Music at the Mine Concert Series once again provides a unique and memorable musical experience at the Kentucky Mine located on Highway 49 just east of Sierra City. The five concerts, which begin at 7:30 pm, include something for every musical taste from the series favorites Mumbo Gumbo, countrified rock, blues, and tribute concerts to Patsy Cline and Johnny Cash.

Music at the Mine

Summer Concerts at the Historic Kentucky Mine

Sierra City, California

2012 Program

All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.

June 23rd - Joni Morris
"Tribute to Patsie Cline &
Legendary Women of Country Western"/\$25

June 30th Mumbo Gumbo/\$25

July 7th - James Garner
"Tribute to Johnny Cash"/\$25

**August 4th - Bob Mora and
3rd Degree Blues Band/\$15**

August 25th - Bourgeois Gypsies/\$10

All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. with the pre-show
BBQ Starting at 6:30 p.m. Prices for the BBQ are
NOT included in the ticket price. BBQ is \$15 per person.

Purchase Online at www.KentuckyMine.org
or call (530) 862-1300 for ticket sales locations.



Music feeds the soul and the delicious barbeque, beginning at 6 pm at the mine preceding each concert, feeds the body and makes the evening a complete feast for all the senses. To make certain you don't miss any of the fun, just cut out the schedule of concerts and pricing information provided below and keep it handy throughout the summer. Locations where you can buy tickets include the Kentucky Mine and Museum and the Old Sierra City Hotel. Or hop on the web and purchase tickets through PayPal at www.KentuckyMine.org. For more information call 530-862-1310.

Museum News and Announcement - (Continued from Page 2)

One very exciting project that we hope to start in June will be interviewing and recording oral history of special Sierra County people. Chris Lamm, a friend of one of our lifetime member Susan Hopkins, suggested the idea for this project. Chris visits the museum annually, and became intrigued by some visitors who were telling stories of travel in the Alleghany area many years ago. Chris thought these nuggets of history needed to be recorded, and volunteered to type stories as they were being told. This concept used with audio/visual recording will save history that we will lose if we do not take steps to conduct interviews. Susan has organized throughout the winter and has now gained another person to assist, Marilyn. Thank you Susan, Chris and Marilyn. We know that this is also a project that our new Historical Society President, Mary Nourse is very interested in doing. Mary will begin her interviews shortly; and conducted interviews in past years.

If you would like to be interviewed, or would like to suggest a person to be interviewed, please contact us as soon as possible. Please call the Kentucky and leave a message at 530-862-1310, by email to historicalsociety@kentuckymine.org, or by mail to PO Box 260, Sierra City, Ca 96125.

Our used book project brought in needed extra money last season. Please keep us in mind if you have Sierra County books, maps, or documents. The donations will first go to our reference library at the museum. If not needed there, we will offer the items on our gently used section of the gift shop. Any California history books, historical fiction, or even US history would be appreciated. This has proved to be a nice low impact fund raiser to support the Kentucky and valuable additions to our reference library have been received.

This is the second installment of the Sattley Sesquicentennial Story which was originally published in 2002.



The Sattley post office was established in 1884. It adjoined the Sattley Store which was built in the 1870s by Ezra Church. The town name was changed from Church's Corners to Sattley, the maiden name of Harriet Church, Isaac Church's mother.

Emil Jr. "Bing" Dotta, who is deceased, lived his entire life in the Sattley area, continuing a long history of Dotta's in the Sierra Valley. Bing's great grandfather Ceasar immigrated to the valley from Switzerland in 1882 because he was a milker and had heard of the many dairies in the area. Bing's father, Emil Sr., purchased 320 acres near Sattley in 1937, land running along what is now County Road A-23, and operated a dairy and cattle ranch there for many years. The family also raised a large vegetable garden because Bing said, "Groceries wasn't too good in those days." The family home had been moved from the Sunset Mill to the ranch in 1928.

When asked how he acquired his nickname, Bing said, "I guess somebody dropped it on my shoulder." And that's probably exactly what happened on the busy, bronco-bustin', ranch where Bing grew up with his two brothers and sister. Hay was grown and put up with horses, to feed their dairy cows. Horses were used to pull the mower and the rake, as well as the wagons that brought the loose hay out of the fields to the barn. The job of breaking horses for riding went to Bing, who was known for his bronc riding abilities. "I hit the ground more than a couple of times," he said, then added, "There's never a horse that's never been rode."

Bing's mother, Juanita, milked and managed their 60-head dairy herd. She kept careful records of the cows she bought and sold, as well as the calves that were born. Many of her cows were given names and a picture of each cow was posted in her record book along with notes about the price paid for the cow, and the price the cow brought when she sold it. The Dotta family continued to operate their dairy until the early 1960.

Bing served in the Korean War and when he returned, he and his wife Betty moved into the home where he had lived as a child. But when the home caught fire and burned in 1956, Bing moved off the family farm and it was sold. Bing, and Betty, who died in 1993, moved to the ranch located on Highway 89 two miles northwest of Sattley, where Bing lives today with his wife, Colleen.

Surrounding the yard of Bing's home is a beautiful work of art, the fence Bing created with a welder, and a lot of love. He collected and assembled in a perfectly balanced, artistic arrangement, old gears, wheels, tools, and whatever else struck his creative fancy! The result is a one-of-a-kind fence/sculpture that stands as an ageless testament to Bing's unique artistry.



Bing, age 16, in 1948

Elver and Barbara Martinetti

Elver doesn't remember it, but has been told that after he was born on March 19, 1924, he was brought home in a sleigh from the midwife in Sierraville to his parents' ranch in Sattley. Elver's parents, Issac and Delia Martinetti, had a ranch and dairy barn one half mile east of the township of Sattley. Elver and his wife Barbara continue to live on the ranch in a home surrounded by cottonwood trees, hence the original name given the ranch, the Pleasant Grove Ranch.

1924 is remembered by anyone living in the Sattley area at that time, as the year of "the fire" – a fire that burned many buildings and homes on the ranches near Sattley. When their dairy barn burned, Ike and his neighbors built a new barn from usable burned trees that were milled by Harry Turner, who had set up his portable sawmill at the ranch. The family continued to operate the dairy and ranch, milking a herd of 60 cows.

When he was 16, Elver got a job working for the county, earning \$1.00 per hour. "That was big money," Elver said of his wage. It helped him purchase the "big, ole Buick," that he drove.

Barbara Martinetti met Elver during a visit to Sierra Valley from her home in San Francisco. After their marriage in 1947, Barbara worked



Martinetti barn



with the family in their dairy business and on the ranch. She and Elver have five children – John, Jess, Ann, Lisa, and Joan. Barbara remembers a time when,

"It was a big thing when we went to the Sattley store shopping or to get the mail."

Elver served in World War II and upon returning to the ranch, shut down the dairy barn because of new federal regulations concerning milk production and grading. With several sawmills operating in the area, Elver soon found work driving a logging truck. Elver remembers the busy sawmills and the loggers who often ate dinner at the restaurant in Sattley after work, and then played poker in the Sierraville bar during long winter nights.

In 1949, the Sattley area experienced a freezing storm that completely immobilized the community. Elver remembers, "It was so cold, and the ground was so hard, they logged across our back pasture." Three years later, when Elver was working for CalTrans, he remembers that on March 1, eight feet of snow fell on the Sattley area!

Elver and Barbara have seen many changes in the Sattley area over the many years they have lived and worked on their ranch. They are aware of the increasing traffic passing by their home on Highway 89. But they enjoy memories of the family farms, busy sawmills, and the unique feeling of community that continues to bind Sattleyites to this special place.

The Sierran

Sierra County Historical Society

P.O. Box 260

Sierra City, California 96125

The Sierran – Membership Corner News, April, 2012

Thanks to all of you who have gifted us with renewed memberships. We appreciate your belief in our work. It is you who are vital and who keep us going. We will gladly accept your gifts at any time soon if you happen to be the few who have not renewed as of yet.

Starting in January, Don Yegger's membership was given to him for his birthday by his in-laws from Loyalton, Kenneth and Elsie Alexander. Don was born and has lived in Sierra County since 1962. His family has been loggers and business owners. He attended Downieville High School and served as a sheriff's deputy for a time. Presently he lives in Loyalton with his wife Becky.

For 100 years between 1850 and 1950, Jean Cunington's family were loggers and farmers in Downieville, Loyalton, and Sierraville. She joined in February with an individual membership donation. She now lives in Fort Bragg, California.

Melvin and Marcella Fischer-Ponta have been members since 2007. They decided to become lifers in February of this year. Since 1850 their families have been pioneer goldseekers, farmers and business owners in Goodyears Bar, Downieville, Loganville and Sierra City.

In April, a Sierra County lifetime resident decided to join us with a lifetime commitment. Her name is Sidone Christian. He is also a candidate for Superior Court Judge. Her family has been in Sierra County since 1960 when they purchased Salmon Lake Lodge, located in the Lakes Basin area. She is now in charge of operating the resort.

Our board and staff want to thank you for your support and we welcome you to the Sierra County Historical Society!