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# THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 15, 1973 VOL V, NO. 3

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Author Unknown

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Dressler

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# The Hitherto Unpublished Diary of a Downieville Miner in the 1850's

We again hope that our readers are enjoying the diary of a miner who mined in the Downieville area in the 1850's. This diary, or at least the part that has survived, was written from April 12, 1856, to March 2, 1859. We thank Mrs. Marian Lavezzola for making the diary available to the Sierra County Historical Society. We have tried to keep as close as possible to the original in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure, and have only made changes when we felt the original would be completely confusing to the reader.



#### Friday Jarch 27th 1857

Degan to rain in the night. Was cold in the morning--some snow. Davis & I went to town. Got one number of the "Pacific". We Expected that the trial of Juttes (for the murder of Aoffatt which happened about two years ago) would be progressing, but we were mistaken in our calculations--- The trial will not come off for several days yet, & I could not learn which would begine. Came home alone. It was raining briskly--- ate my dinner & busied myself the balance of the afternoone with making a kind of box to put beef in so as to keep it away from the flies & still allow the air to have access to it--- did not quite finish it for want of tacks.

Was in Col. Taylors Law Office & saw a small book there, <u>The</u> <u>Devils Pulpit</u>, which I borrowed of him. He said that I need not be particular about returning it---I do not know what it means as I have not read it yet. Been reading the "Pacific" to the boys. It is still raining---

#### Saturday Eve March 28 1857

It has been raining nearly all day but we worked in the forenoone notwithstanding--- as out awhile after dinner but as we only had a little more to do to finish the Cut that is the "looming off" part of it & as it began to rain harder than it did in the forenoone, I came up to the house & built a fire the rest soon followed. Have reread a couple of letters I recd from homeperlast me il from Sisters Mary, Lizzie & Healic & Harriet. Read two chapters in the book I borrowed yesterday "Devils Pulpit"

Have been baking breads/boiling beans & C,

Read an article in the February Co. of Putnams Nonthly Entitled "The Boston Ladies Exception of Pashington" to Andy & Davis---

#### Sunday March 29th 1857

There were clouds & showers in the forencone, but since then the clouds have passed away, The heavens are out in splendor, inn umerable stars are shining from the mystic canopyon high.

Davis left home about ten oclock fro town, andy, has spent the day reading David Copperfield I also have a little. Have written two letters ---briefones---to sister Mary & Sister Lizzie, Healic & Harriet. Had a little with a couple of Frenchmen about a lot of ground in the river which I took off for flumming----

#### Monday Murch 30th 1857

Davis was up early & had breakfast ready soon after sunrise. Then Davis came from town last night he brou ht word from A&S.Dawson to have me go down this morning to see whether I would be satisfied with a contract The Tyoning lining Co. were about making to have their Tunnel run through the Rock to the gravel, I started right after breakfast--Arived in town much too early for any of them, for none of the company were at hand when I got there & were not for more than two hours afterward---

The great event or amusement in town was the plan which the roadoverseer took to indever people to work on the road between Downieville & Good Years Bar, he got a band, flags & a promise of all the liquor they could drink. The ban d struck off some sort of music I could'nt tell what it was & those who intended to work carried a pick & shovel apiece. There were about sixty thus armed and equipped as their dutyled them but I suspect that but little work would be done---

Left town about Eleven o'clock, when I got home Davis was getting dinner---Worked in the afternoon. Very hot Davis sick tonight. Was up to see lott a few minutes---

# Tuesday Harch 31st 1857----

The beautiful sky of yesterday was not to be seen this morning It was showering during the forenoone. We began work at an early hour. The forenoon seemed to be very long. We struck the bedrock, & found it soft but not of the right quality to paywell. Don't expect to get much out of this cut, went out to work after dinner but as it began to rain pretty soon & pretty rapidly we concluded to quit for the day rather than get wet through for nothing.

Davis & I went to town to attend the trial of Buttes which we understand was to begin this afternoone. Traveled down there through the rain & when we arrived learned that there would be no trial to day at all as his (Buttes) attorney Col. Baker plead a demenor. I beleive it is called on account of a flaw or some error in the inditement---The Judge (ar. Searles) will examine that & if it is correct the trial will go on immediately & if it is incorrect he (the criminal) will be brought before the grand jury next londay & a new inditement made when his trial will proceed forthwith---

Did not stop long in town, rained harder than ever when we were returning. Found the door locked, Andy absent & the fire out.

It is now afterdark & still raining. The river will be high by morning I Expect.

# 'ednesday April 1st 1857---

Another beautiful day It was very was very warm. David C. Rolston, the man of whom I purchased this place, came up from town in the forenoone to see us. He left when we went out to work again in the afternoone. I went&renewed the notices on the claims I have in the river. The one is the balance of the ground I had flumed last but failed to work it. I also went up the river to claims taken up by Uncle Stephen & A.S. Daveson a his wife---

About middle of afternoone Uncle Stephen was going up for the purpose of renewing his notices. He came down to the diggings when we were at work. He informed us that the mail had arrived from the Atlantic States. Upon this information Davis was easily persuaded to go downe to town & get any letters that there might be for either him or me. He returned about dark with two: one for himself & the other for me which I found to be from i.r. Killpatincke of Phila, who married my aunt Rhodae--from that letter I learn that Aunt Dadsone is married to a Dr. Jennings whom I have never seen---Davis also brought Our 'Pacific' for me a part of which I have read to the boys--It is filled or nearly filled as usual with religious matter---

# Thursday April 2 nd 1857---

Have been working hard all day. Had a great many rock to move. The cut is small most too small for three men to work in Hr. Long an old friend of Davis who has been living in Forest City for the last two months came out to see us today. He is stopping with us tonight---

liave been reading "Fabius Taximus" finished it since supporthave also read the parallel of Pericles & "Fabius Taximus"

# Friday April 3rd 1857---

all cleaned up today. I drifted about six feet in our side but found the bedrock hard & smooth without any gold. One of Andy's acquaintance is staying with us tonight

-4.

Andy & David did talk of going to Forest City Tomorrow & I Wanted to go to Eureka, but now Andy does not seem inclined to go. I Expect we will work---

# Saturday Eve April 4 th 1857---

All of us left home. Andy & Davis started for Forest City & Ravine I to Eureka. I arrived in Eureka about noon---The walking was good for the greater part of the distance About Eureka there is a great deal of snow---

# Sunday Eve April 5 1857---

Stiles Judson with whom I stayed last night spread his blankets on the floor, where he & I slept very comfortably though the night was cold. I took breakfast with Judson a Sears his partner a dinner with Whiting Fellows. He talks of going home this summer---

I left Eureka about two o'clock in the afternoone & reached Downievelle about hafafter four. Arrived at home about sunset---

#### Jonday Eve April 6th 1857---

Ueather very warn. River higher than it has been in many days & still rising---Davis left early in the morning for Forest City---Brown worked in his place today---Bassett came down in the forenoone & stayed until after dinner. He brought the last number of Putnam's Hag. & borrowed an old no, of the Edinburgh Review & the 2nd Vol. of Jacanlay's history of England---Have been to town since supper---

#### Tuesday April 7th 18 57----

Brown left no early in the morning. Davis worked in the drift which Brown started yesterday. River is rising rapidly. It is great benifit to me for the rise will sweep the tailings away which have troubled us so long---

Davis' brother James---& his partner 'r. Compton are staying with us to night. They are on their way to the Buttes to whip saw, they sawed there last year & got six dollars per day & board & expect to get the same this year---

# Vednesday April 8 1857---

Quit the tunnel. Commenced work at the lower end of the flat's little above the house---Fixed our boxes moved the derrick & vashed or loomed off some---Reading the Tarch No. of Putnam's Monthly Lag.

#### Thursday April 9th 1857---

Weather very hot & river high---snow is fast disappearing---There is a little to c seen on top of the mountain which is distant about and mile from our house.

He are looming off---have a great many boulders to move. He were all thoroughly wet when we came in---

# Friday April 10, 1057

At work as usual. I sometimes think that I wight do better than to work so hard every day. My great idea has been to get an education but I am getting so old now & feel so unlike applying my mind to anything that is laborious that I rather Expect that my book Education will never be any better than it is already & it is poor enough heaven knows--- I am thinking of home nearly all of the time, I dream of home nearly every night --- last night I dreamed of seeing my old flame that was Miss P. Mc'H. I believe that my acquaintance with her forms the happiest part of my life. It is nearly seven years since I saw her, I was thinking to day that if I could raise money enough by next winter I would go home & go to school three or four years to offset my working here so long --- We have done a good deal of work to day, I feel tiered & I Expect the rest doalso---

#### 1857----Saturday Eve April 11th

Quit work about four ocl'k P.M. after an early supper Andy, & I went to town. Took them picks with us to get sharpened, when we arrived in towne saw some people marching around after a flag & some kind of music. From the appearance of some of the party & judged that they were pretty drunke. Nearly all of the lawyers were called out to make speeches. I heard several of them & according to mynothion they werepretty ----boop

#### Sunday Eve April 12th 1857---

The sun was looking over the hills when I got out of bed, I have felt the heat more than usual. Mrote a letter for Davis which I addressed to his Nephew in this state --- Davis left for town soon after breakfast, I wrote a letter for Andy, to his parents in Ireland filled four pages, he seemed to be much pleased with it, much more so than I was---

Read several chapters in "Nicholas Nickleby" Have been to town in afternoone. Had a chat with Uncle Stephen Dadsone--- Came home before sunset---

Monday April 13th 1857---

Andy, stopped at Miott's Grocery nearly all night in company he said with four others engaged in playing cardsfor liquor. Andy, must have drank agooddeal of liquor for he was too sick to work to day. He like agreat many others in the same situation declares that he will not go there again to drink their bad liquor, which no doubtedly is poisone.

Davis & I kept at work, we finished looming off the Cut, Have the dust nearly all off of the bedrock, It is high & hard. Saw alittle fine gold sticking on the surface.

Tuesday April 14 1857---

Andy, was up before me I got up quickly & got the breakfast, Wrote a letter for Baruch Prido in answer to one he had just recd from his Father, He stopped with us until after dinner & promised to return from town to night but has not arrived

Mave just finished a letter for Davis It is to his wife

Wednesday April 15 1857---

There was thunder yesterday so that the air was cooler or rather there was more

air in motion for so it seemed to me when I was at work--- At noon wrote a brief letter to Sister Hannah---

Davis went to town--- in the afternoon & took his letter & mine to the P.O.---

Have been reading an article in the last Harper on Samuel Johnson by L B Macaulay It is very interesting, being of that kind of lituration which most delights me---Thursday Eve April 16 1857---

Finished cleaning up. I enjoyed the greater part of the incutting bedroke for the sluice boxes to set inc. A young man came along with Newspapers in the afternoon. We bought the N.Y. Herald. & N.O. Delta, The news man reported that the mail wasin towne, so Davis started off hoping to get a letter. I washed out the riffles---Andy got supper, Davis has returned without anyletter for himself or me. Have been reading the paper to them

Friday April 17 1857---

Got the sluices & moved the Derrick in the forenoon. Have began to pick & cave the bank butsoon found that we had too little water to carry off the sand & gravel rapidly--- Andy & I went up the Ditch to clean it out, we saw that a great deal of rubbish consisting of boulders gravel & c had been thrown over & on the flume & soon had found their was in to the flum & stopped a large portion of the water,

Hoisted downe boulders out with the Derrick but that works poorly it is about the hardest work we have to do---

This Flat has got to be verywarm, there is but little wind & I think it is much hoter than any other place around here---

Finished reading "Alcibiades" in Plutarchs Lives.

Saturday April 18th 1857

Were busily engaged with looming, the bank is high aboutSixteen feet & we are stripping it nearly to the bedrock. There are so many boulders that most of the time is required to hoist them out of the way. We were all thoroughly wet through & pretty tired when night came Since supper Andy & I have been to town. Sold our dust & paid our bills. I saw Uncle Stephen & had quite a chat with him---came homelate. Sunday April 19th 1857

The sunwashigh when I got up---Davis left for town soon after breakfast I busied myself during the forenoone with washing dishes & cooking & c

Uncle Stephen Dodsone& a partner of his came up before noon, they took dinner with us & were here several hours, They located some claims for miningon the other side of the river, Have been reading Harpers Magazine---"Oliver Goldsmith" & "Morettes" (?) Washed a few clothes---Had no rest to day---Sunday never is a day of rest to me---Monday Eve April 20 1857

Have worked very hard & feel very tired, all of us were wet through long before quitting time The water fulls over the bank under which we are working---We would freeze the water is so cold were it not for the warm sun which makes it pleasant enough Tuesday ... Dve April 21st 1857 ---

Was so much worn out yesterday that I couldnot rest in bed & woke this morning nearly as tired as when I laid down---

Uncle Stephen Dodson came up in the forenoone. He located some ground for mining purposes on the side of the river opposite to Stove Ripe Flat a few days since & has since tried to organize a company to go in with him & work the ground. He failedto get a company---He took diamer with us. I proprised to him to buy in here & mentioned it to the other boys Andy. & Davis. After some consultation a bargaine was made to sell him our fourth interest in the mining ground one The Flat with the tools & c appertaining to that interest---He is to pay Seventy five Dollars---one half down & the other half when it comesout. - He loft soon after noon and will be up tomorrow.

We finished looming off the cut we have been engaged with for four days nowe will begin to clean up tomorrow,

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we remind our readers that the stall of the quarterly does not verify the accuracy of articles printed. Should any readers notice incorrect information, contact us so that corrections can be made. We are interested in any type of article dealing with the history of Sierre County. Please feel free to submit any articles for publication. Past copies of our publication may be purchased from Mrs. Jeane McMaban, Sierra City, California. You may renew your membership in the Sierra County Historical Society by send your membership fee, \$5.00, to Mrs. Jeane McMaban, Sierra City, California. Membership fees are tax deductable, and you receive our publications as part of your membership.

# "CALIFORNIA CHINESE CHATTER"

Editor's Note

The following article is taken from a book by Albert Dressler. The book is a collection of telegrams sent to and by the Chinese miners of Downieville in 1874, as well as the account of a trail of one Ab Jake. Our article shall only concern itself with the telegrams. We quote Mr. Dressler's foreword to his work:

"To the reader the contents of this book may at times appear comical. It is not my purpose to lampoon, and I wish to state, here, my attitude toward the Chinese. I have high regard for the Celestial Brethren, and I am ready at all times to accord them the respect I consider due them, because of their achievements, and most ancient lineage.

> "The heat of the tropical sun shines down, What matter the skin be black or white; For white, or yellow, or black or brown Are equal, at last, in the Master's sight."

To those interested in the history of the State of California, and to those inclined toward the humorous, it is not amiss to call attention once again to the adage, "Truth is stranger than fiction." The truth herein contained is represented by 120 telegrams, exchanged among the Chinese, to and from Downieville, Sierra County, California, in the year 1874. It provides the reader with a heretofore unnoted aspect of California's Melting Pot. It offers a glimpse into the realism of her romance, as yet unknown save to a local few, and rising solely on its own merit it proclaims the atomic part of that Entity to which it belongs.

> TELEGRAMS EXCHANGED BY THE CHINESE TO AND FROM DOWNIEVILLE, SIFRRA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, DURING THE YEAR 1874.

> > Kim Bayo

Marysville, Ca March 1, 1874, 10 A.M. Quong Wo & Co I no saby you, no can pay man, you send money I pay. 13 Collect 75c Quong Hing Lung Quong Chung Shing & Co Downieville, Cal.,

724 Com'cl St., San Francisco March 3, 1874 Git Wo. I want you pay your cousin Ah Hoey ex-penses to come Downieville quick attend to claim. Am afraid there will be big fight. Answer. Fong Sing

28 words Pd. \$1.75

THE SIL

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Downieville, Cal., Hop Wo March 3, 1874 Care Kong You & Co 728 Com'cl St., San Francisco Chinamen can't compromise about claim. Afraid they get fighting. Send man up quick today. Com today Tong Wo sure. Answer Tie Yuen 20 words Pd. 11 San Francisco, Cal., Gong Sing March 3, 1874, 11:40 A. M. Ah Hoey not here. Hop Wo Company and Nin Yung Company send men tonight. You no feel bad. Cuong Chung Shing & Ce 18 Collect \$1.24 (1) 1) San Francisco, Cal., March 2, 1874, 3:30 P. M. Fong Sing Ah Hoey gone Virginia City. Two go up yesterday. Stop no fights. 12 Collect \$1.00 Quong Chung Shing & Co. Downieville, Cal., Ah Chu March 4, 1874 Stockton Trouble about mining claims. I own a share and all the company want you come. I want you come. Ans yes Fong Sing or no. 27 words Pd. \$3.00 Ah Jake Stockton, Cal., Ah Jake March 4, 1874, 8:50 A. M. Partner gone San Francisco. I care business. No time come. Send letter, see what I do 15 Collect Ah Chee 11 Stockton, Cal. Ah Jake March 4, 1074, 7:04 P. M. Very busy have no got time. What is your lawsuit? 10 Collect \$1.00 Ah Chee Stockton, Calif ... March 5, 1870, 7:25 P. M. Fong Sing I can't come now. Put your suit off. I try come soon. 14 Collect Ah Chee ))



Camptonville, Cal., March 7, 1874, 7:25 P. M. Ah Jake If no delay all right will be there tomorrow. G G Glough 9 PD Downieville, Cal. Yuen Lung March 10, 1874 Stockton, Cal Has Ah Chee started for Downieville. If not, tell him start right away. Answer 14 Pd. \$1.50. Ah Jake Stockton, Cal. 11 March 10, 1874, 5:15 P.M. Ah Jake Have your suit put off. My partner not come back yet. When He come I telegraph. 17 Collect \$2.00 Ah Chee たたち Virginia, Nevada March 12, 1874, 5:50 P.M. Fong Sing Sh Hoey go Virginia four days ago for Downieville. If he no come to Downieville send to San Francisco for him. 21 Collect \$1.25 Sam Sing 0101 Downieville, Cal. March 12, 1874 Hop Sing Camptonville Did Ah Hoey get in your place tonight by stage. If so tell him to come right up quick. Answer. 20 words Pd. 50c Fong Sing Pownieville, Cal., Gee Lee March 13, 1874 U Elko, Nevada Tell Mow Sing to come Downieville. I in trouble have a big lawsuit on my hands. If he will come I will send him money to pay all of his expenses. Answer quick. 30 words Pd. \$3.50 Gong Ahug Elko, Nevada March 13, 1874 Tong Ah Hing He can't come got business to attend to 8 Pd. Gee Lce

Stockton, Cal., March 14, 1874 Ah Jake Start tomorrow you want me come up. Answer quick. 9 Collect \$1.00 Ah Chee

Sacramento, Cal., March 16, 1874 Fong Sing Store Tell Ah Gek that Chu Chee will be Marysville today and Downieville tomorrow. 13 Collect Chu Chee

North San Juan, Cal. March 21, 1874 Fong Wo Why don't Yu Wo Ah Ching come back. When will be he here. Answer quick. 15 Pd. 35 Quong Tai Jan

Tei Yuen Don't sell your opium. 4 Pd. 65

March 25, 1874

San Francisco, Cal.

Kong Yuen Chong

Fong Wo & Co opium too dear 3 pd

San Francisco, Cal., March 25, 1874

Yu Wo & Co

San Francisco, Cal., Quong Wo & Co March 26, 1874 Opium up to one hundred and sixty dollars. Send down some money. We bought some before 16 Collect Wuong Wo Lung

Downieville, Cal. March 26, 1874 Yen Mow Nevada, Cal. Case all settled Expense so much have no money to send. Get money from some one else to go San Francisco. 20 words Pd \$1.00 Quong Wo & Co.

Downieville, Cal., March 28, 1874 Yu Wo & Co 717 Dupont St., San Francisco What the price of opium, Answer 6 words Pd. 75c Gong Wo & Co.

THIS ARTICLE WILL BE CONTINUED IN OUR JUNE BULLETIN

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IMPOSTANT INFORMATION

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Information on California Proposition #1, and information on tentative plans of the Sierra County Historical Society.

The citizens of California will vote on Proposition #1, which will be on the June, 1974 primary ballot. This proposition will raise several millions of dollars to be spent in California for several projects, among which is historical preservation and historical restoration. Sierra County's share of these monies, should the bond issue pass, will be \$200,000. This money is to be shared by the cities within a county, and the county. Both the cities and the county must work together as an approval body as to where and how the money is to be spent. The money is to be shared by the cities and the county. In Sierra County there is only one general law incorporated city, Loyalton, so Loyalton and the county will work together on this project. The City of Loyalton will work with the Historical Society on whatever plans the Historical Society formulates for a county wide plan of historical preservation and restoration.

The Historical Society has formulated tentative plans for a museum chain in Sierra County. These plans call for a museum in Alleghany, in Sierra City and in Loyalton. Work has progressed and at this point the Society is attempting to get property in Alleghany for a museum. Mr. Lee Withycomb has been of great help in getting the site in Alleghany which we may be able to purchase at a reasonable cost. We have not been so lucky in Sierra City. The committee working in Sierra City has come up with two tentative sites, but both will cost a considerable amount of money ---money that the Society does not have at this time. A museum site in Loyalton is no problem as the Society owns two lots in Loyalton, and the City will donate a larger tract of land in its City Park should the Society wish it. There is confusion at this point as to how much of the grant can be used to purchase sites and how much must be used for construction of museums or preservation of existing sites. The members of the Society will want to review this carefully as to what amounts of the grant they feel should be spent on purchase of sites and how much on construction.

Whatever final plans are formulated, the approval of Proposition I can only help Sierra County restore and maintain some of its rich historical heritage. We of the Historical Society urge you to do everything possible to help pass Proposition I in June.

Our first bulletin for the 1974 season will be published in June to keep our members notified on what progress is being made with our museum chain project.

We urge you to vote yes on Proposition I.