

Sierra

County

Historical

Society

Roses from Dravieville!

How it was on the Gaba!

August 15, 1975 Vol. VII, No. 2

THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 15, 1975

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THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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ROADS FROM DOWNIEVILLE:
THE LIFE OF JOHN DORMER, AN ITINERANT CALIFORNIA-NEVADA NEWSPAPERMAN

-Eric N. Moody

Most of the individuals who flocked to Nevada after the discovery of the Comstock Lode and other rich mineral deposits were California emigrants, and many of them came from that state's mountainous northern counties, lately the possessors of their own mining boom.

A considerable number of the Golden Staters who moved from the older mining areas to the newer, more promising ones had already achieved prominence in such areas of California affairs as business, journalism and government. Nevada's early history contains the names of many such men who had held public office or served apprenticeships in public affairs in California, and who became prominent in Nevada politics. Certainly the most notable of these were William M. Stewart and John P. Jones, both of whom became U.S. senators from Nevada and conspicuous figures in the national effort of the 1880's and 1890's to remonetize silver. Others, such as former California Supreme Court Justice Charles H. Bryan, ex-Attorney General Thomas Fitch, and erstwhile state legislators Charles E. DeLong, David E. Buel and Thomas Fitch, and journalists like John K. Lovejoy and John C. Lewis, made forays into Nevada seeking fame and high office only to be frustrated in their greatest ambitions. These men usually returned to California or drifted off to other promising regions in search of whatever dreams they pursued.

Most of the mountain county emigrants did not, of course, seek any elective positions in Nevada. They came looking for wealth, and a large percentage of them did not remain in their adopted home after its mines began to play out.

Nevertheless, the nineteenth century political record of Nevada is crowded with the feats of formerly prominent residents of Placer, El Dorado, Tuolumne, Sierra, and other California mining counties, who did succeed in making names for themselves in the new territory and state, and who participated in and helped to shape its political fortunes. One of these, although he did not come until the flush times of the Comstock were almost over, was John Monteith Dormer, a longtime resident of Downieville, Sierra County.

Dormer, like too many of his contemporaries, is a forgotten figure of Nevada political history. The only existing sketch of his life is a short one which appears in Myron Angel's 1881 History of Nevada, and it was written at a time when he had not yet been elected to state office. According to this biographical article, Dormer had led an eventful life before he ever settled in Nevada. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1841, he moved with his parents to Wisconsin when he was but a few month old, and then to Downieville in 1850.¹ For the next seventeen years, except for time spent in schools in Marysville, Santa Clara and Oakland, he lived and worked in Sierra County. He became a printer for William J. Forbes, the publisher of Downieville's Sierra Democrat and later the editor of such Nevada newspapers as the Virginia City Daily Union (Daily Trespass), Humbolt Register, and White Pine News.²

Young Dormer's mundane life as a printer was interrupted for a time in 1860 with the outbreak of the Paiute Indian War in Nevada.

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The defeat of a band of Virginia City militia under the command of Major William Ormsby, which had advanced upon some Indians at Pyramid Lake for the purpose of chastising them for hostile behavior, had started the "war" in May of 1860. Ormsby's disaster spread fear among the residents of western Nevada and raised cries for punitive action, not only from Nevadans, but also from the inhabitants of California's Sierra communities. Downieville alone sent 165 armed and eager volunteers to Virginia City to participate in a campaign against the Paiutes. Dormer, declares the Angel history, was one of the first to volunteer for the expedition.³ The war, Nevada's first major - and most important - engagement between whites and Indians, concluded by the end of May with the defeat of the outnumbered Paiutes, and the California volunteers returned to their homes.

Once back in Sierra County Dormer decided to take up mining, but this new occupation was short lived.⁴ When the Democrat's printing plant was destroyed by fire in 1864, the way was cleared for Dormer to launch his own paper. In January of 1866 he and C.S. Clarke, as joint proprietors, began publication of the Sierra Advocate. Clarke assumed sole editorial management of the "Independent Union" weekly.⁵ Apparently, however, Clarke's performance of his duties did not meet with his partner's approval. In the August 4 issue of the paper Dormer announced that he and the Advocate had declared themselves "free from, and independent of all editors and particularly those who have heretofore so oppressed us...We shall hereafter edit ourselves⁶

Dormer continued for a while to publish the Advocate, but after two years connection with the paper he departed Downieville, moving first to San Francisco, then to Oakland, where he became involved in publishing the Daily Termini in the early 1870's. After a short time, however, he relinquished his interest in that enterprise and moved on to Oregon, where he was employed by stagecoach and railroad entrepreneur Ben Holladay. When Holladay's fortunes collapsed Dormer moved to Walla Walla, Washington, and then to Lewiston, Idaho. In the latter community he entered into a partnership with W.C. Whitson and published the Lewiston Signal. He continued in this endeavor until Whitson was assigned to a judgeship in Boise, and then took the road again back to Washington, where he worked for the Portland Oregonian.⁷

In 1877 rich gold discoveries were made at Bodie, California, and Dormer joined the rush to the booming district. Almost immediately he became engaged in editing the Bodie Standard, and also the Esmeralda Herald in nearby Aurora, Nevada.⁸ During the winter of 1879-1880 Frank Kenyon, the owner of the Standard and Herald, took ship for Guatemala City with the intent of starting an English language newspaper there and left Dormer in charge of his mining camp operations. Kenyon, however, never reached his Central American destination, for, suffering with jaundice, he died at sea. Dormer assumed management of Kenyon's newspapers and continued to edit the Herald until December of 1879.⁹ By early 1880 he had sold both of his late employer's papers "for the benefit of the estate," and had begun, with two partners, publication of the Bodie Free Press.¹⁰ He soon sold his interest in the Free Press, however, and took up residence in Nevada. There, in June, 1880, the thirty-nine year old widower began publishing the True Fissure at Candelaria.¹¹

In Candelaria Dormer appeared to have found a home of some permanence. The editor and sole owner of the new Republican weekly

newspaper became active in local politics. In 1878 he ran for and was elected Esmeralda County superintendant of schools (a position he held only until April, 1880, when he resigned).¹² He did manage, also, to take some time away from his journalistic and political pursuits. For a few months late in 1880 he left his assistant editor Wells Drury in control of the True Fissure and went Prospecting.¹³ This gold seeking interlude probably occurred after Dormer had run for state assembly - and gone down to defeat along with most of the other Republican candidates in Nevada.¹⁴

Dormer, by most accounts, was an editor of considerable ability and, judging from his writings, possessed a developed sense of humor, but he was not content to remain just a good newspaperman. Having been infected with political fever, he made another attempt for public office, and was successful. In 1882, at the age of forty one, the full-bearded journalist gained the Republican nomination for secretary of state.¹⁵ Commenting upon his success, the True Fissure reprinted the Reno Evening Gazette's statement that "Dormer's fight was a handsome one, and made him friends. He is to canvass the State and his scholarly appearance, genial warmth and handsome face will make him a favorite."¹⁶ Dormer took his place on a generally youthful "reform" slate of candidates nominated by the Republican state convention. Of that convention there had been considerable comment. The Carson City Index had remarked of the meeting that the "predominating sentiment was that the party...should be at once delivered and redeemed from the degrading bossism that has too often asserted its power in the party councils. The struggle hinged very largely upon the gubernatorial nomination and the result was a victory for the rank and file."¹⁷ The Grass Valley, California, Union declared that the "machine appears to have been largely broken up" and that in the nominations, from the governor's on down, the political manipulations of Nevada's mining and railroad "bosses" seemed to have been thwarted.¹⁸ Heading the "reform" ticket as the gubernatorial candidate was Enoch Strother, a Comstock mine superintendent and mining company president who had managed William Sharon's unsuccessful campaign for the United States Senate in 1880.¹⁹ On election day Strother and the Republican congressional candidate, Christopher C. Powning, met defeat, but the remainder of the party's state ticket was victorious. The new secretary of state placed his name upon the time honored roll of California "carpetbaggers" who had achieved success in the Nevada political arena.

Following his election Dormer left Candelaria for Carson City, taking Drury to the capital with him as an assistant.²⁰ He retained ownership of the True Fissure, which was not sold until 1885 when Candelaria was rapidly declining into a ghost town.²¹

The new secretary of state appears to have performed capably his duties as Nevada's chief record keeper, publications dispenser and paper shuffler, and as ex officio member of the state university's board of regents, but he does not appear to have taken a very active role in partisan political affairs.²² In 1886 he was again nominated to run for the secretary's office and narrowly won re-election over his Democratic opponent. Assured of another four years salary from the state, he again returned to the newspaper field. In 1888 he became a part owner and the editor of the Reno Evening Gazette, but his association with the journal lasted less than a year.²³

During the 1880's the movement for the remonetization of silver was beginning to gain strength in Nevada politics and Dormer participated in it. He was a delegate at large to the Nevada Silver Convention of 1885; although he was not one of the signers of the constitution for a silver association which the convention adopted.²⁴ It is probable that Dormer was initially interested in the growing silver movement for the political advantage he might personally derive from it, but he did not attend a second silver convention held in 1890, and he left Nevada before the state's Silver Party was formed in 1892.²⁵ By 1890 he appears to have lost interest in a political future - or at least hope for advancement within the Republican party, although there was some talk of his being nominated for a third term as secretary of state. In that year, while still holding his Nevada public office, he and Drury started the Daily Evening News in Sacramento.²⁶ When his term as secretary expired in 1891, Dormer moved to Sacramento and became city editor of his newspaper.²⁷ Drury joined him there, but the two refugee Nevada politicians (Drury had served in the assembly in 1887) published the News for only two years before selling it.²⁸

Dormer remained in Sacramento for a time, and from 1893 to 1895 was employed by the California State Printing Office, first as a proof reader, later as a compositor.²⁹ He appears to have departed California's capital in 1895 or shortly thereafter, and by 1898 he was involved in another gold rush. The Lyon County Times of Yerington Nevada, reported in October of that year that "Johnny" Dormer had gone to Alaska to join his wife and her son, who had struck a rich claim on Pine Creek.³⁰ The newspaper was sure that his old Nevada friends would be glad to hear of the former secretary's good fortune. The fortune, though, must have proved to be not as great as its finders' hopes were high: within a few years Dormer had returned to California.

In 1904 the aging newspaperman and unsuccessful gold seeker settled in Los Angeles and went to work on William Randolph Hearst's new Los Angeles Examiner.³¹ He remained with the Examiner for about a decade, initially as a proofreader and then as a printer. He had apparently been retired only a few years when he died in Los Angeles on November 25, 1920.³²

Dormer's death was shrouded in the same obscurity that had enveloped his life. His passing received brief attention in some California newspapers, but went almost unnoticed by the press of Nevada.³³ Virtually all of the obituary writers seemed to be ignorant of the fact that their subject had once been a man of prominence.

John Dormer's minor significance to history lies less in what he achieved as an individual than in his being a representative of certain groups. He is significant, first, because he was a typical member of the Western frontier, mining camp school of journalism. Secondly, he possesses importance as one of the numerous Californians of the northern mining counties who became prominent in Nevada politics and government. If he was not one of those, like Stewart or Jones, who helped shape the history of the Silver State, he at least participated in its making.

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¹Myron Angel, ed., Reproduction of Thompson and West's History of Nevada. 1881 (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958), p. 298; Standard Certificate of Death, John M. Dormer. County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, November 26, 1920. Some records indicate that Dormer was born in 1843. Angel gives this date, and it is seemingly supported by the manuscript census of 1880, which recorded Dormer's age as thirty-six. Dormer's death certificate, however, bearing information supplied by his widow, states that he was born February 22, 1841, as does the Virginia City Chronicle of January 20, 1921. Considering the frequent errors of Angel and the census takers, 1841 appears to be the correct birth year.

²Angel, History of Nevada, pp. 298, 302.

³Ibid., pp. 298, 158-59.

⁴Ibid., p. 298.

The writer of Dormer's obituary in the Virginia Chronicle, January 20, 1921, stated that Dormer served as a volunteer during the Civil War, and afterward went to Virginia City to work as a typesetter. Dormer does not appear to have performed military service in any California or United States unit, although he may have served in a local guard outfit. There is no record of his having resided on the Comstock during the 1860's.

⁵Angel, History of Nevada, p. 298; Sierra Advocate, January 13, 1866; Reproduction of Fariss and Smith's History of Plumas, Lassen and Sierra Counties, California. 1882 (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1971), p. 484.

⁶Sierra Advocate, August 4, 1866.

⁷Angel, History of Nevada, p. 298; Henry G. Langley, San Francisco Directory. 1869 (San Francisco: Henry G. Langley, 1869), p. 203.

⁸Angel, History of Nevada, p. 298.

⁹Ibid.; Richard E. Lingenfelter, The Newspapers of Nevada. A History and Bibliography (San Francisco: John Howell, 1964), p. 9. The Gold Hill News, March 27, 1879, says Kenyon sold his Aurora and Bodie newspapers before his voyage.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹John Gregg Folkes, Nevada's Newspapers: A Bibliography. A Compilation of Nevada History, 1854-1964 (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1964), p. 100. The 1880 census lists Dormer as a widower. He remarried sometime in the 1880's.

¹²Angel, History of Nevada, p. 406.

¹³Lingenfelter, Newspapers of Nevada, p. 19; Wells Drury, An Editor on the Comstock Lode (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936), pp. 184, 239.

¹⁴Angel, History of Nevada, p. 298.

15 There are two known existing portraits of Dormer--an engraving facing P. 330 of Angel's History of Nevada, and a photo taken while he was Sec. of State. The latter is included in an 1889 album of portraits of Nev. state officers and legislators.

16. True Fissure, Sept. 16, 1882.

17. Reno Evening Gazette, Sept. 9, 1882. 18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Drury, Editor on the Comstock, p. 269

21. Folkes, Nevada's Newspapers, p. 100. The True Fissure ceased publication in 1886.

22. Dormer's official papers are included among the Nevada Sec. of State and University of Nevada Board of Regents records at the Nev. State Historical Society, Reno.

23. Lingenfelter, Newspapers of Nevada, p. 70; Reno Evening Gazette, Jan 3, Sept. 29, 1888.

24. Proceedings of the Nev. Silver Convention---1885. (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1885), pp. 7, 45

25. Winnemucca Silver State, June 3, 1890.

26. William W. Willis, History of Sacramento Co., Ca. (L.A.: Historic Record Company, 1913), p. 164

27. Hawthorne Walker Lake Bulletin, Jan. 12, 1892

29. Willis, History of Sacramento, p. 164

30. Yerington Lyon Co. Times, Oct. 29, 1898. Dormer's Alaskan venture is also noted in Alf Doten, "Early Journalism of Nevada," Nev. Magazine, Sept., 1899, p. 57

31. Los Angeles City Directory. 1904 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Directory Company, 1904); Certificate of Death, Dormer. Los Angeles, November 26, 1920.

32. Los Angeles City Directory. 1904-18. 1920; Certificate of Death, Dormer.

33. A belated obituary appeared in Nevada in the Virginia Chronicle, Jan. 20, 1921

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MINUTES OF THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MEETINGS

April 20, 1975
Goodyears Bar, Ca

After the usual good pot-luck dinner with 18 members in attendance, Pres. Copren opened the business meeting. Minutes were read and were approved. The president announced that an archeological survey would be made of the Sierra Brooks area and charged to that corporation. He also requested any historical information on that portion of the Toiyabe National Forest, south and west of Dog Valley which lies in Sierra County for the County Specific Plan. This includes portions of the Steven-Donner Trail and the Henness Pass road. There is to be quite a development in this area which is near Verdi. The president then read a letter from U.C. Davis requesting any archological or historical information on the Independence Lake area. They had agreed to do an archeological study there.

Correspondence was read. A motion passed to order 10 pictures each of Downieville, Sierra City and the Kentuck Mine from Friday House of Nevada City at \$1.00 each to be sold to members. The motion was then amended and passed to change the order to 15-30 pictures.

A treasurer's report gave a balance of \$1,262/46 after expenditures of \$404.92 for the month. Jeanne McMahon then gave a report on the lot and the Society is buying in Loyelton. Four payments totaling \$850 have been made leaving \$150 owed. A motion was passed to make the final payment of \$150 to Norma White.

A membership report showed 29 paid members at present. A motion passed to put \$42.50 into the savings fund. This comes from the \$2.50 of the \$7.50 membership dues.

A motion was then passed to include in the picture order 15 pictures of Bassett's Station. When it was discovered that these cost \$5.00 each, the motion was amended and passed to lower the number to 10. A motion was made and passed to include 15 pictures of Webber Lake at \$1.00 each.

A duscussion followed on dues--what period they cover if paid late in the year. As a result of this, a motion passed to create a membership chairman. A motion then passed to divide the year into 4 quarters and dues be effective from the 1st of the quarter. Geor-gene Copren was then appointed membership chairman and she will notify members when their dues become due, and she will notify Jeanne McMahon and Darlene Messner of paid members, so that the bulletins and meeting notices can be sent out to all current members.

Under old business, the president gave an up-to-date report of Prop. I decisions. Since the Board of Supervisors rejected the decision on the division of the money reached by their appointed committee, an alternate plan must be presented to them, requiring more negotiations with those groups requesting money--mainly the Calpine Association, the City of Loyelton, the School Board and the Historical Society. After much explanation and discussion, a motion passed to give Bill Copren and a Sierra City representative power to negotiate

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the Society's request for a minimum of \$79,000 to \$99,000.

The president announced that a total of 10 places have been inventoried and sent to the State with Zerox copies returned to us. There are still many sites to be done and he asked for action from the different communities.

Under new business, the Chamber of Commerce is forming a Bicentennial Committee for Sierra County and two projects have been recommended that we work with-

1. An oral history project under Sarah Shidler
2. State historical landmarks (there are two in the county registered by the State--Hennessey Pass and Plum Valley House.)

Ray Darrach volunteered to get a committee from Sierra City; other committee heads were Mrs. Lambert from Downienieville, Mrs. Drury from Goodyears Bar, Mary Hope and Mr. and Mrs. Allen Angell from Alleghany, Maren Scholberg and Georgene Copren from Sierraville. Gwen Lynch will be asked from Loyalton. These committees will work on state historical landmarks and the president will let them know what they are to do.

The president announced that on May 18, there will be a reception for Sierra County author, Jim Sinnott, at the Kenton Mine Lodge in Alleghany.

The next meeting will be on July 20 in Alleghany. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Maren Scholberg, Sec.

July 20, 1975
Kenton Mine Lodge
Alleghany, Calif.

Following a delicious pot-luck luncheon in the interesting dining room of the Kenton Mine Lodge, Pres. Copren called the meeting to order. There were 15 members present.

The minutes were approved as corrected. The treasurer was not able to attend, but sent word we have \$1,477.77 in the bank. E Clampus Vitus has donated \$100.00 for the Kentucky Mine fund.

The following bills were approved:

1. Membership chairman--\$15.54 for cards and stamps
2. 1 certificate for Mr. Jim Sinnott--\$15.00
3. Darlene Messner--cards and stamps--\$40.00
4. Option for Kentucky Mine--Sarah Shidler--\$250.00
5. Instant Print--covers and papers--\$25.88
6. M. Gottardi--mimeos for bulletin--\$38.25

It was moved and seconded that we pay all bills. Carried and so ordered. It was moved and seconded that the treasurer pay all bills from Instant Print as soon as they come in without waiting for approval--carried and so ordered. It was moved and seconded that the treasurer take \$500.00 from the checking account and open a general fund savings account with it. Carried and so ordered.

Correspondence: A letter was read from Jim Sinnott thanking us for the certificate we presented to him at his reception.

Handwritten signature and flourish

Page 3--Minutes of the Sierra County Historical Society

Old Business: Under old business, Pres. Bill urged members to get busy on the county inventory of historical buildings and sites. We have only 14 turned in and there are many more that should be put into the inventory. Ray Derrah gave a report on the present status of the Kentucky Mine project. We expect to receive \$90,000 from Prop. I. There also is \$18,000 from C.E.T.A. which will be available on Aug. 1st. This is to be used to put people to work, so we can get much of the needed work on the grounds and mine assessment work done with this money. We have a signed option from the four heirs of the Anna Loeffler estate, which is to be closed within one year. The Board of Supervisors has signed this agreement and it has been recorded.

The Historical Society has to do assessment work of \$200 or equal value yearly. We are also obligated to record our proof of labor. The heirs want two weeks' notice before any work is done. They also want a representative to be there when it is done.

The risk of loss is on the Historical Society, so, after some discussion, it was decided to purchase insurance for fire and theft in the amount of \$35,000. and liability insurance of \$1000,000 to \$300,000.

The president appointed the following committee to make any decisions needed for the Kentucky Mine without needing to call a meeting of the whole organization: Ray Derrah, chairman, Milton Gotterdi, Margaret Lambert, Earl Withycombe, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Hayes, Rich Norris, Jeanne McMahon, Bill Copren, Sophie Tschopp, and Gwen Lynch. Six members present will constitute a quorum.

It was announced that anyone who has anything to donate to the museum can store it in the Wells Fargo building until such time as the museum is ready to receive it.

We received a five dollar donation to the Kentucky Mine Fund.

New Business: The president named the following nominating committee to report on a slate of officers at the next meeting:

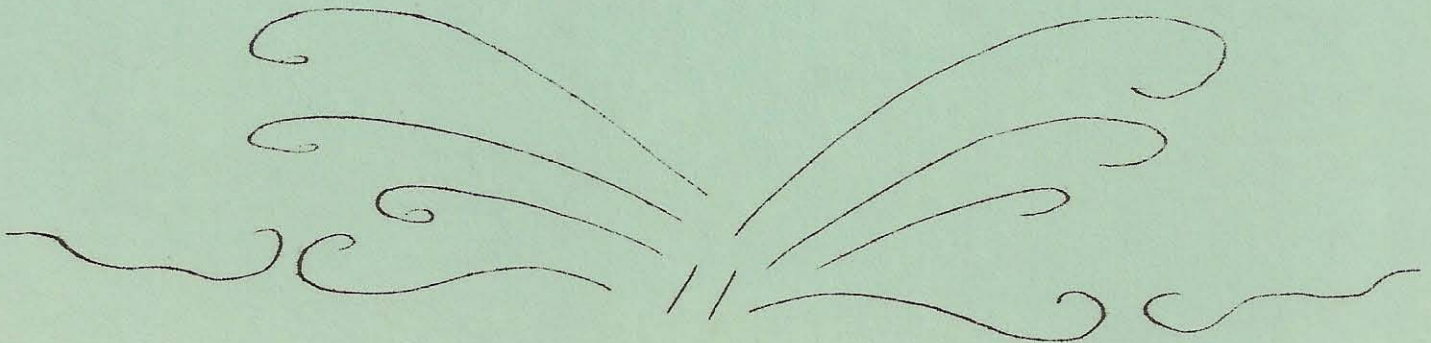
Bill Copren and Darlene Messner.

The next meeting will be on Sunday, October 19, in Sierra City, potluck as usual.

It was decided that Downieville and the Kentucky Mine would be the first priorities to receive the Bi-centennial State Historical Landmark markers.

We unanimously thanked Mr. and Mrs. Al Weiss for the use of their lovely building, after which the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Georgene Copren,
Secretary, pro-tem.



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.

(July 28, 1857 and July 29, 1857 are missing from the original diary. Our last published date was July 27, and we continue with July 30, '57)

Thursday-July 30, 1857

Have managed to put in a full day. Moved a great many stones-some of them pretty large for one man to handle. Washed considerable gravel but did not clean up. Saw no gold. The weather is very hot, though I work in the shade a good part of the time. Davis and Andy were here in the morning. They reported their diggings full of water in consequence of the tailings having filled up the river just below the mouth of the flume. I read the letter to Andy, which I wrote for him on Sunday night last, he seemed to be well pleased with it and took it with him to mail.

Friday-July 31-1857

My left shoulder was quite sore when I first got up and my right arm was sore at the elbow and in the armpit it was swollen and painful. I found when I first began to work that I would be obliged to quit: but after working awhile I got along easier. Have been at work most of the day on bedrock, but did not finish the spot I was cleaning-saw a few bits of fine gold, did not clean out the sluice-wrote a letter to sister Kate last night after I wrote my journal--

Saturday-August 1st-1857

was in bed at Seven Oclck when Andy came up for the letter I forgot to take with me to town yesterday. I gave it to him to take down & place in the P.O. for me-Washed my shirts & finished reading the 2nd volume of Hume's History of England. George Scholes came up from town & brought a letter which was directed to him and me sent from South Eureka stating the fact that Samul. H. Taylor had been recently killed by the caving of a bank. They wrote to me to learn where Taylor's friends resided in the States, I answered immediately and gave them all the information I could. Took the letter to town and mailed it.

Monday-August 3d-1857

Woke at six, breakfast & began work before seven. I spent the forenoon cleaning rock. Saw a few pieces of fine gold. In the afternoon began to clean off more ground. Osborn was here and stayed about an hour. I paid him the assessment due on my interest (which Uncle Stephen holds) in the Wyoming Claim.--

~~~~~12~~~~~



Page 2, Diary of a Downieville Miner

Tuesday Eve August 4-1857

Was up before five Oclk, got to work by six, washed out the riffle. Moved the sluice, cleaned a small quantity of bedrock and washed a good deal of gravel--At noon the young man who was here yesterday came along with his blankets & having concluded to stop & try it awhile. Since supper have baked a loaf of bread & made coffee. Read some at noon-

Wednesday August 5-1857

Have been very busy, worked on the diggings about Eleven & half hours, cleaned some rock & found a little gold. Albert Meeker and his brother in law came here towards night to inquire about the ground on the hillside just above the dam, they want to work there. Meeker has a family to support and no diggings. He has been finding some gold when here & they were quite talkative--as sisted me to clean some of the rock. I have a great trouble lately with my nose--last week it bled at nearly all times. It was quite sore yesterday & this morning when I first got out of bed it began to bleed without any having to touch it at all--the blood was thin and watery--here before it has been thick and of a dark red color. It has felt irritable all day and affected myeyes & head--At noon time I read the beginning of Henry the eights Reign.

Thursday-August 6th 1857

Have been cleaning Bedrock nearly all day. Saw some gold. Davis was here in the forenoon & borrowed some sugar. A friend of my new hired man was here. Newspapers came up--I have been stooping so much today that my back feels sore. I am very tired. Davis has just been here, brought a letter from his wife for me to read for him. He brought one "Tribune" & one "Pacific"

Friday Eve-Aug 7-1857

The pump was rather slow in getting the water out of the diggings this morning. I started it at five & was at work more than an hour before the bottom was dry--found some gold in a crevis which was cleaned out partly before noon--Miott was here since dinner, chattered some time--Been reading last "Tribune"--have a backache

Saturday Aug. 8-1857

Young Corbett my hired man complained of diarhea. He seems to be quite willing to do all that he is able & he is young, stout & active. I have not been quite myself for several days past, my back has troubled me considerably. Gold appeared to be running out. Examined some bed rock which I found was cleaned before Meeker & Co. who are working on the hill close by me --they come frequently to see how I am getting along. They tell me that they are not making anything. From the pay which they imagine I am getting on old ground they are inclined to clume a portion of the river above here--Had supper early, washed-dressed & went to town--made a few purchases--attended the Theater & witnessed the "Lady of Lyons" performed by Mrs. Potter & Phelpo, got shaved & hair cut & came home with my picks by twelve--



Sunday Eve--Aug 9th-1857

Slent till about seven when Andy came in making a great noise which woke me. Have been about home all day. Reading the reign of Henry the Eight of England. Tried to sleep awhile but the sun shines too fairly on the tent to make it endura ble during the heat of the day-took Humes history out in the shade and read till I grew tired. Davis brought a handsome specimen of gold bearing quartz for me to examine. It is rich for the size & has probably one ounce of gold in it.

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Monday Eve-August 10th-1857

According to the time by our old silver watch-I was up by half past four Oclk. Have worked long & faithfully, broke & threw back out of our way a great many rock. I drank a great deal of water & sweat a great deal. Was up to see Uncle Stephen at noon. He had one man with him then, he was preparing to put in a wheel & pump. Meeker & Co. are reparing the flume where it burned some time ago. They turned part of the water through which has had the effect here to make our wheel go slower. Was at Motts a little before sunset. He was absent, had quite a long talk with the madame, heard a good deal of scandal about her lady neighbors.

Tuesday-August 11-1857

Clowdy during the forenoon. The air was close and sultry. Very hot-I thought it would surely rain, however the sky is clear again tonight. George was here in the afternoon-stopped about two hours. Had a great deal to say about Dr. Yarmington (unclear in original) what the Dr. had written to him a bout me concerning my treatment of him last summer with regard to the claim which I was working then, how that he was treated so ungratefully and unkindly and dishonerably by me. It appears that he has been writing to different parties in this section endeavoring to influence them against me. All this and much more he told me as having heard from Dr. Y and others. I was upset to think that my name was bandied about mixed up with



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dishonorable deeds but I suppose I must bear it though it is ever so much against the grain. The water gained on the pump this afternoon--the wheel is going faster now though and I think that if the ditch above here doesn't bother us we can work tomorrow. The water has been out of the ditch so long that the boards have shrunk and the water which has just been turned in again runs through the cracks fairly--

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Wednesday-12th August 1857

The pump was at work all night long but the diggings were still filled with water so that thewe were forced to discontinue work for one day. I assisted Mr. Cochran to caulk the ditch above here by which means we stopped the water from running into my diggings at all. C. took dinner with me. I wrote a letter for Davis. He came up at noon to have me read it to him before mailing it. Corbett started for town soon after breakfast. I took a pick and some other tools to the blacksmiths to get repaired. Was in town & S.I. came up to me--was friendly, chatted a while and invited me to go to his house with him. Did so--Their little girl was lying on a cushion which was on the floor placed at the feet of the mother of the child. The baby has been sick some little time in consequence of eating an apple they told me, but she now seemed to be better. Got two papers at the P.O. Came home by half past six Oclk--started the wheel and got supper.

Thursday-August 13-1857

Corbett stayed with his friend at the Empire Ranch last night. He was here before I got up. The diggings were full of water though the pump was at work all night. I turned part of the water that came down the hill into the flume. The prospect for working on the bottom looked rather dark but we have made out to a sort of days work although it does not amount to much. I saw no gold of any consequence. The pump finally succeeded in getting the water all out. I lowered the wheel a little so that it now goes faster than it did. We added two more boxes to our line of sluices and Corbett has been at work clearing off the top stones and dirt. Last night after supper I put all the beef I had into a small kettle to boil. Built a fire and had it nearly cooked when I went to bed. The kettle was without a lid and this morning when I got up and went to make a fire I saw the kettle was empty and a track in the ashes made by a large dog--I suppose a big white fellow that has been here before. Corbett got his

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double barralled pistol out and loaded for the reception of Mr. Dog should he be kind enough to return the visit.

Friday-August 14-1857

The dog came last night to disturb our clumbers so our pistol had no opportunity of having its merit tested. Made the fott dam higher-moved the riffle box & sluices-got to washing about middle of the forenoon. At noon while we were eating dinner two of our French neighbors came here and appeared to be very angry on account of the ditch having been turned off above here. It appears that they nailed the flume up some time ago in order to prevent anyone from turning the water out, but Andy came up and took the boards off of the outfit and this displeased the Frenchmen who want the ditch to be kept entirely full all the way down to its terminus at the lower end of Stove Pipe Flat. Been at work this afternoon. Kept Corbett bailing water and I tried to clean it. Lacked very much success--though our pump at the lower end of the ground takes away the water with ease, yet we cannot sink a hole down in the rock anywhere but we will be soaked with the leakage through the rock itself.

Saturday-August 15 1857

Only cleaned a little bedrock today-finished cleaning the crevice-we were at yesterday but didn't get much gold. Saw a few small pieces I feel very glad that this is the last day of the week for I am about worn out. Could hardly get through supper--have washed up since supper. Been up to get my shirt which Mrs. W. had to wash. Buckins told me that his company was doing well on the ground which Cochman and they had the dispute about. Read some in the Reign of Edward the Eighth.

Sunday August 16 1857

Have been at home all day. It has been very warm-got through with 2nd vol. of history of England and began the next. Have read some forty pages in the reign of Elizebeth. Corbett had a friend of his here for dinner. I tried to shoot some squirrils that came around here in search of food but did not kill any--had Corbett's pistol-a double barralled instrument but could not kill any.

Monday-August 17 1857

Put another pump to work that took the forenoon. Began to wash gravel in the afternoon. I tried to clean the rock and the pump but could not because the pump was not deep enough to take off the water-lowered the pump a few inches. It sets on the rock and it is so slow digging in the rock even when it is off. I worked under the pump and sluice boxes till I was wet through. Got my clothes changed since I quit work and feel better though very tired. Corbett complained of backache--the work is heavy for him.

Tuesday--August 19 1857

In the morning while I was cleaning out the riffle Davis came up and informed me that the Atlantic mail had arrived the evening previous. He wants me to go down but I did not promise to do so.

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We kept at work during the morning; Corbett at shoveling gravel and I cleaned some bed rock and found a little gold but only a little-- After dinner as I was reading Thomas' history of Elizabeth a message came from the United States Hotel stating that my wife Sarah Jane and my daughter Emma Dodson were there having just arrived from the Atlantic States. I left Corbett to work alone in the afternoon and I went to town to see those I love so dear.

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