

SIERRA COUNTY

PRICE: \$2.10

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HOW IT WAS
ON THE YUBA

EAST MEETS WEST
— 1887 —

SOCIETY
NEWS

AGRICULTURE
IN SIERRA VALLEY

OCT. 18, 1974

VOL. 6 NO. 2

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 19, 1974

VOL. VI, No. 2

Contents:

- I. Historical Society News Mary Hope
Pages 2---4
- II. Continuation of the Unpublished Diary of an Early
Day Downieville Miner Author Unknown
Pages 5--10
- III. Telegrams from the Chinese Community in Downieville
From a book edited by A. Dressler
Pages 11---15
- IV. Agriculture in Sierra Valley during the 1870's
Bill Copren
Pages 16--20

Editor: Milt Gottardi, Loyalton, Ca.

Typing: Milt Gottardi and Norma White, Loyalton, Ca.

Reproduction: Rachel Reynolds, 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 Secretary: Darlene Messner, San Leandro and Sierra
Co.



THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 18th MEETING OF THE
SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, HELD IN SIERRAVILLE

A special meeting of the Sierra County Historical Society was held August 18, 1974, at the home of Georgene and Pinkie Copren, Sierraville, California. We owe much thanks and appreciation to the Coprens for their generous hospitality. Twenty-five members and guests were present for our usual potluck feast, which was so enjoyed by everyone. Highlight of the day was Georgene Copren's delicious cheese cake, on which she always does what is called a super job.

Pres. Bill Copren called this special meeting to order, and stated we must get on the ball regarding State Proposition I, as that was the purpose of this said special meeting. Pres. Bill is on the County Committee that deals with Proposition I. Historical Society members could not possibly meet the deadline of July 15, 1974, under Prop. I, therefore, an extension of time has been agreed on, which gives us until June 1, 1975. It was stated there is to be an article in the Mt. Messenger sometime after the County Supervisors meeting of August 20, pertaining to all proposed projects in 1976-77, money to be appropriated. Secretary is to notify chairpersons on committees, appointed at the meeting in Alleghany on July 21, 1974, to contact each committee member in the committ of Alleghany, Sierra City and Loyalton. The Secretary is to write Tim Beals, Assist. Planner, at Downieville, giving him the names of the chairpersons in each of the above mentioned communities, and to keep in contact with him. Each committee is to start working on their proposed museums and plans. Seven criteria to be published in the Messenger.

Georgene reported on money to be deposited to new Sierra Co. Historical Society, being signed over by former officers of old Society. Pres. Bill reported that this money had been placed in a savings account as an endowment for future use on museums by the Historical Society. The Minutes and the Treasurer's report were read and approved. The minutes were corrected concerning an article in the Mountain Messenger, concerning water resources and dams on the Yuba. This had been reported as a Dept. of Trans. article.

Jeanne McMahan reported that the Busch building in Sierra City is not any longer a possible museum site. Frank Fortes reported on the old Kentucky Mine near Sierra City, as a fine possibility of a museum and park for that area. This well worth investigating. The mine is on U.S.F.S. land, but Maren Scholberg reported on a plan that could possibly be worked out between the Forest Service and the Historical Society.

A possible park in Downieville was discussed. President Bill stated that the people of the town will have to get together, and go through all the details that the Historical Society has to go through in order to obtain Prop. I funds. E. Lambert reported that one big problem in Downieville was the question of land. M. Hope reported the same problem exists in Allegheny.

Mary Hope reported on the Museum Committee in Alleghany and as to whether the people listed on the committee could serve. Al Weiss was to have attended the days meeting and did show shortly after the meating started. At this point Milt Gotterdi phoned that

2

Page 2-Minutes of August 18th Meeting of Historical Society

he would be at the meeting in about 20 minutes, which he was. If Peggy Brooks cannot serve on the Alleghany committee, the remainder of the committee is to select someone else.

Maren Scholberg asked if the money would be divided? Pres. Bill explained that the County would get the entire amount under Proposition I, then it would be divided among the projects which were approved. Calpine is working on a park, and Loyalton is also working on theirs.

Chairpersons of committees are Gwen Lynch, Loyalton, Sophie Tschopp, Sierra City and Mary Hope, Alleghany. Georgene Copren of Sierraville is to be our Coordinator of committees. We must keep in touch with her at all times and with all things. She is to keep an account of all telephone calls, stamps and mileage by the committee. Motion made and carried that all expenses incurred by Georgene, Gwen and chairpersons of committees be paid by the Historical Society. Milt suggested a \$30.00 limit, and if more needed, it could be obtained. Motion on this made and carried.

Under Proposition I \$200,000.00 will be available to Sierra Co. Al Weiss reported that he read in the Messenger the money was for recreation. President Bill informed us that the money was also for historical purposes. Question was asked that if museums were approved, would the County assume expenses. Pres. Bill stated that the County did not want to do so. Discussion followed as to why Supervisors do not want to carry this. The land purchased by the Historical Society in Loyalton was discussed. Darlene reported that the land, such as the Kentucky Mine, etc., might be a weighty problem with the U.S.F.S.

Correspondence read from Joe Carmical for Richard Castaldini, regarding location of Historical Sites. Discussion followed on this. Pres. Bill stated that he had quite a few forms on which to register these sites, such as the ones enclosed, with the letter from Carmical.

Discussion followed as to whether or not it would be appropriate for Milt to serve on the Loyalton Museum Committee, as he must also serve on the overall Co. Committee representing Loyalton. Milt asked that he be removed from the Committee, but stated he would help in every way he could. Gwen Lynch was appointed chairperson of this part of the Museum Committee. Another replacement is to be chosen by Gwen Lynch.

Milt suggested that a list should be published in the paper as to just what the Historical Society wants from Proposition I. Pres. Bill also brought up publicity. It was agreed that some sort of article of information on what our goals are under Prop. I should hit the paper. The Secretary was requested to write a letter to Asst. Planner Tim Beals, requesting our plans be put on a priority list, such as the acquisition of property in Alleghany and Sierra City, and the development in Loyalton.

Mary Hope resigned as future secretary, as she had served since September, 1971. Georgene Copren moved that we accept the resignation, with regret. Motion carried. Gwen Lynch, who was not present, was nominated for the new secretary, should she accept.

E. Lambert passed pictures around which she had reprints of, which were of early days in Sierraville. She explained what each place was, where located at that time. Motion made and carried that these pictures be reprinted by Jerry Burelle for the Sierra

3

Page 3-Minutes of August 18th meeting of Historical Society.

Sierra Co. Historical Society records.

Darlene seemed to think the Society should have a membership chairperson, as unpaid dues are a problem. She reported we had 90 paid members and 82 unpaid. She suggested that at the second meeting each year a committee should be appointed to check with unpaid members. She also thinks a committee should mail out our bulletins instead of the Treasurer. Milt sympathized with Darlene but felt she was not realistic as most of the people present at the summer meetings would not be present at winter meetings. Pres. Bill asked Jeanne if she wanted to drop mailing bulletins and asked if someone else wanted to do it. Maren Scholberg volunteered to help if Jeanne did not want to do it. The next bulletin will be out after school starts. Nothing further was done on a dues committee.

Georgene reported on the difficulty she had in depositing the \$78.42 in the Loyalton Bank of America, which had been signed over to the new Historical Society from the officers of the old Hist. Society. The next meeting was discussed and it will be held in Loyalton on October 20, 1974, with a potluck at 1:00 p.m. at the High School.

Milt reported on the Calaveras Historical Society having an essay contest each year in their area schools, and wondered about something like that in our county sponsored by the Historical Society. It would be good publicity. Georgene reported on the unsuccessful attempt of an art contest sponsored by the Native Daughters, the response being almost nil. Prizes for the best essay were discussed. Pres. Bill stated that we would publish the top 3 essays in our bulletin. Al Weiss suggested a \$25.00 savings bond for high school and one for elementary school. The second and third places to receive honorable mention in our bulletin. The Historical Society was quite interested, so Milt will make arrangements for these essays with the schools.

Georgene reported on an old school in Quincy which had been used until a few years ago as a school, but is now being used as a museum. She reported that it is quite interesting, and should any of us be in that area, it would be well worth our visit. President Bill adjourned the meeting.

Submitted respectfully

Mary R. Hope
Recording Secretary

Editors Note:

The Historical Society wishes to thank Mary Hope for the fine job she has done over the past several years as our Secretary. She has been faithful in attending meetings and writing comprehensive minutes of our meetings. We are glad she'll get a rest, but are all sorry to see her stop being our Secretary. Thanks Mary, for an excellent job!

~~~~~ 4 ~~~~~



THE HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DIARY OF A DOWNIEVILLE

MINER IN THE L' 1850's

The following article is part of a series of articles which have appeared in the Sierra County Historical Society Bulletin over the past two o years. The diary, or at least the part that has survived, was written from April 12, 1856, to March 2, 1859. We again thank Mrs. Marian Lavezzola, Sierra County Treasurer, for making the diary available to the 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.

Tuesday, May 19th--1887

Began to read "pyrrhus" in Plutarch's Lives. Al Dodson was up here in the morning to see Uncle Stephene. I quit work about four o'clock P.M. and went to town to get our letters. Recd two letters from Davis and one for myself from my wife--I don't seem to get along well in the world. I believe I am quit a mistake altogether. I have always went wrong ever since I can remember--I began life at the age of nineteen without friends, money or talents and now at the expiration of seven years from that time I have acquired none of either yet and have no prospect of doing better in the future--alas, I feel discouraged and am more careless of my life everyday. I have in times gone by built many "Castles in the Air" but I have only lived to see them totter and fall and dismantled heap of ruins--I will build no more.

Wednesday May 20 1857

Have been at work as usual. Have not yet finished cleaning the Bedrock. It will take part of tomorrow to finish it--I got some arsenic when I was in town yesterday. Our house is nearly overrun with rats and to night we put several pieces of bread well spread with butter and then sprinkle with the poison, we then cut the pieces in smaller pieces and placed around so as to afford a convenient banquet for the rats--

Thursday May 21st 1857

Had all of the bedrock cleaned by noone. We got two ounces apiece and left an ounce and a half in the companys' purse to meet future exigencies---After dinner we got our boxes ready to loom off another Cut. moved the Derrick and let the water on and then quit as it was nearly night and we did not think it worth while to wet ourselves for so short a time---have washed my shirts, and concluded the Life of Marius in Plutarch have begun Lysander--There has been a good deal of wind lately. Sky cloudy in afternoon, a slight sprinkle of rain just before sunset--

Friday May 22nd 1857

Were up early and began to loom off. The water seemed to be very cold. Got rid of a larger quantity of top earth---Have read an article in the last Harper called "John Bungan" by Macaulay--Got my clothes all wet and I am now nearly frozen--Have been debating with myself to day whether it would be best to send for

*5*



Page 2--Diary of a Downieville Miner

my family or not. If I remain here for years to come yet I suppose that it would be altogether better to have my wife and daughter with me.

Saturday May 23rd 1857

A mass of earth and rock fell during last night which kept us busy nearly all the forenoon in working off---The bank falls readily don't have to pick any scarcely Except the bottom. We have more rock than usual. Hoisted some large boulders out with the Derrick and one large one we were just able to overturn by means of the Derrick. I was wet all day yesterday, and slept in the same shirts that I had on at work they were not dry this morning, and to day I have been exposed to the water as much as ever again. I wear two shirts, a pair of woolen drawers and a pair of canvass pants over them---There was not a dry thread in any part of my clothing to night---

Sunday May 24 1857

This has been the hottest I have experienced in a long while. We had a little fire in the stove which made the house too hot for me. I couldn't read, so after an early dinner I tramped to town in company with Davis and Uncle Stephene, when there found a letter for me in the P.O. proved to be from Mr. Saml. H. Daylor, a one time resident of the East Forke. Arrived home again by four Ocl'k when Mr. Bassett arrived soon after and chatted away a couple of hours--Have begun a letter to my wife---

Monday May 25 1857

River was booming high last night. It has been very warm again today and the river is higher than it was last night. It roars like the sea when it is angry--Andy did not work today. He took cold some daysago and has not been well since--I have been wet all day but felt no inconvenience from it. The sun was very hot---Have finished the letter to my wife. I am writing for her to come out here if she wants to come---Finished reading "Sulla" by Plutarch--

Tuesday May 26 1857

This morning we thought we would make a finish of looming this Cut so as to be ready for cleaning it up tomorrow but we have not finished. Probably will not tomorrow. It has been a very hot day. The river is very high---Reading Plutarch--There is to be preaching about half a mile above here by a Methodist minister this evening and I thought some of going but I fell pretty tired and none of the rest will go so I think I had better stay at home. I have been thinking of home nearly all day, dreamed of seeing my wife--I thought we had been traveling and were about stopping at a Hotel when she decorated herself with a brilliant redrose, I don't know what is going to become of them or me. I have been away so long and see no likelihood of my getting back to them very soon---money is certainley a curse or at least the want of it is -to make us leave home and kindred and travel to the uttermostparts of the earth in search of gold to make us happy but the gold we are after is never found in sufficient quantities to satisfy us and then what

*6*



Page 3 Diary of a Downieville Miner

we do get instead of being happy we are only rendered mor miserable by the filthy lucre which filth and dirty as it is, we are all ready to grasp with great fondness---A small competence with a happy family is enough for me and in my opinion enough for all mankind---

Wednesday May 27 1857

At work as usual. Very warm again each day seems to be hotter than the one preceding it. The sky was partially overcast with a thick mist or thick clouds but it is nearly clear now---I think we have had our last rains for this season---Have just finished reading Sulla

Thursday May 28th 1857

There was a great slide in the diggings last night. The whole place was covered. It was fortunate for our safety that it happened in the night or else we might have been caught. There was so much dirt that we were busied until noone with running it off--The forenoon was very hot. There was a shower up the river. We heard the thunder down here---

Friday May 29th 1857

Mr. Jones was up here in the forenoon and stayed until nearly night. We have got our boxes ready for cleaning up--we wanted to begin in the morning---The Cut that we have loomed off is very large--We expect to make small wages out of it--The forenoon was very hot some clouds were flying in the afternoone. Mr. Wilson was here since supper and agreed to bring two hundred pounds of potatoes here tomorrow at eight cents a pound.

Saturday Eve May 30 1857

Was engaged during the forenoon shoveling gravel--This has been the hottest day of the season. The sweat ran off me in streams. After dinner I got the boys to help me move some timber up the river--They were three very heavy sticks so that we were hardly able to heave them up to their places with the aid of blocks--the whole job took about one and a half hours. Then we concluded to quit for the day. So Davis and I started for town with the picks. and left Andy and Uncle Stephen to move the stove. Some weeks ago I sent below for Human History of England, today I recd it. It came to six vols, I had to pay Eight dollars--A friend treated me to supper and afterwards I witnessed a Ballet performance in the Theatre. There were but few spectators and the playing was dull--Davis and I have just returned home and it is after Eleven o'clk.

Sunday May 31 1857

Wrote a letter for Davis and then finished one for my wife which I sent to have mailed by Uncle Stephen. Then mended my pants which took a couple of hours---After that I began to read History of England which I bought yesterday. I read the life of them which is preficed to the work and read to the fifteenth page in the history. Towards night a heavy shower came down the river. There was a good deal of rain and some hail

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Page 4 Diary of a Downieville Miner

Monday June 1st 1857

Have a severe cold. My head has troubled me all day. Not quite so hot as yesterday. I made a trip to town after dinner, to get letters but was disappointed the mail was in but brought nothing for me. I got our California paper out of the Office and bought a late New York Herald. I have been reading the Herald since supper--This is my week to cook, I will have but little time to read--

Tuesday June 2nd 1857

Have not been well today. I quit work awhile before night. I have had a severe cold for several days past. My bones seem to be very sore. I can hardly stand.

Sunday June 7th 1857

My diary has been interrupted for several days past in consequence of an attack of fever. I had a chill and fever on Tuesday night. Was crazy until morning. Uncle Stephen rose before me and got breakfast. I kept the bed until noon. In the afternoon I went to town to see the Dr. Kibber (spelling uncertain). Was so weak I could hardly walk down there. Had to stop and rest some half a dozen times. Saw the Dr. when I arrived in town he gave me some medicine which I administered and then went to bed. Kept my bed for two days as quietly as I could thought I was up each day a part of the time.-- Today I have a good deal of headache and am troubled with a cough for remedy which the doctor gave me a syrup. I have just arrived home and feel better here than in town. Have been at Asbornes. He is living very happily--has a good wife and pretty, healthy and interesting little girl--I ate dinner there today in company of Uncle Stephen--Uncle Stephen has read a letter in which he is informed of the marriage of Sister Mary--

Wednesday June 10 1857

Have been about the house these last three days. Have been neither sick nor well. Have been taking some medicine. Haven't got rid of that yet--My cold sticks to me, my head feels bad. It aches about all of the time--worse when the sun shines--did not sleep last night. Take no pleasure in reading, yesterday the company made finish of the Cut. They did not charge me any thing for the time I was off (Six days) but divided equally all around. They do not intend to work any more this week, Davis and Andy, have gone to Downieville and Uncle Stephen has gone up the river to see about dearing a dam away that will interfere with his fluming operations--

Monday Eve June 15th 1857

Last Wednesday Mr. Bassett and Wm Baker came here with about a score of trout which they had caught in Gold Lake the day previous, They described the "good fishing" so well that we concluded to go out and see for ourselves--Whiting Jellows came up to see me and he agreed to accompany us--Uncle Stephen then went down to Mr. Jones and invited him and hired a pony in town at four dollars per diem. Mr. Jones and Whiting stopped with us over night. Davis not at home--Bassett also stayed here--We were up early Friday morning and soon had our animal packed with blankets and provisions for the trip. When we got started the pony would not cross the ditch and our ef-

*Wm Jellows*



forts to compel him only made matters worse. He sprang backwards, turned entirely over and rolled down the hill. We got him up and backed the load over again and went better for some distance when the rascal took a motion to kick which operation nearly threw the load off again, after several of such delays which consumed two or three hours time we at last got to going along without any trouble and arrived at the lake about two o'clock in the afternoon. We went over a good deal of snow and we were all pretty well worn out when we reached the lake. The last two or three miles seemed to be much longer than necessary, the lake is about two miles long. It took us about an hour to travel from the upper to the lower end--I stayed in camp the first afternoon, the remaining four went down to the lower end and caught eighteen trout which we cooked for our supper and breakfast--We had poor success the first day, yesterday we did much better. Whiting and I caught fifty-eight with spears last night by torch light--We left the lake this morning about nine o'clock and arrived home by three. Stopped to lunch on the road--We brought down about two hundred and twenty fish--the most of which are given away---

Wednesday June 17th 1857

Yesterday I staid in the house until about middle of afternoon, shaved and bathed and afterwards went to town. Expected to have found the mail in but was disappointed. Saw Mr. C. F. Jones, he had improved his dress somewhat since I saw the day before. The sun shows excessively hot. I wore a pair of thick cowhide boots with woolen socks and my feet were nearly scorched--Called at A. S. Dodsons to get some papers for Uncle Stephen. I arrived home about sunset. Today I have busied myself in different ways--in the forenoon I was engaged in removing a lot of drift wood which had accumulated on the dam which is at the head of the claim I had dried last year. Read several pages of History of England. In the afternoon assisted Uncle Stephen to remove a Dam which is on the lower end of the ground he intends to flume--The dam is the same that A. S. and I had at the head of our Ditch and which was built in March 55---it was about thirteen feet in height and it has been lowered nearly two feet. It is dangerous to work in this place. I expect to help him again tomorrow--

Thursday June 18 1857

Have been assisting Uncle Stephen tear out his dam. It is a difficult job. We succeeded in lowering the water about two feet, We have been up there twice today--did not stay very long either time. I staid in the water until I was chilled through. We expect to go up again tomorrow---it will probably take several days yet to get it all out. Davis had two friends staying with him last night. Andy and Davis went off to town with them this morning--They were not home at noon so Uncle S. and I prepared dinner for ourselves. We were so unlucky in the forenoon as to break an ax and it took about two hours time to get the old out and the new one in--Read several pages in History of England. The boys have returned from town and say that the mail has not arrived as of yet--

*in 9 in*



Friday Eve June 19th 1857

Have been helping Uncle Stephen tear out his dam--Were busy all day--finally succeeded in getting the worst of the dam out. We will try to finish it tomorrow. I bought of the newsman who was here when I returned home-one Home Journal and Harper's Magazine for June--I have read the Home Journal through since supper. Got a letter from home today--It was from Father and Marg.

Saturday June 20 1857

Uncle Stephen and I finally succeeded in getting all of the dam out, all of the plank and all of the logs with the exception of a small one which lies on the bottom. I lost my best crowbar, it slipped out of my hands when I was punching a plank, it slid into the deep hole right below where I was unable to get it. Did not work in the afternoone. Have been reading Harper's Magazine, the History of England and etc.--

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

ED WHITE AND SONS

Garage-----Ford Dealer  
Loyalton, California

LOYALTON PHARMACY

E. J. and Bob Peeler  
Loyalton, California

LOYALTON MARKET

Under new management-  
Groceries--Fresh Meat and  
Produce

Debi and Bill Davis  
Loyalton, California

LAMBERT-WHITTAKER INSURANCE,  
INC.

Loyalton, California

LOMBARDI MERCANTILE

for all your mercantile  
needs!

Loyalton, California

PAT AND JIM'S EMPORIUM

Sporting Goods---Clothing  
Loyalton, California

BRICK'S PLACE

Loyalton, California  
Your host,  
Bob Bowling



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, SIERRA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, DURING THE YEAR 1874.

Ah Luk  
Sierra City, Cal.,  
August 7, 1874, 9 P. M.

No tend to go, You Dicks, he snatch my money last night.  
I take him back Sierra Valley tomorrow twelve o'clock.  
Answer I pay.  
24 Pd.

Ah Sing

Ting Yeu  
Downieville

Auburn, Cal.,  
August 12, 1874, 12:30 P. M.

Fook Sing's woman has gone to Marysville.  
7 Pd.

Ah Tom

Len Tin  
Oroville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 12, 1874

Send me letter about woman quick.  
6 words Pd.

Fook Sing



Sing Lung, Ah Yik  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874

Bring woman up right away will pay three hundred dollars.  
Answer.

13 words Pd. 75c

Tie Yuen  
Fook Sing

Sing Lung, Ah Yik  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874

Bring her in a buggy and I will meet you at Campton-  
ville. Come tomorrow.  
14 words Pd. 75c

Fook Sing

Sing Lung, Ah Yik  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874

Watch woman close. I come tomorrow.  
6 words Pd. 50c

Fook Sing

Sing Lung, Ah Yik  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874

Is man who took woman there. Answer.  
7 words Pd. 50c

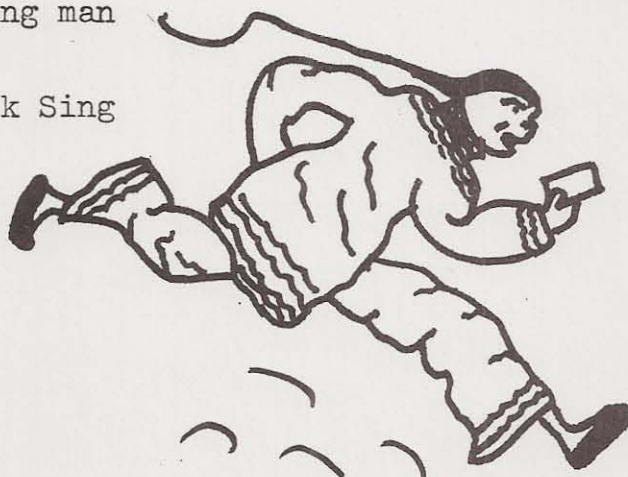
Fook Sing

Sing Lung, Ah Yik  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874

Will you bring man  
and woman. Answer.  
7 words Pd. 50c

Fook Sing





Fook Sing

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874, 8:15 A. M.

Will you come by buggy or stage. I want to meet you  
outside of town. Answer immediately.  
19 Collect \$1.00

Sing Lung, Ah Yik

Tie Yuen

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874, 11:05 A. M.

Tell Fook Sing Min Que is here. What you going to do.  
Answer quick.  
16 Pd

Sing Lung, Ah Yik

Fook Sing

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874, 4:20 P. M.

She wants you come right away and get warrant with  
officer, friends will help. You don't be afraid. We will get  
her sure.  
23 Collect

Sing Lung

Ah Sing Goon

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874, 3 P. M.

Hom Game Sing take woman he stop here now. Fook Sing  
come quick to Marysville. Answer back.  
17 Collect

Sing Lung, Ah Yik

Fook Sing  
Care Eing Yue

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 13, 1874, 4:21 P. M.

Ask Fook Sing if he wants me to bring the woman back to  
his place. Expenses will be about three hundred dollars. If he  
is willing to pay it answer immediately. She might go off in a  
day or two.  
42 Collect

Sing Lung, Ah Yik

Fook Sing

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 14, 1874, 11:15 A. M.

I want to know whether you come or not and what way you  
come. Answer.  
15 Collect

Sing Lung



Sing Lung  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 14, 1874

Fook Sing go down stage this morning, be there tonight.  
10 words Pd. 50c Tie Yuen

Tie Yuen

Marysville, Cal.,  
August 15, 1874, 10:12 A. M.

I saw the woman but have not arrested her. Send marriage certificate.  
12 Pd. Fook Sing

Fook Sing  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
August 15, 1874

Will send the certificate next stage.  
6 words Pd. 50c Tie Yuen

Fong Sing

Truckee, Cal.,  
August 26, 1874, 7:50 P. M.

I can't come tomorrow. Chinaman got killed, they want me to attend to him.  
14 Pd. Ah Jake

Fook Sing & E Barry  
Nevada, Cal.

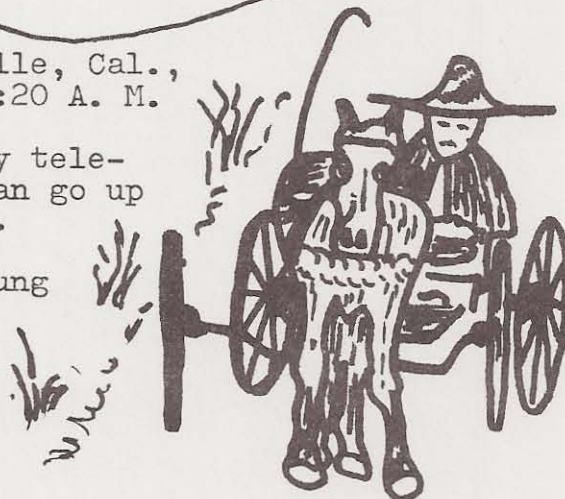
Downieville, Cal.,  
October 4, 1874

Is the woman in jail or not. If she is I will send money. Answer quick.  
20 words Pd. 80c Tie Yuen

Eing Goon

Marysville, Cal.,  
October 5, 1874, 9:20 A. M.

Send fifty dollars down by telegraph today to pay expense of woman go up to Nevada City. She name Gan Que. She come from Colusa today.  
25 Collect Sing Lung





Eing Goon

Marysville, Cal.,  
October 5, 1874, 4:20 PM M.

The woman is in jail here now. Send one hundred dollars today by telegraph for expenses to take the woman up to Nevada. You no send money she no go. Fook Sing he stop Nevada. You no got money, answer.  
40 collect

Sing Lung

Sing Lung  
Marysville

Downieville, Cal.,  
October 6, 1874

I have not got any money here for Fook Sing. You pay all the expenses for the woman to go to Nevada and when Fook Sing comes up we will send it all back to you.  
37 words Pd \$2.00

Tie Yuen

Tie Yuen

Marysville, Cal.,  
October 6, 1874, 4:20 P. M.

Woman went up to Nevada this morning. I paid expenses one hundred twenty dollars. You send money tomorrow.  
18 Collect

Sing Lung

E Barry  
Nevada

Downieville, Cal.,  
October 6, 1874

What do you think about this case. Have you got the woman or not. Answer immediately.  
16 words Pd 80c

Tie Yuen

Ah Tien, Ah Heing Store

Nevada, Cal.,  
October 6, 1874, 8:50 P. M.

Send one hundred dollars, we have woman.  
7 words Pd

E Barry  
Fook Sing

E Barry

Nevada, Cal.,  
October 8, 1874, 10:45 A. M.

Kem Sing with officer go Downieville today. Hide woman.  
Answer.  
10 Pd.

Ah Wan

15



## AGRICULTURE IN SIERRA COUNTY FROM

1880 to 1890

The following discussion of agriculture in Sierra County is in some ways of artificial structure. Only the principal aspects of farming and ranching are to be considered, and each separate from the others. The discourse will center around hay, cereal grains, dairying and the beef cattle industry. In almost every case these aspects of agriculture were interrelated and carried on simultaneously by the farmers or ranchers, although many emphasized one product or another. The related livestock and crops have been separately studied for the sake of expediency and simplicity. It should be remembered that this affected ordering did not actually occur and is simply an unnatural artifice of the author.

The four principal aspects of agriculture in Sierra County have been emphasized to the neglect of secondary and less important crops and livestock groups. Potatoes, market-garden and orchard products were all of some significance. Swine and horses were also important to the overall picture of ranching during the period. Particularly the raising of trotters and race horses was an unusual but interesting practice. It has been ignored during this article due to limitations of space and time.

Problems dealing with land tenure, irrigation, fencing, disease, and plagues of insects have all been examined individually. The problem of sheep has also been divorced artificially from the particular emphasis of this study. Yet, in the final analysis, it is hoped that the artificial structuring of the discussion will lead to a better understanding of Sierra County's agricultural industry during the 1880's. The reader must keep in mind the intrinsic relationship of all the factors discussed. The social and political activities of the farmers will be discussed in a separate and concluding section of this work.

As the decade opened there were 156 farms within the confines of Sierra County. Most of them contained from 100 to 500 acres, averaging around 250. There were no farms larger than 1,000 acres, and only twelve contained more than 500 acres. In well over ninety-five percent of the cases, the person who worked the farm also owned it. There was no share-cropping and little tenant farming. A total of 38,965 acres were being farmed in 1880. Improved farm land was collectively valued at approximately \$450,000. During the 1880's farms changed hands repeatedly and new land was located under the Desert Culture Act of 1878. Slowly, but surely, the farms grew in size, the smaller ranches being incorporated into the larger ones. New land was cleared and brought under cultivation and Swiss-Italian immigrants homesteaded land not already claimed. Subsequent to the Desert Land Act of 1887, abuses in acquiring land became apparent and "land grabbing" by the larger farmers grew into a serious problem. Many residents doubted whether there was actually any desert land in Sierra County. The means used by some farmers to gain more acreage were highly questionable where they were not openly fraudulent and dishonest. In 1889, claims of desert land locators were being contested, too late to prevent a dangerous drift toward concentration of land in the hands of a few.<sup>1</sup>



The number of farms, by 1890, had dropped by one-third, although total acreage in farms had increased by almost sixteen percent and the value of farm land had increased to \$646,370. The average size of a farm had grown to 417 acres and six now contained over 1000. The number of farms containing less than 500 acres had declined from one hundred and thirty-six to eighty, whereas the number containing over 500 had almost tripled during the decade. The tendency, seen throughout America during this period, toward the concentration of land in the hands of fewer and fewer persons was proceeding apace in Sierra Co.<sup>2</sup>

Sierra Valley farmers did not face a major problem in regard to fencing materials. Timber was close at hand and many of the lumber mills carried posts, one-inch boards and rails. Barged wire had been developed in the previous decade and was in general use in Sierra Valley during the eighties. In an average year the farmers would spend about \$5,000 building and repairing fences. By 1885, much of the valley was fenced off and new wood and wire barriers continued to enclose the open range. Miles of fences were built each spring while the ground was soft, "the usual styles being posts with two boards and a barbed wire on top, and a board in the middle of the posts with a barbed wire above and below it." The animals were not accustomed to wire and many were injured when wire was strung by itself.<sup>3</sup>

Irrigation was a significant concern of the valley grangers and they experimented with a number of methods of bringing water to their crops and meadows. One of the first major attempts to bring more water into Sierra Valley began in 1878, when a joint stock company known as the Sierra Valley Irrigation and Water Company was incorporated in Virginia City, Nevada. The company's aim was to cut a canal from the Little Truckee River, below the falls, to the valley. Three miles of the canal were completed and water was being delivered when construction was halted because of a court action brought by the Boca Mill and Ice Company and Dr. D. G. Webber. The injunctions were a crippling blow to the water company and subsequently it was in constant financial trouble, showing up on the delinquent tax lists in both 1880 and 1881. By 1885, the company had folded. D. D. Newman and H. A. Mason then appropriated the water and attempted to repair the canal. The valley ranchers kept a sharp watch on their counterparts in Nevada, especially after 1889, to be sure that none of this ditch water was taken for use in the sister state's irrigation plans. Water continued to flow into Sierra Valley through the canal, but never enough to supply the need.<sup>4</sup>

In 1881, the Sierra Valley farmers began their most impressive experimental effort to find the needed water--drilling artesian wells. A number of ranchers on the west side of the valley brought in a natural flow, and in 1882, Walter Ede began drilling for water along the eastern foothills. The following year new improved boring equipment was imported with the intention of going down 2000 feet if necessary. In 1884 several successful wells were sunk and one year later Ede brought in his well--the largest yet found. With more technologically advanced equipment, it became possible to drill 500 feet in as few as seven hours. Seven hydraulic jetting machines, costing about \$1,000 each, were drilling wells in Sierra Valley between 1886 and 1889, and a flow of some of the wells was substantial enough to drive machinery. In 1889, companies were formed in Long Valley to drill for artesian wells. The experiment in Sierra Valley had proved so successful that the Nevada State Legislature began subsidizing exploration and drilling in that state. By 1890, Sierra County contained forty-five artesian wells, with an average depth of 458 feet and an average flow of forty-



seven gallons per minute. Despite the general success in gaining water by this method, the demand continued to outrun the supply. Other methods had to be used to supplement artesian wells and water ditches.<sup>5</sup>

As the decade drew to a close two new attempts were made to acquire more water. First, the farmers in the southern end of the valley sought out the proper sites and then erected storage dams across the mountain streams that entered the valley. Others dammed the creeks as they crossed the valley floor. This was successful to some extent but was costly and caused legal problems over water adjudication for downstream users.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in 1889 and 1890, the farmers brought in wind powered pumps to exploit the natural ground water. In those two years both pumping and geared windmills went up around Sierraville, Sattley, and Loyalton. But even the harnessing of the wind was not sufficient to keep pace with the ever expanding need for water. The twentieth century would see other, more sophisticated, solutions to the water problem. Yet, by 1890, over thirty-two percent of the farm area of the county was artificially irrigated and almost nine out of ten farmers were using some means of irrigation to water their crops and meadows.<sup>7</sup>

Lack of water was not the only problem the grangers had to contend with. They also had to face plagues of insects and disease. A six year infestation of grasshoppers, beginning in 1878, pushed Sierra Valley farmers to the brink of bankruptcy and defeat. The battle between man and insect became a struggle for existence. The decade of the 1880's opened with the great grasshopper war well under way. The insect scourge was on the point of overwhelming the ranchers in 1880, and there was serious talk of appealing to Thomas Edison in the belief that he could invent something which would defeat the locusts. The grasshoppers' natural enemies did not exist in great enough numbers, and it appeared that the 'hoppers would drive the farmers from Sierra Valley. The insects advanced from north to south, completely devastating the northern grass and grain crops. Hay was harvested before it ripened so that something could be reaped before the grasshoppers reached the fields.<sup>8</sup>

By 1881, scientists of the United States Entomological Commission had established that the insects were not the seventeen year locust; not that this made much difference to the beleaguered grangers. In that year grasshoppers overran the grain and grass crops in Clover Valley, Squaw Queen Valley and Last Chance by the middle of May. Millions of eggs were found in Sierra Valley that month, and by June, tons of hay were being consumed by the pests. There were four times as many grasshoppers as had infested the valley previously, and again, the twenty-five ranches in the northern end were devastated. There were "acres and acres, and even miles of them in some locations....They were coming from the north, and marching south and east" in huge black masses. The farmers tried to defend their fields with whatever weapons were at hand. They hauled in straw, scattered it over the earthbound insects (only a few could fly) and set it on fire. Ditches were dug and filled with water in the hope that this might half the devouring hordes. Finally in July, though as the pests made for the grain fields, the inhabitants turned out and fought them face to face. "The frightened ranchers assembled on the edge of the grass land, and with burning straw, sticks, stones, rags and a large ditch succeeded in repelling the invaders." The grain crops in the southern end of the valley was saved and the farmers hoped that the plague would not return the following year.<sup>9</sup>

Hopes and prayers were not enough. New egg-beds were discovered early in 1882. The farmers concluded to plow them up, attempting to kill the larvae, and then made heavy grain plantings believing that some of the crop could be recovered.



The lower section of the valley was again hard hit, but about two thirds of a normal crop was harvested for the entire area.<sup>10</sup>

By 1883, the plague had abated somewhat. The farmers' sense of humor seemed to return. When one "solemn faced granger" was interviewed by a Tribune reporter about why the grasshoppers had not been exterminated earlier, he replied: "Kil 'em! You can't do it; and as for catching 'em and clipping their wings, we've got something else to do." But the insects had taken their toll. Dairymen had been driven out of the valley for lack of feed and the grain and grass industries had suffered severe losses. In 1883, the grasshoppers left as mysteriously as they had come, only to appear the next year in Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys.<sup>11</sup>

No pest was again to subject the farmers to the punishment they received from the locusts. But in the closing years of the decade the hay crop was heavily damaged by a plague of rabbits. The livestock and dairy industry suffered whenever the hay crop was impaired and stockmen had the added burden of animal diseases which swept through the herds of horses, beef and dairy cattle.

This article will be continued in the December issue of the Sierra County Historical Society Bulletin. The author of this article is Bill Copren, the president of the Historical Society. This is a section of a larger work by President Bill covering the history of Sierra County through the 1880's.

-----  
1. Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883) pp. 34-35; Compendium of the Tenth Census, Part I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 689; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Aug 2, 1883; Sept. 12, 1884; May 15, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Editorial, Jan. 6, 1888; Jan. 6, 1888; Editorial, April 13, 1888; Feb. 15, 1889; March 8 1889

2. Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 124-125, 200; Report on Farms and Homes; Proprietorship and Indebtedness in the United States at the Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1896) pp. 249, 289; Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1883) pp. 34-35.

3. Compendium of the Tenth Census, Part I (Washington, D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 689; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 10, 1888; May 4, 1888; June 7, 1889; Jan 3, 1890. Quotation from Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, May 15, 1885.

4. Trickee Republican, Nov. 23, 1881; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Jan. 31, 1880; Feb. 5, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, May 15, 1885.



Page 5, Agriculture in Sierra County

5. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Marcy 19, 1881; Nov. 26, 1887; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, May 4, 1882; Downieville, April 17, 1884; June 5, 1885; Sierra City, Dec. 4, 1885; July 17, 1885; Editorial, Jan. 6, 1888; Sept. 28, 1888, May 17, 1889; Reno Evening Gazette, Jan. 9, 1883; Jan. 28, 1889; Feb. 2, 1889; Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 15.
6. Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Editorial, Feb. 1, 1889; Feb. 8, 1889; Aug. 22, 1890
7. Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Aug. 30, 1889; Oct. 3, 1890; Sept. 12, 1890 Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the U.S., Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1896), p. 41.
8. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Feb. 7, 1880; May 8, 1880; May 29, 1880; June 12, 1880; July 24, 1880; Dec. 11, 1880.
9. Reno Evening Gazette, Feb. 9, 1881; June 23, 1881; first quotation from June 3, 1881; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, June 4, 1881; May 21, 1881; June 11, June 25, 1881; second quotation from July 16, 1881; Aug. 6, 1881
10. Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, April 27, 1882; June 29, 1882; Sept. 28, 1882.
11. Reno Evening Gazette, June 23, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Dec. 20, 1883; quotation from Aug 2, 1883; Truckee Republican, May 8, 1885.



