

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRICE: \$2.10

HOW IT WAS
ON THE YUBA

EAST MEETS WEST
— 1881 —

SOCIETY
NEWS

JUNE 7, 1974

VOL. 6 NO. 1

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 12, 1974

Vol. VI, No. 1

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Contents:

I. THE UNPUBLISHED DIARY OF AN EARLY DAY DOWNIEVILLE
MINER Author Unknown

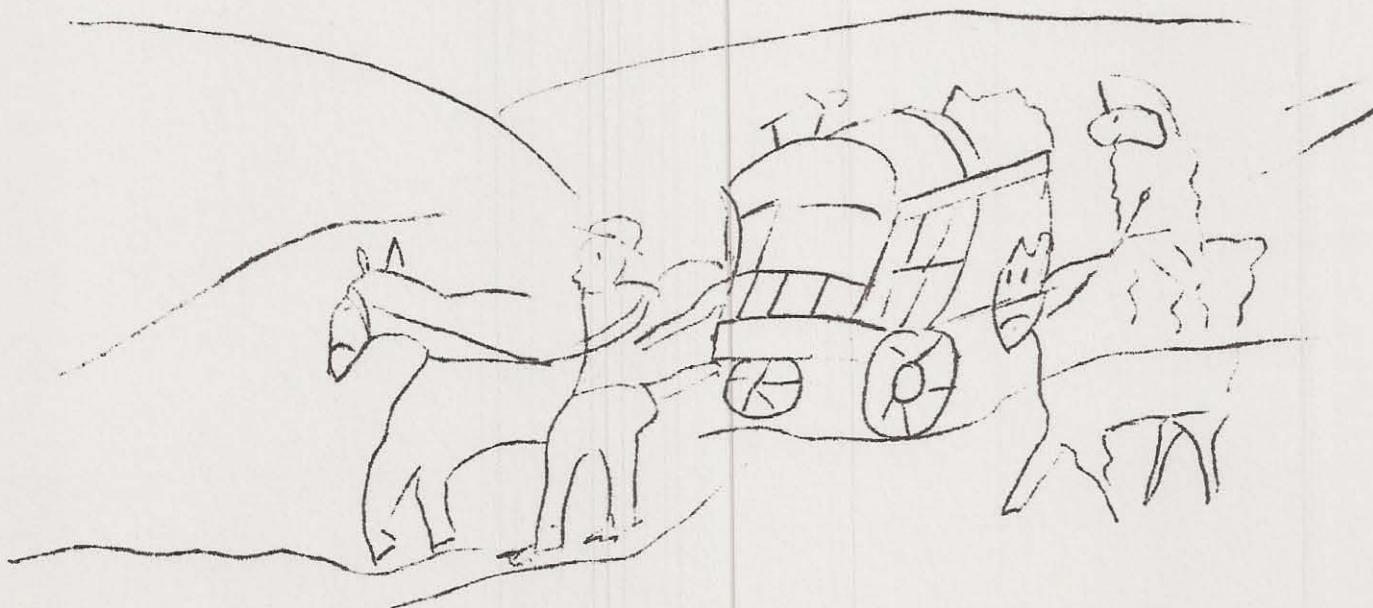
II. TELEGRAMS FROM THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN
DOWNIEVILLE From a book edited by Mr. A Dressler

III. Historical Society News

Editor: Milt Gottardi, Loyalton, Ca
Typing and Reproduction: Bill Coggin, Loyalton, Ca
Cover: Norma White, Loyalton Ca

Officers of the Historical Society

President: Bill Copren, Calpine, Ca
Vice-Pres.: Ruth Drury, Goodyears Bar, Ca
Secretary: Mary Hope, Alleghany, Ca
Treasurer: Jeanne McMahan, Sierra City, Ca
Corresponding Sec.: Darlene Messner, San Leandro, Ca



THE HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DIARY OF A DOWNIEVILLE

MINER IN THE 1850's

We 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.

The diary continues on the following pages:

Wednesday April 22nd 1857---

Have been washing the bottom took out considerable gold. Uncle Stephen came up in the forenoon with his blankets. I drew up a bill of sale at noon & he paid Andy & Davis. It is part of the purchase money that was agreed upon to be paid in advance, for the balance the one half to be paid when it should be taken out of the claim. I also drew up an article of agreement---The thing is now arranged so Uncle Stephen is now a partner of mine again after an interval of nearly two years---We have been istroanged a good deal since then but I expect that the fault was princepally my own & from what I have learned I hope the like may never occur again---

The sky was cloudy during the greater part of the afternoon, I was cleaning bedrock & had such pain in my back that I could hardly keep at worke---

Thursday April 23rd 1857---

Cleaned up the bottom & am now ready for looming and then cut. Andy & I attended church at Eliotts when the Rev. Mr. Pond from Downieville held forth to about twenty auditors among whom were four ladies---Elliott & the woman with whom he has been living for nearly two years were married today by a Justice of the peace---

Have read two chapters in Martin Chuzzlewitt since I returned from church.

The day was very hot & the river is roaring high, higher than I have seen it before in a year.

Friday April 24 1857

Uncle Stephen went out to work with us. We had first to fix the boxes & then to see to the Ditch. The water had all been stopped up above somewhere & Davis & I went up to see what the matter was & to right it if we could---

Feel very tired to night. am almost worn out, getting old rapidly.---

Saturday April 25th 1857---

Were at work early. I felt stiff & sore the water seemed to be very cold. Worked until noon, after dinner Andy & I took the picks & crowbar to the blacksmiths shop to be sharpened. Were in town about two hours. Bought a panama pot for which I paid One Dollar & fifty cents

A.S. Dadson came up to where I was standing & began a conversation in his pleasant voice which he puts on when he is up to deceivng-----

Sunday April 26 1857---

Have been at home all day. It was warm & seemed very long I wrote a short letter to Rev. Kilpatrick, one to Uncle Stephen & another to Cousin Eliza Frankline who is living at Nevada----I have no acquaintance with her myself but wrote at Uncle Stephens request. He employed part of the day in reading & part in fixing his bunk---

I finished reading "Martin Chuzzlewit" and began Timolion in Plutarch's Lives---

Monday April 27 1857---

Sky cloudy---quite cool. Have been busy looming off the Cut. Finished in the afternoon & placed the boxes ready for cleaning up the bottom, Finished the Life of "Timolion" in Plutarch. Uncle Stephen is reading "David Copperfield". I got my clothes all wet. feel chikly as well as tired---

Tuesday April 28th 1857---

No water in the Ditch. A company who own mining about half a mile above us had piled a great many boulders right above the Ditch on a side hill. last night they started off in a slide & completely mashed the Ditch to pieces--- we have not worked any in the Diggings to day---The Ditch is repaired & the water coming again, Have been endeavoring to buy a second hand set of castings for the Devrick but did not succeed in doing so---

Wednesday April 29th 1857---

Cleaning bedrock, but did not finish it---Warmer than yesterday was. Washed out to night & had very good pay--- Uncle Stephen is deeply interested in "David Copperfield" while Andy, is reading "Nicholas Nickleby" I have just concluded the "Oak Openings" or the "Ben Hunter"

3

Thursday April .30th 1857----

Still at work on the Bedrock---Expected to finish it but did not, nearly as much gold as yesterday Cool winds---Have a head ache since supper, Read 'Paulus AEmilius' in Plutarch also 'limoleon & Paulus AEmilius compared'

Friday May 1st

Have the Bedrock nearly cleaned, find some gold not so much as yesterday however---the sun is clear and bright but owing to wind the weather is more pleasant to work---at noon I renewed the notices on my two river claimes & Uncle Stephen went up the river to renew his---Read 'Pilopidas'

Saturday May 2nd 1857----

Davis & Uncle stephene were sawing stove length cuts off a large log that lay near the house while Andy & I finished cleaning up. we washed out all of the riffles & made a complete finish of this cut. made a division of our dust and settled up our affairs generally I went to town in the afternoone. read a letter from my wife.

Sunday eve May 3d 1857----

Uncle Stephen, Andy, & Davis went to towne soon after breakfast. I have been at home all day. Read a little in Putnams Magazine---Had a load of grub arrive here in the forenoone. Bassett came up from town on his way home to his cabin on the East Fork He stopped with me nearly all day--- The sun came out with great power. I felt the heat unusually great---

Uncle stephen & the rest of the boys bought a set of Castings for a Derrick. Our old Derrick is nearly worn out. It requires two men at least to haul up a small load over & with the power we will have with the irons one man can do the work of two

Monday May 4th 1857----

Uncle stephen was sick all night. did not eat any breakfast or dinner. We had a carpenter here to make a frame for our Derrick but we did not let it finished. We are going to a good deal of Expense in fixing up the Derrick and perhaps will not make much hereafter. The sun shown very hot. Dvis was in town nearly all day tetting osme irons for the frame. George Macy came up in the afternoon & James Davis came this evening. I have written a letter for him---

Tuesday May 5th 1857-----

Was up early. Have been tinkering at the Derrick all day. It will not work yet. I was obliged to goto town atnoontime to get tools. It has been very hot, have had a head ache all of the afternoone. Have read nothing of any acoount in several days-----



Wednesday May 6th 1857 ---

As we failed in our endeavors to make the derrick work yesterday owing to a fault in the construction of the frame that supports the castings, Uncle Stephen went to town to inform the carpenter who made it & the result & to have him come up & remedy the defect. He came about middle of the forenoon & soon had it right---so that it would work easily---we hoisted several loads with great ease---We set some boxes & began to loom off the top---Did not succeed in doing much owing of the derrick & the storm which began in the forenoon. We worked a couple of hours after dinner we then quit on account of the rain--- Andy had been to town since then Uncle Stephen has been deeply interested in "David Copperfield" ---Davis has been abed & I have been cooking washing dishes & Read "Marcellus & the compass". It is raining ---

Stove Pipe Flat East Forke

May 7th 1857---

The storm which began yesterday has continued all day--- I have hardly been out of the house during the whole day. Spent the greater portion of my time in reading the "Lives Adventures" of James P. Beckworth" The book contains many horrible tales of Indian wars and particularly of the success of the said Beckworth in the most dreadful of blood spelling scenes---Such work may please some people but they are very disgusting to me---I would have none of them,

Davis paid a visit to town & bought himself a pair of rubber boots---

I was up about five in the morning. snow had just begun to fall, there is a little snow on the ground but it melts as it falls---

In the forenoon wrote a letter to my wife Sarah Jane Davson. filled the sheet nearly full---don't feel much in the humor for either writing or reading---much as studying. my mind is too dull to profit by study or even to be roused or awakened by thought the noblest part of myself slumbers in inglorious repose & will probably never be awakened. If I could have age to exercise the mind as much as I have the body during the last four years I would at least be capable of doing things which I & am not attempt now & would fail in if I did attempt them---

Friday May 8th 1857---

Storm cleared away---worked about eight hours---but little sun---water very cold. The derrick works well---new man can perform the labor of two with the old derrick---

Some rain & hail in the afternoon, quit early in consequence of the cold rain---Reading "Aristides" Baking bread & boiling beans---

Saturday May 9th---

Considerable frost, not very clear yet. Some of the late fallen snow still in sight. Cool again to night will freeze again I expect, have been hard at work loomed, water is very cold. we were all wet long before night, I begin to feel stiff and sore in consequence. Our derrick works well. It requires a little longer time to hoist a load than it did with the old derrick though now we hoist a great deal more at a load--- We have loomed off about half of the cut---

Sunday May--10th 1857---

The sky has become cloudy. the air is cold---Davis left the cabin soon after breakfast---in order to have his likeness taken in compliance with a request of his wife---Andy, & I went up the river to look at a dam which Uncle Stephen wanted to have taken out so that he could flum the ground---

Was busied in cooking & washing dishes until noon when we had dinner & I accompanied Uncle Stephen to town. I mailed my letter bought a novel "Old Curiosity Shop" & returned home. It is quite cloudy & threatens rain---

Monday May 11 1857

The snow was falling fast when I woke up, it did not continue long but was very cold all day. We worked about eight hours & nearly froze at that, I was completely wet & about as cold as I ever remember to have been in country, Commenced reading "Old Curiosity Shop"---

Tuesday May 12---1857---

Weather more pleasant, The sun has been shining all day & taken the snow off the hills, It is pleasant enough to work in the water when the sun shines but it is horrible almost to work & freeze---

Wednesday May 13 1857

Mr. C. F Jones came here in the forenoon He has recently been to San Francisco & is usual with him has a great deal to say---While he was here we had a great bank slide which came very near catching Andy. & Uncle Stephen though they were a great ways off---I was standing on one side talking to Mr Jones at the time which probably saved me from the danger, Mr Locke came about noon, He had not been to see me since last September. He has been slopping in Forest City during the winter, has made a living & that is about all---His object in seeing me was to see some books he had which I had borrowed of him last year. He talks of leaving & can not very well take them with him. I bought of him & accompanied him to town to get them. I returned about Eleven o'clock

— G —

Thursday May 14 1857---

Got the sluices and attached the hose to the flume ready to bring the water down into the boxes we had this done before noon after dinner we began to clean up. as soon as I had eaten my dinner my head began to ache not in the forehead it generally aches but in the back head & around the ears particularly the right hand one. I worked till about the middle of the afternoon & then quit; ate no supper but employed myself the while in : reading "Old Curiosity Shop"---

Friday May 15 1857---

Uncle Stephen is the cook this week, He was sleeping soundly when the sun was shining in through the window & cracks of the door, I was glad to see him sleep so well for he is retting along in years now & still workshard & to preserve his health & vigor much sleep is required---My head ached some in the morning, I ate a light breakfast & have worked with the others all day my head is well enough now---

Saturday May 16 1857---

Beem at work on the Bedrock, It is harder than that in the other cut & pays less---W- quit work at four o'clock P.M. after supper started for town after supper, took the picks with us to get them sharpened. took our dust with us sold it & paid our debts---It was after dark when I reached home again---The boys were allabed.

Sunday May 17th 1857---

Wrote a letter for Davis to his wife in Virginia---Davis & Andy, went to town. Uncle Stephen wrote a letter to his friend William F Copkins in Michigan. He started for town . about two hours ago to put it in the P.O. I have been reading the "Old Curiosity Shop" have followed poor little Hell to her quiet gram It is an affecting story, It seems so simple trim & like like I never stopped to doubt the truth of what I was reading but hurried one fascinated unto the end---

The sun has been shining brightly & with great heat, all day but now since the sun has gone down a little behind the hills the air is cool & to me appears chilly---

Monday May 18 1857---

This being Davis' Cook week he was up early had breakfast ready before six o'clock, I began to read the Life of Philipom in Plutasck & finished it at noon---We have all been cleaning Bed rock---it is very rough & requires a great deal of work to clean it---The rock is not very good but it paid us quite well to day---

7

The Historical Society thanks the following places of business which support our activities. We urge all our members to repay these kind people by supporting them:

BOWLING'S GROCERY AND FURNITURE
Loyalton, California

LOYALTON PHARMACY
E.J. and Bob Peeler
Loyalton, California

LAMBERT WHITTAKER INSURANCE, Inc
Loyalton, California

PAT AND JIM'S EMPORIUM
Sporting Goods---Clothing
Loyalton, California

ED WHITE AND SONS
Garage-----Ford Dealer
Loyalton, California

LOYALTON MARKET
Under new management
Groceries---Fresh Meat and
Produce Debi and Bill Davis
Loyalton, C alifornia

LOMBARDI MERCANTILE
for all your mercantile needs!
Loyalton, California

BRICK'S PLACE
Loyalton, California
Your host, Bob Bowling

"CALIFORNIA CHINESE CHATTER"

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 trial of one Ah Jake. Our article is concerned only with the telegrams. We quote Mr. Dressler's foreword to his work:

17
—
11

17
—
11

17
—
18
—
7

—B—

"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."

h
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." *h*

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, SIERRA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, DURING THE YEAR 1874.

San Francisco, Cal.,
March 28, 1874, 4:05 P.M.

Fong Wo & Co

Now price hundred sixty dollars each hundred vials. Opium
will be higher.
12 Pd.

Yu Wo & Co

~~~~~
Virginia, Nevada
March 29, 1874, 11:33 A.M.

Yuk Tong

Yuk Tom you lie you jap boy gon Shanghi come or answer.
19 Pd \$1.00
Luk Chung

Luk Chung
Virginia, Nevada

Downieville, Cal.,
March 29, 1874

Yuk Tong all right. Don't understand what you mean.
Answer.
10 words Collect

h
Yuk Tong
h

Virginia City, Nevada
March 30, 1874, 1:30 P.M.

Yuk Fong

Did the girl Wah How no come here last month. I think she is kidnapped. Answer if she was.

19 Pd \$1.00

Luk Chung

Luk Chung
Virginia City

Downieville, Cal.,
March 30, 1874

She has not come here yet. Have never heard any one speak of her before. If I do I will telegraph.

21 words Collect

Yuk Fong

Won Lung
Stockton

Downieville, Cal.,
March 31, 1874

Case settled. Ah Chee went this morning on stage.
9 words Pd \$1.00

Ah Jake

Cune Chong
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,
April 24, 1874

Send one hundred and twenty dollars by telegraph to Fong Sing's Store. I sent letter to you next mail. Trail on Monday. Answer.

23 Pd. \$1.25

Lim Lung

Fong Sing

In few days will get men go up.

8 Pd 50¢

Chung

Cune Chung
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,
April 26, 1874

Clough is sick. Get good lawyer. Send money quick. Trial tomorrow morning 10 o'clock. Case can't be postponed. Answer.

10 words Pd.

Fong Sing

Marysville, Cal.,

April 27, 1874

Received at Downieville at 6:15 P.M.

Fong Sing

Hire a lawyer and if he wins case me will send one hundred and twenty dollars. If no win me send no money. The lawyer pay his own expenses. Answer immediately.

32 Pd. \$1.75

Lem Chung

Alleghany, Cal.,

June 20, 1874, 7:40 A.M.

Tung Wo & Co. Store

Tell Lem Lun come over and cook for Miller. Bring two boxes opium. Answer.

14 Pd.

Ah How

Oroville, Cal.,

July 12, 1874, 9:55 A.M.

Fong Sing, Tie Yuen

Your woman she go Colusa. You want her go there.

10 Pd.

Lem Lun

Downieville, Cal.,

July 25, 1874

Kaw Chung

Wadsworth, Nevada

Don't you let her go. I will come over tomorrow and see her. I want to bring her to Downieville to live with me. What time does the train start. Answer quick.

32 words Pd.

Fook Sing

Downieville, Cal.,

July 26, 1874

Wing Wo Chung

Wadsworth, Nevada

Fook Sing left today, will be in Wadsworth tomorrow. Tell her nto to go to wait till he comes. Answer quick.

21 words Pd. \$1.25

Tai Yuen

Downieville Cal.,
July 26, 1874

Daw Chung
Wadsworth

I will start for Wadsworth today and meet her on the way.
Tell her to wait for me to come and if she wants to go
I will let her. Don't care. Answer.
33 words Pd. \$175

Fook Sing

Downieville, Cal.,
August 2, 1874

Hing Wah
Auburn

Ask Ah Tom if my partners Yuck Sing's woman down there.
If you find where she stop answer immediately.
19 words Pd \$1.00

Ah Tri

Downieville, Cal.,
August 2 1874

Ah Tom
Auburn

Go and ask Mow Sing and he will tell you all about it
and answer quick as you can.
19 words Pd. \$1.00

Ah Tri

Auburn, Cal.,
August 2, 1874, 10:10 A.M.

Ah Tri

The woman is at Virginia. Come to Auburn and I will tell
you heap lots.
15 words Pd.

Ah Tom

Auburn Cal.,
August 2, 1874, 11:05 A.M.

Ah Tri

Woman went to Virginia town with How Ah Sing. You
better come here and talk to the company. Keep quiet. I
know all about it. It is all right.
28 Collect \$1.50

Ah Tom

Nevada, Cal.,
August 3, 1874, 1 P.M.

Tie Yuen Company
Downieville

Gum Sing and woman arrested. Here tomorrow. Send
sixty dollars. 10 words Pd. 2- Fook Sing

Nevada, Cal.,
August 4, 1874, 6:45 P.M.

Tie Yuen Co
Downieville
Man and woman in custody.
5 Pd.

E Barry

Downieville, Cal.,
August 5, 1874

Fook Sing
Care Wing Wo Ching
Wadsworth, Nevada

Ah Tom write me Gan Que is at Auburn, You want
catch her go right away. Answer.
17 words Pd. \$100

Tie Yuen

Wadsworth, Nevada
August 6, 1874, 11:10 A.M.

Tie Yuen

I need two hundred dollars for expense. You send money
to me and I will return it to you.
19 Pd.

Fook Sing

Downieville, Cal.,
August 6, 1874

Fook Sing
Wadsworth, Nevada

Come over here quick and I will see if I can let you have
the money or not answer.
19 words Pd. \$1.00

Tie Yuen

Nevada, Cal.,
August 7, 1874, 11:40 A.M.

I Yum

Barry, the woman and myself start for Downieville right
away.
10 Collect Not charged

Fook Sing

213

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS AND INFORMATION

The Spring meeting of the Historical Society was held May 19, '74, in Downieville, Ca, at the home of members Mr. and Mrs. "Mac" McDermid. After the usual delicious lunch, enjoyed by about twenty eight people, the business meeting was held. Mary Hope, Secretary, read the minutes of the last meeting and read correspondence.

President Bill reported on his visit to the Board of Supervisors. The Sierra County Board of Supervisors appointed the Historical Society to be the Historical Inventory Committee for Sierra County. President Bill then reported on the plans of the Historical Society should Proposition I pass in the June Primary.¹ The Historical Society will work to finalize its "Museum Chain" plan for Sierra County. This plan calls for a museum in Alleghany, in Sierra City and in Loyalton. Problems of obtaining land and/or buildings in Sierra City and Alleghany were discussed. Our June meeting will be in Alleghany, at which time the Society members will visit one of the proposed buildings for a museum in Alleghany. You will be notified by Darlene of the date and time of the next meeting. Two possible locations for a museum exist in Sierra City. By the next meeting we will ascertain if these locations can be purchased and for how much and if grant monies can be used for purchase.

Mr. William E. Padgett, Park and Recreation Specialist, History Preservation Section of the State of California (office address is Box 2390, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, Ca 95811) gave an excellent report and demonstration in the Catholic Church. He explained to the Society members how the County inventory should be done. He explained how to fill out the forms that are necessary for the state on each of the sites listed in the inventory. He then showed the Society colored slides of some of the sites already inventoried in other counties. These color-slides were an excellent help in demonstrating what sites should be inventoried and how members were to complete the inventory forms. Mr. Padgett explained to the Society members the organization of his office and how that office could help Sierra County in its work to preserve our rich and colorful historical heritage.

Mr. Scholberg of the U.S. Forest Service explained that the Forest Service is anxious to cooperate with the Historical Society in making a historical inventory on Forest Service lands. Committees were appointed to work with Mr. Scholberg (in the eastern area of the county) and with Mr. Castledini (in the western area of the county).

Not wishing to leave all the excellent food that was left over from lunch, the members went back to the McDermid residence and enjoyed what amounted to a "pot-luck" dinner and then all left for home. We wish to thank Mr. and Mrs. McDermid for their excellent hospitality.

1. Proposition I, as you all know, did pass, so the Historical Society will be busy in the next months.

—14—

