

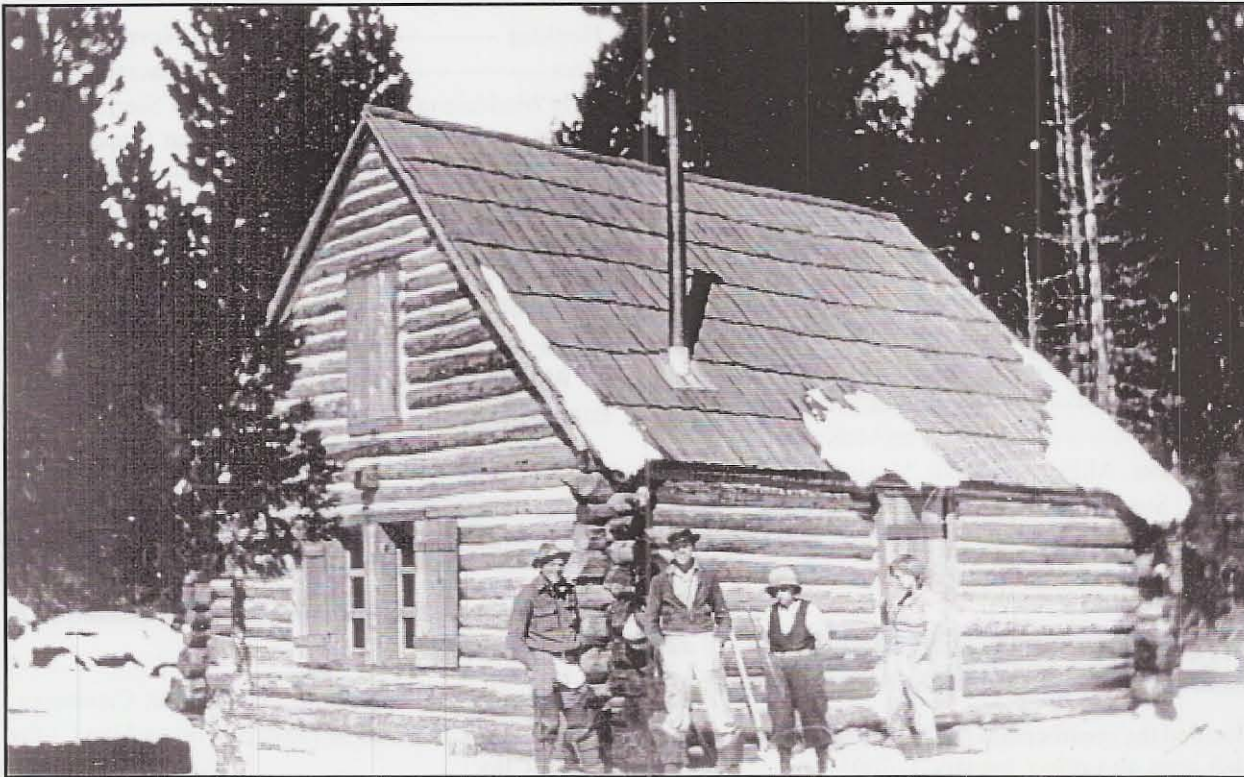
THE SIERRAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies
and the California Association of Museums*

Volume XXX, Number 2

Fall / Winter 2002



Striking jaunty poses in front of the "old Taylor cabin" are, left to right, George Browning, Tom Taylor, Ella Taylor, Audrey Browning. Probably late 1930's.

— Courtesy of Chandler and Dorothy Browning Hunt.

THE CABINS AT SARDINE MEADOWS AND SARDINE LODGE

by K. W. Green

The year was 1933, the country was plunged deep into the Great Depression. The population of the mining counties had risen again dramatically as many desperate, jobless folk headed for the hills to try to dig a living from the goldfields. Downieville's population was said to have reached the one thousand mark again for the first time in many years. In addition, rather than splurge on expensive vacations as they might once have, people took up camping and other forms of less costly recreational activities in a big way. For both reasons, Sierra County enjoyed a boomlet in the 1930s.

Meanwhile, in the late 1920s, through the '30s and early '40s, spurred on by "New Deal" attitudes and social policies dominating the federal government at that time, the US Forest Service adopted a formal policy of inviting and encouraging ordinary people (read: not necessarily rich) to build recreational homes in the nation's forests on public lands. The rationale was complicated and humane, also political in nature. In any event, the USFS built many summerhome tracts of its own to aid and abet implementing the policy. Since the 'teens of the 20th Century it had also passed out special use permits for the purpose of constructing resort lodges and cabins so that many more people could briefly visit the scenic places for rest and refreshment in greater comfort, as once others had come with their tents and sleeping robes to sleep under the stars alongside the creeks and lakes.

Keeping this background information in mind, we turn to an example of the consequences of both the economic climate and the recreational lures being cast by the USFS at that time which is of special interest to the Sierra County Historical Society today. In June of 1933, after half a dozen or more summers of camping out at Wild Plum campground, Thomas R. and Ella Taylor, their daughter and son-in-law, Audrey and George Browning, and several other friends located a 160 acre placer claim along Salmon

"Sardine Cabins" continues on page 3.

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 just outside 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—for instance, as a volunteer at the museum, serving on the board, or recruiting new members to share in our work—or would just like to give your support, please join us!

2002 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF

President	Bill Long
Vice President	Bill Copren
Treasurer	Milton Gottardi
Secretary	Maren Scholberg
Membership Chair	Lynn McKechnie
Directors	Lee Adams, Milton Gottardi, Virginia Lutes, Susan Schoensee, Bud Buczkowski.
Museum Director	Anne Eldred
<i>THE SIERRAN</i> Editor	Katie Green

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The SCHS Board reddecided the membership fee hike, back down to the following, which goes into effect January 1, 2003:

INDIVIDUAL	\$15.00
FAMILY	\$20.00
INSTITUTIONS	\$20.00
BUSINESS	\$30.00
SUPPORTING	\$30.00
SUSTAINING	\$50.00
LIFE	\$250 +

Please send dues to Membership Chair:
Lynn McKechnie
P.O. Box 294
Sierraville, CA 96126

SCHS: HOW TO REACH US

Office Address: **Kentucky Mine Museum**

Mailing Address: **P.O. Box 260, Sierra City, CA 96125**

Telephone: **(530) 862-1310**

Newsletter: **(916) 645-2499**

SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Report

We welcome these new members who have joined SCHS since the Spring 2002 issue of THE SIERRAN. We appreciate the continued interest and support of all our members.

Sharon Elorza	Sparks, NV
Jim & Karla Golden	Emeryville, CA
Juanita & Edward Holley	Loyalton, CA
Susan D. Hopkins	Nevada City, CA
Stuart Lauters	Sacramento, CA
Tony & Cindy Maddalena	Sierraville, CA
Mary Marchetti	San Francisco, CA
Tom Maxwell	Auburn, CA
Bill & Joanne Nunes	Calpine, CA
Dee Samuels & Joel Shawn	Corta Madera, CA
Elden Strang	Auburn, CA
Marjorie Stockwell	Rocklin, CA
Agnes Sullivan	Fresno, CA
Kenneth N. Walters	Carmichael, CA
Mark & Tami Wilkening	Santa Maria, CA

GIFTS • GIFTS • GIFTS

We are extremely grateful for the following additions to our family history archives:

- ▲ Sharon Arnold's material about the Vollmar, Crossman, York and Meyer families of Downieville and the Colby family of Clío.
- ▲ Joanne Busch's photo albums of the Busch / Logomarsino family.
- ▲ Jerry Martini for old photos of Lakes Basin and mines.
- ▲ Bill Staiger for a photo of Downieville School 8th grade class of 1934 — with names!

and for contributions to our collections of relics:

- ▲ Jim Connolly: for early bottles, books and assorted weird stuff.
- ▲ Ed and Joan Vane: for a '30 era wringer washing machine.
- ▲ to Stuart Lauters and Lee Adams for returning, when the cooler weather permitted, to plant heritage roses at Kentucky Mine Museum.

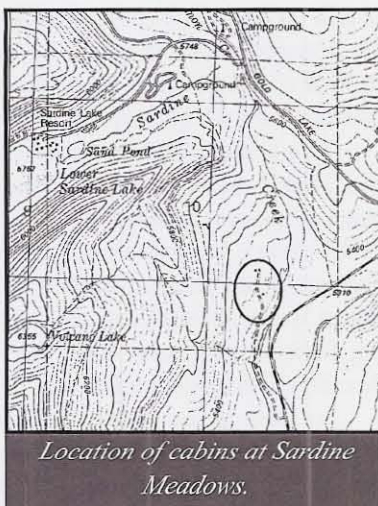
Thank you, everyone!

"Sardine Cabins" continued from page 1.

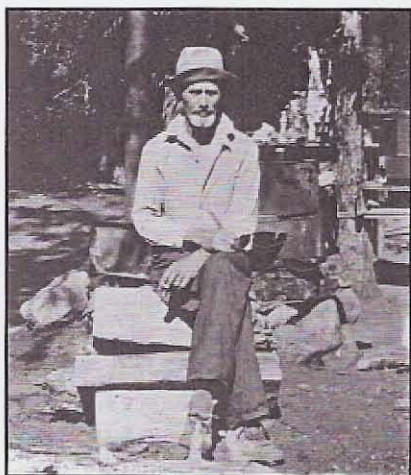
Creek at a place known variously as Sardine Flat or Sardine Meadows. The claim, called the "Sierra Audrey", straddled the creek for a good distance on both sides. The next year, 1934, the Taylors and Brownings were permitted to build a modest log cabin at Sardine Meadows for use when they mined. Later on Tom Taylor, a fisherman and hunter of some renown, would use the log cabin as a basecamp from which to outfit and lead other hunters and fisherpersons into the back country on horse or muleback. A matching sleeping cabin was added only a few feet away from the first one to house visitors. Tom was a builder by trade and constructed a log home in Sierra City, as well.

Construction of the cabins at Sardine Meadows or Flat was a family enterprise. Everyone pitched in to help, even George Browning, who was already somewhat disabled from rheumatoid arthritis that would later severely hamper his mobility. Undeterred, he stumped around with the use of canes, doing what he could. Good straight logs of middling size were imported from Indian Valley and hauled to the site from the highway by a goodnatured burro named "Jim", whom everyone but Jim thought was the property of Mark Smith. Audrey Browning and the sturdy little animal became good friends as she accompanied him many times the

mile downhill to the old Lakes Basin wagon road to drag logs and other supplies back to the site using an Indian-style travois. [That earlier wagonroad, unpaved and often bone-jarringly bumpy, paralleled Salmon Creek on the opposite side from where the cabins sit, midway between the creek and the route of the modern Gold Lake Highway.] Many happy seasons passed at the claim in the grassy meadows beside the chuckling stream. Only when Tom Taylor's heart condition became too severe to



Location of cabins at Sardine Meadows.



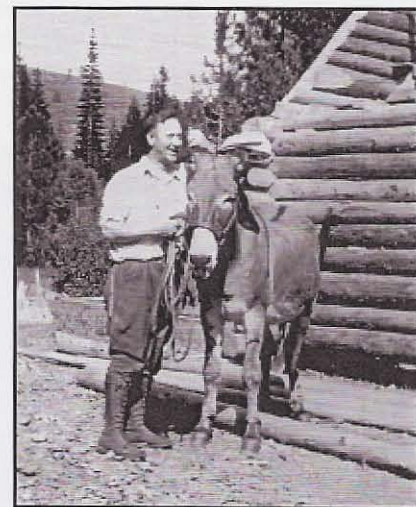
Long, lean Tom Taylor relaxed at Wild Plum campground some year before building his own cabin at Sardine Meadows. —Photo courtesy of Chandler and Dorothy Hunt.

make staying at the cabins prudent did they sell out, to John O'Hara. In 1972, after several intervening owners, the Padgett family purchased what was by now a recreational lease and have enjoyed the property continuously for twenty-odd years.

Both the Brownings and the Taylors came from Long Beach to Sierra County, and wintered there and other places most years. George Browning, a former salesman for Motorola in Chicago, had moved to Long Beach after a divorce, meeting Audrey there. The child of his first union, Dorothy Jane, came out from Chicago to stay with her father and step-mother for the first time the summer of 1940. Fortunately she took instantly to Audrey (and vice versa) and also the woods. She plotted her return.

After a few years the Taylors and Brownings looked around at the various resorts in the Lakes Basin busily serving the tourist trade and decided they'd like to take a crack at that themselves. They applied for and received a special use permit from the Forest Service to construct a Lodge and cabin resort at Lower Sardine Lake, the last of the resorts to be allowed in the basin. The permit came about as a result of an interesting land trade. The Brownings and Thompsons had become friendly with Joe Doakes at the Young America Mine, owner of a great deal of patented property in the the Packer Lake-Sardine Lakes area. After some negotiation, the USFS gave its blessing for Sardine Lake Lodge in exchange for Doakes generously giving up some of his holdings.

The history of guest lodges actually goes back to 1912, when the two first such structures were built—one at the outlet of Grass Lake, called the Lakes Center Lodge, in the Plumas National Forest. Sadly, this old granddaddy lodge was removed by the Forest Service in 1979 because the owners couldn't afford to redo the electrical and septic systems in the time allotted. The other constructed in 1912 was Gold Lake Lodge. The original lodge at this site burned in 1925 but was rebuilt the next year as an office/dining room. To complete the list, Elwood Lodge was erected in 1920 by William Frank Drew, Gold Lake Beach Resort in 1921, Packer Lodge in 1926, Gray Eagle Lodge in the 1930s, and Salmon Lake Lodge in the late 1920s. Many of the early visitors to the basin came by train to Blairsden and were brought up by horse and buggy to the high country. The rest came



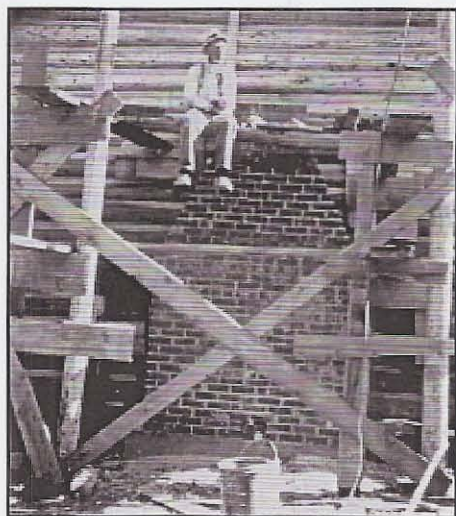
George Browning and Jim the burro, with partly-finished cabin in the background. —Photo courtesy of Chandler and Dorothy Hunt.

"Sardine Cabins" continues on page 4.

"Sardine Cabins" continued from page 3.

from the Yuba drainage side of the mountains by buggy, horse-back or later by car.

The building of Sardine Lodge in 1941 proceeded much as the cabins at Sardine Meadows had some years earlier, with family and friends doing a lot of the work. As Dorothy Browning Hunt says, her father "was a very sweet and charming man and could talk people into helping him." The summer of 1946, Dorothy, a vivacious and very attractive 20-year old, came again to visit. There she met Chandler Hunt, just out of the armed service. After the war ended Chan wasn't quite sure what he was going to do in civilian life. The Brownings had come to the Hunt ranch in Sutter County the winter before to do some duck hunting and George asked Chan if he mightn't want to come work for him over the coming summer tourist season. Thus, Chandler helped build cabins # 5 and 6 and conducted a whirlwind courtship of his boss' daughter on the side. Six weeks after they met, Dorothy and Chandler were married at Sardine Lodge in front of the big fireplace.



Tom Taylor pauses to rest while building the outside chimney at Sardine Lake Lodge, 1941.

—Courtesy of Chandler and Dorothy Hunt.

George and Audrey Browning ran the Lodge until George died in 1971. The first seven years of occupancy they had wintered over, getting around on the deep snows characteristic of the Lakes Basin in an old army "Weasel". In the severe winter of 1952 the drifts above the bridge across Salmon Creek to town (Sierra City) were too steep for even the "Weasel" and they found they must snowshoe to get out. After that experience, they decided to shut the resort in winter and find refuge in the foothills. After George passed away, Dorothy Hunt helped Audrey run the resort for three more years, doing an apprenticeship, so to speak. She and Chandler had operated a goat dairy in rural Lincoln, but freed themselves up to buy Sardine Lodge resort in 1974. For the next thirty-three years they were the genial hosts of that establishment, relishing the long friendships cultivated with repeat visitors and employees who stuck with them loyally for many years.

Fifty-six years later they are still a devoted couple, living in Sierra City at what was once the Williams House next to Holly

House on Main Street. Most nights during the tourist season they are honored guests at dinner at the Lodge they have turned over to their daughter, Janis Boucher, and son Tom Hunt, to run. The warmth with which they are greeted by everyone is telling.

As a coincidental footnote to the history of the cabins, Chandler Hunt's maternal grandfather, Frank D. Nichols, operated a stage stop near Sardine Meadows around the beginning of the 20th Century, Chandler thinks perhaps near where the flume from Salmon Creek came down toward the mines on the flank of the Sierra Buttes. Nichols had also been mining in the Buttes Mining District with some very well-known Sierra City personalities: Sam Devine, A.M. Dobbie, Alfred Peller and Laurence Goff.

So what is the snake in this leafy Eden? Well, for the last decade the Forest Service has denied an extension of the lease on the log cabins at Sardine Meadows, long occupied by the Padgett Family, and is asking permission from the State Historic Preservation Office to tear them down. The odd thing is that the FS evaluation of the cabins done in 1992 stated that the Thompson-Browning log cabins are prime candidates for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, excellent examples of that particular type of Depression Era log architecture prevalent many places. The State Historic Preservation Office concurred in that assessment. For a decade the Padgett Family has tried heroically to protect the place and had hopes under the previous Forest Supervisor. Those hope dimmed in 1999. Thus far SHPO is holding fast but needs encouragement from the citizenry that we want the site to survive. The Sierra County Historical Society believes there is no valid reason to destroy the structures and is pressing the case for preservation and protection of these valuable landmarks. Stay tuned.



Sardine Lake Lodge, 1941 (from Eastman postcard/photo).

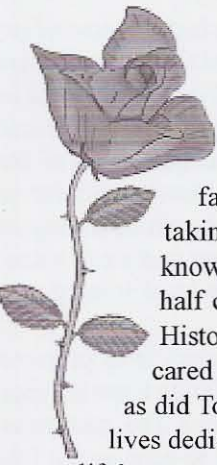
—Courtesy of Chandler and Dorothy Hunt.

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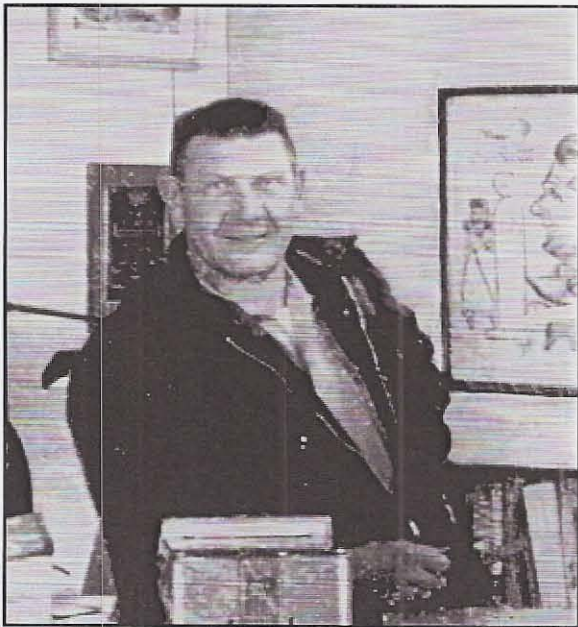
- ▲ *Wildflower Walking in Lakes Basin*, Toni Fauver.
- ▲ Mine and deed records, Clerk-Recorder's Office Sierra County
- ▲ Chandler and Dorothy Hunt.
- ▲ Padgett family members.

In Memorium

Tom Vilas, Frank Tabor, Alvin Lombardi



Our entire county grieves with the families of three oldtimers who died recently, taking with them the good cheer and combined knowledge and experience of more than two and a half centuries. Life Members of the Sierra County Historical Society, Frank Tabor and Alvin Lombardi, cared deeply about the county and its inhabitants, as did Tom Vilas. These men spent all or most of their lives dedicated not only to earning a living but to easing life's passage for the rest of us. All were notorious for going out of their way to shoulder the responsibilities of keeping our democratic process on track through elected office or volunteerism, and their random acts of kindness were legendary. We would like to clone such exemplary citizens, but in the absence of that possibility, there is no help for it but for those left behind to pick up the yoke they laid down. They made the burden seem light! Go in peace, gentle men.



Frank Tabor in his prime behind the counter at Downieville Motors. On the wall is displayed a caricature of Frank drawn by his old friend, Frank "Pancho" Willmarth, who preceded him in death by a few months.

ANNUAL MEETING AT LOVERIN RANCH



The creamery building at "old 1862 Ranch".

For those of you that missed this special occasion, the 2002 annual meeting was held at a wonderful ranch that was planted many moons ago near the emigrant route in Long Valley near Bordertown in the far southwest corner of Sierra County. It exudes its long, checkered history in various interesting ways, through weathered old buildings, equipment relics and the ambiance of age carefully preserved by its owners as they restored the ranch.

Emigrant trains began to straggle through Long Valley by 1853, but pressed onward over Donner or Henness Pass toward the mines or the fertile central valleys and coast. Eventually people focused on something other than searching for gold began to settle out in the eastern valleys. The environs where the ranch sits were once part of the town of Purdy, apparently, although it is now difficult to establish its outlines as the hamlet has completely disappeared. An old dairy label clearly locates the ranch in the Purdy postal district. "Old 1862 Ranch", as they call it, is now owned by the Loverin Family. It was originally established in 1862, or possibly a few years earlier. At one time it was owned by no less an influential personage than Samuel Wright, director of the Carson City Mint.

For a long period (for the West, these things being relative) between the 1870s and the 1930s, it was owned by the Caesar Ramelli Family. The Ramellis were one of the many Italian Swiss families who moved into the Sierra Valley and surrounding grassy valleys during the mid-to late 1800s and established prosperous dairies. What Loverins believe to be the original 1860s creamery, where later the Ramellis produced butter and Monterey Jack cheese, still stands, as does the two storey brick house (with attic-turned-loft space as a cosy third storey) the Ramellis built in the 1930s. It was their "new house". A few yards away across the lawn, a smaller dwelling predating the brick structure has been renovated into a charming guest cottage. Doing much of the work themselves, Jan and Jim Loverin have transformed and beautified the structure over two decades, doing extensive remodeling from the skeleton out, landscaping a large yard, and installing a covered front porch, but the charm is distinctly old fashioned. So is the hospitality.

MUSEUM VISTORS

Probably only a little more than half of the people who cross the threshold into our museum at Kentucky Mine bother to sign the register, even after gentle hints and polite direct requests. Presumably those that evade our grasp are shy persons. From the signatures that are recorded we have gleaned the following general information for this season:

- total signatures (guestimating how many comprise a "family"): approx. 1150
- most visitors were from the state of California, of course
- most were from out of county (fulfilling somebody's law about such things)
- of the out-of-towners, most were from Nevada
- followed by Utah
- 22 states were represented, in total
- 7 foreign countries produced 25 visitors, with Turkey and Denmark tied for first!

Over all, our park experienced the same diminished numbers in visitors that all the surrounding parks and museums complained about this year. Those who did come, though, were lavish in their praises for the facility and the quality of the tours. Not to get too swelled-headed about it, the curators were told repeatedly that our tours were superior to any others the guests had taken through similar mine museums and/or historical parks. That was music to our ears.

We are doing something right! After visiting the park in July, Steve Mikesell, Assistant Director of the California State Historic Preservation Office, pronounced it "a gem" and "one of the best-kept secrets" among the State's many parks, deserving of far greater attention. That was nice to hear, too.

BOUQUETS FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

We owe a lot to our band of faithful volunteers who helped in and around the Museum this season. Kathy Ashby, Frances Brett, Jim Connolly, Milt Gottardi, Elaine Johnson, Adrienne Mackey, Laverne Monaco, Ruth Neubert, Maren Scholberg, C.K. Smith—you made all the difference. An especially hearty thank you to our "Pelton Man", Eli Scholberg, whose weekly presence at the Museum was a gift from the gods.

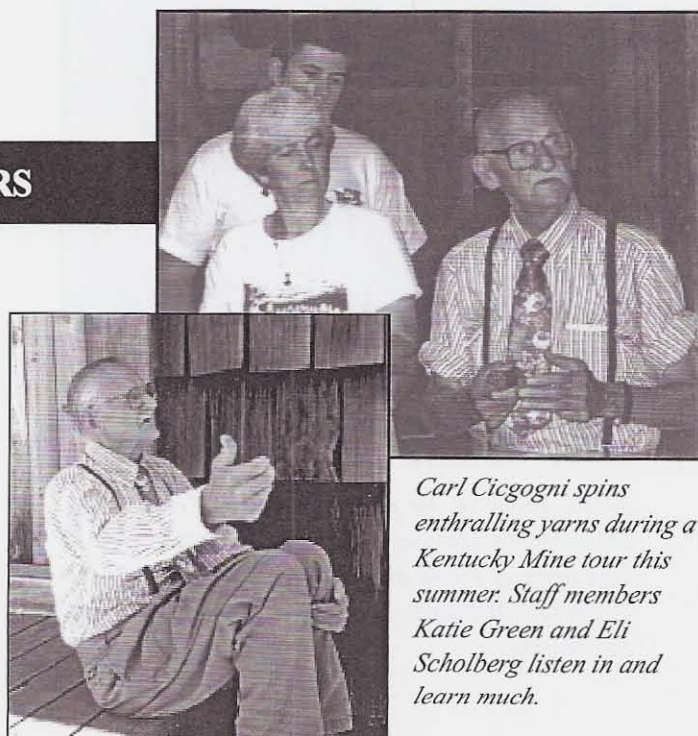
Also deeply appreciated were visits from descendants of previous owners (Loeffler, Hansen) and hired laborers (Peroni) of the "Old Kentuck" Mine — as well as the last miner to work the tunnel, Carl "Chick" Ciccogni, about 90 years of age, who called on us twice—dredging up new (to us) anecdotes which add much depth and color to our presentations about the mine and stampmill.

ALLEGHANY'S MUSEUM

Under the guidance of curator Rae Bell and a highly knowledgeable new Board of Directors, the Underground Goldminer's Museum of Alleghany has had new life breathed into it. Founded in 1995 by Michael Miller, John Hess and Janice Steet, the central focus of the museum's education program has been tours of the Sixteen-to One Mine, the oldest operating hardrock goldmine in the world. This mind bogglingly rich mine began operating in 1865 and has lined many pockets in the century and a half since. Tours of the hallowed premises incorporate local history and geology using the mine itself as Exhibit A.

The visionary plan of the museum directors is to promote the Alleghany Mining District's history by offering tours of other mines in addition to the Sixteen to One in future. The ambitious goal is to expand the museum building itself to take on the following and more: a world class display of gold specimens from the Alleghany Mining District; a display about the historically significant aerial tramway at the Rainbow Mine; a geology display; a video about mining and the history of the District; research library and archive dedicated to the mines and people of the District; displays of art by locals; gift shop; a free walking tour map of Alleghany.

The museum is open seasonally from May through October by arrangement with Rae Bell at 287-3223. The fine website for the museum is www.ugmm.org and contains most everything you want to know about tours and the folks involved. The interesting first newsletter of the organization is printed online. Otherwise they can be reached at Box 907, Alleghany, 95910. We wish them a long and successful future.



Carl Ciccogni spins enthralling yarns during a Kentucky Mine tour this summer. Staff members Katie Green and Eli Scholberg listen in and learn much.

NOTES FROM PRESIDENT BILL LONG



Due to the tragic fire that destroyed Bill Long's home and took all his belongings, including his much beloved carousel research, President Long is unable to write his usual report for this issue of *The Sierran*. As Vice-President, I am writing the year end report for the sake of expediency.

The year 2002 was a fine one for Sierra County historians. It is Sierra County's sesquicentennial anniversary, as you doubtless know by now. As such, there were many fine events carried on in each of the county's small towns. Each was a success in and of itself and the actual Birthday Event in Downieville was particularly well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Kentucky Mine Museum and Park was operated by SCHS for another season. A total of \$50,000 has been granted to this facility: \$40,000 for opening the adit [portal tunnel]; \$10,000 for preparing a presentation on the endangered bats which occupy the facility. The Historical Society is grateful for these funds and hopes to have the hardrock mine open for next season. The facility has now closed for the season except to large, pre-arranged groups. Luckily for the Historical Society we had both Anne Eldred and Katie Green sharing the curator's position this season to staff the museum and lead tours. This arrangement seemed to work well for both persons and for the visiting public.

The annual membership meeting was held at the Loverin Ranch in Long Valley at the historical community of Purdy. Many

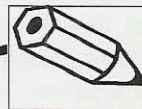
of the attendees arrived by four-wheel drive over the scenic and historical Henness Pass Road and the Dog Valley-Long Valley Road. All enjoyed this back country trip. The bylaws of the society were amended to expand the Board of Directors from seven to nine persons. Susan Schoensee, Virginia Lutes, and Bud Buczkowske were elected to vacant or newly-created seats on the Board. Mrs. and Mr. Loverin took the members on a tour of their ranch and ranch structures. Bill Copren was prevailed upon to repeat the speech he gave at Sierra County's birthday party in April. The meeting was well attended.

Respectfully submitted,

William G. Copren

An account has been set up at Placer Savings bank to assist Bill Long and Beal Dick recover from the devastating house fire that destroyed their home and belongings. Anyone wishing to contribute to this compassionate cause may send checks to either branch bank in Downieville or Loyalton earmarked for the Bill Long Fire Fund.

A SHELF OF HISTORIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS



An assortment of local histories and surveys published under the auspices of the Sierra County Historical Society is available by mail order for holiday giving. A volunteer for each book, at different addresses, stand by to fill requests promptly. If the purchaser wishes to have the book(s) shipped directly to a giftee, just enclose clear directions and perhaps a gift card.

■ Great news! Maren Scholberg's long out-of-print *Sierra County / Sierra Valley Barn Book* has been reprinted. \$17 includes tax and postage. Orders payable to: Sierra County Historical Society, Box 141, Sierraville, CA 96126.

■ *The Historic Homes of Sierra Valley in Sierra County*, by Maren Scholberg is available for \$17 (sales tax included; add \$2 for mailing). Photographs and intelligent commentary based on Maren's voluminous knowledge of the Sierra Valley. Order as above.

■ Jim Olson's popular memoir, *The Logging Camps of Clover Valley*. Charming, informative and nicely illustrated. Make checks of \$19 (includes tax and mailing), payable to the Sierra County Historical Society. Mail to Box 141, Sierraville, CA 96126.

■ *Sierra County Pioneer Cemetery Historic Survey* (to 1925), compiled by Lee Adams in 1997. \$22. Only a few copies left. Order from the Sierra County Historical Society, Box 141, Sierraville, CA 96126.

■ *Like A Leaf Upon the Current Cast*, by Katie Willmarth Green. Subtitled "An intimate History of Shady Flat, Neighboring Gold Rush Landmarks and Pioneer Families along the North Fork of the Yuba River between Downieville and Sierra City, California", copiously illustrated, 272 pages. For Katie's book, make checks for \$37 (this includes tax, insured shipping and a contribution to SCHS), payable to Katie W. Green, 3935 Fruitvale Road, Lincoln, CA 95648. Phone: (916) 645-2499 or e-mail: greengal@psyber.com Also available at selected bookstores and shops in Sierra, Nevada, Placer and Sacramento Counties.

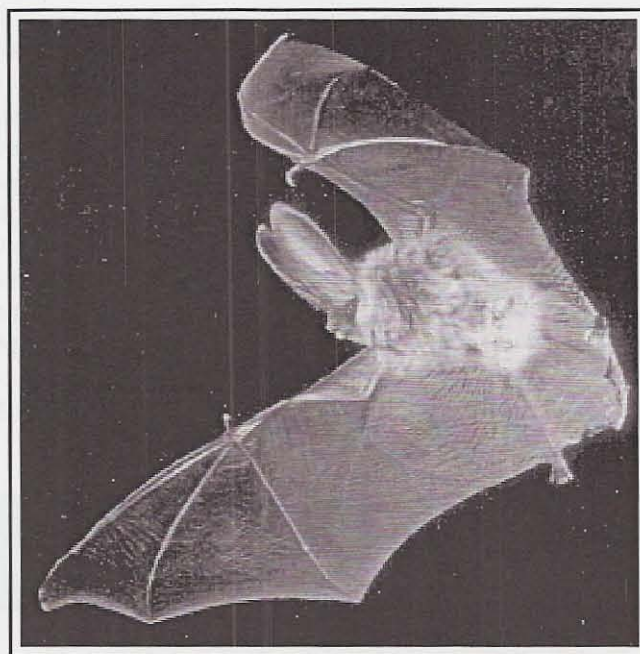
■ *Voices Still Echo in the Canyon*, and *Whispers on the Wind*, by Bud Buczkowske, recounting the history of Alleghany and some stories from the Goodyears Creek / Canyon creek band of the county, respectively, replete with photos. \$22 each, including tax and postage, the books may be ordered directly from Bud at Box 904, Alleghany, CA 95910.

THE SIERRAN

BAT ATTRACTION

The bat population which breeds and perhaps hibernates year 'round in the Kentucky Mine stampmill is attracting more and more attention. After diminishing to very few animals in the years after the park opened, this colony of the species known as Townsend's big-eared or lump-nosed bats (unflattering but true) has slowly regenerated in numbers to approximately half of the beasts present in 1976. This is puzzling and exciting news in bat circles, according to USFS Wildlife Biologist, Marilyn Tierney, who works closely with the staff at Kentucky Mine Museum to monitor and protect the bats. The big-eared bats, *corynorhinus townsendii*, have waned steadily and inexorably in California to become a species of special concern. They are known to be hyper-sensitive to the presence of humans and loud disturbances (which often go hand in hand). When frightened, they often forego night feeding or completely abandon disturbed sites, leaving their immature young behind. Therefore, to discover a nursery colony which has made some sort of adjustment to frequent and sometimes noisy human activity during the season the park is open and concerts happening, is very good news. Close observation and evaluation will continue, with the possibility of a major study being focused on these adaptable individuals.

"Bats are highly beneficial wild mammals," Marilyn Tierney informed us, "more closely related to primates than to rodents. California is home to different species of bats, all of which feed on



night-flying insects." Like all bats, big-eared bats consume their own weight in food each night, she said, thus making them important regulators of forest pests. And like other mammals, the bat usually gives birth to only one "pup" per year, so that it takes bat populations a long time to recover when they disperse or are decimated by predators.

We find that many folks, particularly children, are as fascinated by the bats as the machinery on our tours of the stampmill! The curators take special pains to prepare visitors before entering the building to share our admiration and careful concern for these fleet-winged, insect-gobbling creatures. Since, according to Ms. Tierney, they can have life-spans of thirty years and more, we hope to have a cordial and respectful relationship with them over the long haul.



Left: Some windows of the stamp mill at Kentucky Mine must stay open perpetually to accommodate the comings and goings of the bats.