

Sierra
County
Historical
Society

How it was on the Yuba!

East Meets West!
Agriculture in Sierra Valley!

June 1, 1975

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THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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William G. Copren

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Author Unknown

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From a book edited by A.
Dressler

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THE HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DIARY OF A DOWNIEVILLE

MINER IN THE 1850's

The following article is part of a series which has appeared in the Sierra County Historical Society Bulletin over the past two years. The part of the diary which 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 attempted to keep the flavor of the original diary by making a minimum of changes in the original punctuation, sentence structure and spelling.

Wednesday, M July 15, 1858

Wednesday, July 15, 1857

Turned part of the water into the flume, fixed the mouth of the flume---Sawed two breadths of canvass together and spread it over the mouth (Ø)---had great difficulty in fastening it on account of the strong current of water. We were in the water nearly all day and both of us were chilled through before night. We quit work rather early on account of the cold. Have just returned from Davis'. He was in town this afternoon and brought a "Pacific" for me-- The French Co. below here have got one pump in and to working. I passed their diggings about dark and they were still at work--

Thursday, July 16, 1857

Patched the dam sluices a lot of dirt in it to stop the leakage. The dam and flume are midling tight. We began to clear out a place for the foot dam. In the afternoon an assessors Deputy came along and inquired after placing us under oath as to our means "money and property" of all descriptions whatever. He was also after Poll tax which was four dollars. Ward and I paid ours and got receipts. Davis was up here awhile just before night. He has a sore foot and is quite lame.

Friday, July 17, 1857

Dug and wheeled a great lot of dirt from foot dam--made a finish of the dam as far as we could. Set the small wheel up and attached the pump to it. Started the pump and it worked well--Davis was here in the morning. He has a bad heel. He can hardly get about. He, Andy have their flume ready for working. Their wheel and pump are at work, their boxes in and they have to sink down to the bedrock. The woods are fire on the south side of the Fork--Part of the Erupion (Øunclear)) Mill Co. Ditch burned last night with a hundred or so cords of wood which belonged to Dr. A. Chase, the fire is now right in front of our shanty.

Sunday, July 19, 1857

Got up early and went to town. Recd a letter from Sister Katherine made up of three fragments written at different times. Took a letter out of the P.O. for Davis which I brought up and at his request read to him---Arrived at home soon after noone. Have read part of the Reign of Richard the Second. Baked and cooked--Have just returned from a

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visit to Uncle Stephen--His flume is laid down and has some water running through it--it is not water tight though and has not been caulked any yet. He intends to let it swell all that it will and then caulk it. He has two men to assist him--I still retain the man I have had all along, I made a slight endeavor today to hire another but did not succeed. I will engage another man by the first opportunity--The fire is burning on the mountain though the flume has not caught yet--

Monday, July 20, 1857

Had to go nearly to Downieville after the picks which I took down yesterday and could not get sharpened because it was Sunday. The sun was just peering over the mountains when I got there. I found the picks ready for me and immediately returned. Got our pump down on the bed rock. It is hard and smooth. I don't think it will pay anything. Got our sluicess and commenced washing-Davis was in town and brought in one Tribune of June 20-the first of my year's subscriptions---

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Tuesday, July 21, 1857

Began at an early hour as usual but we were out only a few minutes when I observed that Ward-my hired man-was quietly smoking his pipe in spite of the numerous intimations I had previously given him that it was disagreeable to me. We discussed the matter a little and as we concluded that he could not give up the habit of smoking after meals when he was at work. I determined to discharge him. To pay him off I was obliged to go to town in order to get change as my money was nearly all there. We arrived there before Seven o'clock. I paid him his due and after doing a little trading started for home-came here and went right to work and have worked faithfully ever since. All alone by myself with the exception of a couple of brief visits from Davis whose sore foot prevents him from working on his claim. I fixed up the old rocker which I used last winter--lined it with drilling and when I had it repaired as well as I could do it--washed out the large riffle I had in and formed--as a result of yesterday and today am washing just about five dollars-as near as I could come to it with my nights. Have washed the dishes since supper--Feel tired and sleepy. It is quite lonesome here now--



Wednesday, July 22, 1857

Was up early and began to work early but felt lonesome to do much--took a couple of hours rest after dinner which I employed in reading the Tribune. Have made but little head way on the claim today. The ground has been worked before me and pretty well too I should suppose from appearances. It was flumed six years since--they were careful enough to work this piece of ground which I am on now pretty well. Am likely to have trouble with the French Co. below here. They are the owners of one half of the ditch which runs on Stovepipe Flat. I also have an interest in it which I bought of D. C. Rolston when I bought his claim and Co. on Stovepipe last winter. The French Co. says that the water should be used on Stove Pipe Flat and no where else without it is sold--therefore as I take the water for my sluices out of the ditch way above the Flat and the river terminus of the ditch, I must pay them five dollars per week, being the half of ten dollars which they consider to be the value of a sluice head. I have used the water since our conversation when I told them that as I had bought it once I did not choose to buy it again and I intend to use it as long as I can without making too much of a muss--I can get water from the dam without much trouble.

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Thursday, July 23, 1857

Put the pump down deeper and cleaned out the drain to the pump. There is one part of the ground under the boxes which I was unable to get dry because there is high bedrock between it and the pump--Have been at work all day with the exception of a rest after dinner when I got interested in the Tribune. Da vis was here in the afternoon. His foot is still sore so that he is not able to work yet. He likes to talk but never has much to say that is interesting to me. Andy, who came up after I had my supper, has just left.

Friday, July 24, 1857

Have done a good deal of work, piled up a great many small stone besides shoveling gravel in the sluices, the tailings bother me a great deal. Have to shovel them all off to one side, about one fifth of my time is required to clear away the tailings. I thought it was very hot. Drank several quarts of water, I get my drinking water from a spring which comes out of the hill near-the-water is quite cool and clear.

Saturday Eve, July 25, 1857

I was in the shade a great part of the day but I found the heat very great even there. I find this working alone to be very lonesome, if it were not for the little pictures which fancy presents my mind's Eye of home and other lands in which I am so interested sometimes that I almost believe myself there even when I am working away with



the pick or shovel as hard as ever I can--

Quit work earlier than usual. Shaved, bathed, ate my supper and went to town. Took the coffee mill down to get it repaired--I have been unable to make my coffee for several days past and in consequence have drank tea which is a very poor excuse for coffee according to my notion. I am getting to be very fond of coffee, like it strong and clear.

Sunday, July 26th, 1857

As I was sitting down to my breakfast, Davis and his hired man came up here to get me to read a letter for Davis which he had just received from his nephew in Yreka and he also wanted me to answer it for him which I did. After they were gone and I was looking over the columns of the "Pacific" which was left here last night by Davis while I was absent in town, Andy, came up with the letter which he recently recd from his relatives in Cork Co., Ireland. He gave it to me to read and wishes me to answer it for him. He intends to send

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them fifty dollars in his letter. Accompanied Andy home and took supper with him. It seems to me that this has been an uncommonly hot day. I almost melted in it. Had head ache and felt bad generally, when I arrived in town I called on A.S.Ds--and found his wife sitting on a loveseat fanning her beautiful little girl which was sleeping on the floor before her and as it seemed to me the very picture of Angel like beauty and innocence. A.S. was not at home--I looked about town among the crowds of people in search of a man to help me mine. I was so far unsuccessful as not to get any. Came home without any help whatsoever, and will have to work awhile by myself again--

Monday Eve, July 27, 1857

Was troubled with a boil which is growing on my right hand arm-- It is quite irritable in consequence of exerting it so much today. Was cleaning bedrock in the forenoon but it had all been worked before so that I found but little pay on it--About middle of the afternoon George Cochram and two others came along and requested me to go with them up the river a short distance when they were about disputing some mining ground and I was needed for a witness. I accompanied them, although much against my will--

5



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## AGRICULTURE IN SIERRA COUNTY FROM

1880 TO 1890

(Part III of a series of articles)

The author of this series of articles is Bill Copren, president of the Sierra County Historical Society. This is part of a larger study by President Bill which deals with the history of lumbering and agriculture in Sierra County from 1880 to 1890.

The second principal livestock industry in Sierra County during the 1880's was dairying; the most important dairy product was butter. Milk could not be preserved on a large scale and only a negligible amount of cheese was made, mostly Swiss cheese, until William Arms built a small cheese factory near Beckwourth in 1890.<sup>1</sup>

The county contained almost 1400 milch cows in 1880. The dairy herds, which were significantly smaller than beef herds, seldom contained 150 animals and usually numbered from forty to eighty head. The dairy cows were not all milked continuously. As weather grew colder the number of cows being regularly milked, declined. As an example, the James Miller ranch near Sierraville milked sixty-nine cows in the summer, forty-five in the autumn, and only thirty in the winter. By 1890, the county contained about three hundred fewer milch cows than it had ten years earlier. But numbers by themselves tell only part of any story; the quality of the milkers had been increased through the use of better blood strains.<sup>2</sup>

Durham pure-breds had been brought into Sierra County before 1880, and were, by that time, the principal breeding strain. Few herds of pure bred were raised; in most cases Durham bulls were crossed with lower quality stock to produce milking shorthorns. Holstein breeding stock was brought into the county in 1887 by V. Dodson of the Empire Ranch. One year later, A.S. Nichols paid the stiff price of \$250.00 and \$40.00 freight for a full-blood Holstein bull named San Leandro. Two months after making this expensive purchase, Nichols lost the animal to disease. But the desire to improve the milking strain led him to import ten Holsteins the following year. By the end of the decade there were twelve pure-bred Holsteins and Durhams in Sierra County and thirty-five milkers of one-half blood or higher. The general development of applied science in the United States was being felt by the valley dairies. The 1880's saw the beginnings of genetically improved

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milking strains through the use of full blood breeding stock. But it was not only in the stock that improvements were being made. Technological advance was also taking place in the creameries.<sup>3</sup>

Creameries, some made out of brick, were small factories organized, basically, on the assembly-line principal. Until the latter part of the decade the dairies were powered by water wheels or tread-mills. Furnaces and coolers were so arranged that the temperature seldom varied more than two or three degrees from the optimum--somewhere around sixty degrees. The first steam cream separator was brought into the valley by A.S. Nichols in 1888. It had a capacity of sixty gallons per hour but was powered by a tread mill until the following year when a five horsepower steam engine was finally connected. By the end of the decade steam power was swiftly replacing water wheels as the principal means of driving the separators and other machinery needed to make butter.<sup>4</sup>

Butter was the leading money product of the dairy business. The process by which cream was turned into butter and readied for transport and sale was described by a correspondent of the Nevada City Daily Transcript in 1881:

The milk is first put into one of William & Hammon's Champion milk coolers' having four pans, each pan holding forty gallons. Under these pans are false bottoms, for the purpose of putting in warm or cold water, according to the temperature, in order to set the cream. After remaining 48 hours the milk is skimmed, and the cream put into cans, where it remains over night. Next morning it is transferred to a patent churn, capable of making 75 pounds of butter at on time. This is run by water power. About 30 minutes in summer is required to make the butter, 45 in fall, and about one hour in winter. The churning process being over, the butter-milk is drawn off at the bottom of the churn, and given to the hogs and turkeys, as is also the milk after it is skimmed. The butter is then worked with cold water in the churn and is afterwards taken out and placed in the butter-worker, which is about 6 feet wide, 4 feet long, and 6 inches high, and is placed at an angle of about 20 degrees. A movable wooden lever is forced down upon the butter until all the milk is forced out. The butter is then washed with cold water, and again the lever is forced to bear upon it, and once more it is deluged with cold water, so that not a particle of butter-milk remains. It is then spread out on the butter-worker to about the thickness of half an inch, when it is salted. One and a quarter ounces of salt is used to the pound of butter for home consupction and one and a half where it is packed and shipped. After being salted and thoroughly worked in with the lever th butter is placed in in a large pan and put intthe buttery, were it remains 48 hours. This rest changes the color of the butter from white to a rich yellow. It is then again taken to the butter-works and goes through the same process (except salting) when it is ready for packing. Firkins are made in Sierraville of fir - wood, and holds 118 pounds of butter. The firkin being filled, brine is puured on top, which finds its way down the sides as the butter shrinks. In winter it is moulded into two pound rolls, wrapped in cloth and packed in boxes containg from 25 to 50 pounds each. The dairy being described is the J. Miller dairy near Sierraville.<sup>5</sup>



With the coming of steam power much of the hard physical labor was taken out of butter making and production was stepped up. The use of firkins had not changed since the seventeenth century and they were not replaced until well into the twentieth. Thousands of these large wooden containers were made each year by skilled craftsmen in Sierraville, fir wood being used because it imparted no odor to the butter. Butter has a particular capacity for assuming and retaining odors from its surroundings. Sierra County creameries ran into serious financial trouble in the last years of the decade due to odors imparted to the butter because of poor sanitation practices. By that time production had also fallen.<sup>6</sup>

In 1879, Sierra County produced 171,805 pounds of butter. The following year forty tons were exported from Sierra Valley dairies alone. It was not uncommon for a single dairy to market from 15,000 to 30,000 pounds of butter a year. In 1883, the Nevada and Oregon Railroad began carrying Sierra Valley butter inyo Reno and three years later, four tons a week were going as far south as Virginia City. Monday was known as "butter day" on the N&O. The better dairy herds gave an annual average yield of two hundred pounds of butter to the cow by the end of the decade. By that time the only problem was turning out a product that was competitive, both in quality and price, in markets throughout the western states and territories. Butter was always in demand and where the competition could be met, as in Reno, where one retailer was receiving two tons of Sierra and Clover Valley butter a week, the dairymen prospered. But generally dairy production mirrored the fluctuations in the regional economy and by 1889, Sierra County production had dropped twenty tons from its annual yields of ten years prior.<sup>7</sup>

Sierra Valley butter was marketed in the mining towns on the western slopes of the Sierra, at the large mines that boarded their crews in Reno, Virginia City, Oroville, California, and as far away as Butte City, Monatana, and San Francisco. The railroads put Sierra Valley in the extended western market. Regardless of this, when the mining camps like Virginia City and Sierra City hit upon hard times the dairymen suffered.<sup>8</sup>

Butter prices were high in the first few years of the eighties. The demand was so great: in 1880 that Sierra Valley creameries could not fill all their orders. Prices remained stable at a fairly high price of around forty cents per two pound roll through 1888. In the following year prices dropped to about twenty-four cents and by 1890, had fallen to twenty cents. Sierra Valley butter was losing the San Francisco market because of shoddy dairy practices. Rancid butter had been delivered to Bay Area wholesalers. Silver mines in Nevada and gold mines in Plumas and Sierra Counties were experiencing economic difficulties and another outlet for butter was being squeezed shut. By August, 1890, the price was so low that hundreds of cows were not being milked. The dairymen in the county, like the cattlemen, entered a depression in 1888-89. Dairy herds were smaller, creamery production had declined and the bottom had fallen out from under butter prices. The future appeared bleak for the Sierra County livestock industries. Stockmen usually doubled as growers of hay or grain. In hard times they could fall back on these crops if they remained profitable. What was the state of the grass and grain business?<sup>9</sup>

9



Hay was one of Sierra Valley's main products and mechanization was coming to the hay fields. Horse-drawn mowing machines had replaced the scythe in the 1870's. During the eighties steam hay-presses, mounted on skids, were used to bale hay that was exported to outside markets. In Sierra Valley large hay crews worked from dawn to dusk during the harvest season and two or three hay-presses ran at full capacity. By 1889, wire was used to bind bales, in place of rope.<sup>10</sup>

Hay grown for local fodder was put up loose in barns built specifically for this purpose. These barns were noted for their size, never ceasing to amaze outsiders who described them as "massive" or "commodious." The specially designed hay-barns, and inclined planes used to move hay inside, apparently originated in Sierra Valley and were in general use there. Perhaps the best description of one is that of a Reno Evening Gazette reporter:

... as hay is the principal product /-of Sierra Valley -/ the question of handling and storing it with economy is very important. To meet this demand, a barn of peculiar construction has been developed. It is usually very large and roomy and the wagon loaded with hay is carried to the top on a runway that starts up on a steep grade outside the building, and enters just beneath the comb of the roof low enough to admit the load. The sides of the wagon drop on the opening of a latch and the hay almost unloads itself. The barn is sometimes filled entirely with hay, but usually the first floor is divided into stalls for cattle and horses, and a store-room for wagons and machinery. Over this is a loft and a very wide space on each side of the runway capable of holding immense quantities of hay. A Gazette reporter recently took measurements of J.L. Crow's barn in Clover Valley. The runway is 600 feet in length and rises to a height of 27 feet and is eight feet wide. The wagon is drawn up by a whim worked by a horse. Heavy timbers are spiked on the outer edge of the runway and guide the wagon. Anderson of Fish Springs, Flint of Sierra Valley and many others use barns of this pattern and are satisfied. The patent originated in Sierra Valley.<sup>11</sup>

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Timothy, Alfalfa, Rye hay and meadow grass were crops grown for hay in Sierra Valley during the eighties. In the first year of the decade, 15,844 acres were mown, producing 12,807 tons



Despite the grasshopper scourge the valley continued to harvest twelve to fifteen thousand tons a year. The grasshoppers left in 1883, drought followed in 1885, and the hay crop was cut in half both by a lack of water and heavy frosts. The frosts that came in early and late summer continually stunted the growth of hay crops. In 1889 and 1890, drought was followed by too much water and farmers failed to harvest full crops in either year. Yet, more acreage was being planted to hay and total production remained relatively stable, actually increasing slowly over the long run of eleven years. In 1890, Sierra County mowed 16,438 acres of hay and harvested 16,198 tons. 12

Although the acreage and tonnage grew slowly during the period, prices showed a general decline. Hay prices fluctuated wildly as the regional market rose and fell according to volume, weather, and transportation facilities. Hay sold for a high of sixty dollars a ton in the winter of 1880, but dropped as low as twelve dollars later in the year. By 1888, the price averaged around ten dollars, then climbed over the next four years to a peak of twenty-five in 1885. From that point it fell to around ten dollars three years later and reached such a low point in the summer of 1889 that the valley ranchers stopped baling hay for export. That autumn the market strengthened somewhat, and the price increased to twelve dollars per ton. In 1890, it declined to \$6.50, only to begin an upward swing late in the year. But, taken over the eleven year period, prices had fallen precipitously. The highest prices in 1890 were only about half the 1880 highs, and on the low end, the 1890 prices were thirty-three to fifty percent of what the lows had been when the decade opened. 13

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It should be remembered, though, that the price of fodder was a double-edged sword, lower prices hurt the growers but allowed the stockmen to absorb lower stock and dairy prices. Yet, it becomes clearer that the agricultural depression of the late eighties was general. Does the development of the grain industry in Sierra Valley also bear this out?

During the 1880's four cereal grains were harvested in Sierra County: barley, oats, rye and wheat. For the purposes of this discussion these crops will be considered collectively as "grain." This is not a completely artificial grouping since contemporary accounts often considered the cereals together as the "grain crop." Grain, like hay, was grown both for local use



and for export. Wheat used locally was ground into flour at grist mills in each of the communities and some barley and oats were fed cattle during the winter to supplement the diet of hay. But most of Sierra County's grain crop was marketed outside the county.<sup>14</sup>

Work in the grain fields followed a relatively strict timetable which was closely dependent on seasonal weather changes in Sierra Valley. Plowing could begin only after the rains had sufficiently moistened and softened the turf. Depending upon the amount of precipitation, plowing was accomplished in late autumn, during open periods in the winter, or in the month of March. Grain was normally sown in March also, although some seeding was done during winter months if fields were clear of snow. During summer, the grain grew and ripened. Harvesting had to be completed before October to have any chance of saving the vulnerable grains from frost damage.<sup>15</sup>

Machinery was being used in grain production at the beginning of the decade, but not extensively. Harvesting was partially mechanized in the first few years of the eighties but it was not until 1888, that mechanical seeders began to come into use. Grain harvesting was a two step operation. Grain was first cut, then stacked and then threshing machines went to work. The threshers were powered by horses or tread mills until the last few years of the period when steam powered threshers automated the harvesting process. By 1890, the steam thresher was in extensive use throughout Sierra Valley. At no time during the nineteenth century was a combine used in Sierra Valley; harvesting grain remained a two step process of cutting and threshing. Capital needed for expensive combines was simply not available and grain acreage was so great as to necessitate their use. Increasing production during the eighties required that the grain industry mechanize to a certain extent; steam thresher sufficed to meet this requirement.<sup>16</sup>

Grain production during the 1880's was continually crippled by grasshoppers, frosts, hail, drought and long winters. The frosts in early and late summer blighted grain fields year after year, and farmers were often forced to cut frostbitten grain for hay. Yet, despite one natural calamity on top of another, production leaped to 105,000 bushels. This, despite a July frost which ruined all the grain on the west side of the valley. The harvest remained relatively stable from 1885 to 1890, at approximately 140,000 to 150,000 bushels. Fluctuations in grain prices were not mirrored by fluctuations in production figures. The farmers solution to low prices was to increase their yield. Between 1880 and 1890, grain acreage and production almost doubled.<sup>17</sup>

Sierra Valley grains were marketed in Sierra City, Downieville, Jamison City, Forest City, Truckee, and Reno. About two-thirds of the crop went to the last two cities. The market prices for the grains were stable at a relatively high point during the opening years of the decade and climbed to a peak in 1884 and 1885. The farmers continued to gain a fair return on their investment until 1888, when prices plummeted. Much of that year's crop remained unsold and eventually was fed to livestock. The next year prices ranged from \$1.10 to \$1.25 per cental (hundred-weight), very low. In August, 1889, the Leader noted that the market for grain was "very much poorer than usual this year, in fact there is no market at present. . . . A malfunctioning dis-



tribution system and over production on America's farm lands had swamped the market and Sierra Valley cereal growers found themselves caught in a general economic decline.<sup>18</sup>

Sierra County's agricultural industry, unlike the lumber business, had entered a period of severe economic hardship. All agricultural economic indicators tended to point down during the eighties. The livestock, grass and grain men could not be expected to understand the cause of their distress. Few professional economists of that time understood, even slightly, the workings of a mass economic system. Sierra Valley's ranchers were tied into a regional-wide, possibly a nation-wide, economic order over which they had no control whatsoever. As the decade closed, farmers in the mountain county, with their counterparts throughout the west, began to look to science, panaceas and politics for solutions to their economic problems.

1. Sierra Valley Leader, Jan. 3, 1890; Aug. 22, 1890; Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883) p. 144.
2. Compendium of the Tenth Census, Part I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), pp. 840-841; Guinn, Biographical Record of the Sierras, pp. 308, 312, 314, 332, 620, 718; Nevada City Daily Transcript, Oct. 9, 1881; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, June 14, 1889; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 11, 1880; Reports on the statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 278.
3. Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, March 9, 1888; May 4, 1888; July 27, 1888; June 14 1889; Dec. 6, 1889; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, July 30, 1887; Arthur L. Strang, "History of the Cattle Business in Sierra Valley," SCHSC, I (June, 1969), p. 3; Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), p.278
4. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Aug. 7, 1880; Dec. 11, 1880; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 25, 1888; July 5, 1889; Mountain Mirror, Sierraville, Sept. 10, 1890; Guinn, Biographical Record of the Sierras, p. 314, on page 487, Guinn claims Nichols built the steam creamery in 1887; this date is incorrect as the machinery was not powered by steam until 1889 and not even in place before 1888; Jackson, "Historical Survey of the Stampede Area," p. 40 reports that according to a long time resident of the county there were no separators and cream was taken off by hand. This is simply untrue except possibly in the case of cream separated for home consumption from one or two cows. This report points out one of the pitfalls of oral history that is not cross-checked with written sources.
5. Nevada City Daily Transcript, Oct. 9, 1881.



6. Marion L. Starkey, The Devil in Massachusetts (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969), p. 200, mentions the use of firkins in seventeenth century Massachusetts; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Oct. 19, 1882; Jan. 4, 1883; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, April 6, 1888; Editorial, Jan. 17, 1890; Editorial May 16, 1890; Arthur I. Strang, "History of the Cattle Business in Sierra Valley," SCHSO, I (June, 1969), p. 3.
7. Report on the Production of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883) p. 144; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 11, 1880; Jan. 8, 1881; Myrick, The Northern Roads, pp. 349, 352; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Oct. 12, 1888; June 14, 1889; Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 278.
8. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Jan. 8 1881; June 4, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Oct. 19, 1882; Nov. 16, 1882; April 10, 1885; April 24, 1885; Sierra City, May 11, 1888; May 3, 1889; Myrick, The Northern Roads, p. 352; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Aug. 24, 1888; June 14, 1889.
9. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 11 1880; Sierra CoSnty Tribune, Downieville, March 27, 1884; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 4, 1888; May 31, 1889; June 14, 1889; Editorial, Jan. 17, 1890; Editorial, May 16, 1890; Aug. 22, 1890.
10. Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, July 25, 1884; July 3, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, June 21, 1889; Aug. 2, 1889; Aug. 16, 1889; Sept. 12, 1880.
11. This quotation may be found in the Reno Evening Gazette, May 19, 1881; for other descriptions of Sierra Valley barns see Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 18, 1880; Nevada City Daily Transcript, Oct. 9, 1881; in the severe winter of 1889-90, at least nine of these barns collapsed under the weight of snow.
12. Report on the Production of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printin Office, 1883) p. 256; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 18, 1880; March 19, 1881; June 4, 1881; July 16, 1881; Reno Evening Gazette, June 18, 1881; June 23, 1881; Truckee Republican, Nov. 23, 1881, Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, April 17, 1884; April 10, 1885; June 5, 1885; May 18, 1888; May 25, 1888; March 8, 1889; May 10, 1889; May 31 1889; Aug. 2 1889; Aug. 22, 1890; Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington D.C.:Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 424
13. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, March 6 1880; April 24, 1880 Dec. 11, 1880; March 19, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Oct. 10, 1884; July 31, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville Nov. 20, 1885; Feb. 10, 1888; Feb. 24, 1888; July 20, 1888; Aug. 3. 1888; Nov. 2 1888; May 31, 1889; Aug. 2 1889; Aug. 16 1889; Nov. 1, 1889; April 4, 1890; Sept. 12, 1890.



14. Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 144; "Blatchley Letter," p. 1.

15. Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Feb. 26, 1881; March 19, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, April 27 1882; Sept. 28, 1882; Downieville, April 17, 1884; Aug. 7, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, Feb. 24, 1888; March 2, 1888; Aug. 10, 1888; Dec. 21, 1888; Dec. 28, 1888; Jan. 18, 1889; Nov. 22, 1889; April 4, 1890; April 11, 1890; April 25, 1890; Aug. 29, 1890; Sept. 12, 1890.

16. Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 106; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Jan 31, 1880; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, March 16, 1882; Sierra Valley Leader, March 2, 1888; Aug. 10, 1888; Sept. 14, 1888; Aug. 23, 1889; Sept. 20, 1889; Aug. 29, 1890; Sept. 12, 1890; Mountain Mirror, Sierraville, Sept. 10, 1890.

17. Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), p. 144; Mountain Messenger, Downieville, Dec. 11, 1880; July 16, 1881; Aug. 6, 1881; June 4, 1881; Reno Evening Gazette, May 19, 1881; June 23, 1881; Truckee Republican, Nov. 23, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Forest City, June 29, 1882; Sept. 28, 1882; Aug. 2, 1883; Aug. 30, 1883; Downieville, March 27, 1884; April 17, 1884; June 5, 1885; Aug. 7, 1885; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, July 18, 1884; May 25, 1888; Aug. 10, 1888; Sept. 28, 1888; Aug. 2, 1889; Sept 20 1889; Aug. 29, 1890; Mountain Mirror, Sierraville, Sept. 10, 1890; Reports on the Statistics of Agriculture in the United States, Eleventh Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896) p. 358

18. Truckee Republican, Nov. 23, 1881; Sierra County Tribune, Downieville, Oct. 10, 1884; Sierra Valley Leader, Sierraville, May 31, 1889; quotation from, Aug. 16, 1889; Nov. 1, 1889.

SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES WHICH HAVE GENEROUSLY  
SUPPORTED US:

POP's Trading Post  
Al and Elsie Potter  
Jean Oliver  
Sierraville, California

WRIGHT'S GARAGE  
Wright's Country Kitchen  
in  
Sierraville, California



"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 trial of one Ah Jake. Our series of articles only concern 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 Calif., 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 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---Part 5 of a series.

Downieville, Cal.,  
November 22, 1874

Quong Chung Shing & Co  
724 Com'cl St., San Francisco  
Tell Ah Jake my brother cam yesterday.  
7 words Pd. 75¢

Ah Hug

San Francisco, Cal.,  
November 23, 1874, 2:45 P.M.

Tie Yuen

You sent money to bank no check send check quick. Can't get money without check. Answer.  
16 Pd.

Wee Ah Hong

Downieville, Cal.,  
November 23, 1874

King Yuen & Co  
San Francisco Calif

The check is in letter that left here on the nineteenth last Thursday. You go to the bank and see if the check has been cashed or if it is lost. Give security for it and get the money. If the bank don't believe you have them telegraph to this bank.  
57 words Pd. \$3.00

Tie Yuen & Co.



San Francisco, Cal.,  
November 24, 1874, 8:30 A.M. 11/24

Fong Sing

Send down the small account book to me.  
8 Pd.

Ah Jake 11/24

Downieville, Cal.,  
November 24, 1874 11/24

Ah Jake

Care Quong Chung Sing & co  
724 Com'cl St., San Francisco

I did not get your message until this morning at nine o'clock. The stage had gone. Shall I take it to Camptonville.  
29 words Pd. \$2.00 Fong Sing 11/24

San Francisco, Cal.,  
November 25, 1874, 1:40 P.M.

Fong Sing

Send book tonight. I leave here next Tuesday.  
8 Pd.

Ah Jake 11/25

Wadsworth, Nevada,  
November 25, 1874, 2:30 P.M.

Eng Yuen, Fook Sing

Your woman go to San Francisco tonight with Lee Hung  
Sing Hoe go back to China you want to let her go answer  
23 Pd. Kaw Chung 11/25

Downieville, Cal.,  
November 25, 1874

Ah Jake

c/o Quong Chung Shing  
724 Com'cl St., San Francisco

In this town everybody knows that Jim is gone back to China. Look out for him.  
15 words, Pd. \$1.00

Tong Hug 11/25

Downieville, Cal.,  
November 25, 1874

Quong Now Lung

741 Com'cl St., San Francisco

Tell Ah Wing go Ah Lee collect money from Wo Tung He.  
Tung He comes from Downieville, Fong Sing's Ah Hug own brother.  
23 words Pd. \$1.50 Quong Wo 11/25

Downieville, Cal.,  
November 27, 1874

King Yuen & Co

728 Com'cl St., San Francisco

Tell Ah Luk that Tong He will take the next steamer and go to China. Catch him and get the money if you can in any way.  
27 words Pd. \$.1.75

Ah Tien 11/27 17 11/27



Downieville, Cal.,  
November 27, 1874

Kong Yuen & Co.  
728 Com'cl St., San Francisco

Tell Hom Chung that Wo Tong he owes my store one  
hundred and ten dollars. He is going to start for China very  
soon. Collect the money from him if you can.

32 words Pd \$2.00

Tie Yuen

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San Francisco, Cal.,  
November 27, 1874, 8:45 A.M.

Fong Sing

Cowden is down there everything all right.

7 Pd.

Ah Jake

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#### WORK PROGRESSING ON HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROJECT

In the next issue a detailed account of the progress being  
made on the restoration of the Kentucky Mine and the work  
being done on the museum will be made.

The Society was lucky in obtaining Title X monies it had  
not expected, so work is being done now on some phases of  
the restoration project.