

# The Sierran

— A Publication of the Sierra County Historical Society —



Westall family pictured in Palo Alto after they had moved from Sierra Co., although three of the sons, Marion, Alford, and Edward continued to mine in Sierra Co. and Ed Westall raised a family in Loganville. L to R - Alice, Marion, Mother Susan, Father Alford, Elizabeth, Edward Etta, Adele and Edith. Not pictured are Martha, Samuel and Alford.

## Uncle Marion Remembered

**T**he story of how the parents of Marion Westall arrived in the gold mining towns of north western Sierra Co. (Over North) is typical of how most families arrived in this area. But each family has its own unique story, and this is the story of Alfred Westall (1835-1910) and Susan A. Dobbins. Edna Westall Gottardi wrote to her uncle, Marion Westall (son of Alford and Susan) in the 1950's and asked her uncle if he would write down everything he could remember about his father's trip across the plains. He didn't write a great deal about his father's trip, but did proceed to write a fifty-eight page account of his family's life, beginning in the Scales-Poverty Hill area of Sierra County. Only a small part of this story is reproduced in this bulletin, but I hope it is as interesting to the reader as it always has been to me.

Milt Gottardi ~

"As I remember of what I heard and remember of the times and events of long ago.

My father Alfred Westall joined a party in Missouri to cross the plains and join the people on the rich gold fields in California. They had the usual trials and tribulations. One event nearly caused them annihilation. One of the party by the name of Taylor saw a squaw sitting on a log. Without thoughts, cause or justification, up with his gun and killed her. There was soon a large gathering of hostile and very mad Indians, who demanded and took Mr. Taylor, putting him through the most horrible, unbelievable tortures before their eyes. They had no further trouble from the Indians and in due course of time

Uncle Marion Remembered (Continued on Page 3)

## THE 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 an annual meeting, 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 us!

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We welcome new members who have joined since the Summer 2004 issue of THE SIERRAN. We appreciate the interest and support of all our members.

### OUT OF STATE MEMBERS

Allen County Public Library	Fort Wayne, IN
Cindi Buczkowske	Bridgeview, IL
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Earl & Joyce Collins	Seattle, WA
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Will & Lois Van Doren	Boise, ID
Jeff & Linda Wanamaker	Incline Village, NV
Beverly Berger White	Reno, NV
Frances Wright	Sparks, NV

### TIME TO RENEW YOUR 2005 MEMBERSHIP

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	\$15.00
FAMILY & INSTITUTION	\$20.00
BUSINESS & SUPPORTING	\$30.00
SUSTAINING	\$50.00
LIFE (per individual)	\$250.00

Please send dues to the Membership Chair:

Lynn McKechnie  
PO Box 294  
Sierraville, CA 96126

### SIERRA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Office Address:

Kentucky Mine Museum  
PO Box 260, Sierra City, CA 96125  
(530) 862-1310

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## Uncle Marion Remembered (Continued from Page 1)

landed in Gibsonville where the party separated, each going on his own way.

My father was in fine walking trim and started for Marysville making the sixty miles in one day. The length of the day was not mentioned. My best walking record could not equal father's. Starting at Pescadero with a Stanford law student, I walked up the coast to Spanish Town, now Half Moon Bay, over the mountains to Woodside, and on to Palo Alto, forty-five miles in ten hours. Father drifted to Poverty Hill where he was anchored, becoming interested in mining claims and a store operated by Hancock, also from Missouri. They got their supplies by pack train from Rabbit Creek now La Porte. An ancient river came from somewhere to Gibsonville and Whiskey Diggins, and in almost a straight line down to La Porte, Secret Diggins, Barnard Diggins across Slate Creek to

Poverty Hill, and on a mile or two. Little Bold Mountain raised its ugly head in front of it. There are some indications that part or all of it (the river) turned west down Bone Hollow to Slate Creek County. Some to this day believes it did. The predominate surface indications points out that it turned East joining the Blue Gravel Channel from Howland Flat St. Louis, Grass Flat and Port Ravine, at a point between Ermatingers Ranch and Scales; then on to Scales, Union Hill, brushing Perkins Point, swinging east to Fare Play, through Fare Play Ridge to Canyon Creek turning S.W. to Council Hill, thence south to Brandy City. Poverty Hill was large enough to cast 160 votes, but great changes was to take place trouble times were ahead. Wages were three dollars for ten hours. Chinamen were slipping in and could be hired

for one dollar and fifty cents for the same hours, the same, or more work.

Father bought the first wagon from American House into Poverty Hill. When he started down the steep point into Slate Creek he saw his brakes would not hold the wagon back in control. He cut a large sapling or small tree down and chained it to the wagon with all the limbs and branches left on. He reached the creek in safety, but to get the wagon up the opposite side point was more than a mans job. Many years later he showed me the route covered by him. It was a clear indication there was no

wagon roads in Poverty Hill at that time or he would chosen a road fifty or more miles around to a gradeless road less to a four mile short cut.

There was a young lady from North Ireland working for Pat Cunningham at the American House who father wooed and won. They were married at Poverty Hill in due course of time and a red-haired girl was born. Two years later, June the seventh, 1867, a son came to light who they named Marion, having General

Marvin in mind. Father was joined by Sam Westall, his father, and Marthus Barrow Westall, his mother, and sister Elizabeth. Seeing no future, they bought a home in Oakland. In eighteen months James Edward, a black-haired boy, appeared on the scene. They kept on coming, boys and girls, red and black, until six girls and four boys made up the family!

In the meantime, the Cleveland Mine and Union Hill Mine began to employ men. A branch road from the La Porte road at North Star was constructed and Scales Diggins became quite a town. Pratt and Alley built a



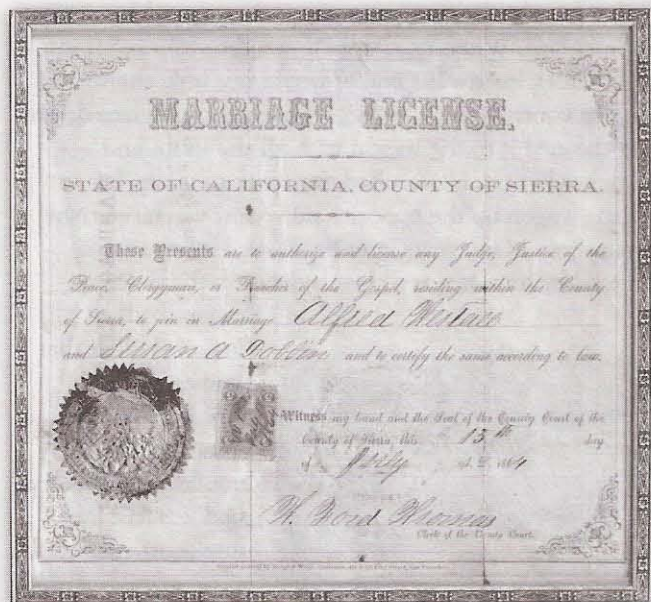
*Westall children celebrating Christmas in the family home in Loganville.*

*Back Row - L to R - Adrian Westall, Lucy (Westall) Nasholm, Gladys (Westall) Fowler, Sidney Westall, Ed Westall*

*Front Row - L to R - Edna (Westall) Gottardi, Mother Amy Weer Westall, Amy (Westall) Bowman*

Uncle Marion Remembered (Continued on Page 4)

## Uncle Marion Remembered (Continued from Page 3)



Marriage Certificate of Alfred Westall and Susan Dobbins—  
married October 9, 1864.

general merchandise store. Saloon accommodations had its building. Hancock sold his interest in Poverty Hill to Judson Powder Co., and moved to Oakland. Father was put in charge. The store business was allowed to fade away. His whole interest was in one of the three hard bed rock tunnels being driven in to the channel from Rattlesnake Ravine. They were working the channel wrong end to down grade. Father worked many long days, months and years with strong arm, courage and determination using single jacks, double jacks and inch steel to put their rounds in the face, often using wooden rails for the cars to take the dirt out on. They had no high power powder but used black powder which was troublesome in wet holes.

The house we were living in consisted of a big room warmed with a large bar room stove, three bedrooms and a kitchen standing on logs past six feet long, giving plenty of room for winter wood. The deep snows of winter gave them the idea of an elevated house. There was a well under the back porch that gave us very fine cool water. Father and his three or four men were making progress in the tunnel. Charles Hendle, their surveyor, told them they were at a point where they could put up a raise bar air and prepare to operate. There was a flume to build with riffles to save the bottom and save the gold. When everything was in place, the water was turned on. Gravel rocks and

water poured down the shaft so fast the flume could not carry it away. The tunnel was blocked, a reservoir began to build up, a frequent occurrence, often dangerous to open. Father soon had an opening, the water was on again with success this time.

Quite a few changes had taken place. Henry Miles with his wife and two boys had moved to Union Hill. Firgieson had finished his claim on the rim. Chinamen were occupying his house Laferty. His wife, two sons and daughter was gone. Chan Turner and Danfort ??? laws of Laferty there ??? ranches on Gold Run Creek. The former bought the hotel at Scales. The latter left his first born in a grave with a picket fence near the American House Trail. When the water season was ended Father cleaned up the sluice, and more bad luck, he brought the gold home, chalked the inside of the retort to keep the gold from sticking ??? the amalgam gold with quicksilver on in, clamped the top with a five foot condenser pipe attached on. Placed a bucket of water at the end of the pipe to keep it cool and catch the quicksilver, built a fire under the retort. Everything was fine, but was it? A loud blast startled everyone, the pipe got blocked, the top blew off, the gold scattered everywhere lucky no one was hurt. From that time on a piece of bailing wire was used to keep the pipe from blocking. All of the above was on an open gravel surface. Several Chinamen were hired who, for several days, swept until it was clean as a woman's kitchen floor. The sweepings were washed through rockers. The incline was raised to near the west rim of the channel. Firgisson's house standing on the bank, the tunnel had to be pushed ahead. Sam Kingdon and his brother Jim moved in from Barnard Diggins bringing Karl Doud and John Davis with them. They were working on the East side of the channel farther on the West. The two claims were destined to come together as one, plenty of trouble ahead. Father was striving to hold his job with Judgson. Sam Kingdon secretly, finally openly, working to get him out. Father had two men with him, Ed Hughes who batched in a cabin on the point where the La Porte trail dipped into Rattlesnake Ravine. FX Ebley, who lived with his Spanish wife in the Laferty house. One evening about nine we heard a big noise at Jim Kingdon's house. The dogs were savagely barking, the men shouting 'sick him', 'sick him' and shooting. It was against Ed Hughes who was returning from Scales to his cabin. He escaped without injury.

One winter, Father was caring for FX pig and chickens

Uncle Marion Remembered (Continued on Page 5)

## Uncle Marion Remembered (Continued from Page 4)

while they were in Los Angeles. He asked me if I could take the buckets home as he wished to go up to the reservoir. I knew there were some apples in the house and said, 'I could if there was something in them. All right I will get you some apples.' FX returned, she did not. The next winter when there was plenty of snow on the ground and Father was on one of his many trips to Oakland to report to Judgson, FX decided to pull out. Late in the P.M. while passing our house on his way to La Porte to take stage he got in a rangle with my mother. When he got about 100 ft. away from the house he said, 'Oh you get back in to the house and shut up or I will come back and mate you.' Mother replied, 'You come back here and I will give you both barrels of the shotgun standing by my side.' FX vanished in the dusk.

Bill, Hugo, and George Smith had moved into the Miles. One evening after spending a day in the Scales, decided to go by Union Hill and the short cut home, got lost in the timber land, all three wishing to go a different direction. Soon they heard a familiar noise, it was Marion balling, pleased for the first time at that sound they knew which way to go. The Smith boys left and chinaman took possession of the house. Ed and I, who went barefooted during the summer, plagued them so much they covered each approach to the house with broken glass without avail.

During the idle time of the year, Father cut down a large cedar tree, with Marion and Ed's help, split boards twelve feet long by eight inches wide one inch thick, with one side dressed to cover the south side of the large kitchen and put a new ceiling on. Father got some ??? and great pleasure in tracing honey bees. He traced a line to spruce tree on a steep side of the Slate Creek decided he would save the bees. While we were building a flat form to cut the tree above the hive, the bees started to swarm. Hollow, whistle, throw rocks and dirt at them, Father yelled. We did, the queen bee settled on a branch, the others collected around her, forming a ball-like mass as large as a man's head. Father cut them down. The tree was cut, a section about four feet long was cut below the hive with the help of chinese. This section was carried home and placed on a large stump 50 ft. from the house. The bees appeared to be contented. The winter was long and cold. Clear days we noticed dead bees on the snow. Sugar and water was placed on them to work on, by summer they were all dead. He ??? traced one for two and a half, south across Gold Run in the top of a large sugar pine tree. For two days we sawed, chopped and wedged to fall the tree up the steep hill side. We rushed up to see our prize, but too late, big black and empty comb was all we got. In your mind have you a picture of three weary, disappointed males picking up their saw, ax, sledge and

steel wedges for their journey home. Dwight who was to be married arrived at the house, where the wedding was to take place at the appointed time to find his girl had skipped with another man. Embittered man for the remainder of his life said rum, women and tobacco was the ruination of mankind.

The tunnel had been pushed ahead and operations resumed. The East and West rim workings were approaching the center. Fighting was intense, something had to be done. Father had made several trips to Oakland to see Judgson and trips to Downieville on court actions, was stunned on receipt of a letter ordering him to step out. Sam Kingdon was put in charge of all workings. All elated, Sam came to Father and said, 'It is not as black as it looks Al. I have a job for you.' Much surprised, Father accepted. At the end of a month he had told mother he had all of Kingdon and his work he could stand, he was going to Scales to see Boyce. Monday he went to work at Fare Play. An hydraulic mine owned and operated by ??? and Stephen Boyce. The bank was about two hundred feet high consisting of a gravel bed capped by a lava formation, a dangerous place to work. One day they heard a thud, looking up they saw the bank chipping and knew there was going to be a cave. With their tools, the men started for shelter. In about two hundred feet one man got so scared he just jumped up and down without gaining distance. It was a big cave. The force of air from it carried a rock, as large as a man's head, five hundred feet and through both sides of the blacksmith shop, as usual no one was hurt. There were a large pile of lava chunks to be drilled and blasted, with favorable atmosphere the blasting and roaring of the pipes could be heard in Poverty Hill four miles away. A few of the men batched in a little cabin at the mine, the rest walked too, and from town (Scales) carrying their lunch, every day. Hubard, a friend of our family, went hunting, killed a deer, dressed and hung it up to get tomorrow. Getting home about dark he handed his wife the liver, heart, and tongue. Not seeing the deer, she said, 'Why Johnney Hubard, any other man would have got the deer.' A widow now, Hubard had gone to Trinity County gold fields giving Father his log and brush fenced ranch, house and barn, one place the incoming chinks, as we called the chinamen, did not get. A big ditch of water ran past the front of our house into a reservoir that had been raised high enough to flood our basement. One day my mother said, 'there is a rattlesnake swimming around in the cellar.' I grab the gun and went down, it swam across to a platform raised its head as if in challenging. I shot it off."

**Editor's note:** Some offensive language is contained within this diary narrative. The language was retained in order to present the diary as it was written, without alteration. This fascinating narrative continues for many more pages. Excerpts may be included in future issues of The Sierran.

## Sierra County Historical Society Annual Meeting

**B**efore the annual meeting of the Historical Society started, tours of the Loyalton Museum and Historical Park were conducted by Museum Curator, Elda Faye Bell. A delicious lasagna lunch prepared by Joann Buczkowske, Milt Gottardi and Virginia Lutes, with potluck items added by members, was served in the Loyalton Social Hall.

The meeting was opened by President Bud Buczkowske at 1:30 p.m. Guests were welcomed and attendees introduced themselves. In accordance with the organization bylaws, three names were offered to the members for their approval to two-year terms on the



Main Street - Loyalton, July 4, 1912



Sierra Hotel to accommodate B&L railroad customers.  
Built in 1904. - Loyalton

Board of Directors. They were Virginia Lutes, Suzi Schoensee and Bud. There were no nominations from the floor and the three names were approved. The financial records of the organization were available for review by the members.

The meeting was adjourned and Milt Gottardi handed our photos of old buildings (hospitals, schools, stores, etc.) which had at one time existed in Loyalton. The members then boarded a bus, compliments of Wayne White of White's Transportation, and toured the city noting where the historic buildings once stood and what was at the site now. Copies of the two sheets of photos and explanation comments may be purchased from Loyalton Museum for \$6.00 (tax and shipping included) at Box 305, Loyalton, CA, 96118.

All present reported a very enjoyable day. ~

## Kentucky Mine Museum, Gold Mine and Stampmill

**T**he 2004 season opened Memorial Day weekend. What a lift we got from the clean and neat buildings, swept and raked grounds and pretty summer flowers planted in the flowerbeds and in pots set around the picnic area—all this thanks to Toni Strine. Lauri Unland job-shared with me for the summer. She also continued serving as Administrative Assistant, a position she has ably filled for the last eight years.

Attendance was light through June and early July, then picked up considerably in mid-July and throughout August. We closed the second week of September. However we have accommodated 6 larger tours since then. None of

these would have been as successful without the extra help provided by Bill Copren, Suzi Schoensee, and Lauri and her friend Glen Knapp. Special thanks to Maren Sholberg for taking care of the gift shop while we toured 60 Loyalton Elementary students! I will continue to offer special off-season tours to groups, large or small, if people call me ahead of time at (530) 994-3514.

As usual we had visitors from all over the world and from many states in the U.S. We had many more people than in the past from more local places: the Bay Area, Sacramento

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### Kentucky Mine Museum (Continued from Page 6)

and Sierra foothill communities, Reno and western Nevada towns. Evidently some people chose to explore closer to home than to take long road trips.

Thank you to Jim Connolly for watching yard and estate sales and antique stores for local artifacts. He acquired quite a few from both sides of Sierra County and has given them to the museum. My favorite is a flour sack from the grist mill in Etta. It is on display in the Sierra Valley case. Jim has been a frequent volunteer as well. Other acquisitions include a beautiful Maidu metate and several manos, which, thanks to Bruce Morrison's quick thinking, were saved from being broken up by a sledge hammer in Sierra City. The metate and one mano are displayed appropriately under one of the black oak trees in the picnic grounds. Rita Bradley's late 19th Century picture of Independence Lake and some early 20th Century kitchen artifacts were donated by Nancy and Bill Harnach. The picture is on display in the museum, the kitchen items will become part of the display in the Miner's cabin next season. And, as always, thanks to the Loeffler-Hansen family for their gifts of many historic photos (many with names!) and for that beautiful blue

velvet bodice which had been Anna Loeffler's. Other newly acquired items include oilers (thanks to supporters from Quincy) for the Babbitt Bearings on the Pelton Wheel in the mine (due to be installed in the Spring) and a scanner for the computer (thanks to Don McIntosh). Thanks also to the generous people who have donated financially to the museum to help keep our doors open and the museum functioning.

We've held several meetings with the county and Forest Service to determine how to proceed with the lengthening of the adit and the impact on the bats. There will be a graduate student from Humboldt State studying the behavior of our bats, which live in the stampmill. Marilyn Tierney (USFS) will oversee this part of the project. The county will hire a mining engineer. Tim Beals has continued to help us with needed repairs, as well. Thank you, Tim and Supervisor Huebner for your support.

Ah, yes the rattlesnakes: Nobody got bit! Let's hope we have fewer next year.

-Anne Eldred

## Kentucky Mine 2004 Summer Concert Series

**T**he Kentucky Mine Amphitheatre in Sierra City came alive this summer with four Saturday night concerts. Following a slow beginning, the last two concerts were held to nearly a full house. Shirley Leschinsky, event coordinator, offered audiences a variety of entertainment.

Tom Rigney and Flambeau began the series on the Fourth of July weekend. Tom and his group were an excellent blend of hot Cajun-Zydeco and jazz, making it tough for the audience to sit still and perfect for dancing. A first time to Sierra City for this Bay Area group, they are sure to return.

The second concert was return Cowboy Poet Jim King from Chico. His back-up talents, known to many locals, were Johnny Walker on the harmonica and Cecilia Kuhn, with vocals and playing the accordion. Jim King has been selected to be on the stage at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering at Elko this coming January.

Another return was Golden Bough, singing and playing a variety of Celtic music. Unfortunately, this was the final performance on the Kentucky Mine stage as this popular group, after being on the road for 25 years to many European countries as well as the United States, is retiring early in 2005.

Deja Blues from Reno returned to Kentucky Mine by popular demand. Amazing energy from lead singer Wanda Cobb kept the audience dancing.

Special thanks go out to all the businesses and individuals that helped make the Kentucky Mine 2004 Summer Concert Series a success, and especially to ticket outlets—Old Sierra City Hotel, Briar Patch Market in Grass Valley, Kentucky Mine, Bookshelf in Quincy, and top sellers, the Graeagle Mill Works. A bundle of thanks go to Joanne and Dennis Patheal and The Buckhorn, George Alcott, Jan Koettel, Joleen Torri, Jan Patton and Toni Strine. A huge thanks to our special sponsor for without you the concert series would not exist. And, of course, we thank the audiences for making the evening so much fun. Oh, and to Mr. Bear for adding a little excitement and giving the area visitors something to talk about when they went back to the city.

Plans are well underway for the 2005 season. Entertainers are being contacted, dates have been discussed, and ticket agencies are ready. Season tickets will go on sale in the early spring.

For more information on the Kentucky Mine 2005 Summer Concert Series and/or information on receiving CD's and schedules from the 2004 performers, please contact Shirley Leschinsky (530) 277-5446.

# The Sierran

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