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Sierra County  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY

Dec. 17, 1969

DOWN IN THE VALLEY

YEAR OF THE BIG SNOW

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

NOTES OF INTEREST



THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 17, 1969      VOL. I, No. 4

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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## A HISTORY OF SIERRA VALLEY

Nestled serenely in the midst of the Sierra-Nevadas lies Sierra Valley. The valley itself appears to have changed little from the days when Jim Beckwourth rode over Chilcoot Pass and beheld the valley. Those who know its history, however, realize what great changes have taken place.

If the mountains which overlook Sierra Valley could speak, they could relate the hardships and pleasures that were so very necessary for the development of the valley. They could tell of the early pioneers, the birth and death of small towns, the labor of the determined farmers and trail blazers, and, lastly, of the countless fascinating incidents which took place at their feet. This article is an attempt to tell you, the reader, what the silent mountains can not tell.

### The Valley

Sierra Valley is the largest of the valleys in the Sierra Nevada Range of mountains. It is situated between the snow summit and the state of Nevada and has an area of 170 square miles. At some period of time in the long distant past it is assumed to have been a mammoth volcanic crater.

Sierra Valley, once called Beckwourth's Valley, was settled by James P. Beckwourth, an "old Mountain Man", in the spring of 1851. He led a train of immigrants through Beckwourth's Pass, located in the northeast corner of the Valley, that very summer. In the spring of 1852, Jim established himself in the Valley on the route from the pass. He claimed a piece of land, built a hotel and began trading with the immigrants. Other eyes, however, had gazed upon the Valley before those of Beckwourth.

In June, 1850, a party of prospectors, in search of the fabled Gold Lake, reached the headwaters of the middle fork of the Feather River. Three of them, A.P. Chapman, George F. Kent and William E. Jones, went hunting one day. From the top of what is known as Saddleback Peak, they spied the Valley lying to the east,







below them. They left with the others, but returned in October of 1851.

Chapman returned in the company of Joseph Kerby, John Gardner and I.K. McClannin. This small party camped the first night amid a clump of pine trees. In the morning they im-

mediately posted notices of their claim of a strip of land straight across the valley for four ranches. Many others followed suit, and by July, 1852, William C. and B.F. Lemmon, Gardner, Kerby and one other, had claimed land in Sierra Valley. That same spring Jim Beckwourth had located his trading post at the north end of the valley.

In its earliest days Sierra Valley attracted men who thought there might be gold in the mountains to the west of the Valley, but the gold was not to be found. Those who settled in the Valley became farmers, teamsters and merchants.

Before the development of the Yuba Pass road, the freight teams over the Sierras crossed the mountains by way of Hennessey Pass, which parted from the present Yuba Pass Highway between Goodyear's Bar and Forest. It passed Webber Lake, went down the Dog Valley grade into Verdi, and then on to Truckee Meadows. It was joined by the roads from Sierraville, via Lemmon Canyon, and Loyalton, via Lewis Canyon, near Sardine Valley. This road was very steep in places, and the Sierra Valley Teamsters soon showed a preference for the route over Beckwourth Pass and through Long Valley to Reno.

The original road west across Sierra Valley began at Beckwourth Pass, as it does today, but about six miles west of the pass, it veered toward the north and served the ranches along the hill and behind the Buttes. Passing on through the mountains, its logical outlet was Oroville. Marysville, at this time, was one of the more important towns of the state, and it was to the interest of everyone in that region to have a direct route over the mountains. In 1867, Indian Valley merchants engaged Arthur W. Keddle to make a survey for such a road.





Keddie's report of his survey was due on March 31, 1867. In his report he advised the north fork route, condemning the middle fork as impassible. His estimate of the cost of the road was \$150,000, but his survey was not used until the Western Pacific built its line through the mountains.

Early Sierra Valley was taken up at first by Easterners, many of whom sold out to Swiss immigrants. These Swiss immigrants began drifting into the valley, working the various farms, and stayed to play a very important part in the developement of the Valley.

Just why or when the first Italian-Swiss came to Sierra Valley is uncertain. There were Swiss in the valley at least as early as the 1870's. Old histories record that of these early Swiss, many, in both Plumas and Sierra counties, engaged in businesses such as hotels, stores, and ranching.

The early settlers found the country fitted to dairying and grazing. Much cheese and butter was produced in the early days. The cattle raised in the Valley were driven through the mountains and marketed as far away as Grass Valley and Marysville. The mountain valleys were natural meadows, a fact appreciated by the early cattlemen. The story is told of a man named Poor, who started from Oregon in the spring and followed the grass through the mountains with 1,000 head of cattle. He passed through Sierra Valley and arrived with his cattle, fat and healthy, at Sacramento in the fall.

Fine horses were also raised in Sierra Valley. Joseph Dyson bred race horses, and traces of his private track still





remain on the ranches owned. Dr. Webber, for whom Webber Lake is named, also had a horse ranch on which he raised first-class horses for stage use and driving.

The fine native grass made excellent hay, and many a rancher received a great part of his income from hay he had sold. In the early days, hay was hand mown and baled in one hundred-pound bales. Isaac Church carried hay up over Haskell's Peak, which seems to have been one of the earliest trails into Sierra Valley from the gold mines.

The country was settled in what was apparently a much wetter period than now. There are stories of driving sleighs across country without any regard for fences, and because of snow, taking several days to go a few miles. The most famous winter was that of 1889-1890. There was reported to have been ten feet of snow on the level in Sierra Valley and twenty-five feet on the Yuba Pass, which was not opened until July 4 of that year.

Farming and ranching, during the early years of the history of the Valley (1850-1870) continued to be the main way most people earned a living. In the 1870s through the present time, lumbering also was an important industry in the Valley and the mountains near the valley. Lumber from Sierra Valley mills was used in Virginia City, Nevada, in the many mines in the Sierra County and Plumas County regions, and in most of the towns near Sierra Valley.

Several towns grew in the Valley. Some of these communities still exist today and some are only memories in the minds of the old-timers. Here and there, around the Valley, an old cemetery, a mound of rocks, or a crumbling rock or brick wall indicate where at one time a thriving little town existed. If one were to drive into the Valley today from the South West direction (over the Truckee-Sierraville road, Highway 89) he would first reach the town of Sierraville, and then if he continued East, then North, then West and finally South, he would pass through or near the towns listed below.

Randolph: The cluster of houses at the western end of the present town of Sierraville is what remains of the early



town of Randolph. The town was originally one mile from Sierraville and contained about one hundred people. The first house was built in 1853 by one W.C. Lemon and Ezra Culver. The town reportedly grew up around this house. The town, at one time, contained a store, a hotel, a saw mill, a shingle mill, two saloons, a blacksmith shop, a shoe shop, a grist mill and a number of nice residences. Today the limits of Sierraville include what was at one time Randolph.

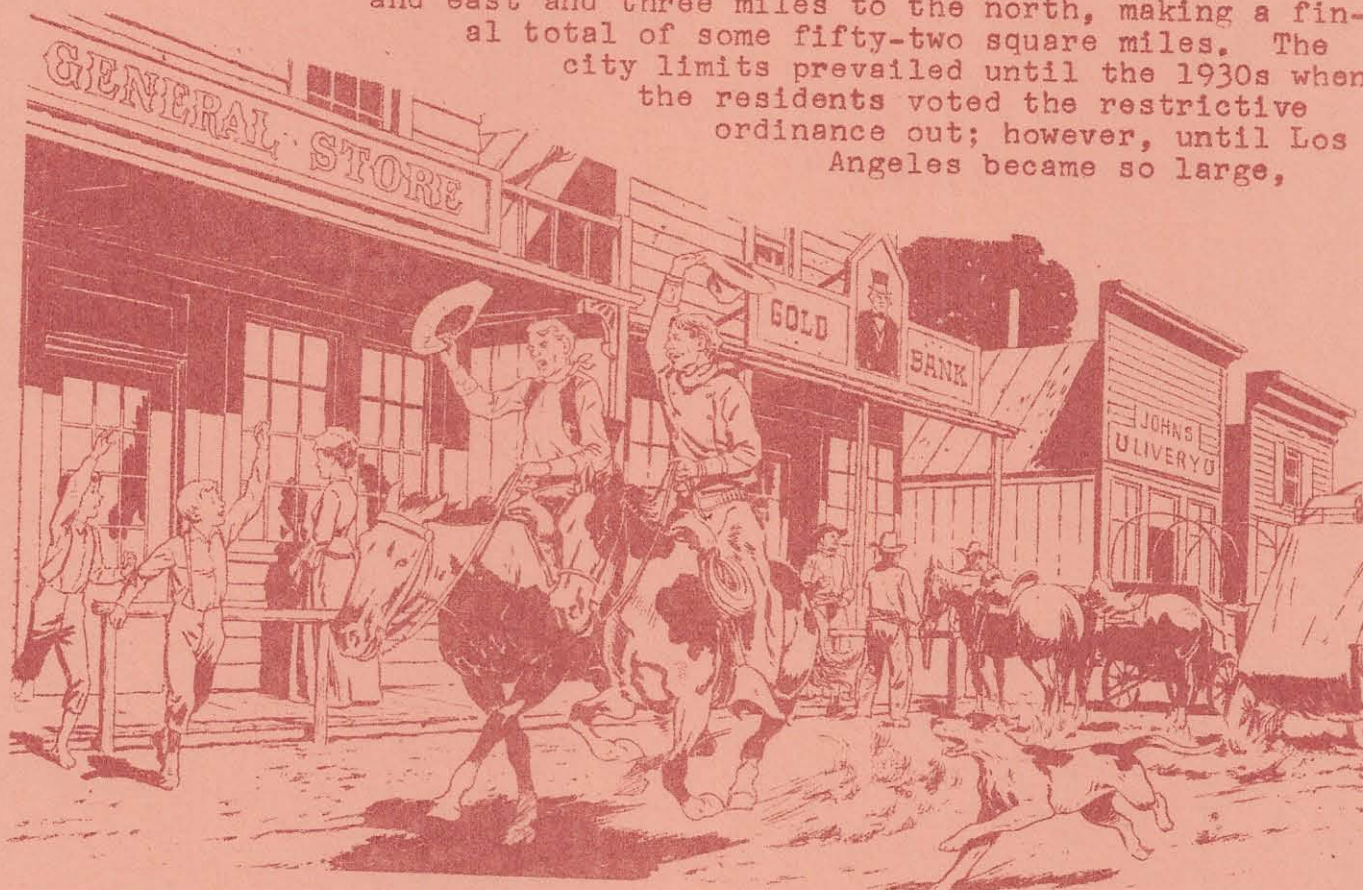
Sierraville: Sierraville was at first just a trading post. It soon grew into a good sized community. William Arms, who later built a ranch at the north end of Sierra Valley, was among the first people in Sierraville. When it came time for the town's people to pick a name for their community, they suggested the name Armsville, but Arms suggested Sierraville instead, and the latter name was chosen. On August 31, 1881, the entire business section of the town, except Darling's Livery Stable, was laid in ashes by a huge fire. The first fire (of many to follow) destroyed two hotels, two stores, an I.O.O.F. Hall and several other buildings. The town, however, was promptly restored. It has remained an important little community of some three hundred people ever since.

Loyalton: Loyalton was originally known as Smith's Neck, although the buildings of the Smith's Neck enterprise were some two miles from the present location of the town of Loyalton. The name, Smith's Neck, came from a party of miners who were associated together under the name of Smith Mining Company. In the spring of 1854 two of these men went east to purchase a large band of cattle. The others went into Sierra Valley to claim land for grazing and agriculture. They claimed five sections of land on either side of a stream which empties into the middle fork of the Feather River, and called it Smith Creek or Smith's Neck Creek. The men who had been sent for cattle failed to return, and that winter the Smith Company failed. The Indians raided and burned the buildings which had been built on the ranch, and the location was abandoned. From the time it was abandoned until the summer of 1857, Smith's Neck remained unoccupied. From 1857 to 1860 people again began to reside in the Smith's Neck region. In the early 1860s there appeared in the area a Doctor Adam G. Doome, who seemed to have been the guiding spirit of the area. He was a doctor, a minister, a hotel keeper, and a bar tender. Much of the present town of Loyalton is built on land previously owned by Doome. He sponsored the organizing and building of the first school, and was the first post master. When Doome was appointed post master in 1863, he called the post office Loyalton. This name was derived from the loyalty that the town had shown to the Union during the Civil War when the entire population responded to war subscriptions. A school was built in 1865, a Baptist Church in 1870, and a Methodist Church in 1871. In August, 1879, Loyalton a fire devastated the town and ruined most of it except for Keye's Hotel, the Methodist Church and a few other buildings. The town was quickly restored, lumber mills were built in town and nearby, and the town has continued to exist



to the present day.

One of the most appealing phases in Loyalton's history was the distinction earned when members of the governing body enacted an ordinance which forbade the sale of liquor within the "city limits". The city limits were then made some forty miles square as the then city fathers continued to widen the city limits to discourage lumber jacks from walking beyond the city limits for a drink of liquor. As a result Loyalton became the second largest city in California. When the city was incorporated, it had reached an area nine miles to the west and nine miles to the south and east and three miles to the north, making a final total of some fifty-two square miles. The city limits prevailed until the 1930s when the residents voted the restrictive ordinance out; however, until Los Angeles became so large,



Loyalton was regarded as the "largest City west of the Mississippi River."

Vinton: Vinton came into being as a town in 1896 when the Peterson brothers rebuilt the old Sierra Mohawk station into a store. Until that time it had been only a railroad station and section. The town was destroyed by fire three times, but was always rebuilt and managed to support a hotel, bar, store and a post office which was established in 1897. The town still exists as a pleasant little community of some 150 people and has a post office, a store, a service station, a cafe and equipment business. It is also the site of the Sierra Valley Grange Hall.



Summit: In 1859, C.T. Adams operated a hotel near the highest point of Beckwourth Pass. The hotel was called Summit House and was accepted by the Post Office Department as an address. In 1861 the name was changed to Summit. By 1864 the settlement had a stone building which housed the Wilkinson Store and a cemetery to the north of town. In 1897 the population had shrunk to such minute proportions that the Federal Government ordered the post office removed, and the name of the village was removed from the Post Office Department listings. Today the ruins of the old stone store, the cemetery, one of the original cabins, and newer houses still stand on the site of Summit.

Chilcoot: By 1899 the people of Summit, the town having grown again, asked the post office department for a post office. The government agreed that a post office was necessary for the town, but in the time interval when the post office was closed another town of Summit had been given a post office in another part of the U.S. The people chose the name Chilcoot for their new post office, reportedly in a salute to the miners of the Alaskan gold rush who had crossed the Chilcoot Pass in the Yukon. Construction of the Western Pacific railroad through Beckwourth Pass brought new prosperity to the Chilcoot area. The mouth of the new railroad tunnel opened right beside the older town of Chilcoot, but the railroad station was placed about one half mile to the west of the tunnel. In time the town followed the railroad station and the town still exists in that location.

Beckwourth: The first house built in Sierra Valley was reportedly built by James P. Beckwourth, a Negro government Indian scout, in the spring of 1852. A post office was established in 1866. For a time the name of the town was spelled "Beckwith", a mistake made in the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C., but the proper spelling was restored in 1932. The town of Beckwourth still exists and has some two hundred residents, although the original cabin built by Beckwourth (and still standing) is some 3/4 of a mile from the town.

Calpine: Calpine was so named for the California Pines which grew in the vicinity. The land was first owned by George W. and Charles M. Knuthson, who sold the real property, about 400 acres, to the Davies-Johnson Lumber Company for a cash payment of ten dollars. In 1939 the Davies-Johnson Lumber Company sold a portion of this property to J.J. Farrar. The lumber company closed and Mr. Farrar sold lots to people who formed the town of Calpine. Calpine is still a delightful spot in Sierra Valley and is attracting many people as a vacation or retirement area. The original deed between the Davies-Johnson Lumber Company and J.J. Farrar is interesting because of its rather severe restrictions. The following were part of the deed, recorded in the Sierra County Clerk's Office, Deed Book, No. 38, pages 18 and 19:

1. The premises were to be used exclusively for



- residence purposes. No buildings or structures for the conduct of any kind of business could be erected.
2. No part of the premises were to be sold or conveyed, leased or rented to any person who was not of the white or caucasian race. None of the property could be used or occupied by any such persons, unless they were under the employ of the resident, owner, or tenants.
  3. No alcohol, vinous, malt, spirituous or intoxicating liquors of any kind or nature could be sold, exposed for sale or stored on the premises.

It is good to note that the people of Calpine have become much more Christian in their attitudes concerning race, and much more liberal in their attitudes concerning liquor, and that none of the previously mentioned restrictions still exist.

Sattley: Sattley was originally called Church's Corners, after the Church family which settled there. A post office was established in the town in 1890. Ezra Church, Jr. was the first post master, and the post office (and hence, the town) was given his mother's maiden name, Sattley. Frank Church, born in 1861, was reportedly the first white boy born in Sierra Valley. The town of some one hundred residents still exists.

Other villages and post offices existed in the past in Sierra Valley, but they have ceased to exist, and it is even difficult today to find their location.

#### Notes on the Author:

We welcome a new contributor to the Quarterly, Mrs. Joan Roth of Loyalton, California. Mrs. Roth was born in Santa Rosa, Calif., in 1951. She moved to Loyalton when in the fifth grade and continued her schooling in Loyalton, graduating from High School in 1969. Her interest in the history of Sierra Valley grew from an assignment she had in High School. She presently resides in Loyalton and is the mother of a little girl. Her husband is in the Military Service.



## CATASTROPHY IN SIERRA CITY

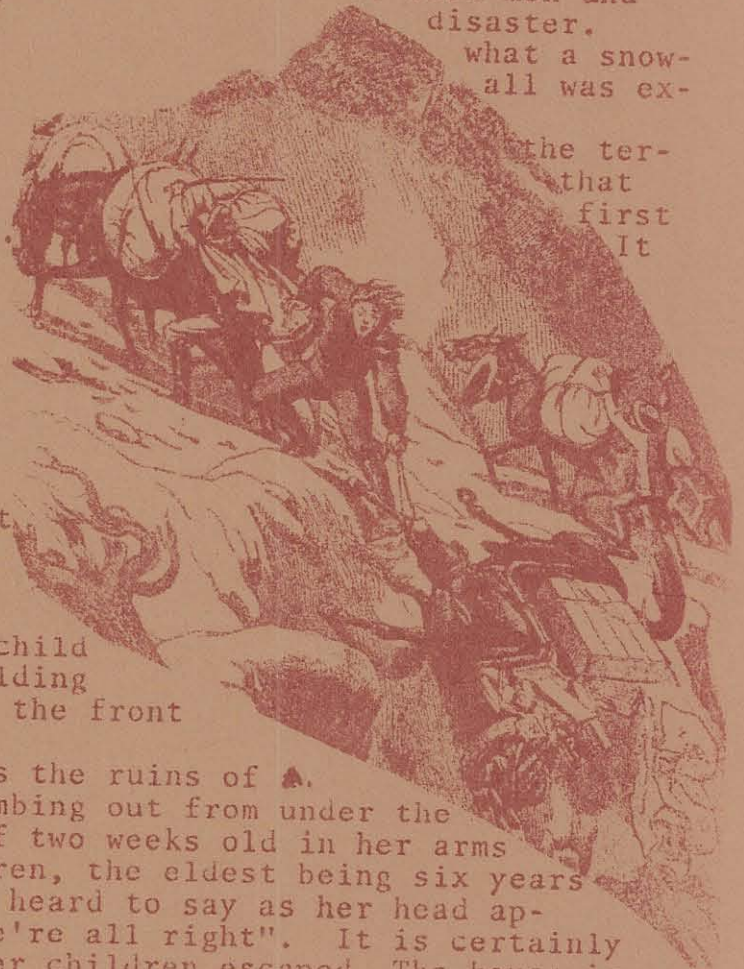
One of the saddest catastrophes known happened here Friday afternoon, January 3rd, 1890, at 3:00 p.m.

A snowslide 150 feet wide precipitated from a bluff of rocks on the Sierra Buttes mountain just above the Buttes Company flume and did disastrous work to the upper part of town by sweeping away, without a seconds notice, people's homes and lives.

It was but a few minutes after the fatal slide came that everybody in the village knew what had happened.

From every direction there could be seen men and women rushing to the scene of disaster. It is mountaineers who know what a snowslide means and consequently all was excitement.

It is impossible to describe the terrible scenes and sad pictures met the eyes of those who neared the place of the ruins. It was painful to the most hardened heart.



### AT THE RUINS

The wife of William H. Buscombe was the first person to be seen. With her child in her arms she stood in front of her wrecked house crying for help.

As providence would have it, neither Mrs. Buscombe or her child were injured although the building was knocked several feet into the front yard.

A short distance from this was the ruins of A. Lewis' house. Mrs. Lewis climbing out from under the ruins with her infant child of two weeks old in her arms followed by three other children, the eldest being six years old. The first thing she was heard to say as her head appeared above the snow was, "We're all right". It is certainly a miracle how this lady and her children escaped. The house is a total wreck. There would have been no chance for them whatever had they not been in the kitchen which was on the east side of the house.

The saddest of the sad spectacles was yet to be unearthed. When the awful avalanche came, there sat by the fireside at her home Mrs. John Rich, surrounded by her four children and her niece, Amelia Ryan of Downieville.



In a moment the poor mother and all the others were swept into eternity by the great mass of snow that gave away from the mountain side, a mile above them. There was not a whole piece of board left after the snow struck the house. Most of the wreck was found below the road several rods distant. The body of Mrs. Rich was found close to where the sitting room stood and she still had her knitting in her hand.

Close to her lay the bodies of her daughter, Etta, son, Bertie, and her niece, Amelia Ryan. The body of Gertie, the youngest child, was found the following morning covered with snow and debris below the road.

Another fearful scene was at the place of Judge I. T. Mooney, just a few feet from the Rich scene. The wife and daughter of Mr. Mooney were at home when the slide came. The house was completely demolished. Men were at work trying to rescue the unfortunate women. After a few minutes, smoke began to rise from the debris showing that a fire had started, which added double horror to the terrible situation. The stricken husband gave up all hope of saving his loved ones and his moans could be heard a long distance as he left the smouldering wreck.

The fire was finally extinguished, but it was not until about dark that the bodies were found. Ethel had evidently been reclining on the lounge as she was found pinned to it face downward, and from all appearances was killed instantly. Her mother, Mrs. Mooney, was found near her and had suffered probably but little. Both of them were more or less burned but those who found them say that life was extinct before the fire reached them.

Thus seven persons were in a moment ushered into another world by a snowslide that occurred in Sierra City. The following are their names and ages;

Annie E. Mooney, beloved wife of Judge I. T. Mooney, aged 51 yrs.  
Ethel Florence Langton, Stepdaughter of Judge I. T. Mooney, aged 36 years.

Mrs. J. Rich, age 51 years, 21 days

Etta Rich, age 18 years

Bertie Rich, age 12 years

Gertrude Rich, age 6 years

Amelia Ryan, age 14 years

#### THE FUNERAL

Sunday was a sunshiny  
ful day for Sierra  
was the day  
six of the  
ones were  
taken to  
their  
last

but sorrow-  
City. It  
that  
dead







resting places.

The funeral was set for 2:00 o'clock. When the bell began to toll, a sad sight was seen. A procession headed by men carrying four caskets passed out of the

Good Templars Hall and marched to the Methodist Church. These caskets contained the bodies of Mrs. Rich and her three children. On nearing the church and at the Masonic Hall, another procession headed by two more caskets made the sight still sadder. In the latter caskets were the bodies of Mrs. I. T. Mooney and her daughter Ethel. The six caskets were placed in a row near the pulpit in the church. Services were then held over the dead ones, consisting of prayer by Joel Champion and singing by the choir. This over, men carrying the six bodies in the lead and followed by a procession a quarter of a mile long started for the cemetery on the hill.

At the grave, services were held over Mrs. Langton by the Golden Bar Parlor Native Daughters of the Golden West, of which order she was a faithful member. Prayer was then offered over Mrs. Mooney by Joel Champion. At the same time the Good Templars were holding services over the unfortunate Rich family. Almost every person in town attended the funerals. It was a dreadful thing to see six persons taken to their graves in one day in a little village like this. The seventh victim, Amelia Ryan, was taken to Downieville Tuesday to be buried.

#### THE SLIDE'S COURSE AND PROPERTY DESTROYED

The fatal snow slide started at a large bluff of rocks above the Sierra Buttes flume and at a point about a quarter of a mile east of the center of Sierra City. The altitude of the place is about 1200 feet above the road leading to Sierra Valley. A large ravine is at the point of starting, in which the snow lay to the depth of thirty feet. This started the slide; and rushing down the steep mountain, it gained immense volume and velocity. The slide is what is termed a lightning slide, differing from slides by moving bodily down the mountain instead of taking a round form and bounding as a ball does. It followed the ravine until it reached a flat 400 feet above the road. At this point the accumulated snow caused it to take a turn and make directly for the upper part of town. Right back of Mr. Mooney's residence it was again turned to almost a right angle caused by a small hollow, and it then broke for the Busch flat, the last of it reached James Noblet's house and the Catholic Church, causing the remains of the structure to rest again at Louis Trompetto's house.

The buildings totally destroyed were:  
I. T. Mooney's residence





John Rich residence

A. Lewis residence

Catholic Church

The buildings more or less destroyed were:

W. H. Buscombe residence

J. Heitz residence

James Noblet residence

W. B. Morrish residence

There probably never was a village of this size thrown into such a panic as Sierra City on this occasion and a dark cloud rests over this unfortunate place to this day. Over two dozen families from that portion of town left their homes as soon as the avalanche occurred to seek shelter in the center of town where less damage was apprehended.

It continued to snow throughout Friday night. Great fear was entertained on every hand that other slides would come down the high mountain that lies above us and wipe out the entire town. But on Saturday morning the sun came out bright and warm, which brought gladness to every heart. A continuance of pleasant weather has caused the snow to settle and not much fear will be felt until the clouds again hover over us.

Everybody held out a helping hand of assistance to the bereaved ones who have lost all by the disaster, but there is one above all whose noble heartedness and in hard labor in this critical time will never be forgotten by the people in general of Sierra City as well as the afflicted. It is William H. James, Superintendent of the Sierra Buttes Mine. We believe it safe to say that this gentleman hardly slept an hour for three days and nights but labored day and night doing what was necessary to be done in such instances.

A collection was taken up among the citizens for the Rich family. \$152.50 was secured in a short time. The county also allowed \$100.00, making the total \$252.50.

#### THE STORM

Up to the day of the disaster, it had snowed just five weeks almost steadily, over eight feet falling right in Sierra City. Old timers say that such a storm was never known before. Sierra City is certainly ill-fated. There is probably no place in the world of this size that has had so many misfortunes as the town. For the past two years nothing has gone right. Just two years ago this time, small pox broke out, and for three months the village was quarantined on every side. Several deaths occurred and others lay suffering with the dreadful disease. There was a general depression of business and the town had the appearance of being deserted. After that, fevers and deaths were frequent. Then followed a general failure of certain mines to



pan out as expected, which injured the town in many ways causing businesses to fall off greatly. Following this, a disasterous fire raged around us the latter part of last summer which caused loss of life and destroyed property and timber to the amount of thousands of dollars, besides causing the Sierra Buttes, one of Sierra City's main supports, to be closed many months, which threw 150 men out of employment. Next came the fearful calamity of last Friday which caused the people to think that Sierra City is doomed to an everlasting seige of misfortune.

#### ANOTHER SLIDE

Another fatal slide occurred on the South Fork two and one half miles below Sierra City near the Marguerite Mine, supposed to have taken place early Friday morning of last week. A man named Lindstrom, his wife and son, a boy about seventeen years of age, lived in a cabin a short distance below the works on the north side of the river. Some time during the night a slide struck the house, breaking it to pieces and burying the inmates under





the snow and broken timbers.

The discovery of the slide was made by a Chinaman who had a cabin near the Lindstroms. He had got frightened and gone down the river to a place of safety and had returned to the cabin to get some provisions and found it gone. He then saw the Lindstrom's house was gone and, hastening to the Marguerite Mine, gave an alarm.

A party of men immediately went to the rescue. Lindstrom was found alive but insensible, buried under two feet of snow with his shoulders dislocated and otherwise injured. He undoubtedly owes his life to the fact that a board shielded him from the snow and that some of the bed clothing remained wrapped around him. The body of his wife was lying near him. She apparently having been badly injured if not killed by a blow on the head from some of the timber. The body of the boy has not been found. According to the man's story, himself and his wife went to bed leaving the boy reading. Later he awoke and found the boy still reading. That was the last he knew until awakened by the jar and roar of the avalanche after which all was blank. The boy's bed with his coat thrown across the foot was found wrecked. Had he been in, he no doubt, would have been killed. The man was taken to the mine and properly cared for, being a relative of Superintendent Morris. This man went insane afterwards and the boy's bones were found in a ditch below where the house had stood.

Written by an unknown contemporary of the avalanche.

Courtesy of Frank "Beets" Fortes.

(Our thanks to our ever faithful correspondent, Jeanne McMahan, for the above article.)





# THE OLD WEST

EARLY ANNALS OF DOWNIEVILLE AND VICINITY  
By One of the Earliest Settlers  
Number One

In 1860, a miner at Columbia, who had a natural bent for informal writing, was persuaded by the editor of the "Tuolumne Courier" to describe his gold rush adventures in Sierra County. This perceptive editor was one of the few of his day who recognized even at that early date the gold rush had been an event of the first magnitude, and that articulate participants should set down their memories whilst still fresh.

It is particularly unfortunate that we don't know the name, or, indeed, anything about this literary argonaut except what we can glean from his "Early Annals of Downieville and Vicinity." He styles himself simply as "One of the Earliest Settlers." We are tremendously grateful to him, however, as his is almost the only comprehensive account we have of the ridge area south of Downieville during the gold rush, and one of the few touching on the Downieville district itself.

The "Early Annals" are a veritable gold mine to the local historian, and for this reason we feel that they deserve reprinting in the Quarterly Bulletin of the Sierra County Historical Society. This first chapter of the "Annals" appeared very inconspicuously in the "Tuolumne Courier" on page two, under the title of "First Discovery of Gold, at Downieville." The frank and easy style of the "Annals" is most refreshing, and I am sure that our readers will look forward eagerly to later numbers of these interesting reminiscences--Wm. Pickiepoche

## FIRST DISCOVERY OF GOLD, AT DOWNIEVILLE

In the "Sierra Citizen" of April 21st, we find an article with the heading, giving the praise of the first discovery of gold at that camp to one Frank Anderson, now Post Master there. Not wishing to detract from the laurels of Mr. Anderson, but simply to correct him, the writer of this--himself one of the earliest settlers--begs respectfully to state that he is simply in error in supposing that he was the first in September 1849. As far back as the 19th of June, 1849, one Mr. Goodyear, who was then prospecting at Goodyear's Bar and creek with his Indians, went to the forks of the Yuba, in order to ascertain for himself whether the report of said



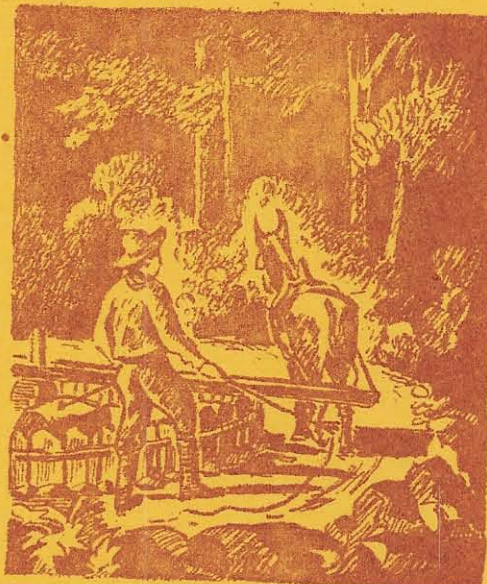


indians was true, that a short distance above it was far richer.

Having arrived there, he proceeded to pan out, and in ten pans got 17 pounds of gold, of a scaly character, but very heavy; the largest piece not weighing much over a dollar, with which he returned to camp. He occasionally sent his indians up there, until Jack Smith, James Armstrong, Captain Devlin, Wm. Downie, Pepper Jack, Wm. Griffith, and Michael Devenny, and a negro, wandered as far as Goodyear's Bar.-I think there was another, but I have forgotten his name. Goodyear then desisted from his expeditions to the forks. This was in the latter end of July, 1849. Early in August, 1849, from what Goodyear had told them, they went on a prospect to the forks. Wm. Downie was the one who washed out the first pan, the result of which was ten ounces. Downie is now on Queen Charlotte's Island, British Columbia; and as yet his manuscript journals are in existence. Up to this time, "there was no white man, nor sign of one," any where above Goodyear's Bar.

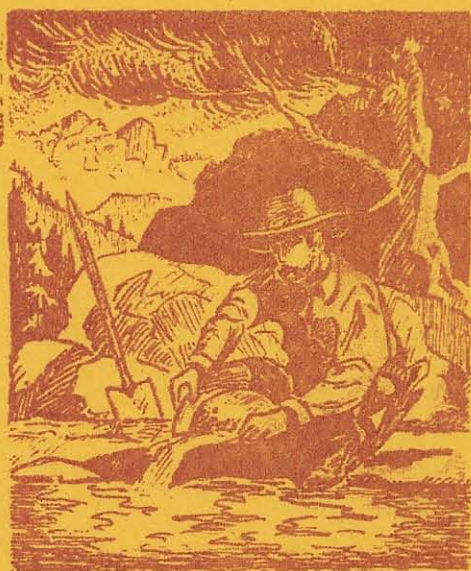
The writer of this has often seen and read these journals. Michael Devenny, then a boy, resides now-or did, three years ago-near Shasta. Griffiths is dead. James Armstrong went to sea again in 1852, and I don't know what became of him; nor of Jack Smith. Capt. Devlin died of delirium tremens in 1853. Pepper Jack was arrested on the Isthmus of Panama in 1853 or 1854, for an attempt to rob the treasure, crossing, and I believe was hung. The negro was, as late as 1857, working a tunnel on the South Fork, opposite Kanaka Bar. The first camp they made, was made of cloth tents, and was nearly where the upper end of the town now stands, and opposite to the Jersey Flat. In October 1849, Jack Smith commenced to build a log cabin on the upper and back end of the flat, and Downie's cabin-also log-was finished Christmas eve, 1849. Both these cabins were standing in 1857. On the 8th of January, 1850, they had a flood which nearly ruined them; sweeping off all their rockers.

On the 4th of July, 1850, the first man was whipped in Downieville publicly. His crime was stabbing his partner, in a fight; and was what was called a "Sydney Duck." In August 1850, the first man was buried. He was interred nearly in front of Downie's cabin, in an old hole along side of the ravine it was built on. He was employed at the time of his death as a watchman, to guard the gambler's money



*The Prospector*





### **Gold Panning**

at night. He was an Irishman, named John Williams, or Williamson, and came to this country from Rochester, N.Y., where he had wife and children. At the time of his death, he had about \$6,000, which was forwarded to his family; but I don't know if they got it, as no letter of acknowledgement was ever received from them.

In May 1850, one Captain Slater succeeded in gulling the people surrounding Downieville, out of "two" mule loads of gold dust, in this way: Giving out that he was going to San Francisco, and would take charge of any treasure entrusted to him, he accumulated the dust, took it down, but "forgot" to deliver it at its destination, and took it on East with him. Shortly after, the Eastern papers noticed his arrival, stating the amount

that Capt. S. had accumulated in a few months, and which he had himself, "with his own hands dug out of the Yuba river!" This was gravely told in the papers of the day, and this was the first intimation of his whereabouts that the denizens of Weaverville had. He was an Englishman, and got clear off with his gains.

In January 1850, Jim Crow Canon was discovered, by the Kanakas, by tracking Wm. Downie and Devenny—who had been to Cut-Eye Forter's Valley, to purchase provisions—and came in through the snow, that roundabout way, in order to mislead stragglers. Shortly afterwards, Kanaka Bar was discovered by the Kanakas, under Capt Ross and Jim Crow, and about April or May, 1850, Kanaka Bar, at the mouth of French Ravine.

Having extended this longer than I intended, I close for the present; but may hereafter give more of the history of Downieville.

ONE OF THE EARLIEST SETTLERS.

Columbia, April 27th, 1860.

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Our thanks to Wm. Pickiepoche for the above article. Notes on Mr. Pickiepoche can be found in previous articles. Mr. Pickiepoche intends to submit a series of articles similar to that above which deal with the early history of Downieville.



# Scrapbook

(TAKEN FROM THE SIERRA VALLEY NEWS, AUGUST 23, 1913, VOL. I, NUMBER 30, PUBLISHED IN LOYALTON, SIERRA COUNTY, CALIF.)

## Lectures on Child Psychology and Training

D. Carl Williams, director of the Baptist Sunday School organization of the Southwest, comprising Utah, Arizona and Nevada, is giving a sermon and series of lectures on "Child Psychology and Training," at the Baptist church this week, and will close Friday night. He will preach next Sunday morning and evening.

These lectures are of unusual interest not only to Sunday School workers, but are of special interest to all parents and teachers and of large value to the general public.

Mr. Williams is a college graduate who has specialized on child psychology and pedagogical methods. His system of child training aims to embody what is best in modern methods, and in addition is embellished by very much that is original. The attendance at the meetings manifests a growing interest, and the importance of the subject and the ability of the lecturer will repay the general attendance of the public.



## Cannon for Downieville

John C. Fremont Post, No. 152, G.A.R., at Downieville, has received two unmounted mountain howitzers and half a dozen 8 inch shells from the United States arsenal at Benecia.

The cannons are part of the lot given by congress, according to a bill fathered by Congressman Raker to each Grand Army post. They are of bronze and weigh about 250 pounds each.

The local post has not as yet determined what disposition to make of the gift, but will likely have them mounted some time in the future.

## REWARD

I will pay Two Hundred Dollars to the party or parties who will furnish evidence and conviction of party or parties who doped my horse, "Farewell," on Sept. 9, 1912.

JOE DYSON

## NOTICE

Those indebted to me will please settle at the Sierra Valley Bank.

DR. G.L. COATES



#### TOWN BOARD IN REGULAR SESSION AND AS BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

The Board of Trustees of the town of Loyalton met in regular session in the town hall last Monday night. Present, trustees Ball, West and Wheeler; absent, trustees Medearis and Coates. The city attorney was directed to draft an ordinance making the speed limit of automobiles and motor cycles on the streets of Loyalton at 10 miles per hour.

No other business appearing, the board adjourned, and the board of equalization convened. No business appearing, the board adjourned.



#### MOVING PICTURES FRIDAY EVENING

Three reels of pictures: "The Sheriff's Baby," "From Orton Junction to Fallonville," "The Cat and the Bonnet," "The Fired Cook." Piano selections by Mrs. Peck.

#### WEEKLY NEWS ITEMS

Public school opened in Loyalton last Monday with 88 pupils in attendance. This number should be increased to over 100 in a short time. A.S. Hamlin, Miss Veva Turner and Miss Nell Field have been re-employed as teachers.

Miss Elia Tognazzini of Beckwith, is teaching piano lessons in Portola and Loyalton. She has eleven pupils enrolled in Loyalton.

Sheriff Johnson spent a couple of days in Sierra Valley this week, subpoenaing jurors.

\$4.00 to \$5.00 Oxfords now \$1.90 at the Leader.

A big crowd from Loyalton went to the open air dance at Chilcoot last Saturday night. Over twenty went through in Medearis' automobile truck alone. Everyone reports having a jolly time.

The Loyalton Orchestra is practicing diligently in preparation for the grand ball in Loyalton September 9th.

Three ball teams have already pledged themselves to enter the tournament at Loyalton during the carnival. All players must be mountain boys; any importation of players from Nevada or the lower country will absolutely not be permitted.

Geo. Hampson, R.I. Hampson and Jack Mardon killed a bear about a mile below Webber Lake last week. The boys say that Bruin had a wonderful appetite for lead and took no less than seven bullets into his system before he gave up the ghost.

(NOTE: SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION IN THE ABOVE FOLLOW THE ORIGINAL)