

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Pliocene Ridge Discovered
Big Year - 1910

Religion and Education in 1870's

Randolph Revisited
Membership News

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April 5, 1971

Vol. III, No. 1

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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

NUMBER FIVE



We continue with another chapter of the reminiscences of a gold rush miner, which appeared in the Tuolumne Curier on June 16, 1860. The unknown author of the "Early Annals" prospected in and about Downieville in '50 and '51, then on the Feather River 'till '53, when he participated in the subsequent "hill diggin's" boom around Alleghany in '54. We have reason to believe that a few of his facts may be just a little distorted, but the spirit of the times and the earliest events on Kanaka Creek are well chronicled for us by the Annalist. He does not refer to Alleghany as such, because the town did not receive its name until 1857, after the events described below, and after the Annalist had moved on to Tuolumne County. However, any of our readers who are familiar with this area will have no difficulty in following his narrative.

Wm. Pickiepoche

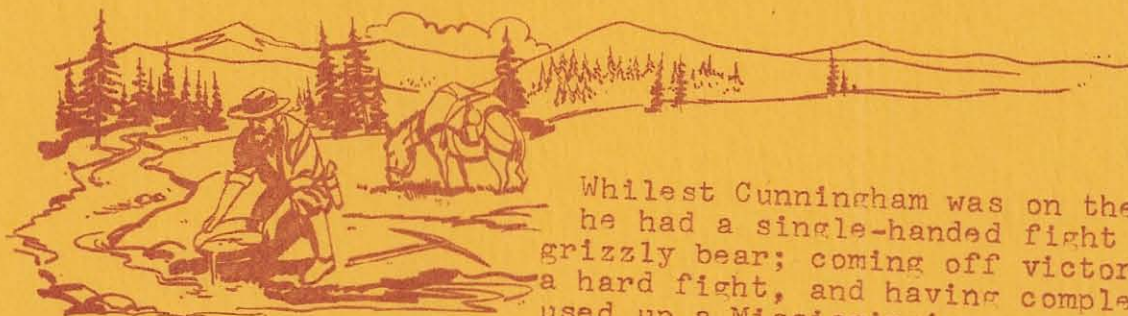
Kanaka Creek and the Kanakas

The year 1850 was preeminently the year of the prospectors; amongst whom was a large company of Kanakas and South Sea Islanders, under various chieftains. The most conspicuous were Capt. Ross, (commonly reported to be one of old Kamhehameha's sons; at any rate he was an educated native, and had been long amongst the whites, speaking our language fluently and well versed in our customs) and a native chief known as "Jem Crow the First," to distinguish him from another of the same name. Jem Crow also could speak English, having been long in our whaling service, and had married one of Capt. John A. Sutter's Indians. These two rival chieftains lived in a kind of rude royalty, exacting a daily tribute from their inferiors, ordering them to prospect, cook, etc., as they pleased; as well as administering their own laws and justice according to their caprice. Early in 1850 "Jem Crow," as I mentioned in a former number, discovered the famous Cañon, which has ever since gone by his name, and thus became a prospector of some importance among the now very heterogenous community.

In May Capt. Ross, becoming jealous of the popularity which "Jem Crow" had secured, determined to try and retrieve some of his lost popularity. Accordingly dividing his portion of the Kanakas into small squads, he started them out in all directions, with orders to rendezvous again at his headquarters at Kanaka Bar on the south branch of the North Fork of the Yuba. This plan was not original with Capt. Ross, but was the suggestion of Major Wm. Downie; who, along with Howland B. Cossett Esq., subsequently—in 1853 or 54,—Prosecuting Attorney in Downieville, kept the principal store on the Bar. According to the agreement, Downie was to have a share if the project succeeded. It did succeed, as will be

seen hereafter, and if the parties had used common prudence, all of them might have gone home with large piles. But Kanakas and sailors are proverbially improvident, and although they took out large sums daily, they were not the better for the strike; as every evening until late in the night, the monte gamblers were to be seen swindling them out of their wealth.

As I said before, it was in May that the discovery of the Creek was made by one of Capt. Ross' prospectors. It was of such astonishing richness, that it was currently reported the miners had only to locate their claims to be rich at once, without any, or at least but trifling labor. Downie, on receipt of the news, started off to secure his share. Rumors soon came that he was killed by the Indians, and H.B. Cossett raised a party to go and revenge his death; when, lo! as they were about departing, the Major was discovered coming down the mountain, on the opposite side of the river. On his arrival in camp, his description of the richness of the Creek was so enthusiastic, and the gold he displayed so alluring, that quite a local stampede was made of most of the miners, gamblers, and storekeepers, to this new Creek, which was named in honor of the discoverers, "Kanaka Creek;" a name which it has always retained. The exact location of the Kanaka Claim was on what is now known as "Little Kanaka Bar," situated immediately where French Ravine enters the Creek; and the first spot worked by them was a crevice at the foot of the claim, running diagonally across the creek. This was immensely rich; so much so, that if it were not so well known and attested to, the bare mention of the amount taken out by the Kanakas would not now be believed. As it was, Jem Cook, the gambler, and the then constable of Downieville district, made not less than \$15,000 to \$20,000 in a short time, and went home; coming back soon afterwards. This system he pursued five or six different trips up to 1855; never going home with less than \$5,000, and several times with a very great deal more. Charles Cunningham also went home with about \$10,000, which he made in three months, partly by mining, partly by store-keeping, and partly by gambling.



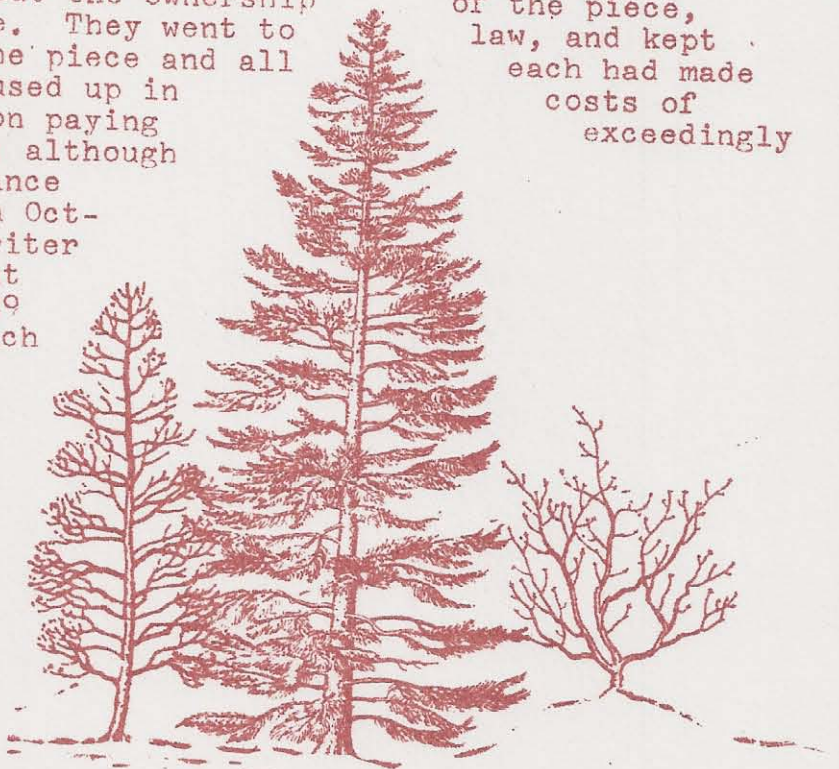
Whilest Cunningham was on the Creek, he had a single-handed fight with a grizzly bear; coming off victor, after a hard fight, and having completely used up a Mississippi yager on his ursine majesty's cranium. Cunningham was completely stripped of his clothing, and so far exhausted that he laid down to die on the side-hill, but was happily rescued by some miners who had been attracted that way by rapid shots he had fired. They carefully packed him into camp, together with the bear, where great rejoicings were made for the victor. Cunningham had the

skin dressed, and made into a coat. He also went home and returned again, but his luck was gone; he never made much afterwards, and became nearly blind. Others also made rich strikes, especially the three brothers Rapp.

In July 1850, a piece of quartz and gold, weighing nearly thirty pounds troy, was discovered in an old deserted prospecting pit on French Gulch, by two sailors, an American and an Englishman. They had been but two or three days there at the time. Not waiting for a second strike they returned below to San Francisco, paying their way by exhibiting the piece for \$1 per head. This piece at the time was supposed to be the largest piece ever found in California, and the second largest on record in the world. On arriving at New York, the partners quarrelled about the ownership of the piece, each claiming the whole. They went to law, and kept each had made costs of exceedingly the suit going until the piece and all by its exhibition was used up in suit. The Creek kept on paying well for several years; although nothing of much importance occurred until the 14th October, 1854, when the writer and four others took out one boulder, weighing 39 pounds avoirdupois, which yielded \$4,730.50 cts.

Big lumps now became common all this Fall. Mrs. Smith, of French Ravine, finding one weighing ninety-six and one quarter pounds avoirdupois and sold it to Adams and Co., Bankers at Marysville, for \$10,500, shortly before their suspension. This piece was found 28th

October 1853. These strikes being noised about, a large settlement of Mexicans, Peruvians, Chilians, and other Spaniards was soon collected on the Creek. They soon out-numbered the white population, and began to manifest their particular proclivities for plunder, murder, horse stealing, and all kinds of rascality. Things went on thus until the 12th day of August, 1855, when Andrew Mauer, an old Dutchman, one of the police of the Creek, was inhumanly murdered. Demands were made on the Spanish Community to deliver up the murderer; this being denied the whites from the surrounding camps assembled, burned up the



Spanish town, and drove the Greasers out of the County. Certain papers of the day without knowing the facts, made statements about as near true, as might be expected from the Prince of Lies.

In the summer of 1854 two or three important discoveries were made in the neighborhood of this Creek. The leading ones of these, were the hill diggings of La Fayette, and Mount Vernon Hill, situated on opposite ends of the Creek. In the winter of 1854 Samuel Carr discovered diggings on his ravine, near Sparks Flat. In the winter of 1858 one of the richest quartz leads was struck, on a spur of the hill above Sparks Flat, by some Mexican packers who were weather bound there, and had formed a large camp. This last, was one of the richest strikes ever made in this section of country, and still continues to pay well.

(Punctuation taken from original.)

Notes on the Author--Mr. Wm. Pickiepoche. William Pickiepoche is the pen name of a mining engineer, a New Englander and graduate of Harvard College and California Institute of Technology, who practices his profession in the Mother Lode Country. He has been in and out of the Allegheny area for the past 30 years and is well versed in the lore of that region. He is an occasional contributor of historical articles to the "Mountain Messenger," and also edits a local historical quarterly.



THE POPULATION OF SIERRA COUNTY IN 1910 By John E. Westfall

Introduction

Even to the casual visitor to Sierra County, it is obvious that the population of the area was much larger in the past than now, as one sees a number of deserted communities and other communities which still exist but which have shrunk in extent and population. Actually, in the twelve decades since the first census of the area (1852), Sierra County's population has declined in six decades and has risen in the other six. The decreases, however, have tended to be larger than the increases, as is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sierra County Population Changes, 1852 - 1970.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change Since Previous Census</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change Since Previous Census</u>
1852	3,741*	-----	1910	4,098	+ 81
1860	11,387	+ 7,646	1920	1,783	- 2,315
1870	5,619	- 5,768	1930	2,422	+ 639
1880	6,623	+ 1,004	1940	3,025	+ 603
1890	5,051	- 1,572	1950	2,410	- 615
1900	4,017	- 1,034	1960	2,247	- 163
			1970	2,365	+ 118

*1852 State Census as given in Federal Report; population was given as 4,855 in the State Report.

Table 1 gives population changes for Sierra County as a whole. The question naturally arises: What have been the changes in distribution of population within the county? In other words, have some areas declined more or less than other areas? Also, although Sierra County has always been entirely "rural" according to the Bureau of the Census, most of its population now lives in a few communities and relatively few people live in the truly rural areas. Another question, then, is whether this pattern of population concentration was more, or less, pronounced in the past.

Sources of Information

To answer the questions above, information on the present and past population of Sierra County must be collected. Before this is done, one must decide just what is meant by "the" population of

Sierra County. According to the Bureau of the Census, the population of an area is the number of persons legally residing in that area at the time of the census (de jure population), and this definition is used here. The number of people living in Sierra County, like most mountainous areas, changes seasonally as well as year-to-year, so it is unfortunate that the time of year the Federal Census has been taken has changed several times (June 1st, 1850-1900; April 15, 1910; January 1st, 1920; April 1st, 1930-1970), but hopefully the requirement of legal residence has reduced the amount of seasonal change. Also, of course, the number of persons legally residing in Sierra County, or any part of the county, may be quite different than the number of persons actually there at any time (de facto population). Generally, one would expect the actual population to be greater than the legal population in summer, and less than the legal population in winter. The Rand McNally Company, for example, recognizes this by publishing estimates of both summer and year-round populations for some communities (eg., Calpine). Certainly, the summer populations of some of the mining camps during the Gold Rush were far higher than, say, the 1852 and 1860 census indicate.

The basic source of historical population numbers for and within Sierra County is the U.S. Bureau of the Census (U.S. Census Office for 1900 and earlier), available in published form for Sierra County from 1860 through 1970. Sierra County did not exist separately in 1850, but the results of the State of California Census of 1852 are available.

The amount of detail given in the published censuses varies. Sierra County was reported by townships from 1860 through 1950, but not in 1852, 1960, and 1970. No populations of unincorporated communities are given later than 1900; in 1900, only Downieville was given, and only Loyalton in 1910-1970.

Sierra County Records can be used for indirect information on county population. The various editions of the Great Register (Precinct Register) give the number of registered voters at each election by election precinct and sometimes by Post Office address. Obviously, the number of registered voters (particularly before Women's Suffrage) is not the same as total population, but the distribution of voters gives at least some idea of the distribution of population.

Particularly in Sierra County, where the majority of the population lives in unincorporated communities, it is unfortunate that the Federal Census has not reported unincorporated communities in the county for 70 years. For this information, it is necessary to turn to other, unofficial, sources. One such source is the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide (previously Commercial Atlas), published annually and now in its 100th Edition. Another such reference, for a more

Sierra County. According to the Bureau of the Census, the population of an area is the number of persons legally residing in that area at the time of the census (de jure population), and this definition is used here. The number of people living in Sierra County, like most mountainous areas, changes seasonally as well as year-to-year, so it is unfortunate that the time of year the Federal Census has been taken has changed several times (June 1st, 1850-1900; April 15, 1910; January 1st, 1920; April 1st, 1930-1970), but hopefully the requirement of legal residence has reduced the amount of seasonal change. Also, of course, the number of persons legally residing in Sierra County, or any part of the county, may be quite different than the number of persons actually there at any time (de facto population). Generally, one would expect the actual population to be greater than the legal population in summer, and less than the legal population in winter. The Rand McNally Company, for example, recognizes this by publishing estimates of both summer and year-round populations for some communities (eg., Calpine). Certainly, the summer populations of some of the mining camps during the Gold Rush were far higher than, say, the 1852 and 1860 census indicate.

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limited period, is Cram's Unrivalled Atlas of the World. Both give population estimates of numerous unincorporated places although, except recently, the method of accuracy of estimation is not known.

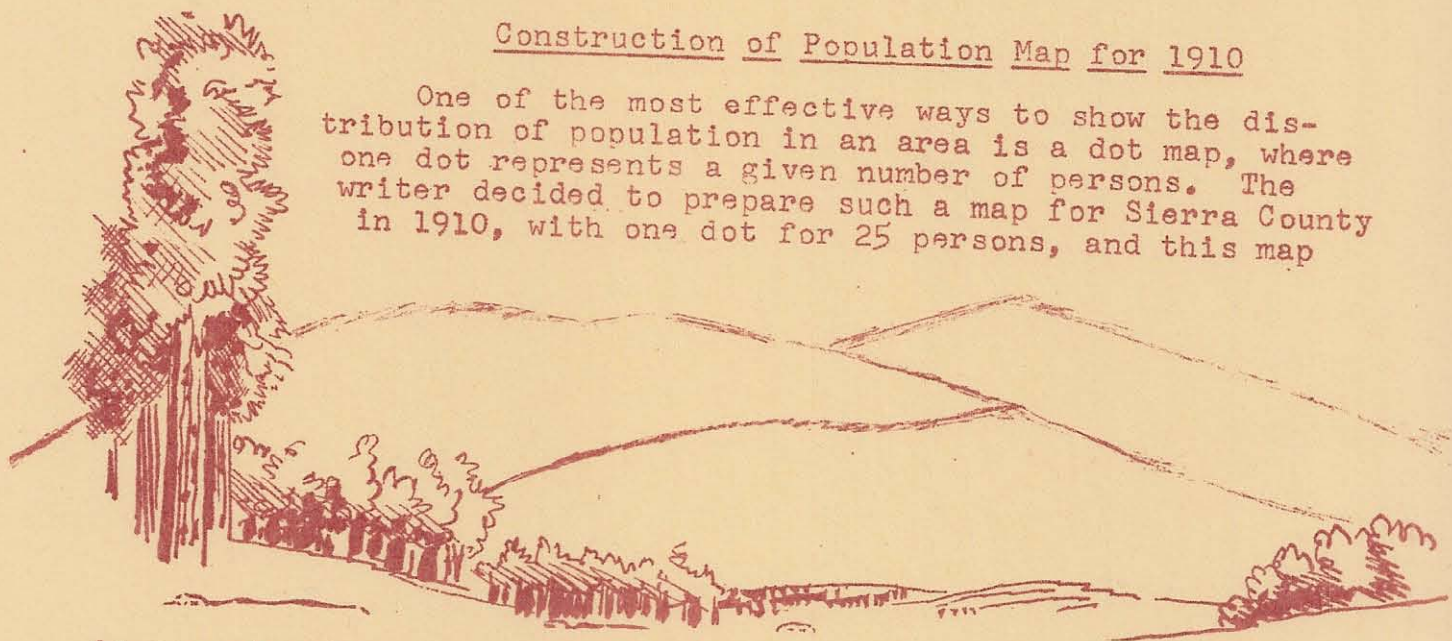
All the sources listed above are almost useless unless one knows precisely what areas the population figures apply to-- in other words, the boundaries of townships and precincts and the locations of unincorporated communities are needed. For this, one needs accurate maps or detailed written descriptions.

Bureau of the Census maps showing township boundaries are available in the U.S. National Archives (Washington, D.C.) for 1930 to 1950, and were published in the 1940 and 1950 Census Reports. An "Official Map of Sierra County," dated 1935, shows townships and school districts for that date. Before 1930, such information is rare. Fortunately, the Sierra County Recorder's Office has Election Precincts of Sierra County as designated and boundaries defined by the Board of Supervisors, dated July 14th, 1912, which gives detailed legal descriptions of Precinct boundaries. Precincts were portions of townships, so they may be assembled to define the townships of that date as well.

Finally, U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps are useful to locate settlements and individual dwellings. Sierra County was covered by this maps in two series--the first, at 1/125,000 scale (about 2 miles to the inch) in 1885-1890; and the second, at 1/62,500 scale (about 1 mile to the inch) in 1948-1955.

Construction of Population Map for 1910

One of the most effective ways to show the distribution of population in an area is a dot map, where one dot represents a given number of persons. The writer decided to prepare such a map for Sierra County in 1910, with one dot for 25 persons, and this map



is reproduced here.

1910 was chosen as the date for the map largely because this was the earliest census for which accurate township boundaries could be found (i.e., from the 1912 election precinct descriptions mentioned above). Also, 1910 marks the approximate

halfway point in the history of Sierra County (1852-1971).

Using published U.S. Bureau of the Census information for 1910, the population of Sierra County was apportioned to the six townships of that time and to the town of Loyalton. This was not detailed enough for an effective population map, so the writer has attempted to further subdivide Sierra County's population by election precincts, based on registration for the General Elections of Sept. 3 and Nov. 5, 1912 (the method used is described in Appendix B). Finally, persons within election precincts were allocated to the unincorporated communities within them, based on the population estimates given in Cram's Unrivaled Atlas of the World, New Census Edition, 1911 (except where Cram's estimates were clearly too large in terms of the population of the precinct or township in which the community fell). Population dots within precincts, outside unincorporated communities, were placed according to the buildings shown on topographic maps.

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE FOR THE POPULATION MAP FOR 1910 

Description of Population Map for 1910

The dot map shows that the population of Sierra County was quite unevenly distributed in 1910. First, there are four general areas where most people lived: The valley of the North Yuba River, the margins of Sierra Valley, and the two mining districts of the northwest (Gibsonville-Howland Flat-St. Louis, etc.) and the Alleghany-Forest area. It is really only in two of these areas--the northwest and Sierra Valley--that much truly dispersed population was found, shown by single, scattered, dots. (For example, there were some 110 farms in Sierra County in 1910, the majority in Sierra Valley.)

It is also clear that most of the 1910 population was concentrated in a few communities--Loyalton and Downieville are the most evident, but Sierra City, Alleghany, Forest, and Sierraville were also important. There were also about ten smaller communities, ranging in size downwards to the point they can hardly be called "communities" at all.

Again, it should be emphasized that the dot map shows the location of population in terms of legal residence. Quite probably, the wintertime population would be even more concentrated in a few communities, while the summertime population would be more dispersed.

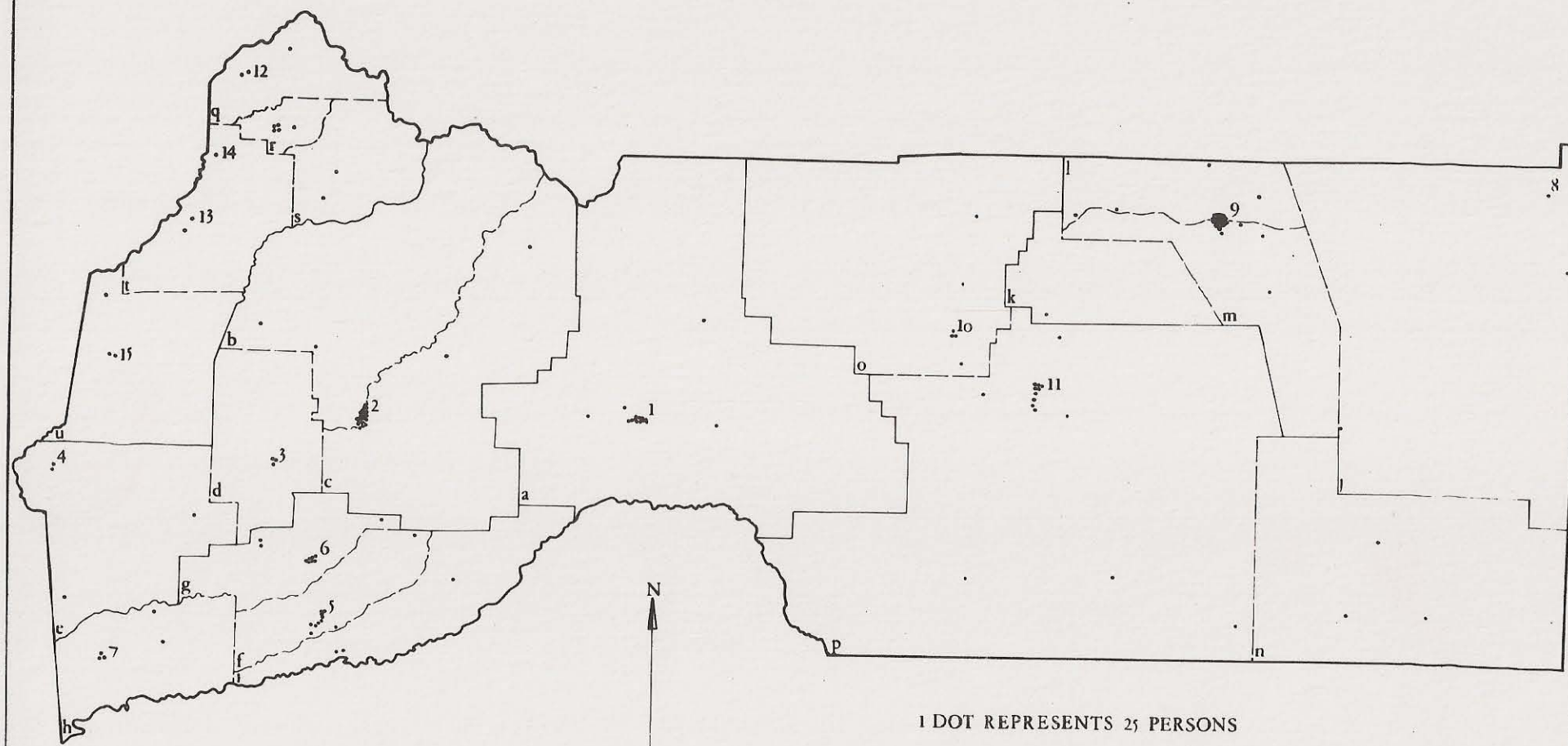
Changes in Population Distribution

The population map reproduced here shows the distribution of Sierra County's inhabitants at only one moment in its history. Actually, its population distribution has changed over the years, both before and after 1910.

First, there has been a long-term tendency for the population of Sierra County to become more concentrated, percentage-wise, in a relatively few communities, and even in the two largest communities (generally Downieville and Loyalton). Downie-

SIERRA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION CA. 1910



1 DOT REPRESENTS 25 PERSONS

—— Township Boundary
(Also Prct. Bdy.)

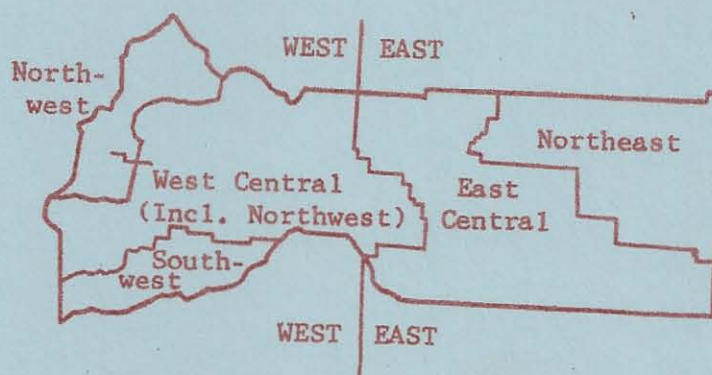
--- Precinct Boundary

Numbers refer to settlements,
and letters to precincts, as
listed in Table 2.

ville and Loyalton, taken together, held about 12 percent of Sierra County's population in 1860, about 36 percent in 1910, and approximately 55 percent in 1970. Furthermore, if we take the total population in six selected communities (Downieville, Loyalton, Alleghany, Forest, Sierra City, and Sierraville), about 38 percent of Sierra County lived in these places in 1880, about 61 percent in 1910, and approximately 73 percent in 1970. (For more details on this subject, see Table 3 in Appendix C.)

Second, county-wide changes in population distribution have been taking place throughout Sierra County's history, particularly when populations of areas are measured as percentages of the county population total. It is difficult to trace these changes for long periods because of changes in the township boundaries, but the map below shows some reasonably-constant areas within the county, which can be compared for several decades.

Sierra County: Regions for Comparison



(Note: Changes in county boundaries have been ignored. The most important such was the transfer of the LaPorte area to Plumas County in 1868.)

On the largest scale, there has been a consistent tendency for the western half of the county to decline in relation to the eastern half, reflecting the decline of the mining industry in the mountainous western districts and the rise of the agriculture and stock-raising industry in Sierra Valley. In 1860, 94 percent of Sierra County lived in the western half (this then included LaPorte); this has diminished to 55 percent in 1910 and to 41 percent by 1970. Conversely, the eastern half contained only 6 percent of the total population in 1860, but 45 percent in 1910 and 59 percent in 1970.

On a smaller scale, the mining districts of the northwest and the southwest have tended to decline compared to the County total, again reflecting the decline of the mining industry itself. On the other hand, the Loyalton area has fairly consistently grown in population, compared to the county total,

particularly during the 1910-1950 period when agriculture and livestock became more and more important to the county's economy.

Other areas have fluctuated in their population as expressed as percentages of the entire county. The area of modern Downieville Township is such a case, although this area seems now to be rising in relative importance, due largely to the recreation industry. (Further details of population changes within Sierra County are given in Table 4 in Appendix C.)

This paper has only touched on the complex population history of Sierra County, ignoring such interesting topics as changes in the national origins and occupations of its settlers. It is hoped that the presentation of a picture of the county's population at a particular date, and some notes on changes before and after that date, will shed some light on other aspects of Sierra County's history.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like here to acknowledge the considerable help given to me in this study by the staff of the Sierra County Recorder's Office. I would also be very grateful if anyone reading this article, who knows of any map of Sierra County before 1910 that shows township boundaries, would contact me.

Appendix A. References Consulted

- Geo. F. Cram (firm). Cram's Unrivalled Atlas of the World. New Census Ed. New York and Chicago: Geo. F. Cram, 1911.
- Rand McNally & Co. (firm). Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide. (Previously Commercial Atlas.) Chicago: Rand McNally, Pub. annually.
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- _____. Areas of the United States: 1940. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942.
- _____. 1970 Census of Population. Advance Report. California. (PC(VI)-6). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Feb., 1971.
- U.S. Census Office. Population Reports for 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900. (Various separate titles.)

Appendix B. Method of Population Allocation

The information sources for the allocation of Sierra County's population, ca. 1910, by election precincts, were:

- (1) U.S. Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States. (1910) Abstract of the Census with Supplement for California. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913. p. 580.
- (2) Sierra County. Great Register. General Election, Tuesday, September 3, 1912.
Great Register. General Election, Tuesday, November 5, 1912.
- (3) Sierra County. Board of Supervisors. op. cit.

From source (1), the total populations of townships were found. Source (2) was used to obtain the mean registration (for the two elections) for each election precinct, which were totaled to give the total registration for each township. The ratio of (total township population in 1910):(mean township registration in 1912) was then found for each township. This ratio was then multiplied by the registration in each election precinct within the township to estimate the total population of each precinct. This, obviously, is the weak link in the method, as it is quite likely that some precincts had a greater degree of registration than others, so the estimates for precincts are only approximations.

This method was used to create Table 2, below, which also gives the letters used to identify precincts on the population dot map. Table 2 also includes 1910 population estimates for communities (from Cram, op. cit.), with the numbers used to identify those communities on the population map.

Table 2. Estimated Election Precinct Populations

(1) Precinct TOWNSHIP	(2) 1910 Township Pop.	(3) 1912 Mean Election Registr.	(4) Ratio = $\frac{(2)}{(3)}$	(5) Estimated Precinct Population = RatioX(3)	Communities within Precincts with Unofficial 1910 Population Ests.
a Sierra City	---	128.5	-----	385	1 Sierra City 500*
BUTTE	385	128.5	2.996	385	500*
b Downieville N.	---	138.0	-----	289	2 Downieville 500
c Downieville S.	---	137.5	-----	288	
d Goodyears Bar	---	38.5	-----	80	3 Goodyears B. 69
e Indian Valley	---	45.0	-----	94	4 Brandy City 100*
DOWNEVILLE	751	359.0	2.092	751	669*
f Alleghany	---	144.0	-----	280	5 Alleghany 200
g Forest (City)	---	130.5	-----	254	6 Forest 342*
h Pike City	---	62.5	-----	121	7 Pike 210*
i Plumbago	---	36.0	-----	70	
FOREST	725	373.0	1.944	725	752*
j Antelope	---	14.5	-----	78	8 Purdys 5
k Long Point	---	6.5	-----	35	
l Loyalton N.	---	111.0	-----	594	9 Loyalton 983**
m Loyalton S.	---	103.5	-----	554	
LOYALTON	1,261	233.5	5.355	1,261	988
n Sardine Valley	---	23.5	-----	70	
o Sattley	---	48.0	-----	143	10 Sattley 69
p Sierraville	---	125.0	-----	372	11 Sierravil. 350
SIERRA	585	196.5	2.977	585	419
q Gibsonville	---	21.5	-----	82	12 Gibsonvil. 200*
r Howland Flat	---	33.0	-----	127	
s Poker Flat	---	10.5	-----	40	
t Port Wine	---	17.5	-----	67	13 Port Wine 40
u Scales	---	19.5	-----	75	14 St. Louis 76*
TABLE ROCK	391	102.0	3.833	391	15 Scales 217*
					533*
SIERRA COUNTY	4,098	1,394.5	2.939	4,098	3,861*

*Unacceptably high estimate in relation to precinct or township population.

**1910 Census count.

The asterisked population estimates for communities have been revised by the writer to correspond better to the estimated populations of the precincts they were located in. These revised populations are as follows:

Sierra City--275, Brandy City--50, Forest--175, Pike--75,
Gibsonville--50, Saint Louis--25, Scales--50.

The population estimates given for these places in Cram op. cit. are probably too high because they were carried forward without revision from earlier dates (generally 1890-1900), when those places were larger.

NOTE: BECAUSE WE SUDDENLY HAVE SPACE, IN THE MIDST OF THIS VERY INTERESTING ARTICLE, WE SHALL PLACE THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON THE AUTHOR, John E. Westfall, HERE!

John E. Westfall, a native of San Francisco, received his PH.D. in Geography at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Since 1968, he has been a faculty member of the Department of Geography, San Francisco State College, with specialities in historical and population geography, and the application of computers and statistical methods in these fields. For two summers, Dr. Westfall has taught a field geography course in Sierra County, at Camp Leonard near Bassetts. He lives in San Francisco with his wife and two children. When time permits, his hobbies include amateur astronomy and the collection of science fiction and fantasy literature.

Appendix C. Changes in Population Distribution
Many of the figures in Table 3, below, are based on unofficial estimates, so there is some uncertainty in the individual populations, totals, and percentages.

Table 3. Community Populations

(Figures in Parentheses are Percentages of the County Total.)

Year	P o p u l a t i o n i n :				COUNTY TOTAL
	Downieville	Loyalton	Downieville + Loyalton	Six Selected Communities*	
1852	810 (22)	----**	---	---	3,741
1860	1,343 (12)	---	---	---	11,387
1870	704 (13)	---	---	---	5,619
1880	650 (10)	84 (1.3)	734 (11)	2,508 (38)	6,623
1890	1,034 (20)	143 (3)	1,177 (23)	2,672 (53)	5,051
1900	500 (12)	500 (12)	1,000 (25)	---	4,017
1910	500 (12)	983 (24)	1,483 (36)	2,483 (61)	4,098
1920	500 (28)	442 (25)	942 (53)	---	1,783
1930	348 (14)	837 (35)	1,185 (49)	---	2,422
1940	350 (12)	925 (26)	1,275 (42)	---	3,025
1950	350 (15)	911 (38)	1,261 (52)	---	2,410
1960	400 (18)	936 (42)	1,336 (59)	1,861 (83)	2,247
1970	350 (15)	945 (40)	1,295 (55)	1,725 (73)	2,365

*Downieville, Loyalton, Alleghany, Forest, Sierra City, and Sierraville (including "Sierra Valley" in 1880, and called "Sierra Valley" in 1890).

**--- indicates "not available."

The regions listed in Table 4, below, are as shown in the map "Sierra County: Regions for Comparison" in the preceeding paper. These regions are approximate because of changes in township boundaries.

Table 4. Population Distribution by Region, 1860 - 1950, 1970

(Figures in parentheses are percentages of the County Total.)

YEAR	R e g i o n							COUNTY TOTAL
	W. Cent. (Incl. NW)	NW.	SW.	E. Cent.	NE.	WEST	EAST	
1860	--- ^b	---	---	---	---	10,724(94) ^a	663 (6)	11,387 ^a
1870	---	---	---	---	---	4,933(88)	686(12)	5,619
1880	---	---	---	---	---	5,511(83)	1,112(17)	6,623
1890	---	935(19)	---	---	---	3,921(78)	1,130(22)	5,051
1900	---	747(19)	---	---	---	2,970(74)	1,047(26)	4,017
1910	1,527(37)	391(10)	725(18)	585(14)	1,261(31)	2,252(55)	1,846(45)	4,098
1920	675(38)	61(3.4)	385(22)	259(15)	464(26)	1,060(59)	723(41)	1,783
1930	673(28)	84(3.5)	343(14)	497(21)	909(38)	1,016(42)	1,406(58)	2,422
1940	1,007(33)	64(2.1)	626(21)	247 (8)	1,145(38)	1,633(54)	1,392(46)	3,025
1950	768(32)	---	262(11)	285(12)	1,095(45)	1,030(43)	1,380(57)	2,410
1970	---	---	---	---	---	961(41) ^c	1,404(59) ^d	2,365
Land Area in Sq. Mi.	380	86	73	318	186	453	505	958

^aIncludes LaPorte area, transferred to Plumas County in 1868.

^b--- indicates area undefined at that date.

^cCensus West Sierra Division.

^dCensus East Sierra Division.

Notes: (1) In terms of the townships in 1910, the regions above are as follows:

West Central--Butte, Downieville, Table Rock

Northwest--Table Rock

Southwest--Forest

East Central--Sierra

Northeast--Loyalton

(West=West Central + Southwest; East=East Central + Northeast)

(2) Areas are taken for 1940 townships from: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Areas of the United States: 1940, p. 36.

Editor's Note: The following two articles, concerned with organized religion and with education in Sierra County from 1880 to 1890, are taken from a larger work by William G. Cooren. The larger work is A Selected Topical History of Sierra County, California

ORGANIZED RELIGION IN SIERRA COUNTY, 1880-1890

The spiritual needs of the inhabitants of Sierra County during the 1880's were met by three organized religious groups—Methodist, Congregational and Roman Catholic. Church membership was low; only five percent of the population were official communicants of any church as late as 1890. The problem of apathy and disbelief was severe, but not nearly as bad as the Reno Evening Gazette, which headlined an article, "Sierra Valley Apparently a Hot-Bed of Heresy," would lead one to believe. The clergy, and the more religious laity, believed that the issue of small membership was a major one, and each faith, in its own way, attempted to bring more people into the fold.¹

The Roman Catholic Church, because of the doctrine that it was a sin to miss Mass on the Sabbath, was not confronted with the problem of apathy to the extent the Protestant faiths were. When the religious could not get to church, the priest took the church to them. During the eighties a resident pastor was continually in attendance at Downieville. He rode a circuit that included Sierra City, Forest City, Alleghany, Howland Flat, Port Wine, Poker Flat, St. Louis and Whiskey Diggings. The priest spread himself thin that he might take the Sacraments to as many of the faithful as was possible. It was not untypical for priest to say Masses in Forest City at five and six o'clock in the morning and then travel to Downieville to say mass at ten o'clock on the same day. The priest would often hold services in Downieville, Sierra City or Forest City on Sunday, riding through the northwestern part of the county saying mass at places like Port Wine and La Porte during the week.²

These long trips could be dangerous and it was not uncommon for the circuit priests to be seriously injured. In 1881, Father Kirley broke his ankle in a fall, and Father Claire was badly hurt when his horse and buggy went over the bank between Sierra City and Downieville seven years later. The Mountain Messenger's report of the latter accident seemed to give an indication of the relative importance of man and beast when it noted that "the buggy was wrecked and the Father badly bruised, but the horse escaped without injury."³



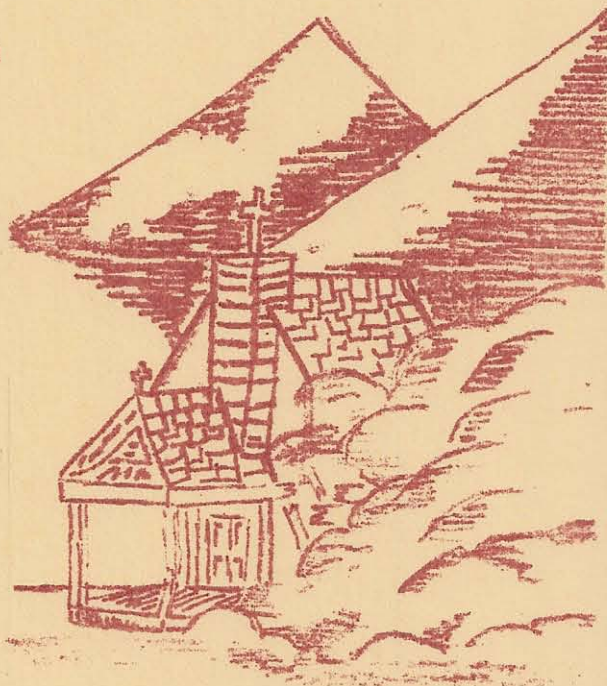
The Catholics in the eastern part of the county were apparently not fortunate enough to have the services of a resident priest. The Irish, who had built a Catholic Church in Sierra Valley, were either moving away or dying. The church building showed up on the delinquent tax rolls in 1881—an interesting commentary on the controversy over division of church and state. When the valley Catholics did hear mass, it was usually from a missionary priest coming out of Reno.⁴

It is said that God looks after his own, but the Catholics of Sierra City might have had reason to question the accuracy of this aphorism during the 1880's. The Sierra City parishioners borrowed \$1,500 to build a church in 1879, only to have it burn down in 1882 before the debt was paid. The church was rebuilt in 1884, and a belfry was added in 1888. Two years later an avalanche swept through the town and totally destroyed the church for the second time.⁵

Churches cost money. When they were destroyed or when there was a need to build one in a new or growing settlement, parishioners had to provide the funds. Local Catholics would put on entertainment or "fairs" to which admission would be charged and the profits were then put into a building fund or were used to purchase items needed for existing churches. The Papists seemed to prefer musical concerts or dances as money raising activities.⁶

Catholicism was apparently more successful than were the Protestant sects in gaining and keeping faithful adherents. By 1890, Catholic membership was equal to the combined total of both Protestant Churches. This, despite the fact that non-Catholics among the general population greatly outnumbered the Catholics. Methodists had more church buildings, but the Catholics had more members.⁷

Between 1866 and 1884, there were no Congregational societies in Sierra County. In 1885, the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Sierra Valley was incorporated with five Trustees. The directors were from the higher strata of society and resided throughout the valley. It is possible that the people who joined the Congregationalist Church did so in reaction to constant revivalist activities of the Methodists, and if so, Congregationalism, in this case, was tinged with a trace of elitism. The purpose of the new church was to promote religious worship in Sierra Valley. Its principal place of worship was to be Sierraville. Rev. C.E. Philbrook was chosen as pastor and he held that position throughout the remainder of the period under discussion.⁸



The Pilgrim congregation was supposed to purchase not more than twenty acres of land on which to build churches and parsonages. Almost immediately, the new group came into conflict with the Methodists, and the Congregationalists had difficulty obtaining subscriptions to build a new church in Sierraville. The Methodists accused the new society of "pilfering" the Methodist Sabbath School in 1887. Apparently the problem was resolved as construction on the Sierraville church began in June, 1888, and was completed by November of that year. The more wealthy members of the new society came to the Church's aid and money flowed into the coffers. By 1890, Rev. Philbrook had acquired enough money to not only pay off the building debt but to also buy a new organ.⁹

The Congregational church of the late nineteenth century was notably more conservative and less evangelical than was the American Methodist. There is a strong possibility that Methodist enthusiasm offended some of the more temperate or moderate Protestants and was one of the reasons the Sierraville Congregational Church was formed. This being the case, members of the new Church must have been surprised when Rev. Philbrook began holding revival meetings of his own in 1889.¹⁰

In relative terms, the Congregationalist Church was the most successful of the three denominations in Sierra County regarding the expansion of official membership. In 1884, there were not only no members, there was no church as such. But by 1890, there were two Congregational organizations, one church building, one hall and fifty-six official members. By that year there were only sixteen fewer Congregationalists than Methodists, and the Methodist Churches had been established institutions in Sierra County for thirty years.¹¹

Apathy was organized religion's primary enemy. The Leader put its finger on the problem the Churches were up against. In May, 1890, the Sierraville newspaper explained:

"The Congregational minister of this place says there is no hell and the Methodist minister says there is. There is very little interest taken in the belief of either, by the majority of the people."¹²

The Methodist churches were probably the most active in fighting against apathetical attitudes confronting organized religion in Sierra County. They were not much more effective than the other denominations in combating disinterest, but organized Methodism involved itself in the life of the community.

The administrative organization of the Methodist Church in Sierra County was rather complicated, primarily due to geography. The county contained two Methodist circuits—the Downieville circuit, which included Forest, Sierra City and Goodyear's Bar, and the one in the east covering Loyalton and Sierraville. The eastern circuit was in the Northern District, Nevada Conference; the western circuit in the Sacramento District, California Conference.¹³

The State Conferences were the most important governing bodies of the Methodist church. They appointed the ministers to the different circuits. Each district was governed by a presiding elder, the district being somewhat similar to a Catholic diocese,

the elder analogous to a Catholic Bishop. The ministers were appointed annually to their circuits and, until 1888, could remain in one place only three years. In that year the California Conference changed this rule so as to allow for a five year pastorate.¹⁴

Local administration was also complicated, and was organized around both hierarchal and democratic practices. The presiding elder traveled through each circuit in his district at least once a year. While there, he presided over the "quarterly" conference of the circuit. These local conferences apparently met annually and were the business meeting, local rule-making body, administrative assembly, and electoral body of the membership. At the meetings, chaired by the elder, the important business of the congregation was transacted. Questions about repairs on churches or the building of a parsonage were discussed. The officers of the Methodist Church for each locality that had a congregation were elected to one year terms. Every congregation had its own elected officers. They included trustees of church property, a steward, treasurer, class leader, organist, secretary, chorister and Sabbath school superintendent.¹⁵

The local congregation did not have control over who was to be their pastor. As already noted, he was appointed by the state conferences. But the people had the means to keep a pastor in line and to see that he administered to their spiritual wants. In 1890, when Sierra County suffered a hard winter, and Sierra City was isolated for a long period by heavy snows, the Methodists in the town complained so long and loud about the absence of the minister, that Rev. C.H. Darling had to place a public apology in the newspapers.¹⁶

The Methodists were a well administered church. Possibly because of their democratic structure and methods, their congregations also were active socially. They incorporated a number of social organizations into their church life. The Sunday schools were particularly active. These social organizations gave concerts, public dinners, and festivals. These activities had a two-fold purpose. They offered an evening of entertainment, food and relaxation; and they brought in money to pay the minister and build and repair churches. The lady's Methodist Social Union was one of the many social organizations that flourished within Sierra County. The women arranged entertainment and dinners as fund raising projects and then used the money to buy paint, carpet or a bell for their church building. At their meetings they painted church walls or laid new carpets in the aisles.¹⁷

Two other Methodist sponsored organizations were less materialistic and more socially oriented than the Sunday schools and the Social Union. The Young Men's Christian Association was a novel attempt to make religion responsive to the needs of the youth. Its purpose was to provide for spiritual and physical development and offer guidance and companionship to boys. The other organization was more a response to the social gospel attitudes of the period. In 1890, the members of the Methodist Church at Loyalton formed a society known as the Christian Working Band. "The object of the society (was) to do street work in a similar manner to the

Salvation Army Band, only less demonstrative.¹⁸

The Methodist social activities were attempts to bring religion to the people of the county. The social organizations and activities were all quasi-religious in orientation, but the Methodists were particularly fond of another method of gaining converts and saving souls--the revival. During the late nineteenth century American Protestants were going through a sweeping period of evangelical revivalism and Sierra County Methodists were caught up in the religious enthusiasm of the time. The Eighties was a period of constant revival meetings in the country, their frequency increasing toward the end of the decade.

The Methodist revival in Loyalton in 1881, held meetings twice a day and lasted for two weeks. Apparently it "didn't catch one sinner." It did succeed however, in turning the Loyalton Literary Society out of the church. It seems that the president of the society was a "mild philanthropic skeptic," or in other words, an "infidel." In 1885, Loyalton Methodists held a week long revival with unknown results. That same year Sierra City showed its religious enthusiasm by holding a week's revival which was "well attended."¹⁹

In 1888, Rev. Crossman was appointed to the Loyalton-Sierraville circuit. He was an advocate and practitioner of the fundamentalist revival technique and reminded the Leader's editor "of the revivalist Rev. Munhall, who visited this coast three years ago." In 1889, Sierra City Methodists were experiencing another revival meeting and Sierraville had a two week religious gathering, held in conjunction with Sierra City's. In the autumn, Loyalton held another long revival and in the following spring, Sierraville's was led by a number of different preachers. The temporary effect upon the farmers, townspeople and lumbermen may have been significant. As for gaining new members for the Methodist Church, one of the principal reasons for holding them, the revivals were less than completely successful. In 1890, the official Methodist membership amounted to only seventy-two communicants.²⁰

Hallowed but tough circuit riders, social organizations, completely new religious societies, and ubiquitous revival meetings were all failures in one sense. Despite the best efforts of three proselytizing religious denominations, in 1890, there were over five thousand persons in Sierra County and only 254 official church members. During the Eighties, the profits and production of the lumber industry went up, agriculture expanded, the quality and effectiveness of education increased, organized religion got almost nowhere, quantitatively. But then, the influence organized religion has on a community is intangible to say



the least, and certainly cannot be measured on a numerical scale.²¹

Sources:

1. Report on the Statistics of Churches in the United States at the 11th Census; 1890 (Washington D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1895), P. 54; Reno Evening Gazette, March 1, 1881.
2. Walsh, Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails, p. 231; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 18, 1886; Jan. 29, 1887.
3. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, April 30, 1881; July 30, 1887.
3. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Feb. 5, 1881; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, April 27, 1888.
5. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Jan 17, 1880, June 19, 1880. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, May 11, 1882; Downieville, Nov. 14, 1884; Sierra City, July 6, 1888; Jan. 9, 1890.
6. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, June 19, 1880; Sierra Co. Tribune, Downieville, May 24, 1883; May 22 1885; Sierra City, March 1, 1889.
7. See Footnote one, pp. 236, 333.
8. Sierra Co. Tribune, Downieville, June 5, 1885; Articles of Incorporation File, 1882-1885, County Clerk's Office, Downieville.
9. Ibid; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 11, 1888; June 8, 1888; Nov. 9, 1888; Nov. 1, 1889.
10. Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, April 19, 1889.
11. See footnote one, p. 333.
12. Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 2, 1890.
13. Sierra Co. Tribune, Downieville, Aug. 14, 1885; Forest City, Sept. 21, 1882; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Oct. 26, 1888; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Sept. 17, 1887.
14. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Sept. 18, 1880; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Sept. 26, 1884; Sug. 14, 1885; Sierra City, Sept. 14, 1888; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Aug. 31, '88.
15. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Aug. 4, 1880; Feb. 5, 1881; April 9, 1887; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, June 14, 1883; Sept. 26, 1884; Jan. 16, 1885; Sierra City, Apr. 16, '86.
16. Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, April 25, 1890.
17. Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City, Nov. 15, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 3, 1890.
18. Reno Evening Gazette, March 1, 1881, Feb. 6, '85, Sierra Co. Tribune, Sierra City, Oct. 30, '85.
19. See footnote one, page 333. Sierra Valley Leader, Nov. 16, '88; Feb. 28, 1889; Nov. 29, 1889, Mar. 7, 14, 21, 1890.
20. See Footnote one, p. 11, p. 236, p. 333.
21. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, July 6, Sept. 7, 1882.

See author for further research materials and sources.

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Formal Education and the Schools in Sierra
County, 1880-1890.

Few would contest a belief that the system of education a particular locality employs is of significant social importance. The residents of Sierra County in the 1880's certainly held formal education in high regard. The newspapers carried editorial upon editorial concerning education and reported the public system's finances, commended teachers, and followed the students' progress. The Sierra County Tribune carried an "Educational Department," J.E. Berry, editor, that ran from July into September, 1882. It is indicative of the importance placed on education by this paper that it ran the education column on the front page.¹

The decade under discussion saw an educational system that was partially fluid and partially stationary. Under the new California Constitution of 1879, the basic administrative organization of county schools was changed. New state laws continued to be passed in legislative attempts to improve the quality of teacher preparation, student health and subject matter. The manner of financing the schools tended to move toward dependence upon the state government and away from local funding.

Yet, the basic idea of local control was not significantly altered, as the county remained a myriad of small school districts. The type of schools remained constant throughout the decade. The public system incorporated primary and grammar departments, and select short-term private schools satisfied the desire of some to continue their education during periods when the public schools were closed. The new high school movement had not yet reached Sierra County. Neither did teaching-learning methods change in any noticeable manner--the recitation method was used throughout the decade.

In an attempt to understand the social phenomenon of systematic, organized, public education, we must view each of the system's components separately while remembering the interaction of the parts. Administration, finances, the buildings, duration of terms and vacations, the different levels of schools, teachers, pupils and curriculum will all be discussed individually in an effort to more clearly describe the system as it was.

California entered the 1880's with a new constitution. On the basis of the new fundamental law the decade saw a number of changes in school law which involved both the administration and the financing of the county public school systems. (The laws concerning the finances of the schools will be covered subsequently, and this discussion will be kept to those laws effecting administrative procedures.) The legislature in 1880, created County Boards of Education consisting of the county superintendent and four other members, of which two had to be certified teachers. The board was to be appointed by the board of Supervisors. This administrative centralization was the most important change in the school law, but there were others.²

The state legislature continued to pass bills aimed at

developing a systematic institution of public education throughout the decade. Statutes involving textbook selection, teachers' salaries, apportionment of funds, powers of the superintendent, janitors, required courses, certification of teachers and vaccination against contagious disease were a few of the more significant changes and innovations enacted by the legislature. All had immediate and lasting effect on the local schools.³

After 1880 the county board of education was the principal administrative agency for Sierra County's school system. The members' terms of office were staggered to promote continuity, being either one or two years in length. This body, along with its general administrative functions, made the final decisions concerning textbooks, certified teachers, prepared semi-annual teachers' exams and acted as local censors of books in school libraries.⁴

The office of County Superintendent of Schools dated from the 1850's in California. The superintendent was, and still is, the chief administrator and executive within the county system. He answered to the county board, of which he was a member, and the electorate, since the office was an elective one. The duties of the office were varied and demanding. It was the superintendent's responsibility to apportion state and county school money. He attended the biennial sessions of the county superintendent conventions, being legally required to do so after 1880. He traveled through the county visiting each school at least once a term and issued an extensive report on the status of the county's schools each year. He also approved or rejected all plans for new buildings or additions to the older ones. In addition, the Superintendent was required to be a full time teacher and on his tours he often acted as a substitute teacher when no other qualified person could be found. It is almost beyond comprehension how all this was accomplished and there is the possibility that an officer with such a multitude of responsibilities, fulfilled none well.⁵

In addition to his duties, the superintendent had to be a practicing politician with all that that entails. The office was definitely not a non-partisan one. The superintendents campaigned under the auspices of one party or another. As the decade opened, J.S. Wixson, a Republican, was the incumbent. He had been elected in 1878 and was reelected every two years until 1886. In the 1882 contest he was confronted by a woman, Miss Josie Lefever, running on the Democratic ticket. Although this was in accord with a basic trend in the United States at this time concerning women's participation in the politics of education, a woman correspondent to the Sierra Valley Leader informed the readers that "if women could vote, J.S. Wixson would surely be elected School Superintendent." In 1886, E.L. Case was nominated by the Republican Party to replace Wixson and ran unopposed after the Democrats decided to run his wife, and she had declined the nomination. Case continued in the position for the remainder of the decade, although he occasionally faced opposition from within his own

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party.⁶

The county was broken up into local districts. In 1880, there were twenty-five small districts, each with their own school house and supporting their own teachers. During the decade, as the population ebbed and flowed, three new districts were added and four lapsed or were suspended. Two of the new districts were added in the eastern part of the county and three out of the four that were terminated were in the northwest. The end of the hydraulic mining in the Slate Creek region following the passage of the anti-debris laws of 1883, depopulated the mountain communities.⁷

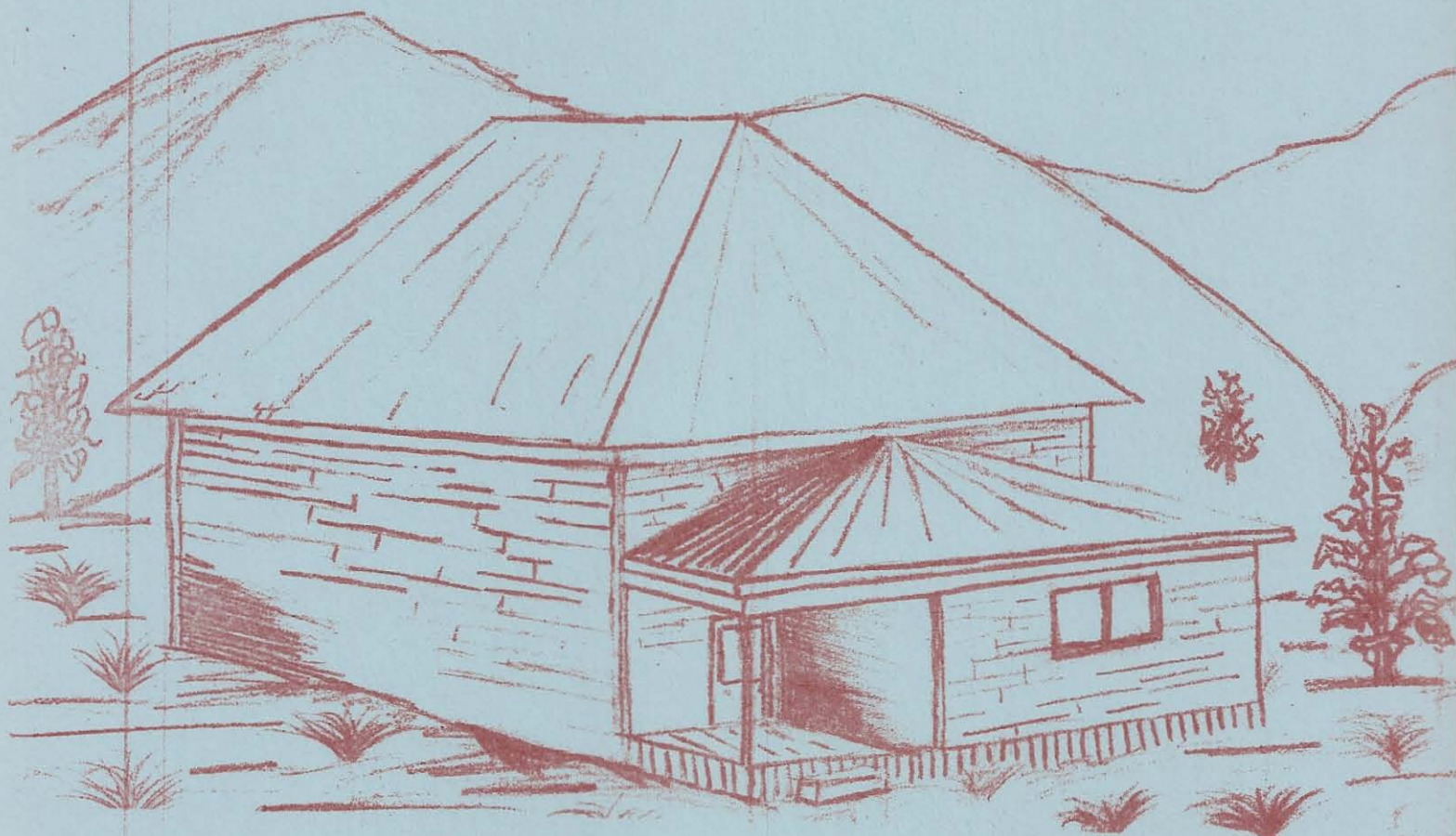
Each district was governed by a three-member Board of Trustees, the officers elected annually. These local districts and their boards enjoyed a great amount of autonomy and were absolutely necessary as long as the horse was king. The districts voted their own bond issues and the trustees, in turn, floated the paper. Trustees engaged teachers and janitors and paid them from money apportioned to the district by the state and county. Each district built and maintained its own school house and provided books for the school libraries. The system was relatively democratic and responsive to local needs and desires. But it was also inefficient and expensive.⁸

The state supplied slightly more than half of the funds for the county public schools during the 1880's. The state funds were apportioned to the counties on the basis of an annual census count of children between the ages of five and seventeen. The county board of education, in turn, apportioned this money to each district based on the average daily attendance. (A.D.A.). The state apportionment during the eighties ranged from a high of approximately \$8,700 to a low of about \$6,450, averaging around \$7,500 a year. Changes in education-oriented legislation first took away about \$3,000 from the county by putting poll taxes into the state fund, then the county gained new money when the state, after 1887, started appropriating library funds.⁹

County school funds were acquired from a special county school levy on taxable property. This tax ranged from the legal maximum of fifty cents per one hundred dollars assessed valuation to a low of thirty-seven and a half cents, averaging approximately forty cents during the eighties. Appropriations from the county fund amounted to about \$6,500 each year. This, coupled with the state appropriations, gave the county about \$14,500 annually to apportion among nearly thirty local districts. The money, apportioned by the superintendent, was divided according to the A.D.A. of each school and was distributed to the districts three times a year. It was then up to the trustees to allocate these funds, and those raised separately from within the district, so that salaries were paid, bonded indebtedness was relieved, and buildings constructed and maintained.¹⁰

The state and county appropriations covered only a part of the cost of running the district school. The remainder had to be made up locally. Most of the added funds were raised through bond issues. If the district needed new buildings, additions or

repairs on the existing plant, the question of issuing bonds would be placed before the voters. In every case during the 1880's, voters passed bond issues which appeared on the ballot in the Downieville, Sierra City, Sierraville, Antelope, and Union School Districts. The Downieville vote was almost unanimous and Sierra City voted more money than was required. The revenue needed to pay off the bonds and the interest, at times as high as eight percent, came from a special tax on property within the district. Thus, some taxpayers were assessed concurrently by the state, county and the school district for the support of public



{ Old Long Point School in Sierra Valley (roughly near where present road turns off Highway 49 to Filippini ranch), moved to place near Vanetti ranch, and finally to Loyalton as V.F.W. Hall. }

education. Yet, the electorate demonstrated a general willingness to tax themselves in support of an institution most felt was beneficial.¹¹

If a school needed such luxuries as a library or a piano, the money was raised by community effort. Exhibitions by school children, balls and suppers sponsored by the teachers, or amateur plays put on by public spirited citizens, were some of the various

methods used to obtain the nonessentials that could not be paid for out of existing funds.¹²

The school buildings in the smaller towns were one room affairs, about thirty feet by fifty feet, painted white. They normally had outdoor sanitation facilities and were heated in the winter by wood stoves. The larger towns that had more children than one teacher could handle, boasted both a primary and a grammar school, usually had two room school houses. The more populous towns were proud of their modern schools which incorporated the latest ideas on educational plants. These buildings had ante-rooms for hanging wet clothes, transoms by which the teacher could control the temperature, wood stoves or hot-air furnaces, "water closets" and sinks. They were apparently also furnished with individual desks. The largest school in the county, Downieville's, had two class rooms, 60' x 65', a main hall and a library room, along with all the other modern appliances.¹³

During the eighties, new school houses were constructed at Loganville, Downieville, Sierraville, Antelope, Pine Creek, Port Wine, and a major addition was made to the building in Sierra City. The new buildings were expensive. The Antelope school, the least costly, was erected for \$800. The one room addition to the Sierra City building cost \$2,286.62, and Downieville's modern structure cost almost \$6,000. In 1890, the value of school buildings and property was \$35,870, having almost doubled during the decade. The residents wanted the best for their children and were willing to pay for it.¹⁴

The length of a complete school term was ten months. A term of this duration each year was only completed in the larger schools. The schools in Downieville, Sierra City, Forest City, and Sierraville usually commenced in September and ended in June. This schedule was not always followed even in these larger schools. At Forest City and Sierra City, where severe winters made keeping schools open almost impossible, they were often closed for a month in February or March. Smaller schools, regardless of whether they were in the agricultural east or the mining areas of the west and north-west, almost always held classes from April or July to November or December, the terms being somewhat shorter than the optimum ten month duration. If the schools worked on the winter schedule, they closed for a vacation during the holidays of Christmas and New Year. If they ran during the summer, they closed for a week or two for the Fourth of July. The teachers often shifted from place to place as one district closed and another opened. They were required to teach not less than ten months a year for five years in order to secure an "Educational Diploma."¹⁵

Because of the shifting schedule of the public schools and because their wages were low, teachers often conducted private schools of short duration in an effort to supplement their incomes. The private schools ran from three weeks to two months. The teacher was paid by subscription, the price ranging from twenty-five cents to two dollars and fifty cents per pupil, per week. Private schools were sometimes separated into "advanced" and "primary" sections and both men and women conducted them. Classes were held

in vacant public school houses or in private homes. The subscription schools were traditional hold-overs from the frontier past. By the eighties, they were an unnecessary anachronism and played only a small part in the education of Sierra County's youth.¹⁶

The public school system was divided into primary and grammar departments. The smaller localities had only primary classes while the larger towns usually supported the advanced grammar school as well. The schools were segregated according to both age and educational advancement. The younger, less educated students filled the primary departments; the older, better qualified pupils were placed in the grammar schools. The latter were not quite on the level of a high school, being similar to today's junior-high or middle school. Although not officially high schools, grammar departments were, in many ways, advanced educational institutions.¹⁷

Grammar school teachers were all men and were paid on a higher scale. Men and women taught the primary schools, but the latter were excluded from teaching the higher grades. The teacher of a grammar school had to have a superior certificate and was required to score higher on the semi-annual examinations. He was also tested in more disciplines, including "algebra, natural philosophy, Constitution of the U.S. and California, ... natural history, ... literature, chemistry, astronomy, rhetoric, ancient and modern history." The curriculum of the grammar school was academically more intensive, extensive and difficult than that of a modern high school. In the Sierraville Grammar Department in 1888, students studied physiology, book-keeping, U.S. history, geography, algebra and philosophy as well as the general courses of grammar, reading and arithmetic.¹⁸

Although Sierra County did not have an official high school until early in the twentieth century, the grammar departments gave the students a relatively advanced education and many remained in school until their seventeenth year. It was not uncommon for a graduate of one of the better grammar schools to be able to pass the difficult teachers' examination immediately after graduation. It would be closer to the truth to say that Sierra County had high schools in fact, if not in name, in the 1880's, than to state unequivocally that the county had not had a high school previous to the one established in Loyalton during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁹

The districts of Sierra County hired a total of 28 to 30 teachers every year during this period. The number of teachers remained stable but a tendency toward the domination of the profession by women can be detected. In 1881, there were fourteen men and fourteen women teaching. In 1890, while the total number of educators was exactly the same, there were now seventeen women and only eleven men.²⁰

Wages paid teachers did not make the profession a particularly lucrative one, especially when mining and lumbering were remunerative at the time. The teachers were paid approximately the same wages as laborers in the mines and sawmills. Salaries were based on a monthly rate but paid only periodically. Women were always paid twenty to twenty-five percent less than men. In 1881, the men were averaging \$84.53 per month and the women, \$68.75.

The wage scale did not change significantly during the decade; the teachers in Downieville, for example, were paid exactly the same salary in 1890 as in 1880. In 1880, teachers in Sierra County averaged less than \$600 a year. Despite the low pay, and although there was a large turnover in the school teacher population, a surprisingly large number of male teachers continued to teach in the county throughout the period. These men formed a nucleus



{ Old Loyaltown Elementary School (in use during the late 1880's and 1890's), for many years used as Catholic Church, presently used as Social Hall by Catholic Church.

around which the profession developed. 21

In accordance with Section 177 of the Political Code of

California, the Board of Education, in 1880, decided that teachers wishing to procure renewals of their certificates without examination would have to be approved by the county board. It is possible, therefore, that some teachers in Sierra County did not take the semi-annual teachers' examination when they obtained a teaching certificate. But in the overwhelming majority of cases, teachers were forced to take these difficult tests to acquire their credentials, to renew them, or to gain advanced certificates. These examinations were difficult and were administered over a two or three day period, every six months. Until 1887, teachers could attempt to gain either second or first grade certificates. After that date, the credentials were known as primary and grammar grade certificates respectively. Those trying for advanced credentials had to score higher and take exams in many more disciplines. The examinations covered twenty-one to thirty-four different subjects, from school law and industrial drawing to trigonometry and chemistry. As one would expect, the rate of failure was relatively high. The questions were so universally difficult, and of such a broad range, that in the present writer's estimation, many or most present day college graduates would not be able to pass these examinations.²²

The teachers, with classes averaging from forty to seventy-five students, were stern disciplinarians. Teaching methods consisted of heavy assignments of memorization work each night, and classroom recitation by day. Yet, some teachers could enthuse their students and others attempted to use field trips and various other methods to encourage learning.²³

Sierra County's teachers were generally a credit to their profession. Although an occasional incompetent then, as now, found his way into the school room, he was the exception rather than the rule. Some teachers were of superior quality and were materially rewarded by the community. The teachers were characterized as "efficient," "painstaking," "exact," "able," "experienced," "intelligent," "industrious," and "conscientious." They worked hard, and gained little money, to provide pupils with as good an education as was possible under the circumstances.²⁴

For the students, just getting to school could be difficult, as the Leader pointed out in 1889:

Two and sometimes three children can be seen upon one horse going to school in this Valley, where the families live two to four miles from the school. The boys almost invariably carry a lasso rope and are learning to throw it, along with their school lessons. There are many boys in this Valley, of from ten to thirteen years of age, who are excellent riders, and are not afraid to lasso good sized animals.²⁵

The horse was a competent means of transportation when the weather permitted their use. During the winter, education suffered and schools were closed, in one case because "the children (had) not all been supplied with snow shoes..." In this instance, school reopened as soon as the students could be fitted with the proper footwear, but heavy snow usually closed schools until spring.²⁶

Sierra County had a large number of school-age children relative to the total population during the decade. The number of children reported in the school census each year ranged from a low of 1103, to a high of 1285. Although there was some over-crowding, a stable absentee rate prevented this from becoming a major problem.²⁷

Absenteeism, itself, was a problem. The Tribune, in 1883, noted that "'hookey' (seemed) to be a very popular game with some of the school boys in Downieville." But "hookey," always an irritation within a school system, was not the crux of the issue. Absenteeism in Sierra County averaged about twenty percent of the school age population; as high as twenty-five percent in some years. This percentage of school census children never attended school at any time during a year. Diseases like measles, whooping cough, and small pox closed schools periodically, and students did play "hookey." But the apathy of parents and the acquiescence of authorities which allowed one child out of five to stay away from school permanently, bordered on criminal negligence.²⁸

The Workingman's Party platform of 1879, had pointed out the need for compulsory education laws and the Sierra County newspapers continually editorialized about the high rate of absenteeism. The Sierra Valley Leader, in 1888, called for stricter laws and explained that the districts with the highest numbers of children not attending school were also the areas that had the highest illiteracy rate.²⁹

More important than the problem of absenteeism, is the question: did the students who attended school receive quality education? One thing is certain. Students worked under harsh discipline, enforced by corporal punishment often inflicted "without due deliberation and for comparatively trivial offenses." Discipline, at times, became an end rather than a means. Visitors to the schools often equated a regimented student body with a well educated one. A teacher who could pass for a Marine drill-instructor was considered a superior educationist.³⁰

The schools did have libraries which offered the student a certain selection in reading matter, but nothing that was even slightly controversial. The board of education acted as an official board of censors and passed judgement on all books placed in school libraries. The state provided funds to each county for books. These funds were apportioned to the districts; the trustees then decided upon the volumes to be purchased, drawing titles from a highly restricted list approved by the county board.³⁰

Textbooks were also chosen by the Board of Education. They published an intent to change the texts, received sealed bids from textbook companies, and then accepted or rejected the bids. During the 1880's, the administration made an effort to keep the texts abreast of the times. In the early part of the decade the textbooks were chosen from the Bancroft, McGuffey, and Appleton series. Appleton's readers apparently contained the latest in educational improvements and ideas about teaching reading. By the mid-eighties, the Board chose books from the catalogues of ten different publishing houses. The books were no longer just readers and spellers, but now covered a broad range of subjects from philosophy to Bookkeeping. Students had the most educationally advanced printed matter available. The necessary physical tools were generally provided to the pupils of Sierra County. Whether a successful teaching-learning milieu existed is more difficult, if not impossible to ascertain.³¹

Officially, students were not rigidly divided into grades according to age. Many schools were totally ungraded, but most teachers, for the sake of efficiency, segregated their pupils into some types of categories. These graded divisions were simply artificial expedients of individual teachers, made necessary because of the great number of students in the class room. In these divisions were made, classes were normally arranged according to a combination of age and achievement, and lettered A, B, C, D, E. The primary schools had the younger, smaller pupils, the grammar schools, the older and larger ones. There was an occasional effort to break down classes into numbered grades, based on age, but the idea never took hold as a general rule. Systematic age segregation was not used in Sierra County during the eighties.³²

The methods used by nearly all the teachers resulted in memorization, recognition, and recitation. Each student studied assigned subject material at home and committed much of it to memory every night. The next day he was expected to answer questions in five or six different subjects by reciting what he had memorized. "The school room was a recitation room as all school rooms should be."³³

Subject matter was difficult and extensive. Even when small children in primary schools were allowed to draw pictures, they studied geography by drawing maps. A student who completed both primary and grammar school in Sierra County would have received instruction in physiology, philosophy, algebra, arithmetic, geography, spelling, word-analysis, United States history, reading, civil government, grammar, drawing and book-keeping. This curriculum is the very minimum that was taught, and all probability, many more disciplines were studied.³⁴

The fact that book-keeping was a regular subject in public schools demonstrates the attention that was then being given to so called "practical" education. During this decade there was a move toward teaching children how to live in a business oriented world. Discussions took place about the need for manual and technical training and it was pointed out that "a youth's education should be to the end of fitting him to make a living...to making money and to the end that he may be a useful citizen." Latin and Greek were coming more and more into disrepute and it was explained that "technical training as well as book learning was important."³⁵

The education received by students in Sierra County was on a par with, and possibly superior to, that received by most rural children. The teachers were generally conscientious and diligent in their chosen profession. Apparently teaching in Sierra County was not considered just a stepping stone to bigger and better things. The administrators were honest and did their best to run an agency that had the centrifugal forces of party politics and local autonomy trying to pull it apart. But being politicians, they were seldom willing to lead, innovate, or produce radical changes in the educational status quo. This was an age of the neighborhood school, and the residents of each district experienced a degree of control over the education of their children that was to disappear in the twentieth century. The tax-payers seemed to realize the value of education and went to the polls again and

again to vote bond issues that would improve their school system. People usually receive the type of schools they deserve and a school system is but a reflection of the community. Sierra County seemed to be seeking a better way of life.

Notes on the Author:

William G. Copren, as explained earlier, has written a more detailed history of Sierra County from which these articles were taken. Mr. Copren was reared in Sierraville, California, attending elementary school there and high school in Loyalton, California. He is presently employed at the University of Nevada where he also does research on the history of Sierra County. He lives in Reno, Nev. with his wife and young daughter.



Source Material for Formal Education, etc.

1. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, July 6, Sept 7, 1882.
2. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, May 1, 1880.
3. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, April 2, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City, May 31, 1889; May 3, 1889; California suffered a serious Small Pox epidemic in the winter of 1887-88 which was particularly severe in Sierra County and led directly to the state law requiring all school children to be vaccinated for Small Pox, passed in 1889, Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City Oct. 11, 1889.
4. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, May 1, June 19, 1880; April 2, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, May 11, 1882; Sierra City, May 3, 1889; The Board was also known as the Board of Examiners, see Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 484.

5. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, May 15, 1880; April 2, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Jan. 2, 1884; Sierra City, May 3, 1889; June 22, 1888; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 27, 1888.

6. Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, pp. 432, 484; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, May 15, 1880; May 25, 1882; Sept. 18, 1886; quotation from Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Oct. 20, 1882; May 18, 1888; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, Aug. 17, 1882; Aug. 24, 1882; Nov. 9, 1882; Downieville, Jan. 23, 1885; Sierra City, April 2, 1886; Sept. 17, 1886; Mountain Mirror, Sierraville, Sept. 10, 1890; Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238.

7. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Jan. 15, 1881; March 12, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, March 16, 1882; Downieville, Feb. 8, 1883; Feb. 6, 1885; March 20, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 27, 1888; May 17, 1889.

8. Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238; Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City, May 3, 1889; Feb. 24, 1888; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 6, 1888; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, May 1, 1880; April 2, 1881.

9. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, March 13, 1880; March 5, 1881; Feb. 26, 1887; The Daily Bee, Sacramento, Feb. 24, 1880; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, March 16, 1882; Downieville, March 8, 1883; March 6, 1884; March 20, 1885; Sierra City, Feb. 26, 1886; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 24, 1888; Feb. 22, 1889.

10. Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 484; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, March 5, 1881; Feb. 26, 1887; July 24, 1880; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Oct. 4, 1883; Feb. 8, 1883; Feb. 21, 1884; Feb. 6, 1885; Sierra City, Oct. 18, 1889; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 24, 1888; July 27, 1888; Feb. 22, 1889.

11. Report on Valuation, Taxation and Public Indebtedness in the United States as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 874; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, April 23, 1887; July 30, 1887; Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 6, 1888; May 11, 1888; Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City, Oct. 18, 1889.

12. Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City, June 28, 1889; Dec. 20, 1889; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Oct. 3, 1890.

13. Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Jan. 16, 1884; Sierra City, Aug. 24, 1888; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Jan. 22, 1881; Sept. 25, 1886; April 23, 1887; Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238.

14. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, April 23, 1887; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 6, 1888; May 17, 1889; Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238; Sierra County Tribune,

Downieville, July 11, 1884; Sierra City, Aug. 16, 1889; Aug. 24, 1888; Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 485; Report on Wealth, Debt, and Taxation at the Eleventh Census, 1890, Part II, Valuation and Taxation (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 604.

15. The discussion is a generalization and exceptions abound. The material demonstrates only ~~some~~ tendencies drawn from newspaper accounts and not official records and thus suffers accordingly. But the synthesis is accurate in the broadest spectrum and could be demonstrated, if space permitted, graphically; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Aug. 28, 1880; July 24, 1880; May 22, 1880; June 25, 1881; Sept. 18, 1881; July 9, 1887; July 16, 1887; Sept. 17, 1887; Oct. 15, 1887; March 5, 1887; July 23, 1887; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, Aug. 24, 1882; June 22, 1882; May 11, 1882; March 16, 1882; Downieville, Dec. 28, 1882; Dec. 18, 1883; March 22, 1883; May 3, 1883; April 26, 1883; Aug. 30, 1883; July 12, 1883; Dec. 19, 1884; Sept. 4, 1885; Sierra City, Sept. 11, 1885; Aug. 9, 1889; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Nov. 29, 1889; Dec. 6, 1889.

16. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, March 13, 1880; March 27, 1880; May 15, 1880; March 5, 1887; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, March 30, 1882; March 16, 1882; Downieville, April 24, 1884; May 7, 1884; June 26, 1885.

17. Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 484, claims that there were ten grammar schools in 1881. I have been able to locate only four in the county for the whole period; one each in Downieville, Sierra City, Forest City and Sierraville; see Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Feb. 8, 1883; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 27, 1888, where the number of teachers in each district is listed, only in districts that had two or more teachers would have had a grammar school and only the four districts pointed out above contain more than one teacher. This is only one of the manners that this determination was made; most of the cited sources in fn 61 following substantiate this conclusion. Another piece of evidence that leads to the same conclusion is that students from districts outside of the four largest towns paid up to \$4.00 a month to attend the grammar schools in these towns, see Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, March 16, 1888.

18. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, May 25, 1882; Sept. 28, 1882; Downieville, March 29, 1883; Dec. 19, 1884; March 13, 1885; Sierra City, March 9, 1888; Aug. 24, 1888; Oct. 5, 1888; Aug. 30, 1889; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 24, 1888; March 9, 1888; May 11, 1888; Aug. 29, 1888; Sept. 13, 1889; Feb. 28, 1890; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Aug. 28, 1880; Nov. 27, 1886; Jan. 1, 1887; Oct. 8, 1887; quotation from Oct. 15, 1887; Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238.

19. Sierra Valley Leader, June 15, 1888; June 22, 1888.

20. Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 484; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Feb. 8, 1883; Feb. 21, 1884; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 27, 1888; Report on Education in the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 56.

21 Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 484; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Aug. 28, 1880; April 2, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, March 13, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, April 18, 1890; Jan. 3, 1890; Report on Wealth, Debt and Taxation at the Eleventh Census, 1890, Part II, Valuation and Taxation (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 604; Memorial History of Northern California, p. 238; men like J.E. Berry, J.S. Wixson, E.L. Case, J.H. Thorpe and M. Powers were experienced teachers of long standing in Sierra County.

22 Mountain Messenger, Downieville, June 19, 1880; examples of examination subjects may be found in the Messenger, Oct. 15, 1887; Oct. 23, 1886; characteristic test questions may be found in Messenger of June 25, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, June 12, 1885; Sierra City; June 15, 1888.

23 Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Sept. 11, 1880; Jan. 22, 1881; Oct. 10, 1885; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, June 15, 1882; Downieville, March 29, 1883; Sierra City, Oct. 5, 1888; Sierra Valley Leader, March 9, 1888; Nov. 29, 1889; April 18, 1890.

24 Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, June 22, 1882; Aug. 24, 1882; Downieville, June 28, 1883; Sierra City, Aug. 24, 1888; Aug. 31, 1888; May 10, 1889; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 3, 1890; Sept. 12, 1890; April 18, 1890; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Sept. 16, 1886.

25 Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 24, 1889.

26 Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 31, 1890, as noted above the schools in parts of the county simply closed completely during the winter months.

27 Mountain Messenger, Downieville, March 6, 1880; March 5, 1881; Feb. 19, 1887; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 27, 1888; March 9, 1888; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Aug. 16, 1884; Feb. 21, 1884; Sierra City, Aug. 20, 1886; Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 485; Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 649; Report on Education in the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 56; Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890, Part I, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 756.

28 Quotation from Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Jan. 25, 1883; see also, Mountain Messenger, Downieville, June 23, 1880; Oct. 10, 1885; Dec. 4, 1886; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Jan. 6, 1888; Fariss and Smith, Illustrated History of Sierra County, p. 484; Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890, Part I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 756; Report on Education in the United States at the Eleventh Census, 1890 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 56.

29. Hittell, History of California, IV, p. 611; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, Aug. 24, 1882; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 27, 1888.
30. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Sept. 11, 1880; Jan. 22, 1881; quotation from Editorial, Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Sept. 17, 1883.
31. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, April 2, 1881; June 15, 1882; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 24, 1888; Sierra County Tribune, Sierra City, Feb. 24, 1888.
32. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, June 15, 1882; Downieville, May 1, 1884; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, April 17, 1880; May 1, 1880; June 19, 1880; Editorial, Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 24, 1888.
33. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, May 25, 1882; Downieville, March 29, 1883; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Nov. 13, 1886; Sept. 17, 1887; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, March 9, 1888.
34. Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Jan. 18, 1883; March 29, 1883; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Oct. 10, 1885; quotation from Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, April 18, 1890.
35. Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, May 1, 1884; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Oct. 23, 1886; Nov. 27, 1886; Oct. 15, 1887; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 11, 1888.
36. Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, April 17, 1885; first quotation from April 3, 1885; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, July 24, 1880; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Aug. 17, 1888; second quotation from Jan. 11, 1889.
37. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, Aug. 17, 1882; Downieville, April 3, 1885; Sierra City, May 3, 1889; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, March 28, 1890; May 11, 1890.

SPRING MEETING INFORMATION

The spring meeting of the Sierra County Historical Society was held at the Sierraville School on Tuesday, March 16, at 8:00 p.m. Over thirty people attended the meeting.

Special guests at the meeting, who were part of the program, included Artie Strang of Sierraville, Mary Ellen Glass and Robert Armstrong of the University of Nevada at Reno, Nevada. Mrs. Glass, Director of the Oral History Project at the University described how the oral history project is organized and how this program could be instituted within the Sierra County Historical Society. She read several interesting examples of Nevada history which were obtained through the Oral History Project. Mr. Armstrong, curator of special collections, explained to the members of the Sierra County Historical Society that the University of Nevada would be glad to preserve any items of the SCHS that we would wish to place at the University of Nevada. These items would be used by students at the University for research, but they would be returned to the SCHS at any time we would wish to have them back. This time would be, we would hope, when we have a museum capable of proper storage. Mr. Artie Strang gave an interesting history of the early freight routes into Sierra County. He also had a display of old pictures of Sierraville and vicinity and a map which indicated locations of old railroads and freight roads.

The members voted to do the necessary cleanup work around the old Etta Postoffice which would meet the requirements of the Fire District. This would give the Society time to decide whether or not to make a historical park out of the old Etta Post Office. President Jeanne McMahan assigned committees for further study of the Etta Post Office project, the Historical documents project, the historical plaques project, and made plans for the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Historical Society will be held in Alleghany on June 28th, at 1:00 p.m. Mrs. Mary Hope of Alleghany is in charge of this meeting. Interested members and friends should bring "pot-luck" lunch. A tour of the old mines will be on the program during the afternoon.

A tour of the eastern end of Sierra County is being planned. It is hoped that this tour will include Pike City, and other old mining locations of that area.

Delicious refreshments were served by Arlene Amodel, Georgene Copren and Esther Goss.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS, CONTINUED

36. Louis Lombardi, Loyalton, Ca.
37. Helen Lowey, Downieville, Ca.
38. Darlene F. Messner, 2 Walden Lane, Mill Valley, Calif.
39. Mary E. Moreau, 7713 Lake Adlon, San Diego, Ca. 92119
40. Jeanne M. Moses, Loyalton, Ca.
41. Forest McMahan and Jeanne McMahan, Box 67, Sierra City, Ca. 96125
42. Audrey Mull, Downieville, Ca.
43. J.L. McGaffrey, 5380 Swarthmore St., LaMesa, Ca. 92041
44. Harold I. McGrath, 2109 Hyland Crt., Santa Rosa, Ca.
45. Vicki McKinney, Sierraville, Ca.
46. Winifred McKurtis, Sierraville, Ca.
47. Beverly Perry, 3306 Neolopua Dr., Honolulu, Hawaii
48. June Polastrini, Sierraville, Ca.
49. Dallas Poston, 9537 Sara St., Elk Grove, Ca. 95624
50. Edwina Savage, Sierraville, Ca.
51. Maren Scholberg, " "
52. Lotte Schultz, 3854 Edgehill Dr., Los Angeles, Ca. 90008
53. Angelina Cabello Sem, Chiesa P. Sondrio, Co. Costi, Italy 23023
54. Sierra College, 5000 Rocklin Road, Auburn, Ca. 95677
55. Mrs. Harvey Sheehan, Box 4, Rackerby, Ca. 95972
56. Gladys M. Skinner, 2204 Silver Lake Blvd. Los Angeles, Ca.
57. Sophie T. Tschopp, Sierra City, Ca. 96125
58. Thelma Turner, Downieville, Ca.
59. Univ. of Nevada, Reno, Nev.
60. Norma White, Loyalton, Ca.
61. Bill Woods, Sierra City, Packer Lake Lodge, Ca. 96125
62. Dorothea S. Woods, Box 38 Sierra City, Ca. 96125

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The Staff of the Sierra County Historical Bulletin wishes to remind our readers that the staff does not check on the historical correctness of the information submitted to us for publication. If any of our readers notice errors in our historical facts, we would appreciate you letting us know so these errors can be corrected. The Staff of the Bulletin welcomes articles of interest on Sierra County or related areas.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS AND INFORMATION OF INTEREST TO SOCIETY
MEMBERS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS AS OF
MARCH 26, 1971

1. Elaine Amodei
Sierraville, Ca. 96126
2. Associated Students, LHS
Loyalton, Ca. 96118
3. Richard Avignone
783 Rodney Dr., San Leandro
Ca. 94577
4. June L. Barnum
845 California St. San
Francisco, Ca. 94108
5. Steve and Terry Beck
5750 N. Ninth
Fresno, Ca. 93710
6. Theresa Bedell
Downieville, Ca. 95939
7. Robert W. Bibby
355 Racetrack St., Auburn
Ca. 95603
8. Frances Bony
Box 185, Bangor, Ca.
95914
9. Rita Bradley
Sattley, Ca. 96124
10. Peggy Brooks
Alleghany, Ca.
11. Clark Brown
Downieville, Ca.
- 12.
12. Georgene G. Copren
Box 98, Sierraville, Ca.
13. Jennie Copren
Sierraville, Ca. 96126
14. William G. Copren
1775 Evans Ave, Reno, Nev.
15. Ruth Drury
Goodyear's Bar, Ca.
16. Dorothy Dyer
2008 Clinton Ave.
Alameda, Ca. 94501
17. H. Ellery
Box 269, Placerville
Ca. 95667
18. Larry Fitzgerald
1401 Jones St. #305
San Francisco, Ca. 94109
19. Gladys Fowler
Loyalton, Ca. 96118
20. Frederick E. Goodwin
142 Granada Dr., Corte
Maders, Ca. 94925
21. Mabel Gossman
Loyalton, Ca. 96118
22. Milton Gottardi
Loyalton, Ca. 96118
23. Bill Gott, Amos Alanzo
Stagg H.S., Stockton, Ca.
24. Frances Guidici
1322 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley,
Ca. 94709
25. Mary Haggard, Loyalton, Ca.
26. Mary Kay Haggard,
Box 67, Loyalton, Ca. 96118
27. Dr. Robt. Haggard, Loyalton,
Ca. 96118
28. Dr. Wm. Hammerman
10 St. James Court, Daly
City, Ca. 94105
29. Olea S. Haueter
14819 E. Floman Dr.,
Whittier Ca. 90603
30. Jack Hawkins, 26464 Taafee
Road, Los Altos Hills, Ca.
94022
31. Beverly Helrich
3260 Gypsum, Reno, Nev.
32. Mary Hope, Box 895, Alleg-
hany, Ca. 95910
33. Leona Lindgren, 1877 Country
Club Dr. Placerville, Ca.
95667
34. Attilio Lombardi, Carnelian
Bay, Ca.
35. Della Lombardi, Loyalton, Ca.
96118

Editor's Note: The following article is taken from the correspondence of Elizabeth Dearwater Brown to Mrs. Adella Lombardi of Loyalton. Mrs. Brown was born in Sierraville (she now lives in San Francisco) and recalls many interesting stories about her own family and incidents and people in Sierraville and Randolph. The article appears verbatim as written by Mrs. Brown.

DEARWATER FAMILY HISTORY AND YOUTHFUL INCIDENTS

Father's Parents:

John Durwachter-Elizabeth Harin Durwachter
Married July 7, 1855 Children all born in Goodyear's Bar, Sierra County. Our father was Joseph Dearwater (changed from Durwachter), born March 4, 1862, died in Sierraville on March 14, 1934 of bronchial pneumonia which began with the flu.

Mother's Parents:

Charles Perry-Margaret Murphy Perry
Married May 30, 1854 at Old Fort Hall (Now Pocatello, Idaho). They came to Sierra Valley August 1856 under the guidance of James Beckwourth who was a friend of Grandpa in the Rocky Mountains. Beckwourth is named after this man.
Mama (Sophronia Elizabeth Perry Dearwater) born in Sierraville, Dec. 2, 1869, the 9th of 10 children. The Perry home still is occupied and is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Gifford Webber. Perry Creek flows alongside of this lovely old house. Grandpa owned several hundred acres in Sierra Valley, and our grandparents were successful farmers, cattle raisers, and dairymen. They were always considered among the well-to-do residents of Sierra Valley. Their ranches helped to supply the mines then operating in Sierra City and Downieville. About 1895 they sold their interests in Sierra Valley and moved to Oak Park (now a suburb of Sacramento). But both returned to die in the Valley they loved so dearly; Grandma June 25, 1897 (she was 68 years old) and Grandpa on Nov. 7, 1905 (he was 81 years old). Both are buried in the Sierraville cemetery.

Papa (Joseph Dearwater) was orphaned at the age of 8 or 9 and was brought to the Protestant Orphanage in San Francisco, located at that time on Haight Street. It is now known as Edgewood and located on Vicente Street, S.F. He left the orphanage in 1875 or 1876 and went to live near Danville, Contra Costa Co. with a Captain Fitzgerald. He was brought to Sierraville by the murder of his older brother, John Dearwater, in Dec. 1884. This murder was committed on the ranch now owned by Kenneth Torri, and was at that time known as the Rowland Ranch. My uncle was shot to death by two gamblers who had come to rob him. These two murderers were captured, tried, found guilty and sentenced to prison, where both died years ago. Our parents were married on May 30, 1888. They were the parents of three children; two girls and a boy: Elizabeth, Barbara (Eatheland) and Everett, all born in Sierraville, and the latter two born in the Dearwater home in which we lived for 77 years. It was a happy home, and filled with much love and kindness.

Mama was always called Nonie by everyone except her mother who called her Tuck, always. It was an endearing name which our grandmother brought with her from her native Ireland. Early in her life Mama learned the duties that are a part of living: she was taught to cook, sew, wash and iron, do housework, and help with the dairy chores. I have heard her tell that at age 3 she was given a small pail and taught to feed calves, and how they bunted her around pretty rough, until she would drop the pail and climb up on a fence where they could not reach her. A few years older (probably 6 or 7) she was given a few cows to milk twice daily. Later the string was increased to ten and there were 4 milkers. So it was a good sized dairy by any standard, and all to be milked by hand. Grandma milked some but it was her part to skim the milk all by hand and get the milk pans ready for the fresh milk. Those were the days when work was work, children (and lots of them were needed) and strong backs were a MUST. I have been told many times that Mama was a real beauty--one of the most beautiful ever raised in Sierraville, and we know that she was beautiful until God took her home on July 30, 1967, nearly 98 years of age. She had a happy nature and nothing could keep her down for long; she always found hidden depths within herself that carried her over the roughest roads, and Life, for no one is ever a bed of roses. There are always thorns. Sierra Valley, today, can thank her and the late Grace Wilson for the electric power people now enjoy. These two devoted women, with Alden Johnson to do the letter writing, were the ones who got the Government to put REA into the Valley. That will always be a monument to them. Mama is also responsible for the telephone service which Sierraville has enjoyed for many years. At one time there were only 10 phones in the community. Mama went to the Railroad Commission and stated the need for phone service, and before too long the company had put in more phones so now everyone has this convenience. I remember that when anyone was sick she was the first to go to their help, cooking, washing, sitting up long nights with the sick person. Like other young persons she had a lot of fun, and I guess beaux. Her father was not too happy over her choice of a husband, but time proved that she was so right in marrying our good and wonderful Dad. There was none better. The Dearwaters were and are loyal friends, good Americans, and a devoted family.

I left the Valley when I was 15 to attend Sacramento High School so I was not home while brother Everett grew up. I was away 6 years and when I came back to teach in 1911 Everett was 15 years of age and many of his boyhood pranks I never knew. But I know he played his share of tricks and loved to tease and I can see his blue eyes twinkle now with devilment.

Life when we were children centered around the Home, Parents and Family. There is where much of our time was spent in homely pastimes. A trip to Sattley to us was a great treat; and to get to Loyalton was almost out of reach. In the winter of 1895 Mama took Eatheland and me to spend the winter in Sacramento with her parents. We were the big shots for sure. We had seen and ridden on the railroad, and could we tell tales of all that went on in the outer world! Nellie Bly had nothing on us, I can assure you. I have heard of one Sierraville girl (or rather I should have said a

Randolph girl for we did not wish to be Sierraville) who did not get to Sierraville until she was 15 years of age. The school house and yard were the dividing line between the two communities. When we played ball Sierraville was one side; Randolph the other, and we battled like big leaguers do now. The same separation went on in any game where there was choosing sides: kick-the-wicket was one. There was in those days a good wide sidewalk snug up against the fence; said sidewalk extended from the Globe Hotel to the house where Kelso Deilera now lives. It was built and maintained by the residents. I have never been reconciled to the present mode of walking in the highway. Sierraville and its appearance has certainly changed, and I am sorry to say, not for the better. We had a fine Primary teacher named Walter Kynoch, and one year at the end of school he gave an entertainment by the children and enough money was raised to buy a beautiful bell which summoned the school children each school day. It was the most beautiful toned bell I have ever heard. Say to say, one vacation day, I think in the early 30's, the school house and the dear bell were burned to the ground. The school house that burned was the one in which Mama and her sisters and brothers went to school taught by Mr. E.L. Case, and where Eatheland, Everett and I went, and where I taught for 6 years. So the old school house has many memories for us. Soon there will be no one left who remembers it or the teachers who gave us such good training. I now remember an incident Mama told us many times. It seems that the County Supt. of Schools was visiting and he had a catchy mathematics problem that he liked to try out. At that time young men and women who were ready to try for a Teacher's Certificate went to the school with babies just starting, and Mr. Case taught them well. As a teacher he never had a superior. Well, Mama was a smart mathematician so Mr. Case asked if she could get into this problem business with the older ones. So the Supt. said Yes, but she's pretty young for such a big problem because it is hard and catchy. So the young men and women (they were grown up) and little Miss Nonie got up to the blackboard and the example was read to them. All went to work with a right good will, and the Supt. sauntered from one to the other. When he got to Mama she had the example finished, and he said, "That is right. Erase it, quick!". Mr. Case was so astonished he could hardly realize what had happened so soon. No one else but Mama ever solved the problem so the Supt. said to her after all had given up, "Nonie, you can now explain how your worked the problem." She was The Queen Bee for that day, at least.

When we were growing up we could always get up a candy pull, popcorn pop, games such as fox and geese, kick-the-wicket played by the light of a bon fire; also everyone had stilts and some of them were pretty far off the ground. In the winter we skated on ice on the small creeks, slid down the small hill near the place now owned by Curley Wright, or bobbed behind any sleigh going up or down the road. Oh yes, we sometimes got a milk pan to sit in and we slid off barns. But we had no fancy rigs to have our fun in. We had home made sleds, skis, (we called them snowshoes), and we put on old overalls tied them around our ankles, wrapped our heads and necks, donned hand knitted mittens and we were off and into the

world of snow and fun. How we loved the crust on the snow when it would freeze nice and hard. We could run for miles on it. And could we eat. It seems to me, now, that we ate our weight every day.

Everyone then raised a fine vegetable garden which kept the family supplied with fresh vegetables both summer and winter. Papa put apples, potatoes, cabbage, and all root vegetables in pits. First he covered the vegetables with sacks or blankets, then went on a layer of hay or straw and then about 8 or 10 inches of dirt to keep them from freezing. The cabbages were pitted with their roots upward so we could take out one at a time. Our folks also made a huge barrel of sauer kraut, and believe me, there has never been any like it. Every family had a cow, chickens, raised two pigs and a calf for winter's meat. The hog killing took place when freezing weather came and the moon was in the proper phase (everyone believed in the moon in those old times). Papa and Mr. Joy, our dear neighbor, always had this hog killing the same day. We kids got the bladders which we blew up and put white beans into and we had balloons for quite a while. On this day Mama made the best stew from the yeart, liver and I do not know what else she put into it, but boy it was so good. Later the feet were cleaned and made into pickled pigs' feet which were eaten during the cold days which have always marked the Valley. Lard for a year was rendered and so were quantities. Logs were hauled in on sleds and later sawed up, split and piled. I never thought that the day would come when one could not obtain a stick of wood nor get a Christmas tree. But here it is! And it makes me sad, for I do not believe that as people we are a bit better off, and in many ways are worse. Also ice was cut on the ponds and buried in saw dust so there was ice for summer use. A meat safe built of wood and screen wire kept the flies away. Not even an ice box in those days. We did our washing with a wash board and in zinc tubs, and had irons that had to be heated on the faithful wood stove. We had kerosene lamps and had to wash chimneys and trim wicks every Saturday. I do not think we regarded it as hard work, and we certainly did enjoy any leisure and recreation that came our way. Three times a year there was a Grand Ball (dance): Christmas, Feb. 22nd, and 4th of July. Everyone had new clothes and danced from about sundown until sun up with a huge midnight supper (which was needed). It was also a time for visiting with friends that came from out-of-town for the dances. Speaking of dances: Mama learned to dance when she was three years old. Nearly every Saturday night a crowd of young and old would gather at the Perry home, the chairs, tables, etc., were pushed out of the way, and Grandpa would get out his fiddle and the fun began. It would last until midnight and everyone had had a most wonderful time. Mama said many times that she was sure that everyone who learned to dance in Sierraville when she was a youngster did so at the Perry house on those Saturday nights.