

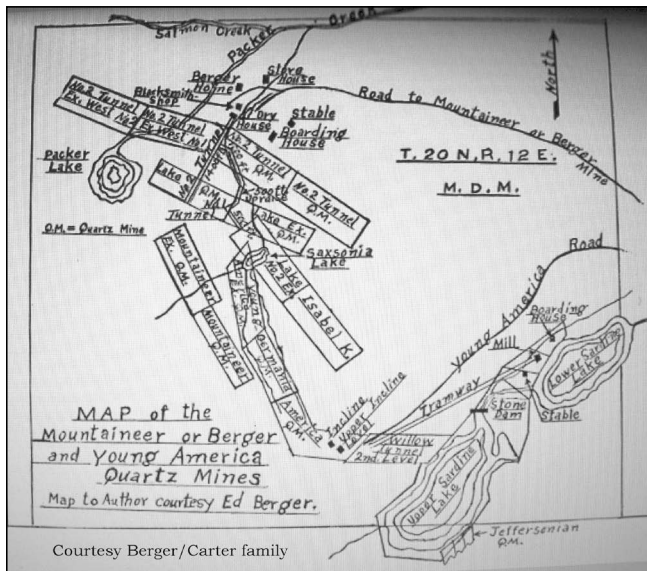
The Sierran

— A Publication of the Sierra County Historical Society —

Young America Consolidated Gold Mining Company
Sierra City Mining District

By Virginia Lutes

The Young America Mine was located in the Sardine Lakes area, two and a half miles due north of Sierra City, California. Even though it was seven miles away by wagon road, old timers said that if the wind was right you could hear the pounding of the forty stamp mill all the way in town.



— THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY —



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

Mary Nourse, President	James Connolly, Director
Ernie Teague, Vice President	Suzi Schoensee, Director
Bill Copren, Treasurer	Joe Madigan, Director
Vacant - Secretary	Judy Lawrence, Director
Don Yegge, Membership	Mark Lombardi, Alternate Director
Judy Lawrence, Virginia Lutes, Co-Editors of The Sierran	Cindy Ellsmore, Webmaster

Dianne Bruns,
Museum Curator

If you have any suggestions or comments, feel free to contact any board member or email at info@sierracountyhistory.org

Become a Member!

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 person/couple)	\$300.00

In addition, Museum Renovation Project donations are gratefully accepted.

Please send dues and donations to:

S.C.H.S.

c/o Don Yegge, Membership Chair
PO Box 336, Loyalton, CA 96118

Reprints Available Soon of Significant Historical Books



Among Maren Scholberg's many accomplishments is the writing and compiling of two very interesting and historically important books - *The Barns of Sierra County in Sierra Valley* and *The Historic Houses of Sierra County in Sierra Valley*. We are pleased to announce that in order to preserve these books for future generations, the SCHS has reprinted the books and they will be available for sale at the Kentucky Mine Museum and the Loyalton Museum this summer. You'll want to add these unique books to your library!

Barns of Sierra County in Sierra Valley



Sierra County Historical Society
1997

Historic Houses of Sierra County in Sierra Valley



Sierra County Historical Society
2000

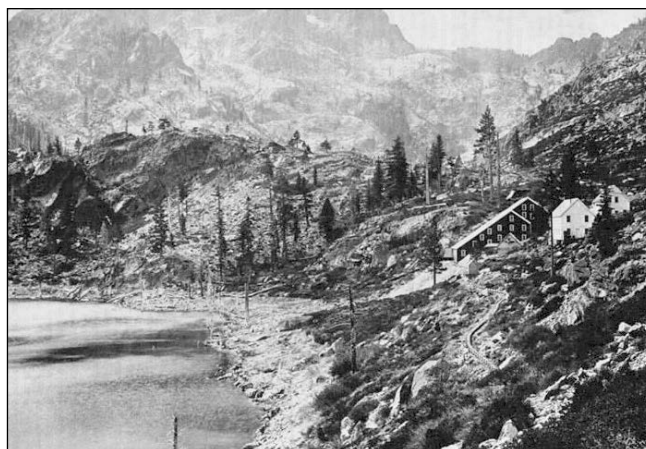
Sierra City Mining District - (Cont. from Page 1) —

finding the now famous Young America quartz ledge. Well, to make a long story short, they finally interested A. C. Busch and P. Deidesheimer in their discovery, giving those gentlemen a quarter interest each, Sunderhaus and Hughes retaining the other half. The company then incorporated with capital stock of 500,000 shares, putting 100,000 shares on the market, the proceeds of which were devoted to opening up the mine. When the stock was first put on the market and selling at a comparatively nominal figure, ex-Sheriff Mead came into possession of 25,000 or 30,000 shares. The mine is now paying handsome dividends. Messrs. Hughes and Sunderhaus to-day have a fortune of \$300,000 each. Mr. Busch, who before counted his wealth by the tens of thousands, now counts it by the hundreds of thousands. Mr. Deidesheimer, who was a comparatively poor man, does likewise. Mr. Mead, who Dame Fortune had for some time previously treated with favor, is now said to possess from \$75,000 to \$100,000."

No matter which was the correct version of the beginning of this fabulous lode, it was known to have produced through its history over \$1.5million, making it one of the richest mines in this area. In October, 1883 the mining claim was recorded by Sunderhaus and Philipp Deidesheimer in the county seat of Sierra and was to be known as the American Quartz Mine (Sierra County Quartz Book C pages 448-449). Soon after, the claimants better identified the boundaries with a filing in Sierra County Quartz Book D pages 68-70. The claim came to be known as the Young America.

Newspaper accounts of the progress of the mine began appearing since mining in this area had slowed considerably, and the new find on this ledge was important to the area. In April of 1884, it was reported that, "The ledge in the Young America is showing up finely. This mine is one of the most promising around here and is likely to be worked on a big scale in the near future." In December of that year: "The ledge in the Young America Mine is over three feet wide and prospects the biggest kind".

In July of 1884, a recording of intent to construct a mill for mining and crushing purposes was filed with the county. The exact name of the claim was Young America Extension Quartz Mine. Although the old records are difficult to decipher, it appears to be signed by A. C. Busch and Herringlake. Lumber for the stamp mill came from a sawmill located near Bassett's Station, owned by Phillip and Jack Hayes and Mrs. Bassett.



In later years the mill furnished more lumber for the boarding house and other buildings at the Young America.

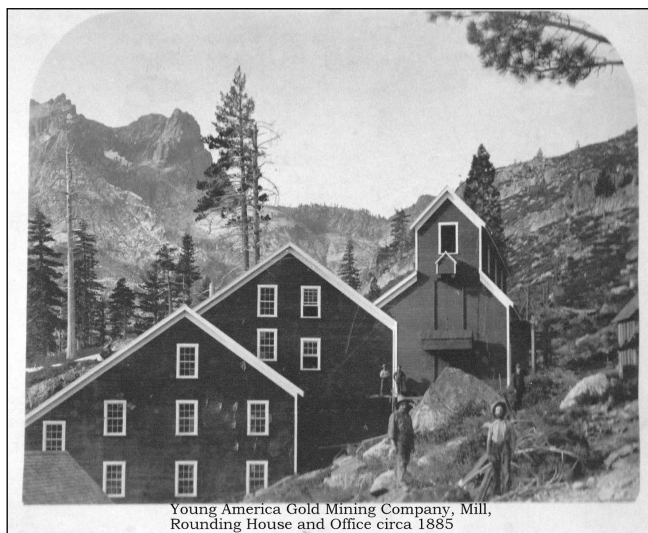
1885 was a productive year for the Sunderhaus, Deidesheimer, Busch, Hughes, Mead and Herringlake enterprise. They prospected the ledge from which the discovery had come and opened the Number 1 Tunnel on the mountainside north of lower Sardine Lake. That February Deidesheimer took close to one hundred pounds of the rich ore to Downieville. The newspapers of the time bubbled with excitement, "It is a fine a lot as can be found anywhere. The Young America has every appearance of being a bonanza". By March work began on the construction of a wagon road to the mine from the Gold Lake Road, and by early April it was completed as far as the Sardine House. At a location below Upper Sardine Lake and the Number 1 Tunnel, the owners began to grade ground for the construction of a ten-stamp mill and a boarding house. Next a 3,200 foot cable tramway was constructed to deliver ore to the mill. All of this was completed by August, including a stamp mill that was powered by a six-foot Pelton wheel.

The first clean-up after a seventeen-day run produced \$16,000 in September of 1885. Construction began to add ten additional stamps to the mill. The clean-ups continued to bring prosperity to the owners of the Young America Mine, but the eager entrepreneurs did not sit still. They continued to work to increase production, and in November of 1885, a workforce of men constructed a dam at Upper Sardine Lake. Built of rock and dirt, it measured thirty-one and a half feet across at both the top and bottom. The purpose of this dam was to raise the water level in the lake insuring that sufficient water would be available to run the additional stamps. By November the second 10 stamps had been started.

Sierra City Mining District - (Cont. on Page 4) —

Sierra City Mining District - (Cont. from Page 3) —

Between the fall of 1885 and the summer of 1886, two additional units of 10 stamps each were added to the mill, which now ran 40 stamps. This was one of the largest stamp mills in Sierra County at the time. (The Sierra Buttes Mine also ran a 40 stamp mill in Sierra City).



Young America Gold Mining Company, Mill, Rounding House and Office circa 1885

A second tunnel, several hundred feet below Number 1 Tunnel had been run into the vein and a raise was put up between the two tunnels. Plans for later in the year called for construction of a third tunnel a few feet above the level of the mill building that would strike the ledge five hundred feet further down. That year an 8,400 pound safe was purchased, hauled to the mine, and placed in the office of President August Busch. Mr. Deidesheimer was serving as secretary to the Young America Consolidated Mining Company at that time. In December of 1886, a cleanup of twenty-five days yielded \$25,563.

The geologic description of the Young America comes to us from Gold Mines in California: "Lying between the greenstone and the syenite, which here form the country, is a belt of metamorphic slate about two hundred feet wide. In this belt, which strikes west 17 degrees north, occurs the Young America Lode, a vein of quartz averaging six feet in thickness, and pitching north with the formation at an angle of 45 degrees. The linear extent of lode taken up by the company, and for which a U.S. Patent has been applied, comprises 6,000 feet."

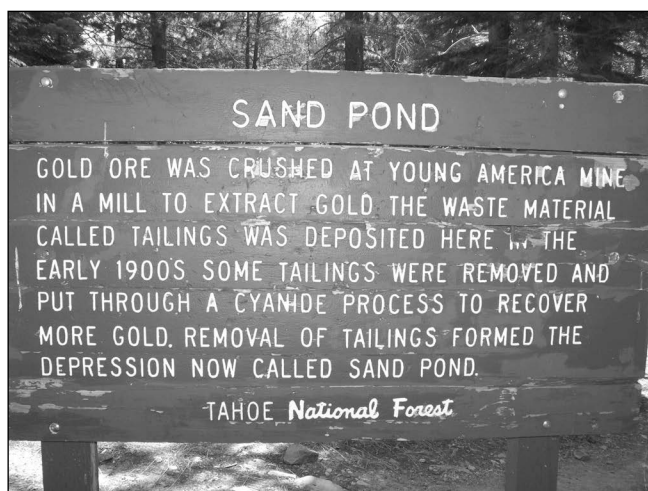
The Young America was watched with great interest and excitement throughout the mining communities. The 1886 Annual Report of the State Mineralogist, described the Young America as such: "The Young America Consolidated Mining company: The

Young America Report of State Mineralogist 1890

Altitude	7,400 feet.
Altitude of lower tunnel	6,200 feet.
Length of No. 1 tunnel	1,370 feet.
Length of No. 2 tunnel	2,400 feet.
Length of No. 3 tunnel	2,215 feet.
Length of No. 4 tunnel	1,860 feet.
Kind of powder used	Hercules Nos. 1 and 2.
Cost of running No. 4 tunnel	\$14 per foot.
Dimensions of No. 4 tunnel	75 feet high by 9 feet.
Length of tunnels timbered	5,000 feet.
Kind of timber	Round pine and fir.
Cost of timber	8 cents per foot.
Distance of mine from Number	4 miles.
Cost of tunnel	\$20 per foot.
Length of road built by company	10 miles.
Cost of road	\$10,000.
Length of ditch (water)	1/2 mile.
Cost of dam	\$12,000.
Character of ore	Quartz, with sulphurets of iron and copper.
Character of stamp	Wet-crushing mill.
Number of stamps	40.
Weight of stamp	750 pounds.
Height of drop	7 inches.
Drops per minute	84.
Height of discharge	6 inches.
Duty per stamp in twenty-four hours	13 tons.
Kind of shoes	Chrome steel.
Kind of dies	White iron.
Cost of shoes	10 cents per pound.
Cost of dies	6 cents per pair.
Size and character of screens	Slot-punched, Nos. 7 and 8.
Kind of feeders	Challenger.
Percentage of gold recovered saved in battery	80 per cent.
Percentage of gold recovered saved on plates	20 per cent.
Kind of concentrator	Triumph.
Number of concentrators	4.
Percentage of sulphurets	One half of 1 per cent.
Value of sulphurets	\$50 per ton.
Number of men in mill	75.
Number of outside men	6.
Total number of employees	42.
Average wages in mine	120.
Average wages in mill	\$2.50 per day.
Average wages outside work	\$3 per day.
Kind of power	\$2.25 per day.
Cost of water	Free.

company's property is in the Sierra Mining District, about seven miles north of Sierra City, and has an altitude of 7,400 feet above the sea. The Consolidation is 6,000 feet in length by 500 feet wide. The vein has an easterly and westerly course, a northerly dip of 45 degrees, and averages 5 1/2 feet in width. The formation of the hanging wall of the rich auriferous shoot in the Eureka at Grass Valley; also identical with the rocks forming the walls of the richest mines in Venezuela. The mill occupies a site 3,200 feet from the mine - in this distance the perpendicular height of the mine above the mill is 900 feet. The one is conveyed to the mill by an elevated tramway in buckets of 100 pound capacity. At present it requires the work of two men to fill the buckets in transit, but that duty will soon be performed automatically by an invention of Mr. Busch, for foreman of the mine. The Consolidated contains within its environs four lakes - the smaller one, three fourths of a mile below the mill, is used to impound the tailings, the higher one directly under the snowcapped Buttes, feeds the waters of the melting snow of the reservoir, which furnishes the mill with power. The gross proceeds of the mine and mill for the year ending August 15, 1886 amounted to \$294,000. For the first 3 months of the year there were but 10 stamps, then 10 more were put in place, and lastly on Aug. 18, 40 stamps were dropping on the quartz of the mine. Owing to the favorable location this mine can be opened by tunnels to a depth of about 1600 feet. During the year the company has built a dam, separating the 2 larger lakes, 175 feet long, 25 feet high and 52 feet at the base. Cost \$8000."

Sierra City Mining District - (Cont. from Page 4) —



Another company, Packer Lake Gold Mining Company, attempted to develop two ledges near Packer Lake, on the other side of the Young America; one ledge was thought to be an extension of the Young America Ledge. This endeavor did not prove out to be as rich as hoped, nor as spectacular as the Young America Mine. The Mountain Mine also operated in that area.

In early January, 1888 men working at the lowest tunnel, (Number 3) struck the ledge, but production did not match that of the previous two tunnels. That spring the Young America had dropped production at the stamp mill; due to the scarcity of water only ten stamps were being run. The company planned to run Number 2 Tunnel through the mountain to Packer Lake in hopes of utilizing the water from Packer into Upper Sardine Lake thus providing an adequate year-round water supply for the stamp mill. At that time 110 men were employed at the Young America, and the amount of supplies needed was extensive. Eight tons of grass hay, fifteen tons of timothy, ten tons of oats, and four tons of butter were but a few of the necessities.

The Young America became quite the place to visit for local folks. The Mountain Messenger described two visits by local people: "At Upper Sardine Lake we met Paul Loeffler with who we enjoyed a row over the blue waters 'neath the protecting shade of the lofty snow-crowned peaks of the Sierra Buttes. We then returned to the Young America Quartz Mine where Paul treated us to a car ride up and down the tramway. At Number 3 Tunnel Foreman Casserly courteously showed us around and presented to each of our party a beautiful quartz specimen ribboned with gold." A second visit by the community was to honor a local artist. "In the office dining room of the Young America hangs on the wall a beautiful picture of the Sierra Buttes, Upper

Sardine Lake, mill and tramway, most artistically painted by Miss Ida Haskell, a niece of Dan T. Cole of the Mountain House, now residing in Paris, France. As a just and merited recognition of such artistic genius, Philip Deidesheimer and Oliver Sunderhaus, stockholders of the Young America, gallantly presented the gifted young lady with \$150,000." A later article in 1889 described this gala event, "Wednesday evening three carriage loads of Sierra City folks, including the Spanish Band, left Sierra City for the Young America Quartz Mine. The lower Sardine Lake was brilliantly illuminated with bon-fires, and skating was indulged in until after mid-night, the skaters keeping time to the sweet and enlivening music of the Spanish Band. Mr. A.C. Busch, one of the stockholders and acting Superintendent, treated his guests to an elegant lunch at his own expense" (James Sinnott, Sierra City and Goodyears Bar).

In October of 1888 the clean-up for September was \$25,500. Word continued to spread of the success of the Young America, and in the summer of 1889, several offers to purchase the mine were made. The owners were asking one million dollars. Ownership continued as before the offers. The owners of the Young America Consolidated Gold Mining Company filed for seven patents totaling 192 acres. The patent process was to "purchase" the mining land and take it from the public sector to the private sector.

The onset of 1890 brought with it a string of bad luck. A fire at the Young America in January destroyed the snow sheds, dry house, a barn and one house with a loss of \$10,000 with no insurance. In August a premature explosion of a blast caused the mortal injury of one man and the serious injury of two others. A few days later, William Dundy, who was one of those injured, died. The month of October brought another tragedy. Two men, McDonald and Wade, were severely injured by a blast. Wade would lose his sight.

Misfortunes continued for the Young America in 1891 which found the owners facing a lawsuit. The San Francisco Call noted that The Detective Morse's Bill Detective Harry N. Morse sued Watt Hughes, P. Deidesheimer, and Oliver Sunderhaus for \$2491.95 for services rendered in connection with the Young America Consolidated Mining Company.

Sierra City Mining District - (Continued on Page 6) —

Sierra City Mining District - (Continued from Page 5) —

An average of the monthly clean-up of the Young America from September of 1885 through 1890 had been about \$20,000, but began to decline at the end of that period. The production of high grade ore in the latter part of 1891-1892 decreased significantly. The mine and owners found themselves in financial trouble. In April of 1892 instead of a dividend, an assessment was levied on the stock held by the owners. The tax owed to Sierra County became delinquent for 1891.

A note in the Financial and Mining Record, Vol. 31 in 1892 stated that, "The report that the Young America Mine, Sierra City had closed is not correct, there are some eight or nine men still at work there." During the winter of 1892-1893, very little work was done at the mine. G. M. Green, of Denver, Colorado purchased the Young America for \$13,500 in 1893.

During 1894 several arrastras were set up and ore of the dumps of the tunnels was milled in them. It was hoped that the waste dumps contained gold sufficient to yield a good return for little cost of operation. The Mountain Messenger report in February of 1894 stated, "The arrastras are running at the Young America and are said to daily grind 100 tons of ore." Then in September the Messenger reported that, "Four men are at work on the Young America tailings. More arrastras will be put up soon. The recent clean-up was satisfactory."

The Marin Journal reported in October of 1896 that, "A cyanide plant of 150 tons daily capacity has been erected at the Young America Mine near Sierra City and will be started up in about ten days. The tailings run \$16 to \$20 ton."

On a Wednesday afternoon in September of 189 ,a fire broke out in the office of the Young America Mine and in a short time had destroyed the boarding house, mill, office, and all of the surrounding buildings. The Mountain Messenger said that, "Mr. Green and family lost everything, including clothing and jewelry. Miss Annie Perryman, who has been stopping there, lost most of her clothing." The mine interests sold a number of times following the fire, always with a hope of regaining the fabulous ore that had once been found. It appears that the cyanide plant and possibly the arrastras continued to work the tailings during the period of time after the fire. The San Francisco Call on September 12, 1903 reported that, "Messrs. Meikle and Stevens have had ten men at work on their cyanide plant and have been working the sand from the old

Young America Mine which was at one time fabulously rich."

The Engineering and Mining Journal of 1907 stated that the Young America had an abundant supply of water for power and washing, and planned to reopen.



The September 9, 1907 the Los Angeles Herald stated: "The one time famous Young America Mine, six miles from Sierra City, is again showing signs of activity. A Los Angeles company has bonded this property and is preparing to run a tunnel several thousand feet in length to crosscut the Young America Ledge at a great depth, and also with a view of hitting the Berger Ledge on the opposite side of the ridge, thus combining the two mines in one. The Young America has paid over \$1,000,000 in dividends, but through bad management, and the loss of all the buildings, including a forty-stamp mill by fire, the mine was closed down some eight years ago." However, the May 30, 1910 Sacramento Union informed its readership: "May Reopen Deserted Mine. Sierra City Elated Over Prospects of Young America Operation". Another headline appeared, "Special to the Union, Nevada City May 29": "The Young America mine may be re-opened soon, and Sierra City is elated over the prospect. Years ago the Young America was the best mine in the district, and employed a number of men. Charles. R. Thompson of Plumas County has taken a bond on the mine and is now examining the property, accompanied by two experts."

The Young America Mine never did reach previous glory but the tailings were worked extensively. In 1915 a large Pelton water-wheel was brought from Nevada City, consigned to the persons who were operating the tailing

Sierra City Mining District - (Continued on Page 7) —

Sierra City Mining District - (Continued from Page 6) —

from the Young America Mine. In July of that year an article in the Sausalito News described, "Many of the old mine dumps of Sierra County have been found to possess value and are being worked on a large scale. Bonlay & Zachert of San Francisco have purchased for cash an immense dump below the Young America Mine at Sierra City and are installing machinery. It is estimated that there are 60,000 tons of tailings and that it will require nearly 3 years to remill them. The values are said to run from \$1.75 to \$2.50 per ton."


In 1922 a Gibson mill was brought to the Young America to regrind the estimated \$50,000 tons of tailings. (Readers may speculate, was this additional tonnage to the 1915 estimate or was this was part of the original tonnage of tailings?)

Work eventually stopped altogether at the Young America Mine. There is very little evidence on the slopes above the Sardine Lakes to indicate the scope of the mining operation in its glory days; but the dam is still intact, some tailings are evident, and the pond once created for mining purposes is now a popular swimming hole known as "Sand Pond".

On May 2, 2011, The Trust for Public Land and the Sierra County Land Trust announced the purchase of 835 acres which included the area in this article.

Editor's note: For more information on the operation of a stamp mill, plan a visit to our museum in Sierra City. The Kentucky Mine Stamp Mill is available to tour during the summer season from Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day Weekend. It is a fine example of a stamp mill that is operable. A Pelton-Wheel is also located in our gold mine portal.

PHILIPP DEIDESHEIMER 1832-1916

 In connection with the history of the Young America Mine, Philipp Deidesheimer in 1860 had invented a new system of timbering in the Silver Mines of the Comstock in Virginia City. This new form of timbering achieved wide recognition, but Mr. Deidesheimer failed to patent the invention, thus did not receive a large amount of money. His "square-set" system allowed the mines to develop much more safely than previous methods. With the type of soft and unstable soil in that area, many mines collapsed killing miners. Mr. Deidesheimer was quoted as saying, "If all goes well and these square-sets protect the lives of the miners, what more could a man ask for?" In the 1870's Deidesheimer was awarded a first prize diploma and gold medal for this system of timbering at the World's Columbia Fair at Chicago in 1890. Then in 1988 the National Mining Hall of Fame in Leadville, Colorado, inducted Mr. Deidesheimer. Mr. Deidesheimer was one of the noted mining engineers of the world.

Phillipp was born in Darmstadt, Hesse in 1832 before German unification. He attended Freiberg University of Mining before immigrating to California in 1852. He worked in the gold fields for several years including in Georgetown. In 1860, Mr. Babcock, trustee of the Ophir Mine in Virginia City heard of Deidesheimer hired Phillipp to solve the problem of underground mining and timbering. Phillipp solved the problem with heavy timbers or "cubes" as supports for mining tunnels and shafts. This resembled honeycombs.

His success led to many offers. He designed and supervised construction of the Hope Mill and Smelter in Granite County, Montana. The town that was formed around the Hope Mill was named Philipsburg in his honor. He returned to Virginia City and served as superintendent of the Ophir Mine for owner William Sharon in early 1875. Later moving to San Francisco, he enjoyed speculating in mining stocks which brought him to financial ruin. Mr. Deidesheimer and wife Matilda returned to the gold fields, to Sierra County to work the Columbia Mine before becoming involved with the Young America in 1883.

He died in San Francisco in July of 1916, penniless.

The Sierran

Sierra County Historical Society
P.O. Box 260
Sierra City, California 96125

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

THE SIERRAN

WINTER 2017

Why Do They Call It Sardine Lake?

First-time visitors to Lower Sardine Lake are often puzzled by its name. The pristine fresh-water lake has rainbow and brook trout, but certainly no sardines. So, what's up with the name? The explanation is really quite simple. According to the folks at Sardine Lake Resort, it was known as Emerald Lake until the late 1880's when a mule packing supplies up to the Young America Mine lost its footing in the rough terrain, fell in the lake, and drowned. His name? You guessed it: Sardine. The miners thought it was only fitting to rename the lake in his honor. To this day, even before asking about the fishing, tourists want to know, "Why do they call it Sardine Lake?"

If you would like to learn more about H. Watt Hughes, one of the partners in the Young America Mine, read the article about the Holly House in the Spring, 2007 issue of The Sierran. It is available in the archive section which can be accessed at sierracountyhistory.org.

