

THE SIERRAN

A Publication of the Sierra County Historical Society
*a member of the California Conference of Historical Societies
and the California Association of Museums*

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Fall/Winter 1996



Downtown Sierra City, circa 1930. (Postcard from the Historical Society collection. Photographer unknown.)

Sierra City Memories

Excerpted from a talk by Charles K. Smith for the Sierra County Historical Society membership meeting at the Kentucky Mine Museum, August 25, 1996

First of all, I want to tell you of my beginnings. I was born here in this area in the early 1920's. My mother and father lived at Lower Salmon Lake. They had a mine up there which they still have. When my mother was pregnant with me, she got on a donkey and my father led her and the donkey to Graeagle where she got on the train and rode to Reno. I was born in the doorway of my Uncle's house. (We never quite made it.) Anyway the doctor did come and, of course, he got his fee.

My mother stayed in Reno three days then got back on the train to Graeagle, got back on the donkey and rode the 10 miles up to Lower Salmon Lake. This was up over the old road that goes down by Frazier Falls but instead of going on down the present road, they cut off at Snag Lake and went down through Lusk's Meadows and came into Lower Salmon Lake. We stayed there until the snows started coming in November and then moved to Downieville. So my first real residence was in Downieville until about May of the next year when we went back to the mine. From there we moved into Sierra City and we've lived in Sierra City ever since.

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SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Sierra County Historical Society is an organization of people interested in preserving and promoting an appreciation of Sierra County's rich history. The Society operates a Museum at the Kentucky Mine in Sierra City, holds quarterly meetings, publishes a semi-annual newsletter and conducts historical research. Members are sent notices of Society activities, receive *The Sierran* and are admitted free of charge to the museum and stamp mill tour.

If you would like to become involved in these activities or would just like to give your support, please join!

1996 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS and STAFF

President.....	Bill Copren
Vice President.....	Bill Long
Treasurer.....	Wanda Longsine
Secretary.....	Lauren Ranz
Membership Chair.....	Maren Scholberg
Directors.....	Rita Bradley
	Al Mitchell
Museum Director.....	Karen Donaldson
<i>Sierran</i> Production Staff.....	Dave Bloch
	Karen Donaldson

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership in the Sierra County Historical Society is open to any interested person, business or organization. Members need not be residents of Sierra County. Dues are due and payable each January for the calendar year.

Membership categories are as follows:

INDIVIDUAL	\$10.00
FAMILY & INSTITUTION	\$15.00
BUSINESS & SUPPORTING	\$25.00
SUSTAINING	\$50.00
LIFE (per individual)	\$250.00

Please send dues to the Membership Chair:

Mrs. Maren Scholberg
P.O. Box 141
Sierraville, CA 96126

REMINDER

Please remember that 1997 dues are due and payable as of January 1.

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP REPORT

New Individual and Family members for 1996:

Glenn Brown	Twain Harte
Mary Chin	Berkeley
Stephen & Lynn Fillo	Sierra City
Sara Hagerty	Carlsbad
Peter Huebner	Sierra City
Richard & Dolly Melim	Downieville
Ellen Plumbtree	Sacramento
Ryan Twito	Aiea, Hawaii
Kenneth & Barbara VanGundy	Roseville

KENTUCKY MINE MUSEUM NEWS

By Karen Donaldson

Here we are with another edition of *The Sierran*—so many developments! Before I get into the recap of the year, I think it is noteworthy to mention that 1996 marked the 15th year of my working for the Historical Society and being involved with the Kentucky Mine Museum. This hardly seems possible.

New Amphitheatre Seating by Summer 1997!

Let's start with a wonderful announcement regarding our Capital Campaign for the replacement of the amphitheatre seating. As you may know, this project was started by past president Speranza Avram in 1994. We received \$801 in personal donations, and while a good start this was not sufficient to complete the project. The campaign was reactivated this year by a group from Graeagle who really know how!

In addition to the 150 individual donors (including those from way back in 1994) we have received two generous corporate grants from Hitachi Data Systems and The Thomas J. Long Foundation and are finally able to install the expensive but maintenance-free seating we have been hoping for so long now. Beyond an issue of comfort, the shaky old seating had become a great liability concern. In addition to replacing the seating, these donations will allow us to replace the picnic tables which after nearly 20 years have lost a lot of their initial enthusiasm and are just plain falling down on the job!

1988 State Parks and Recreation Grant

The ongoing update of the 1988 State Parks and Recreation grant is that Sierra County has approved a set of specifications and is preparing to spend \$19,000 to rebuild and/or refurbish the ore car trestle from the mine to the stamp mill. Again, we understand that this work will be completed prior to opening day in May of 1997. Due to the expense of this portion, there are no funds left to complete any of the other projects on the list of priorities. It remains to be seen how the mine portal will be opened and retimbered, the water system repairs made or the pathway lighting installed. However, even after all these years, we still believe in miracles.

Museum Improvements

During the course of the summer, Paul Bettencourt has been working on the display cases in the museum, making the fronts removable to give us added storage space. The storage problem has been with us for some time. Credit for the idea is due to Mary Bettencourt. Paul and Mary are also responsible for designing and installing shelves in one of the storage closets in the office, with the other to follow as time and energy permit. Sometimes it's the little things that mean so much! After completing the changes to the fronts of the cases, we will be painting all of them for a new and lighter look for opening of the 1997 season. I'm excited about this sprucing up project.

Continuing on the theme of inner improvements, Gary Ranz is undertaking the major task of creating new labels for the displays. I'm also very excited about this project as it's been on my mind for a long time and now something can finally be done about it. Thanks to Gary and modern technology (his laptop computer)!

Another long term project coming to fruition is the enhancement of our outdoor signs. Lauren Ranz, a trained artist, has come to the rescue and the signs at the bottom of the driveway have been newly painted and brought back to life. This is a huge improvement as our highway visibility has always needed some help.

Sometime this fall, our water system fell prey to vandals. Since we have a 10,000 gallon tank, it takes some time to use the supply and then suddenly realize that we have no water! This is a critical problem, considering water is used not only for drinking purposes but fire protection as well. Fortunately, C.K. Smith was in town and responded to our cries for help, remedying the situation. It was quite a project and we are grateful for his assistance.

Shortly after that exciting episode, a squirrel got into the fuses on top of one of the power poles, shorting them out and causing a power surge that destroyed the modem in our computer, damaged the FAX machine, (a donation from Dave Bloch and Speranza Avram), and blew up the telephone in the office. In addition, because I was doing laundry at the time, the washing machine died. It is difficult to determine which of these implements are more valuable, but since we were able to repair or replace everything but the washer it is now highest on my list. Needless to say, the poor squirrel did not survive. Ahh, life in the high Sierra.

Volunteer Appreciation

On December 7th, to acknowledge our loyal and dedicated volunteers, a luncheon was held at the Sierra Valley Lodge in Calpine. This was co-hosted with the Sierra County Arts Council as was last year's similar event, and 34 people attended. The luncheon was open to members of both organizations as well. The *Sierra Booster* published a great article complete with numerous photographs. Many of our volun-

teers are summer-only residents and could not attend the luncheon. Even though everyone received a certificate of appreciation either in person or by mail, I would like to include the following alphabetical list of volunteers whose support is most gratefully appreciated:

Speranza Avram, Lorre Beever, Paul and Mary Bettencourt, Virginia Blankenbiller, Dave Bloch, Rita Bradley, Frances Brett, Fran Burgard, Don and Arline Castleberry, Li Ching, Peggy Creswell, Pat Crilly, Rita Haugner, Jack Hawkins, Mike and Lila Heuer, Elaine Johnson, Lois Keeler, John Kimmel, Myrene Lang, Wanda Longsine, Linc and Billie Madsen, Don and Kathi Manzagol, Carol Marshall, Dennis Messa, Brenda Mitchell, Ruth Neubert, Mary Nourse, Denise Parodi, the Ranz family, Terry Schaeffer, Maren Scholberg, C.K. Smith, Howard Smith, Dale Teubert, and Betsy and Molly Webb.

Museum Donations

Kenneth Turner of Sacramento donated 4 gallons of **red stain** and 100 feet of **engineer's chain** used for surveying.

Carl "Chick" Cicogni of Grass Valley donated a **poem** for the In Memoriam Book. Mr. Cicogni has the distinction of being the last person to operate the Kentucky Mine in 1953.

Evan and Joanne Dailey of San Francisco recently purchased the boarding house of the Sierra Buttes Mine from the Hayes family. They have donated a number of **core samples** from the mine. As per an agreement with Len Kinzler these will be stored for us at the Foundry Museum in Downieville. For more information regarding the boarding house renovation etc. see the Dec. 27, 1996 issue of the *Sierra Booster*. Good photos, also.

(Willie, the museum cat, was also featured in the same issue.)

Museum Memorials

We have finally received the teak bench in memory of R. Bradner Mead from his loving family. This six-foot bench will be a lovely addition to the park this next season and for many years to come.

Concert Series

This was the tenth year of a series of concerts in the amphitheatre. From all accounts, it was a success. From a cultural, historical and financial perspective, the concert series is working to enhance the Historical Society's goals, particularly by creating exposure for the museum. We are currently working on the schedule for the 1997 summer season.

The momentum we are experiencing now was begun many years ago. And it has been a very interesting journey indeed. The future is looking very bright from here and on that note I hope the new year will be a bright one for you and yours as well.

Continued from Page 1

After I was six years old, I used to walk with my Dad to the mines in the summertime and be with him. My other brothers and sisters lived in Sierra City with my mother. I've walked from our house to the top of the Buttes about 15 times on one of five different trails going up there. We visited the mines along the way for one reason or another. Some of them were active like the Sierra Buttes Mine which was running when I was a boy. There was a 40-stamp mill down at Hayes' Field. They had a bull wheel about 10 feet in diameter with a 100-foot-long belt that ran that big mill. But they only ran 5 or 10 stamps. The tramway was down and it wasn't running at the time. They got wood down by a Ford Model-T truck.

Another mine that was running in the area when I was a kid was the Bigelow Mine which was located just 500 feet north of the Sierra City Community Hall. A fellow by the name of Johnny Font, with a house on Main Street, built that mill in 1935. It was a 10 stamp mill, a beautiful stamp mill. They were trying to open up that mine, which that Bigelow House sign hanging [on our Museum] is from. The hot mill hammer we have here [at the Kentucky Mine Museum picnic area] is also from that mill. They had an air compressor that ran that hot mill and they would take the steel, which was solid steel and not bits, and put it into that and crank the air on it and that would make the diamond head on the steel. It would be white-hot when they would form that steel, maybe'd have to hit it three or four times. You've probably all heard of Myrtle Thompson; "Flashlight Myrtle" or "Flashlight Annie" they called her. Her son, Elmer Thompson, ran that compressor in the blacksmith shop and we used to go up at night and watch him form that steel.

Another mine that was running here at that time was the Kentucky Mine. It ran off and on whenever they had the water pressure and whenever they had the milling ore so that they could afford to run the mine. They would run maybe 4 or 5 stamps a couple days a week. They had quite a time getting the amount of water clear up here at the Wixson Springs and at the same time they had the Buttes flume which was running water from Sardine Lake at the flume level which was at least 1500 vertical feet above here. They did capture water from that huge flume and take it down here. They were only authorized to use a certain amount of water so they couldn't run it all the time anyhow.

The other mine that was running here when I was a boy

was the Sacred Mound Mine. Sometimes all four of those mines were running at the same time—Sierra Buttes Mine, the Bigelow Mine, Kentucky Mine and the Sacred Mound Mine.

The tailings leaving these mines ran down the creek into the river. From the Kentucky Mine, it ran red sometimes and in the Sacred Mound Mine, it ran silver. The ore they were crushing was white and silvery color so the stream at the Yuba River was silvery. The Buttes Mine was red sometimes; the Bigelow Mine was red sometimes. In most instances, the mill would start at, say, eight or nine in the morning and run till about 2 P.M., sometimes till 4 P.M.

Then they would shut the mill down because they didn't have the volume of ore to work. By 6 P.M., from Herrington's at least and up, the river would clear up and the fishing was superb!

Also I don't remember coming up here and having these oak trees here like this. This was all bare—the trees were all cut out for firewood. Those trees really grew pretty fast and the whole area looks different from the way that I remember it. You could stand at the snowmobile shop in Sierra City and look out across to the telephone company and you could see every house on the flat. There weren't any trees—it was all open. Every place you looked was open.

When I went to school here, there were 40 kids in grammar school and 25 or 30 in high school, although there were only three in my graduating class.

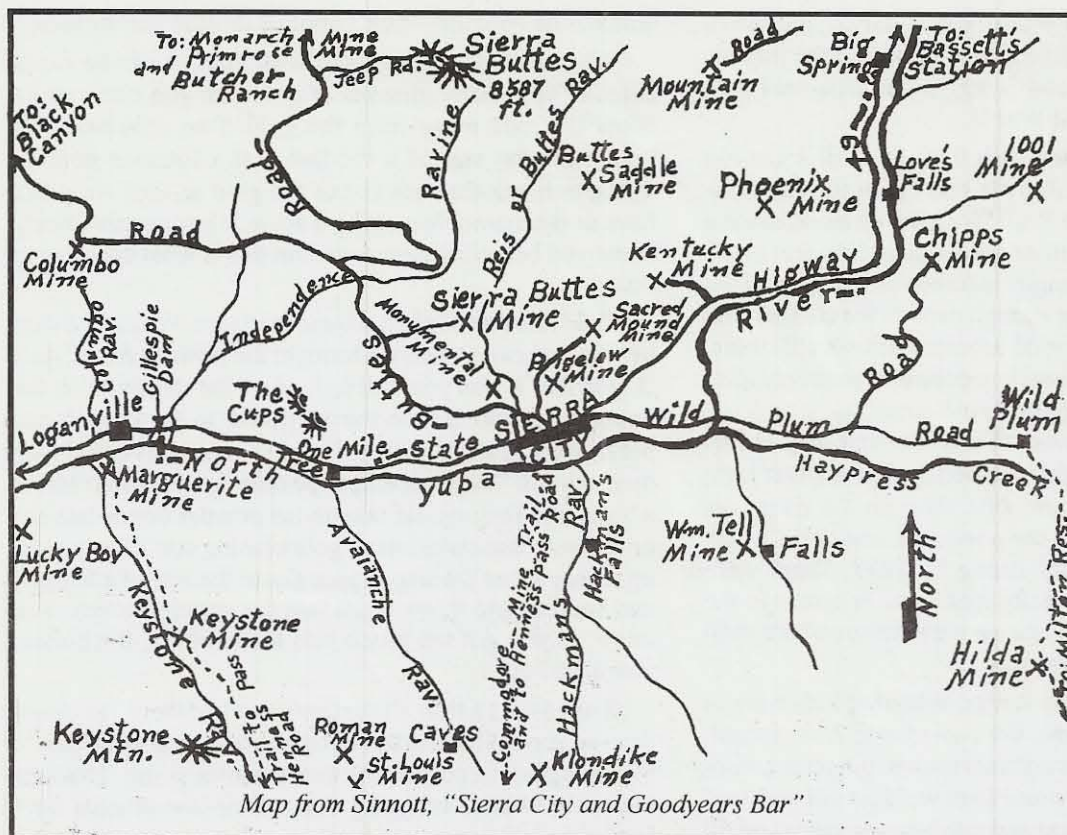
There are a lot of people in the summer, but in the winter-time it gets pretty quiet. There aren't enough children to run a school. They do a much better job now by busing them from here to Downieville.

That's really all I can tell you about some of the mines. I'm familiar with the names, like the Klondike Mine down in back of the snowmobile shop. There's a trail that goes down and crosses the river and goes up to the top of the hill to Henness Pass. Right at the top of the hill is the Klondike Mine. On over the top of Henness Pass going down the Middle Fork in Box Canyon No. 1 is the Commodore Mine. West of that several miles is the Keystone Mine which was very instrumental in providing some of the money for the Great Comstock diggings in Virginia City. They made quite a lot of money in the Keystone Mine.

And then there are the Sierra Buttes Mine, the Colombo Mine, and the Monarch Mine. The Monarch Mine had a fellow by the name of Mr. Holmes who used the skip that is standing outside the Kentucky Mine Museum now. It



*Charles K. Smith at his
Grass Valley home.*



Mine. We used to get into that flume—about three feet wide and two feet deep and float down that flume. It was really neat.

They had about 1,500 feet vertical drop from the big tank at the Buttes going down an 18 inch pipe to a smaller inch pipe to a six-inch pipe and finally to the nozzle—about two and a half or three inches. It spun that great big water wheel which wasn't as big a Pelton wheel as the one at the North Star—32 feet in diameter. (It generated 1,000 horse power at 65 revolutions per minute. You can imagine the power on that!) This one at the Buttes Mine was probably one-half that—15 feet in diameter and generated 500 horse power to run that big mill down there. The

went down roughly 800 feet in the Monarch Mine. The shaft was sunk by Ike Ostrom, father of Alec Ostrom. That shaft went 350 feet down and they rode down in that cage. They ran into some water and I understand they had a tough time going the next 300 to 400 feet down. But they put a vertical tunnel under the mountain and intercepted this shaft. They called this the Monarch Drain Tunnel and that drained water out of the Monarch Mine into Ladies' Canyon.

At the Kentucky Mine, there were just two people working—Adolph Loeffler and his father, Emil Loeffler. They built this mill a piece of lumber at a time; part came from the Phoenix Mine which is just a couple of thousand feet from here. A good portion of that old Phoenix Mill is still there, but tumbled down. But they did resurrect ten stamps in here—ten nice stamps.

They did an excellent job—this is an excellent picture of mining in Sierra County, the best that I know about. It is a ten-stamp mill which is one quarter of the size of the Sierra Buttes Mill—that was a 40-stamp mill with bigger stamps—2,500 pound stamps. That stamp consisted of a shoe, a boss, a stem, a die, a tappet and cam. The cam lifted the shaft, but the whole thing weighed 2,500 pounds and there were five of them in each battery. There were eight batteries like that in a long line shaft. So you can imagine how long that six- to eight-inch diameter solid steel shaft was that turned all the stamps at once and what a tremendous amount of power they made.

When we were kids, we used to go up the Sardine Lake road to a road that turns to the left and came out there at the Mountain

belt was 3 feet wide and 100 feet long. They tore it down. It really hurts me that they tore it down.

The donkey engine here on the grounds came from the Rocky Bar Mine across the river. When Lowell Robinson was cutting logs on the other side of the hill, I thought, "Gee, that would be a great opportunity to pick up that old donkey engine." It was used by Mrs. Phelan in Sierra City who owned the Bigelow House and also owned the Rocky Bar Mine.

I remember as a kid, we'd get out of school at 3 P.M. and I'd go home, change out of my school clothes and run over to that donkey engine. And if I cut wood for it, Mr. Farr the constable in town, who worked along with my Dad and Jack Kirby, they would let me blow the 4 o'clock whistle. You could hear it all over town.

That's the reason we retrieved the engine. I've still got some of the brass gauges that go with that. I also have a brass whistle that's going to go with it. I hesitate putting them on because people steal them. Those brass items are valuable.

The little saw here on the grounds came from the Fournier Ranch. They sawed wood on that saw from about 1900 to 1940—40 years that was used. They used it with water power. There were a lot of places in town that they had these old one lung (cylinder) motors instead of water power. And just as they ran thrashing machines in the Sierra Valley years ago with those motors, over on this side of the hill they used them for wood saws and small mills. There used to be, I would say, about 50 little mills around

this whole country. When World War II started, the mines went dead. People who owned these mills told the junkies to go in and take out the metal. It was sold to Japan and they shot it back at us in World War II.

If you get off the beaten path there are still some old mills standing and particularly if you go up the Comodore Trail or the Klondike Trail. Walking up the Klondike Trail, there is an asbestos mine. You can go fifty feet in the tunnel and you can pull shaggy asbestos off the face of the stringer. It was never a big enough deposit for commercial endeavor but it was very good asbestos and it's still there. The U.S. Forest Service abandoned the trail probably after 1937 when they had the big flood in Sierra City. It took out nearly every bridge between Yuba Summit and Indian Valley. The main bridge that crossed the Yuba River right down in back of the snowmobile shop on the river was washed out. That kept out the horsemen and cars. In fact automobiles were in pretty strong by 1937. There were getting to be quite a few really nice cars. Whereas in the 1920's here, I remember when we were little, we kids used to run to town if a new car came.

That's basically the way it was. When we kids were in school, we had plenty to do. We came home from school, took off our school clothes right off the bat, put on our work clothes or our play clothes and then we'd go out and feed our animals, get in the wood and maybe cut some wood till dark. Then after that, if you wanted to, you could go fishing. It was great!

In about 1929 came the Stock Market Crash and I wasn't old enough to know what the "crash" really meant. I thought when they talked about the "crash", it meant somebody crashed his vehicle into something and he was destitute from then on. I didn't really know what was going on. A lot of people were affected by it.

Just before the Crash, my Dad took a pocket of about \$2,500.00 out of his mine which was two or three years' wages. Then in about 1933 or '34, he got another \$1,500.00 out of there. In 1933 it was \$32.00 [per ounce] gold but in 1929, it was \$20.00. A \$2,500.00 pocket was a pretty nice find.

The people in my time who made a lot of money here were the Bachels family in the Four Hills Mine. They hit a pocket like the big one in Alleghany—the 16-to-1 pocket. I worked in the 16-to-1 Mine in 1941. I mucked in the mine, was skip tender on the main shaft and was a miner on the 1,700-foot level where they hit those big pockets today, where Michael Meister Miller is working. I worked there in 1941 on that same level. In the 1,700, 1,900 and 1,300—all those different levels. I was working there with Don Winstead, who lives right next to the Wells Fargo building, and he and I were drilling on the 1,700 level when we hit a \$650,000 deposit. That was when gold was \$32.00 an

ounce. Just imagine—that's about 6 million dollars today.

When rock is impregnated with gold, it can be fused together with such amounts of gold that you can't really break the rock away from the gold. I've seen beautiful specimens the size of a football that a foreman beat on trying to break the rock out of the gold so they wouldn't have so much trouble melting it down. They just absolutely destroyed beautiful specimens but that's what they had to do.

Gold like that has lain around in places. We picked it up in powder boxes when we brought the powder down. As a skip tender it was your job to load all the dynamite on the flat cars and take it from the main shaft to the 49 shaft and put it down to all the miners in the shaft so they could load their rounds. They had empty powder boxes, about 100 at a time, and they would take those powder boxes into the drift where there was lots of gold coming out. They picked up pieces about the size of your fist to the size of a football and smaller and threw them into the powder boxes. You know, if you got too much into those boxes, the bottom would fall out.

The 16-to-1 Mine, all the time I worked there, ran on ore that ran about \$10.00 a ton but every once in a while they'd hit a tremendous pocket that kept the mine going. This kept the stock holders bragging about their investments for a long time.

I don't know of any other mine around here except the Sierra Buttes Mine that had a record. They were near equal to the 16-to-1. I understand they produced nearly 160 million dollars back from 1860 to 1900.

The Sierra Buttes Mine had a lot of men working for it, probably 200 men. When I was a kid, there were only about 8 or 10 men working for them. But the guys that used to live on the flat by the telephone office in the Hennessey House, two people, every morning at 6 A.M., rain or shine or through four feet of snow, would walk up to the Number 6 Tunnel on a trail to go to work, work all day and come back every night.

There is a mine on Highway 49 about two miles up the road called the Mountain Mine. It had a 20-stamp mill and it had an aerial tram, just like a ski lift—all the way from the highway up into the Buttes. You can still see the old footings, and the old tower and the cable and the cars that are laying there. They took the mill down in 1939 or '41 when the war was going pretty strong. (Barney Lusk hauled the mill from the Mountain Mine to a site above the present Shangri-La resort near Downieville.) If you go up there and look at the Mountain Mine site where the mill was, there's a rock wall in there that has ton rocks in it. Must be 25 feet high and maybe 50 to 60 feet long. Beautiful big rocks in there. It ought to be opened up so people could go in there and see it. It is nearly completely overgrown.

People lived here during the Great Depression—did really well, a lot better than people who lived in San Francisco where they were in long, long lines trying to get something to eat. Grass Valley, Nevada City, Sierra City, and Alleghany—these towns were all going pretty strong in mining and the people did pretty well. There wasn't the big boom like there was in 1855 up to 1900. But it kept a lot of people from starvation.

I think mines paid \$3.00 a day for mucking work. When I went to work for the 16-to-1 Mine in 1941, I think they paid me 40 cents an hour—\$3.20 a day. Board and room at the boarding house was \$45.00 a month so I got \$32.00 every 10 days work and paid \$45.00 for room and board so I didn't have much left. A good miner made \$4.00 a day; a mucker and someone tending the skip made \$2.20 a day. Sometimes you worked six days, other times five days depending on what shift. They worked three shifts—8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; 6:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M.; and midnight to 8:00 A.M. You worked on different shifts. They never paid mechanics much either.

Queen Louie

Queen Louie was the last Chinese resident of this town that I know of. Before him was Buckeye Sam—but he was a generation before me. Queen Louie lived up at the fork of the road that joins Sacred Mound Mine to the community garbage disposal and the cross road going to the cemetery. He lived on the right side of the property where Linc and Billie Madsen live. He had a little old house in there and I can remember going to town with a little wheel barrow to get bread or a bucket of peanut butter for my mother when I was about six years old. I came out on Spring Street by the Sierra City Hotel (also known as Scott's Hotel) right on the corner of Spring Street, and across the street from the brick Wells Fargo building. It was a big hotel, bigger than the one there now. They had a drive-through for horses and teams—the passengers could get out to go into the lobby of the hotel, then the horses went on around to the back.

When I was a kid there was a caretaker by the name of Mansfield who had a 30-30 rifle across his lap threatening the kids. He'd scare the kids and we'd throw rocks at the building. We would go up the back street and circumvent the area whenever we saw him.

If you came down by Billie Madsen's place, there was

Queen Louie. He had a chopping block and he seemed to be always chopping onions and tomatoes or celery or something. He had a bunch of knives stuck around in it.

Poor old Queen Louie didn't get the best treatment from some of the kids. When I saw him, he had a knife in his hand so I sped down the hill by the Masonic Lodge with my wheel barrow and went to the store. Then I used to stay at the store. I didn't want to go back up by Queen Louie's and I didn't want to go by where that fellow was sitting with his 30-30. So I stayed there until the guy would go into the hotel with his 30-30 and then I hurriedly went home. Finally my mother took me up to Queen Louie's and introduced me to him and showed that he was a friendly guy. He wouldn't raise a knife at you unless you threw a rock at his house. So I became friends with the old gent.

(There was also a Red Light district up in that part of town, but that was before my time.)

As a result of my reading McGlashan's book "Give Me a Mountain Meadow," in which he just tore those Chinese people up one side and down the other, I just couldn't believe that people treated the Chinese people like that after they had spent all this time building the railroad from New York to San Francisco with the toughest part of it through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The way they treated the Chinese after all they had done to develop this country! I thought there ought to be a monument to them.

My wife and I took a trip to China and walked the Great Wall. When we got off the wall, it appeared to me that pieces of the wall had been blown out. I went over and picked up a piece the size of a brick and put it in my bag and got permission to bring it home with me.

While I was in China, I had a Chinese person write on the rock in Chinese characters, "Great Wall." I took it to Netz Monument Works and they carved it out. That stone is now sitting on the top of that plaque to Queen Louie and the Chinese people of this town. Downtown at the public parking place next to the post office, in the wall that Alec Ostrom built, there is a chip of that rock. It is not identified for somebody might break it out. (They put a bronze plaque on that wall that said, "On this site in 1880, Absolutely Nothing Happened"—and somebody stole that!)

This was quite a town from 1860 on until World War I



*Queen Louie in Sierra City, 1930
from Sinnott, "Sierra City &
Goodyears Bar"*

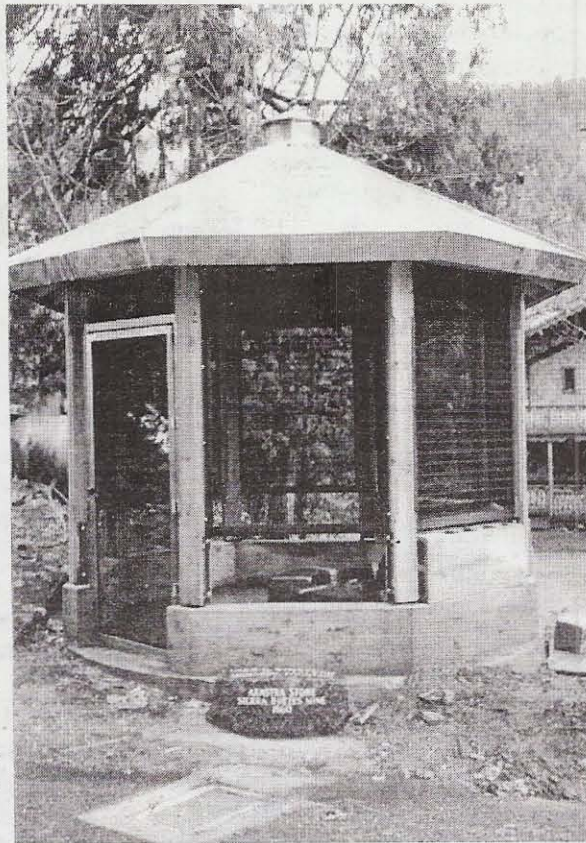
came along. Mining was then stopped, some people abandoned their places and never did come back. If you go up in the Buttes Mine area and Sacred Mound area and anywhere between here and town and get off the beaten path, you can see evidence of rock foundations where a house once stood. There were nearly 3,000 people or more in this town in its heyday. There were a lot of saloons and a brewery. It wasn't active when I was a kid but the building was still there and we used to go into it and you could still smell the brew. It was abandoned about 1914 when all the men in this town went to war. Adolph Loeffler was one of the men who went; George Fournier (who died two years ago at age 104) went and Dick Thomas, among others, went, too.

The monitor [at the Kentucky Mine Museum] came from the Pride Mine which was right across the street from Bassett's Station. I saw that monitor working. A fellow leased it from Arthur Pride about 1934 and they were able to put in a debris dam on Deer Creek. They activated that monitor and washed a lot of gravel out of the Pride Mine down to the debris dam. Bullards Bar Dam was put in by the mining interests, with the State putting in lots of money, to hold back the debris in the Yuba River from entering the Sacramento River. You had to pay tonnage on your hydraulic monitor which was washing thousands of tons of gravel a day. You paid that to the Dam Commission.

I've tried to restore a fountain that was put in across the street from my present fountain in 1869 when they built the Busch & Heringlake brick building in town. This was the Wells Fargo building and store and Post Office and apparently it was a community center only it housed businesses as well as a dance floor and a place to live. August Busch, the main proprietor, was partners with a man named Heringlake. They put that fountain in to water the horses and dogs. It was on the left-hand side of the street coming up from Downieville from 1864 to 1934. In 1934 they widened Highway 49 and put asphalt on the dirt road. That fountain was in the way so the men working for the WPA program of President Roosevelt, which included my Dad and other men, were commandeered to move that fountain to its present location.

The fountain stayed there from 1934 until the Clean Water Act came into place in 1976 and it became mandatory that water be tested by public authorities. They found some fecal coliform, so they closed it down, and it was dead for 18 years.

I decided that since my wife and I purchased the water



Inez E. Winstead Memorial Fountain and gazebo, under construction in fall 1996

company in town and we now had potable water, we should reactivate the fountain. In doing so, I dedicated it to Mrs. Winstead who is a Busch relative. Her cousin was Charles Winstead and he was adopted by Busch people. The Busch name was a no-no in World War I—anything German was taboo—so he changed his name back to Winstead in about 1914. If you were of German descent, you were frowned upon just like the Japanese were in W.W.II. That's the reason it is called the "Inez E. Winstead Memorial Fountain."

The original was never covered by a gazebo or any building, but I thought it would be best this time to put a covering on top and make it a nice place for people to stop and rest and refresh themselves. I think it is a nice location for it. Stop by and have a drink on me!

The stones that encompass the fountain itself are the original stones quarried in Sierra County in 1869. The stone with Inez' name on it is an arrastra stone. These stones were used all over this county before they developed the steel stamp mill. They were used for grinding up the ore. They had a donkey tied to a rock and he walked around in a circle, maybe four or five donkeys, and they dragged this rock that went over the top of smaller quartz rocks and crushed them into powder. Then they got the gold out of it. That was called an arrastra mill. There was a big arrastra mill down past the Sierra Buttes Mine—30 feet in diameter—before they put in the big 40-stamp mill. This stone came from that arrastra and on the top of it, I had carved "Inez Winstead" and on the smooth side it says "Arrastra Stone—Sierra Buttes Mining Co. 1869." That's the original stone set in concrete. It weighs about 500 pounds.

There were a lot of these little arrastra mills. I know where two are practically within sight of here that are still intact with the exception that people have tried to borrow a few rocks out of it thinking they might have left some gold. Someone destroyed one right here—a beautiful mill down in the Lewis Tract that was intact up until the last 10 years. They went in and drilled a hole and blasted it.

This particular stone was a drag stone—it's not an in-place stone which is worn concave for this stone is worn convex. So you know it is a drag stone. In Sinnott's book there is a picture of the Sierra Buttes Mine arrastra which is about 32 feet in diameter with about 15 people standing on the arm. This is a stone from that mill.