



OUT OF THE PAST . . . *Some Ike Livermore Memories*

Norman "Ike" Livermore is one of the best friends packers ever had. As Secretary for Resources for eight years under Gov. Reagan (1967-74), and later as Member and President of the State Fish & Game Commission (1980-84), he was a major force in decisions benefitting the High Sierra Wilderness and the packing industry.

Ike was Grand Marshal of the second Mule Days in 1971, and key person in arranging the visit of Gov. Reagan in 1974. In 1934-35, with the help of Allie Robinson from Independence, and packers on both sides of the Sierra, he organized, and was first Executive Secretary of the High Sierra Packers Association. As packer and partner with Ray Buckman of Mineral King (1929-1946), and with Bruce and Charles Morgan and Tommy Jefferson of Mt. Whitney in Lone Pine (1946-1973), he was at one time owner of the largest pack train in California.

Now 88, he is retired and owner of a 7,500 acre ranch in northern Napa County, family ownership of which dates back to 1880. In 1977, his anecdotes on packing with the Sierra Club appeared in the official Mule Days program, and in 1986, he sent Craig London these glimpses into a few of his memories.

"A 1934 motorcycle trip circling all outfits in the Sierra and leading to my 1934-35 packers' report and organizing the Packers' Association.

"Packing several tons of lumber from Atwells Mill to Cahoon Lookout in Sequoia National Park (Hockett Meadows area).

"My brother John going over Sawtooth Pass just before a lightning storm, and having his hair stand straight up from his head from static electricity.

"The experience of having Walter Starr (later killed in a climbing accident), the compiler of 'Starr's Guide,' rent some burros from Mineral King, and having him come in to say they were lost, then sending a packer back, who found them within 200 yards of camp, belled and hobbled.

"With the help of Allie Robinson and others, lining up 1,000 head of stock for liability insurance for pack-ers.

"A dead tree that silently fell in the Kern, the top landing only a few feet from me, and almost wrecking my string of mules.

"Many rides to the top of Mt. Whitney; fighting fire on Chagoopa Plateau; almost roping a coyote (or wolf?) that was chasing a deer on Siberian Pass; being dragged into a tourist camp hanging onto the lead rope of a runaway horse; and cutting my leg at Guitar Lake when chopping a tree.

"Constructing a 'biffy' for the needs of Gov. and Mrs. Reagan and other tourists on other trips; seeing some of the famous 'Shorty Loveless' cabins along the backbone of the High Sierra.

"Being swept over a waterfall in the San Joaquin near Red's Meadow, losing my hat, and having to ride the whole length of the Muir Trail without it.

"Saving my brother from drowning in Dead Man Canyon; meeting a one-armed packer (Harvey Watts), whose only explanation of his loss was that 'it was bit off;' and packing in a fat man from Mineral King who wore a blister on the front of his stomach even though we gave the biggest saddle available.

"The universal story at Mineral King that Phil Davis, one of the big-time packers there in the early '20s, fell in love with head packer's wife and married her in exchange for two strings of mules.

"With Allie Robinson, packing out two dead men on the 1941 High Trip, one to Mineral King, and one to Symmes Creek.

"Norman Clyde with his 90-lb. pack and his story about packrats forming a pack train that carried away Sierra Club members' hot water bottles; Allie Robinson's story about a 'bellowing lake,' perhaps the origin of the name Bullfrog Lake; and wild horse stories told by packers around the campfires.

"Dan Tachee, the famous Sierra Club cook, with his 100-pound bag which turned out to be full of stolen hambones; Allie Robinson's 'nighthawks,' Screaming Willy and One-Eyed Fox, who hid their beds so well from Allie that they couldn't find them themselves; and packer Roy Albin who, when offered an air mattress, had the air let out by Allie and remarked that he could-n't see that it made any difference.

"The lightning bolt that killed a pack of mules, while the woman leading them on her horse survived; the same summer (1926) seeing a mule killed when it ran onto the runway at Tunnel while a plane was taking off - wrecking the plane as well; and the story Frank Chrysler told about breaking his leg but straightening it out in the crotch of a tree before riding out of the high country.

"How George Eastman, at Tuolumne Meadows, refused to let his packers join him at meals, so they 'got

lost' playing poker for a week; and the story of the dude who was asked to boil eggs, proceeding to place the eggs in a dry pot with the expectation that they would just boil inside the shells."

In his recollections for a 1939 Sierra Club Bulletin, Ike concluded, "Such is the life of a packer. As the years roll by, packers will come and go. But I hope that the High Trip and Sierra packing will go on forever." Friends of Ike Livermore hope he will, too.