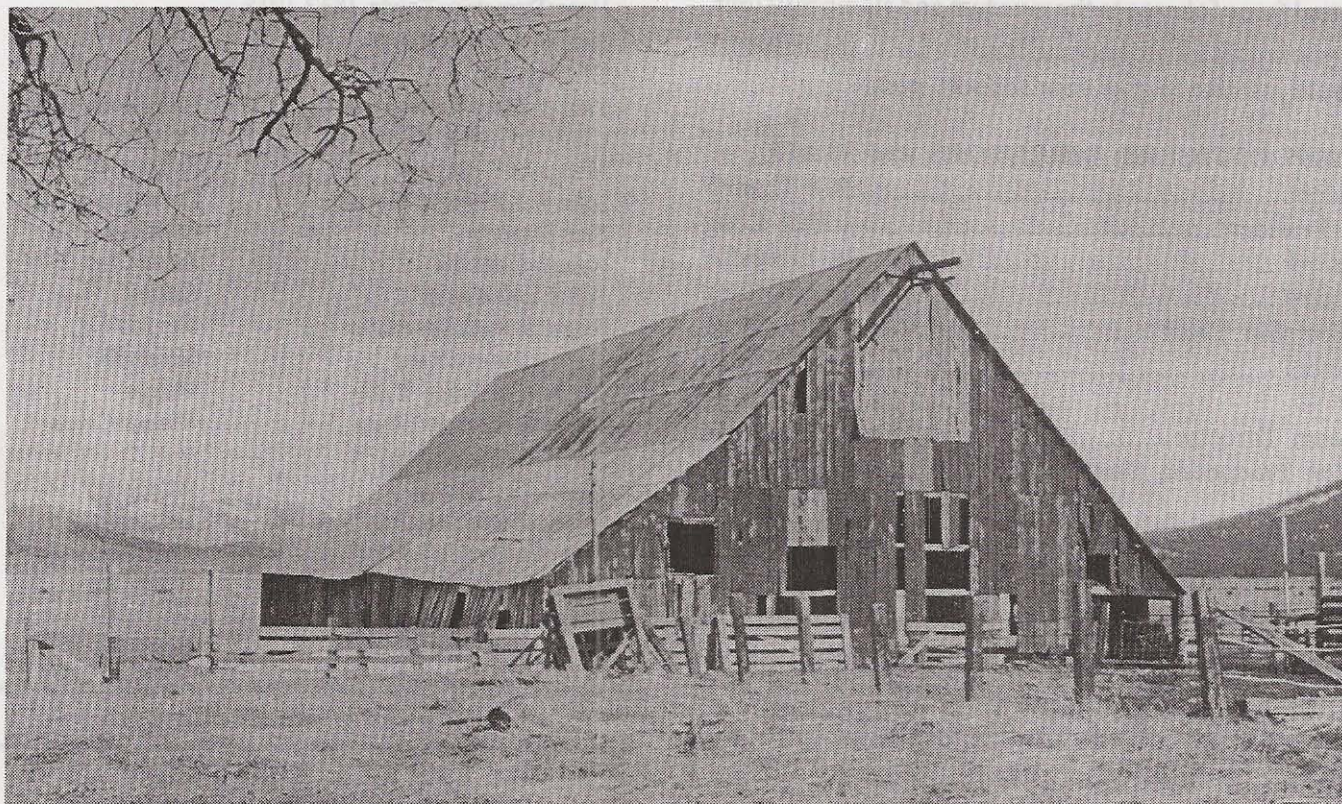


THE SIERRAN

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

Volume XXV, Number 1

Spring/Summer 1997



Arthur M. Strang barn, Sierra Valley, Sierra County. (Story on page 7)

The Barns of Sierra Valley

by Maren Scholberg and William G. Copren

Barns are an important part of America's heritage. Modern Americans can relate to the country's rural past through these important structures. Barns have importance for architectural, social and economic history. They tell us much about where we have been.

Sierra Valley has a particular attachment to its barns. The so-called "Sierra Valley Barn" was invented and developed here. The Sierra County Historical Society published various accounts of Sierra Valley barn development and agriculture in the October 1974, December 1974, and June 1975 issues of *The Sierran*.

Barns of the sort shown in this issue have become functionally obsolete and are disappearing as they become economic white elephants. They are being replaced with a different architectural technology to match the machines replacing manpower in the fields. A recent study by the Smithsonian Institution illustrates that American barns are disappearing at the rate of 3,000 per year. Very few of these charming and important structures remain.

Please turn to page 4

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!

1997 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
Sierran 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

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Office Address: Kentucky Mine Museum

P.O. Box 260, Sierra City, CA 96125

(916) 862-1310

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP REPORT

New Individual and Family members for 1997:

Wayne & Renee Babros	Alleghany
R.T. & Diane Neubert	Sierra City
Joyce Lloyd	Baron, WI
Elaine Johnson	Graeagle
Bill & Norma Reece	Sierra City
Donald & Barbara Schlueter	Graeagle
Henry Towle & the Family of	Sand Point, ID
Harry Demetrius Towle, 1837-1915	

Supporting Members:

Dick Alvarez	Menlo Park
Paul & Mary Bettencourt	Half Moon Bay
Cindy & Gunnar Ellsmore	Downieville
Margaret Finlayson	Salem, OR
John & Katherine Gibson	Darnestown, MD
Sara Hagerty	Carlsbad
Natalie Hopkins	Santa Cruz
Bill & Lois Keeler	Sattley
Roger & Ruth Lescohier	Nevada City
Gary & Lauren Ranz	Sierraville
Michael & Betsy Webb	Vallejo
David & Beverly White	Walnut Creek

Business Members:

Donald R. Dickey	Alleghany
Leonard's of Loyalton	Loyalton
Saundra Dyer's Resort	Downieville
Sierra Business Solutions	Sierra City

Sustaining Member:

Mrs. Lyman Wiltshire	Kenwood
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We appreciate the extra donations some members include with their annual dues. Thank you!

1997 KENTUCKY MINE CONCERT SERIES SCHEDULE

July 4	SWING FEVER—Jazz and Swing.
July 11	QUITUS—Folkloric Music of South America. Pan pipes, charango and more.
July 18	DONNIE MacDONALD AND CHRIS CASWELL—Traditional Celtic music from the Emerald Isles. Stories and humor.
July 25	ANCIENT FUTURE—World music; jazz fusion. Harmonious and ethereal.
August 1	CHRIS SMITHER—Original songs, acoustic blues guitar. An astounding performer.
August 8	PAMELA ROSE & THENATE GINSBERG TRIO—A Bay Area jazz & blues favorite!
August 15	SIDESADDLE & CO.—An evening for the whole family! Bluegrass, country, cajun.
August 22	MICHAEL McNEVIN—Engaging singer-songwriter. Charming storybook songs.
August 29	TALK OF DA TOWN—A capella quintet. Motown and more—Grand Finale!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bill Copren

The past 18 months have been a very positive period for the Sierra County Historical Society and the Kentucky Mine Museum. The SCHS Board of Directors has become much more proactive. The Executive Director was given a significant salary increase in recognition of her excellent performance. An additional part-time position was funded and a new employee hired in an effort to relieve the Executive Director of portions of an overwhelming workload. We have also solicited for a summer museology intern but have not located anyone at this time.

Many projects have been completed from painting of the museum interior and purchase of a TV/VCR, to development of job descriptions and contracting with an accounting firm to provide the Board and membership with timely and accurate accounting of our financial health. We are also in the process of receiving a grant for the computer display of digitized photographs of northeastern California from the Eastman collection. We will be demonstrating this latest project a tour joint meeting with the Plumas County Historical Society on August 3, to be held at the Loyalton Park.

We are very pleased with these recent developments and anticipate an exciting future for the organization.

Finally, on behalf of the Sierra County Historical Society, I wish to thank Maren Scholberg for her efforts in photographing and collecting information on some of the barns of Sierra Valley. More of these will be featured in upcoming issues of *The Sierran*.

CURATOR'S REPORT

by Karen Donaldson

This being the 20th Anniversary of the Kentucky Mine Park and Museum, it is very fitting and exciting to have the many developments taking place this year.

It all began last summer with a group from Graeagle who thought we could use some help raising funds to replace the old wooden benches at the Amphitheatre. Due to the efforts of Don and Kathi Manzagol, Rod and Myrene Lang and Elaine Johnson and their friends, our Capital Campaign success has reached beyond the initial goal to realize many more improvements for the Park and Museum. We received donations from a total of 175 individuals and businesses, 91 of whom have engraved names on the backrests of the seating. Donna and Jerome Stripling who represent the manufacturer, Outdoor Aluminum, were extremely helpful. On October 20, 1996 we received matching grants from The Hitachi Foundation and Hitachi Data Systems. On December 17, 1996 we received a grant from The Thomas J. Long Foundation. Cast bronze plaques to acknowledge these corporations' generosity have been ordered and will be installed at the Amphitheatre.

The Sierra Buttes Snowbusters arrived *en masse* on April 27 to dismantle and dispose of the old seating. The new seating was installed on May 3 and 4. New picnic tables built by Richard Griffin

of Loyalton arrived on May 5. The old ones literally disintegrated as they were being removed!

All this occurred in time for our 8th Annual Spring Fever Dance and Cajun Barbecue featuring Mumbo Gumbo, which was attended by approximately 500 people on a beautiful Mother's Day.

On May 17, we held our first Docent Training. It was attended by twelve new and returning volunteers. Evelyn Whisman, Assistant Curator at the Plumas County Museum in Quincy conducted the training. We very much appreciate her donation of time and expertise.

The Museum officially opened on May 24. We have received visits from an Elderhostel group with Feather River College in Quincy led by George Ross; also students from Downieville School and students from Truckee Elementary.

Michael Miller, President of the Original Sixteen to One Mine in Alleghany entered into a contract with Sierra County to reconstruct the ore cart trestle. At the same time, the SCHS is hiring the mine crew to retimber the Kentucky Mine portal which has been collapsed for some forty years. They are doing a tremendous job using peeled poles, hand-split lagging and techniques not used for many years. These projects should be finished by the end of June.

MUSEUM MEMORIALS

Donations have been received this past winter to honor the lives of the following individuals who are truly missed by many family members and friends. Photographs and written memorabilia have been compiled in the *In Memoriam Book* which may be seen at the Museum.

In memory of Honorable Reginald Littrell:

Suzanne Klika Ury, Shirley Ann Sheppard, William and Frances Carpenter, Roger and Sally Imsdahl, Charles and Frances Condrotte, Wallace F. Rodgers, George and Susan Goto, The Richard Melim Family, Jane Hallman, Mr. and Mrs. Charles K. Smith, Stanley and Louise Young, Noel Watkins, Linc and Billie Madsen.

In memory of Irma G. Loeffler Ponta:

Raymond and Lillian Howe, George and Marylyn Maher, David and Carol Marshall, The Jay Folsom Family, Richard and Dolly Melim, Stephen and Lynn Templeman, James A. Taylor, Jane Hallman, Richard E. Gardella, Mr. & Mrs. Charles K. Smith, Gerald and Nancy Meyers, Lee Adams, Native Daughters of the Golden West Naomi Parlor #36, Carleton and Neva Hansen, Marian Lavezzola and Len Kinzler, Wilma J. Hubbard, Bill & Marianne Steach, Curly and Margaret Dodgson.

In memory of Daniel M. Bifulco:

Arch and LaVerne Monico.

In memory of Georgene Clair Graff Copren:

Lillian Stoner, Shirley Ann Sheppard, Eslee Cann, Virginia Lutes, Bernice Walton, Lee and Ann Andersen, Carl and Maren Scholberg, Doug and Mary Ann Garton, Linc and Billie Madsen, Rita F. Bradley, Peter and Mary Elizabeth Wendt.

The Barns of Sierra Valley

Continued from page 1

In 1996, the Sierra County Historical Society decided it was important to record the remaining barns constructed in Sierra Valley in eastern Sierra County. With this collection of photographs, we have some record of what exists today. In the future, people may not be able to see a barn, but they will be able to see what they missed.

The first recorded hay harvest in Sierra Valley occurred in 1854. Several tons of meadow hay were cut and hauled to Downieville. Within the next few years, families were settling and staking claims that became ranches. Dairying and stock-raising were the earliest industries of the Valley. The barns, an inherent part of this industry, were used for hay storage and cattle feeding. There were two types of roof design, the single pitched roof and the double pitched roof. The latter made feeding the cattle on either side easier.

In 1880, 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. Hay grown for local fodder was put up loose in barns built specifically for that 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 the inclined planes used to move hay inside, apparently originated in Sierra Valley and were in general use here.

Perhaps the best description 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 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 winch 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."

Many of the early barns were made of cedar logs, the beams being hand hewn using the heart of the log which gave them the greatest strength. Wooden pegs were used—no nails. Joints were fastened securely by mortise and tenon in which a notch or hole was cut in one timber to receive the mating projection of the other.

Another kind of barn was the open-sided pole barn, so named because the main supports were tree poles. These were limbed and sunk into the ground for the rafters to be attached.

By the early 1900's, sawed timbers were used exclusively with the main vertical support beams as big as 18 inches square.

Early foundations were of rock or of cedar chunks placed on big, flat stones. Later, concrete blocks were used. The barns had only dirt floors.

Shingles or shakes were used for roofing. Some shingles were hand hewn of cedar; others were made from sugar pine. A 'fro' and mallet were used to make shakes. There were numerous saw mills and shingle mills in the area which provided the lumber needed for building and roofing. Most of the old barn roofs are now covered with corrugated sheet metal.

David Derr Newman of Sierraville built many of the early barns, as did Amos Hathaway of Loyalton. Amos was also a veterinarian and a well digger. In 1928, Amos fell from the roof of the Guscetti barn. He was taken to San Francisco by train and died in the hospital there. The barn was later sold to a gentleman from Southern California, taken down piece-by-piece by Roy White's sons of Loyalton and transported to a site near San Diego where it was rebuilt.

Most of those early barns are gone and more are collapsing every year. The collection excerpted for this issue of *The Sierran* was made in the spring of 1997 for a record of the old barns left standing. The Historical Society plans to publish more of the photographs in future issues.

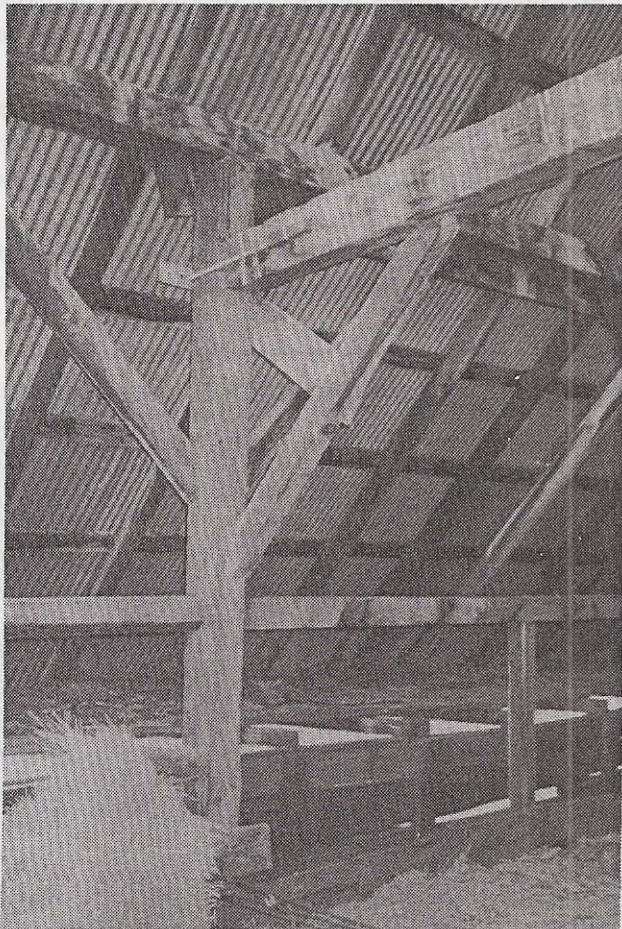
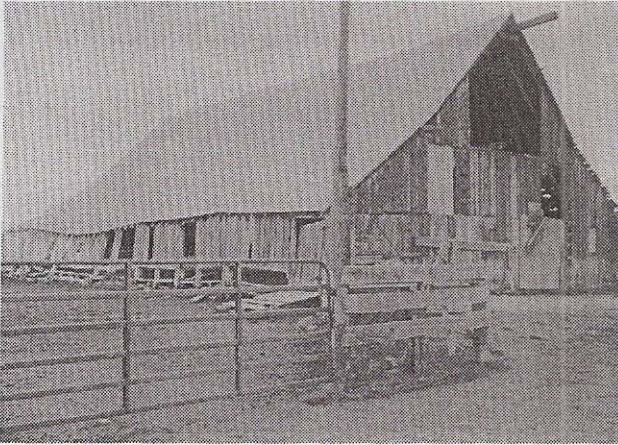
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www.sierracounty.org/orgs/SCHS

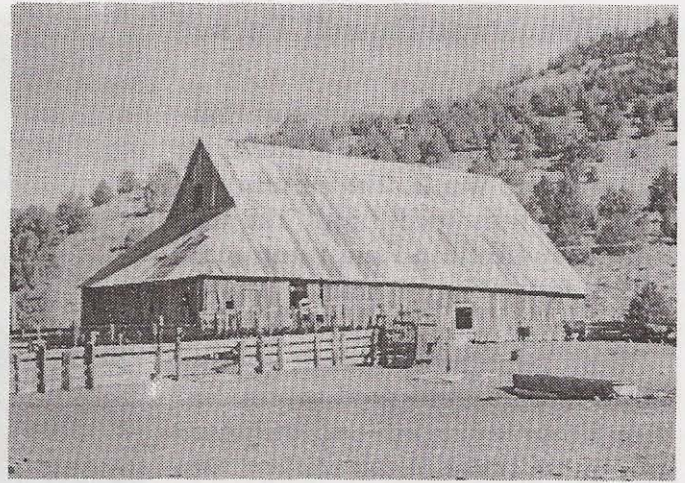
A service of the
Sierra County Chamber of Commerce

The Louis & Carl Genasci Barns

The big barn, shown below, was badly damaged in a six-foot snow storm in 1911. It was rebuilt by Amos Hathaway that year. The smaller barn has hand hewn timbers with mortise and tenon joints.



Detail of Genasci barn showing the beams used in construction. (All photos by Maren Scholberg.)



The Alpers Barn

This ranch was earlier owned by Al Nichols. Other owners were the Hardings and the Hazeltons. The ranch now belongs to Marie Hopkins (sister to Frank Alpers) and to Frank's grandson.

The barn is located northwest of Sierraville on Highway 49.



The Old Barn South of Newman Point

This is just the remains of an old barn, ready to collapse completely.

This barn was owned by the Jones family, then sold to John and Joe D'Andrea. George Henderson and a Mr. Mooney were also owners at one time. Dario D'Andrea of Loyaltan lived on this ranch as a child.

The barn is located a half-mile south of the Pasquetti Ranch at Newman Point.

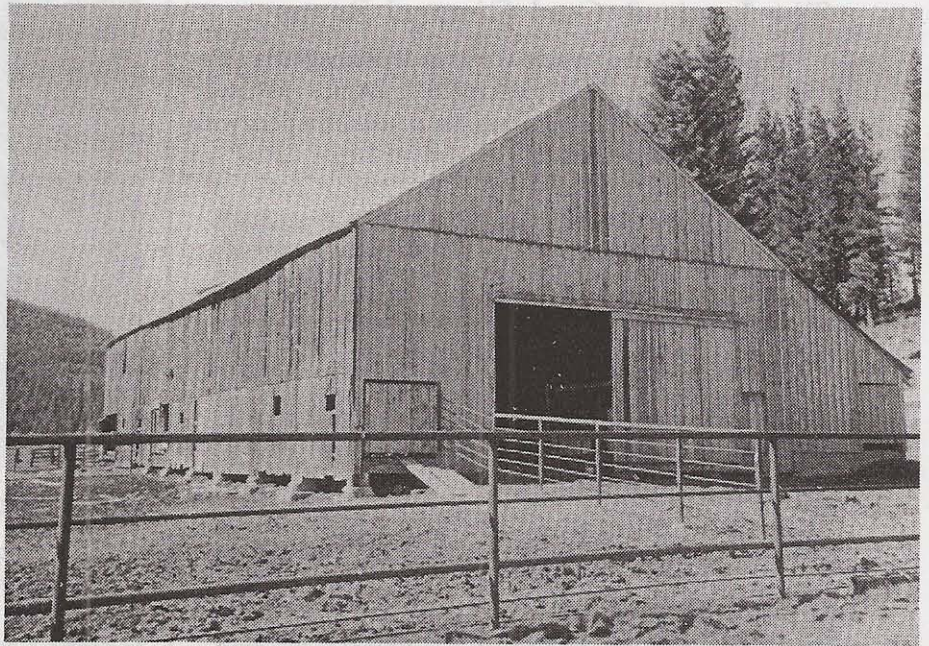
The Frank and Russell Turner Barns

The barn on the land bordering Highways 89 and 49 was moved to Sierraville during World War II. The timbers were hand hewn with wooden pegs. The main beams are 64 feet long. Frank Turner added sixteen feet, making the barn eighty feet long.

Frank Turner bought the land in Sierraville on which this barn stood, gave the land to the Sierraville Fire Department and moved the barn to his ranch. He had a difficult time getting the galvanized steel roofing he needed for the barn. He had ordered it and it was to come by train into Reno. However, before he and the other ranchers could get to Reno to pick up the materials they had ordered, the Army had confiscated anything it wanted. Mr. Turner was seriously considering buying canvas to cover the barn in order to protect his hay. One night, he got a call telling him to get to the railroad station at 2:00 A.M. that morning to pick up his material. He was there with his truck, as were the other ranchers to get their orders, and they got it home before the Army could get its hands on it!

The lower barn (shown here) is across the highway from the ranch house. It is well over 100 years old, having been built in the early 1850's. There are hand hewn timbers, mortised joints, and a rock foundation. The original barn had a long ramp that came up to the gable end of the barn. The hay wagons were drawn up the ramp to unload the hay. This ramp was removed in later years.

The original roof had a steeper pitch with shake roofing. After a severe snow one winter, snow on the south side melted and left the north side with an extra heavy load which caved in the roof. The roof was rebuilt with a flatter pitch. The galvanized roofing was added later. The feeding shed on the north side was added about 1946.



The Lewis Barn

This barn is located at the east end of Loyalton, near the Sierra-Pacific Industries lumber mill, and was built in 1890. It has hand hewn timbers, wooden pegs and mortise-and-tenon joints. There was originally no north door; however, a hay truck got stuck in the mud and had one way out—through the barn wall!

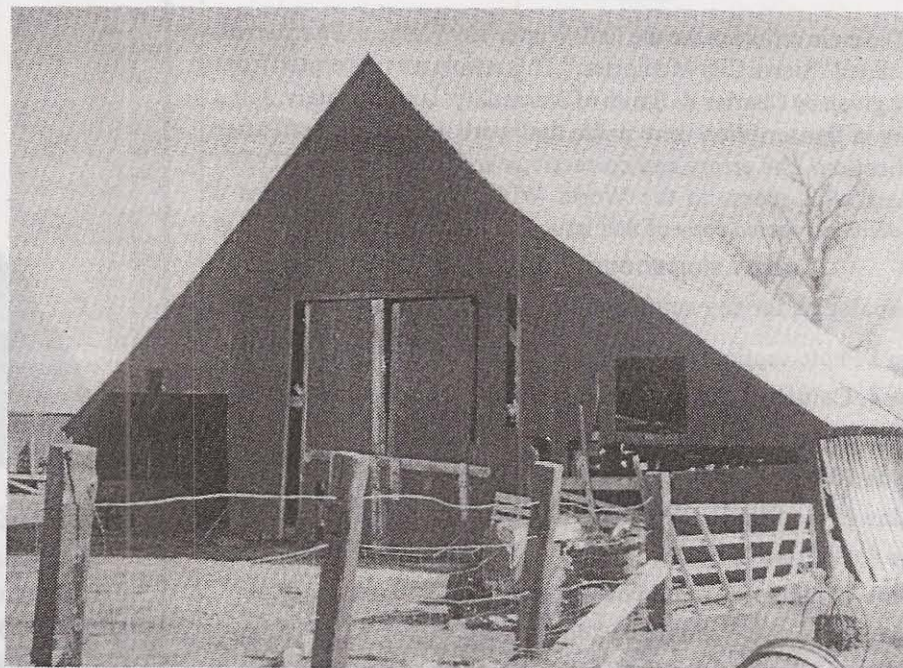
The earliest owners were Hiram Lewis, his son-in-law Cyrus Rees and Alex Guidici. Frank Amodei next owned the ranch for many years. The present owner is Dave Goicoechea from Sparks, Nevada. He is having a new house built on the property.



The Arthur M. Strang Barns

Nathaniel Strang, the original owner of the land, established the ranch in 1856. It has been in the Strang family continuously since then, owned by Jared, Arthur E. and presently Arthur M. Strang. In 1970, Mr. Strang was presented with a 100-Year Club plaque for being in continuous business for a century.

(Cover Photograph): The original barn, known as the cow barn, was built down by the creek in the late 1850's. In 1880, it was moved up to its present location and is the west half of the present big barn on the east side of the ranch. It has hand hewn timbers fifty feet long. The addition was added in 1890. The barn is located one mile east of Sattley on County Road A23.

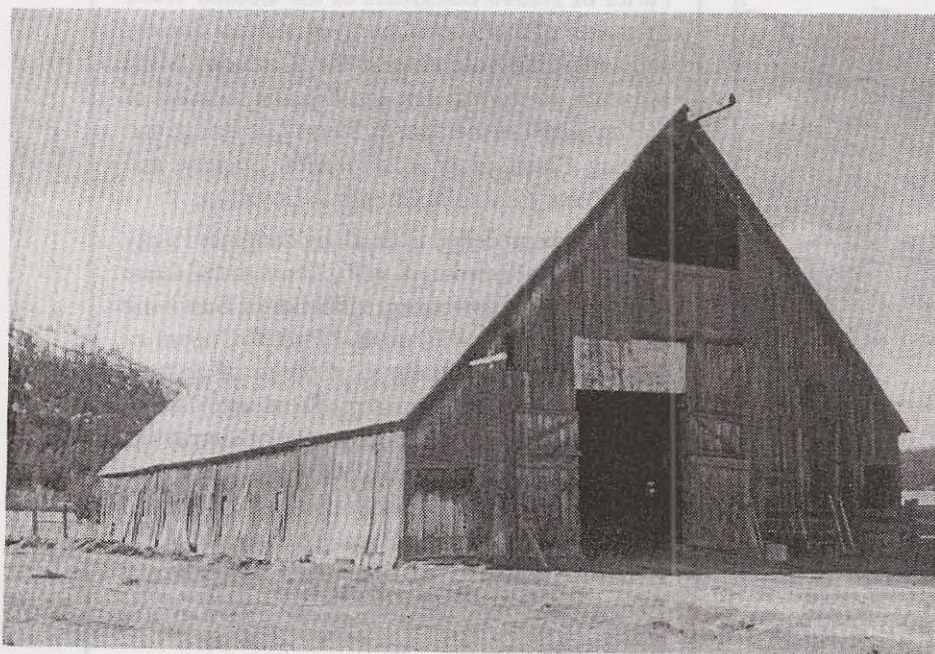


Originally, there were stanchions on three sides, but the south side was taken out later. The barn is built on a rock foundation.

Another barn (shown above), called the horse barn and wagon shed, was built in 1910. Stalls were on the west side; the east side was a wagon shed. There are fifty-foot hand hewn beams in this barn, also. It too had piles of rock for a foundation. Later, railroad ties placed in concrete with posts bolted to the railroad ties replaced the rock foundation.

The Elver Martinetti Barn

Theophilus Maddux settled on this land in the early 1850's for two years but did not prove it. Successive owners included David B. Keyes, James J. Miller (who purchased the ranch about 1868), David C. Berry, and Mr. Rice and Mr. Dixon. Ike Martinetti bought the ranch in 1916 and the ranch has been in the Martinetti family since that time.



This barn was built in 1924 by Amos and Joseph Hathaway after the big fire of 1924 burned the original barn. Harry Turner owned a portable sawmill which he set up in back of the ranch. Ike Martinetti, with the help of neighbors, cut and brought down to the mill good burned trees which were then sawed into lumber for the barn. The barn is located one mile east of Sattley on Highway 89.

ERRATA

The main article in the the Fall/Winter 1996 issue of *The Sierran* was called "Sierra City Memories." This article was excerpted from a talk given by Charles K. Smith of Sierra City. Unfortunately, some errors in transcription were made that were not caught until after publication. The errors and corrections are listed below. **NOTE:** readers with access to the World Wide Web may download a complete, corrected copy of that issue from the Sierra County site at

www.sierracounty.org/orgs/SCHS

We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

Page 1 Photo caption: says "circa 1930;" should be "circa 1940."

Page 4, Column 1, Line 3 "brothers" should be "brother."

Line 13 "wood" should be "ore."

Line 18 "Font" should be "Fontz."

Line 19 Add "in Grass Valley" before the comma.

Page 5, Column 1, Line 5 "horizontal" should be "vertical."

Line 15 "picture" should be "replica."

Line 25 "power" should be "noise."

Page 5, Column 2, Line 39 "Kirby" should be "Kirvin."

Page 6, Column 1, Line 27 change to read "...if you wanted to, and it was light enough, you could..."

Page 7, Column 1, Line 17 "\$2.20" should be "\$3.20."

Lines 20-22 change to read "They worked three shifts—8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; 6:00 P.M. to 2:30 A.M., and midnight to 8:00 A.M."

Page 8, Column 1, Line 37 "my" should be "the."

Page 8, Column 2, Line 5 "cousin" should be "husband."



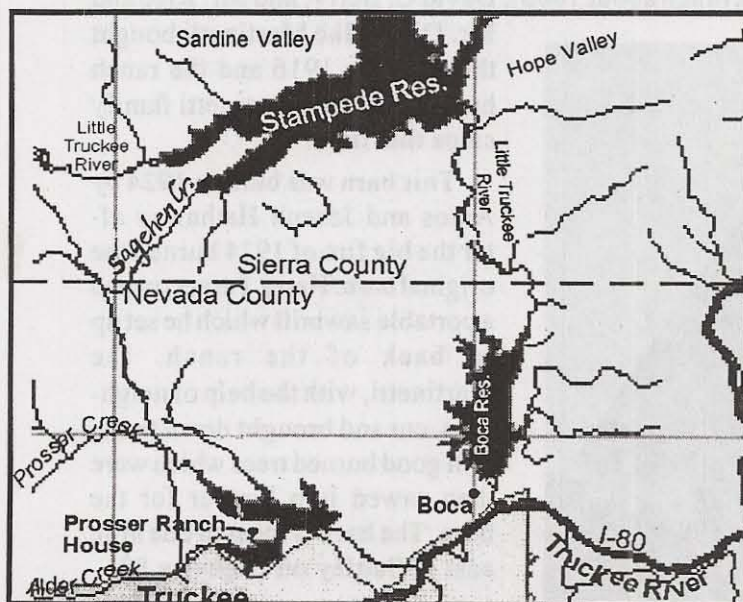
GEORGENE CLAIR GRAFF COPREN

Georgene passed away at Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee on April 4, 1997 at age 91. She was born January 5, 1906 in San Francisco to Margaret Theresa Augustus Graff and George Amos Graff. She received a teaching certificate from the University of California, Berkeley and moved to Sierra County in 1929.

Her first teaching position was in Downieville and she later taught in Loyalton and Sierraville schools. She married William E. Copren on January 2, 1932 in Fallon, Nevada and the union was kept quiet as this was when teachers could not be married.

Georgene was Past President of the Imogen Parlor of Native Daughters of the Golden West, Treasurer of the Sierra County Historical Society and long-time volunteer at the Kentucky Mine Museum, Past President and lifetime member of Sierraville PTA, member of Sierraville Bridge and Sewing Clubs, Holy Rosary Altar Society, and Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Loyalton.

She was preceded in death by daughter Peggy Nelson in 1996, brothers John, Kenneth and Gene Graff, and three newborn grandchildren. Surviving are her husband William E. "Pinky" Copren of Sierraville, son William G. Copren of Sattley, daughters Virginia Connason of Anderson Island, Washington, Mary Eleanor Moreau of Sierraville, Donna Walton of Concord, sisters-in-law Margaret Burelle of Sierraville and Betty Graff of Rancho Bernardo, nephews Bill Burelle of Sierraville and Bob Burelle of Alturas, fifteen grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren. Burial was in Sattley Cemetery.



The map on page 1 of the Summer 1996 *Sierran* contained some labeling errors. A corrected map is shown above.