

JOHN H. LUBKEN

As Told to John H. Wintersteen

My mother came from near Berlin, Germany to Placerville in 1865. She came to this valley in 1869.

My father came to the valley in 1862. She came to New York from Germany and then went on to Australia, during the gold boom. He came back to New York by way of the Isthmus of Panama, to this valley. That was long before the Panama Canal was built. He married my mother in 1875 when she was 19.

I was born in Lone Pine and have been here all of my 90 years, except for five months when I went to Heald's Business College in San Francisco. Arthur Shepherd went to college with me at the same time. Nettie Roeper Fausel of Independence was my cousin. Her father was my mother's brother.

There were lots of ranches here then. They raised all their food and had everything they needed winter and summer. When I was a little boy I pulled weeds. I pulled since I was four years old and could tell the difference between the weeds and the vegetables. Sometimes I would hide as it was too hot to work. I would get in the shade and my Grandmama would come along and say, "You cussed little fellow. You are lazy. You don't do nothing." My mother always was good to me and she would save me from a licking when my Grandmama wanted to give me one.

The first time I milked a cow I was 9 years old and then I started milking cows. I never tasted ice cream until I was about 16 years old. I had one dish at Levi's in Independence and I didn't have any more until I was grown. I was set to work and that is all I did was work. I could lift a sack of potatoes that would weigh 150 pounds when I was 15 years old, and put in on the wagon. My father would go along with four or five kegs of beer and take it up to Cerro Gordo. He made beer and every two days he would take 240 gallons and send it all to the miners. He made lots of money.

When I was only 10 years old my grandmother, my brother and I would sell vegetables. My brother died when he was 13. My brother would watch the wagon while we sold vegetables to the people in Lone Pine. We sold a lot in Keeler too. The farmers raised all kinds of vegetables and corn, potatoes, barley and wheat. There was the Bell's Mill on Oak Creek and another one on Bishop Creek, run by Kilpatrick's. They made flour of the wheat and the housewives made bread, same kind of bread you eat now. There was an old bakery in Lone Pine that made bread in big pans like milk pans and they sold it for 25¢ a loaf. There were four saloons in Keeler and one at Swansea. I used to help my father take beer there. He located a homestead that is now the Lacey ranch. He drove from there to the brewery. Brewery Street in Lone Pine was named after the brewery. A Chinaman had a store on Jackson Street, but most of the stores were on Main Street.

They raised a lot of draft horses here. They were heavy horses that could pull, weighing sixteen to eighteen hundred pounds. They hitched 18 to 20 of them to the big heavy stake bed wagons and hauled groceries from Mojave. It took from 8 to 10 days to make the trip.

The people decided to run a boat across Owens Lake, to help get the lumber from the mill, high up in Cottonwood Canyon. They cut lumber there and sent it down in a flume. Sometimes it would get stuck in the flume and stack the lumber high up in the air and they would have to telephone to the mill to shut off the water so they could fix it up again. Down at Owens Lake, where the creek comes in, there was a dock running out in the lake to deep water. They would transfer the lumber to the boat and take it to Swansea. Swansea then was a thriving town something like Lone Pine. There were people scattered all

along there. There was a pier from Swansea running far out into the lake. From there, the lumber was taken to Cerro Gordo. Cerro Gordo means fat mountain. There was a big mine there and a lot of men, mostly Cornishmen. There were some Mexicans and a Mexican had found it. It was rich in silver and lead. Then there was Beverige, a big mining camp. It was all gold there. I have seen gold stacked high on the tables, where they were gambling. They would play until one of the men won all the stack, or until dark, and sometimes all night.

There were six stores in Lone Pine and three in Independence. There were two in Keeler. They were owned by men who sold and traded dynamite. There were two mercantile stores in Darwin and one saloon. John Burkhardt was a watchmaker in Lone Pine and Bill Vaughn was a tailor. Any time you wanted a suit of clothes, he would make it for you. Shoemaker Pete made shoes and boots. I remember him making my father seven pair of boots. He was the only one that could fit my father. After Pete died, my father got them in Independence but they weren't as good.

I went to school in a little school building where the Town Hall is now. Elisa Carrasco is the only one living who went to school with me. She was two years older than I. There were very few kids. My wife taught school in a two-story building where the elementary school is now. There were two rooms below and one big room above. This building was later torn down and new buildings built in the same place. My wife planted the big tree which still stands in the school yard. She planted two trees and the girls took good care of their tree and it grew. The boys were kind of careless about theirs and it died for want of water.

Lone Pine Brewery was built before the earthquake of 1872, because people told about the gable end of the brewery going out, during the earthquake.

My father came to the valley in 1862 and homesteaded on George's Creek. Later he traded the homestead for a share of the brewery and was a partner in it. Louis Munsinger built it. John Myers, known as Hans Myers, bought Louis out and my father traded his ranch to Myers for his interest in the brewery and got the whole thing. It was called Lone Pine Beer. It tasted a lot like Miller's High Life. It was the same kind of beer. It was sold in Darwin, Cerro Gordo, Keeler, Independence and Swansea. It got so he couldn't make a profit and they stopped brewing beer in 1894. After my father died, my mother sold the brewery. The malt mill in back of the brewery was a horse drawn mill. The horse would keep going as long as the barley hopper was full. When the barley was gone, she would stop and as soon as they filled the hopper again, she would go again. She kept going until she died at the age of 32. The brewery building was torn down by Skinner. He bought it from my mother.

I bought the ranch from my mother, cheap. She was going to sell it to George Shoey for \$12,000. It was a hell of a place, all willows. I asked her if she would sell it to me for \$12,000 and she said, "If you have the money, I'll take it." I told her to never mind the money, but to be up in Independence the next morning and we would fix it up. She said, "Alright, but remember I have to have the money." She never knew what money I had. I had 3000 certificates and I gave her my check for \$3,000 and paid her all in cash. I had \$9,000 drawing interest.

One time, Spainhower and I were coming down the mountain with the cattle. It was hot, real hot, and he said, "By golly it sure was hot," and, "by jings," he was going to pray that night that the sky would be covered so it will be cool next day. By golly, the sky was covered from one end to the other and we drove down and about an hour afterwards the sun came out. He said he was going to pray that night. I don't know whether he did or" not, but he said he did and the sky was covered until we got into the field. It was cool and the cattle traveled like hell. It was a 5-mile drive too.

I ran about 500 head of cattle all the time. They were mixed, the whiteface with the Durham. The Durham weighed a little more. I would run six-year whitefaces and three-year Durhams. One year I got .33¢ for them on foot and had 97 steers.

I was a rancher most of my life. After I went to business college, I came home and went into the cattle game and made my living out of cattle.

The white men sold whiskey. They would take a half-barrel of whiskey and put it in another barrel and then fill it up with water and throw in four plugs of chewing tobacco. People liked that. They thought it was pure whiskey, but I knew it was tobacco because my folks used to get the barrels to put sauerkraut in. They made sauerkraut from the cabbage they raised.

Some of the Indians went by names like Mono John, Pinon John, Skidoo George. Some of the Paiute were bad and there were some uprisings. Andrew Glen was born under a big rock in Tuttle Creek Canyon. At the mouth of Tuttle Creek Canyon is a big rock and his mother birthed him there. In later years, Bennie Morris shot off Andrew's leg for no reason at all. He just stood behind a tree and when Andrew came along, he blazed away and broke it off. He should have been punished but he never was. They didn't pay much attention to Indians in those days. His father was known as Mono John. Andrew was a good man. Pete Thomas worked for me for years. He worked on the ranch and he was a "damned" good cowboy. He was about my age.

I had three children, Bernice, Henrietta and John. Henrietta is the only one living now. I have 7 grandchildren. Bettie Halamicsek, Bennie Bonham, Alberta Clement and Blanch Comino are the children of Bernice. Christy, Linda and John were the children of John. I had nine great grandchildren. Ann Marie is the child of Bettie. Douglas and Dena are the children of Bennie. Joseph John and Paul are the children of Blanche. Carrie, Charles and Chad are the children of Alberta.

I was on the Inyo County Board of Supervisors beginning in January 1913 until 1917, and again from 1930 until 1956 when I resigned at the age of 80. I was Chairman of the Board for 19 years. Jack Hopkins took my place on the board.

John H. Lubken - Inyo County Supervisor and rancher.

Born May 5, 1876. Son of John Fredrick and Augusta Marie Roeper Lubken.

Graduate of Healds Business College, San Francisco - July 2, 1896.

Married Marie Lenore Hollengren at Independence, Calif. June 17, 1902.

Children: Bernice born July 9, 1903; Henrietta Crist born Dec. 31, 1911; John August born April 28, 1917.

Career: Cattleman Rancher, Inyo County Board of Supervisors at Independence from 1913 to 1917 and from 1930 to 1956, Chairman of the Board 19 years. Advisory Board for Taylor Grazing Board for U.S. Government members. Honorary Life Director of Death Valley Forty-Niners. Inyo-Mono Cowbells Father of the Year 1967. Director California Cattlemen's Association. Director of American Cattle-men's Association.

Hobby: Raising Bees - with the help of the grandchildren.

Member of Inyo Lodge, F&AM from 1940 until his death. Member of Knights of Pythias for 50 years, was Prelate, Vice Chancellor, Chancellor Commander and Master of Works.

Recreation: Social gatherings with friends.

Died October 25, 1973 - Services, Lone Pine Nazarene Church Oct. 29, 1973, Rev. Rick Savage and Inyo Lodge F&AM #221,

Interment: Mt. Whitney Cemetery.