

## Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono

Being a quarterly recounting of the nature and history of two California counties

Vol. IV, No. 2

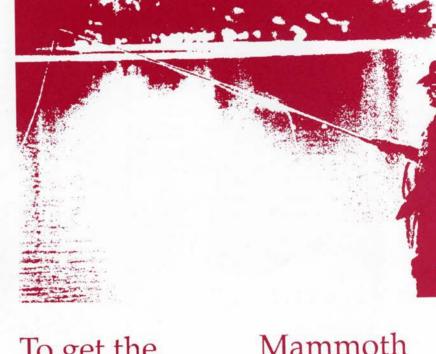


#### INSIDE

Leroy Cline's Tales Wattersons, Part II Mountain Golf Sherwin Story, Part III Bennettville Skidoo Sawmill & Hearse and more

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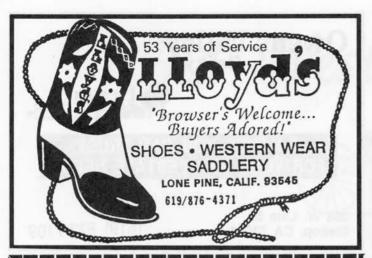
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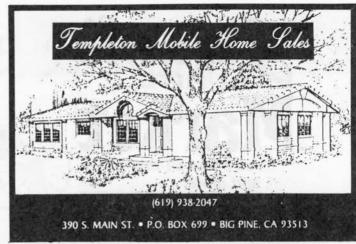
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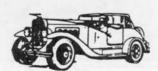
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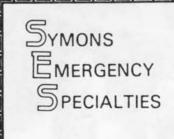


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## THE ALBUM, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono

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#### In This Issue

| Leroy Cline Tells It As It Is, The Rest of The Story                 |
|--|
| The Wattersons of Benton, Part II7 by Demila Jenner Benton Historian |
| Mountain Golf  |
| The Sherwin Story, Part III  |
| An Atypical Summer Day in Bennettville                               |
| Skidoo   |
| The Sawmill and the Hearse41 by Thomas W. Uhlmeyer Big Pine native   |
| Mahala Joe   |
| And In Addition  |

Publisher

Deane Funk
General Manager

Pete Doughtie

Editor

Jane Fisher
Layout Assistant

Peter Korngiebel

Sponsor Contact
Mike Martell

**Cover photo:** Katherine J. Arcularius Watterson in her wedding dress. She was married to Thomas Watterson at the Hill Hotel in Bishop on June 2, 1897. Photo courtesy of Genevieve Arcularius Clement.

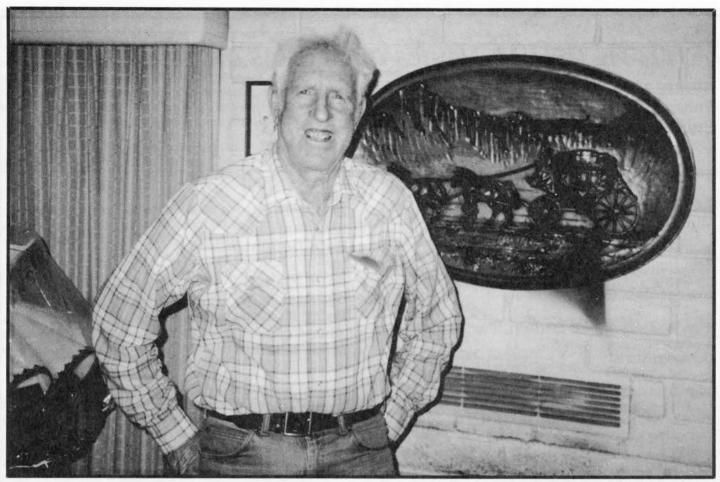
THE ALBUM, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono, is a collection of stories, history, and natural history of Inyo County and Mono County, in Eastern California.

Letters, comments, and contributions are welcome; contributions should be accompanied by photos, documents, sketches, or maps.

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Leroy Cline

Photo by George Garrigues

## LEROY CLINE TELLS IT AS IT IS

The rest of the story

by George Garrigues

When the movies came to Lone Pine in the 1930s, I started working for them. At that time, any scene they wanted they could find there. Westerns, Arabians, Gunga Din, most of the Hop-Along Cassidy pictures were taken in Inyo County. I worked with Boyd. In fact I worked with Monte Montana when he was just starting out.

The Brigham Young picture was made there too, Linda Darnel's first picture. I worked in that picture with her and Dean Jagar; he was Brigham Young. They shot the scene where they sighted the Great Salt Lake from the first switch-back on the Whitney Portal road looking back at Owens Lake. They built the Salt Lake City set by the Moffet Ranch near the Alabama Gates. They used paraffin cakes on the edges for ice and crushed marble for snow. We wore buffalo robes. I never prayed so much in my life. Every time Brigham knelt down, you had to start praying right where you were, in the water or anywhere else. At the set on the Moffet ranch, we planted all the crops, tilled them, harvested and took them to the big warehouse. I worked about six weeks on that picture.

When I first started in the movies, seventeen of us worked as extras. We had to wrangle our own horses, ride one and lead six more and be at the set at daylight. We kept one horse to ride and let out the other six. They'd shoot until sundown, then we'd have to pick up

our horses and wouldn't get home until eight or nine o'clock. All this for \$5.00 a day. Later they raised the pay to \$7.00

The Screen Actor's Guild was just starting to form. They came up and made an offer. If we would sign up, we could join the Guild for a \$10 initiation fee and \$4.50 quarterly dues. The Teamsters Union was the same deal, but I went with the Guild. That raised our wages to \$11. and then we rode a bus to and from the set and got time and one-half for more than eight hours on the set. We also got paid more if we spoke a line so it was a little better after that.

Monogram and Republic Pictures were the main ones. Monogram was the cheapest outfit. For their western scenes, they'd hire two sets of horses, one dark and one light. We'd have dark costumes and light costumes — black hats, white hats. They'd get you down there and you'd be the bad guys while they panned you all the way down. Then you'd go back, change costumes and horses and come down again chasing yourself. We'd go on all day like that.

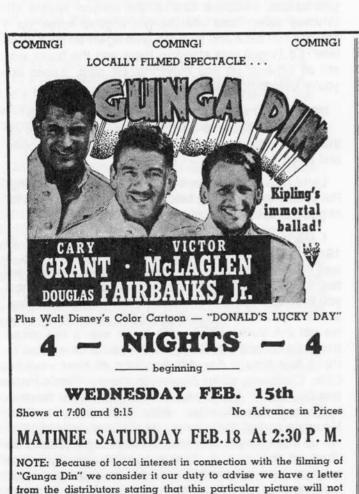
Then I worked for the rock mason on the Ranch House Cafe. We built the fireplace and did all the rock work. I hauled mud, sand, boulders and all that. Whit Barber was the guy that built it and I worked for this old man, Jim McKenna. He was a little Irishman and was

really a good rock mason, laid all the fireplaces and never had one smoke. Did the big one at Crestview Lodge. He worked for Alfonso Bell — did all the fireplaces in Bell-Aire. He wanted me to go with him. I've kicked myself ever since for not going. I worked for him for more than a year and got a good foundation.

I worked for the City of Los Angeles in Lone Pine, relining the aqueduct. Worked for them two times, got on steady the second time. Then they sent me from Lone Pine to West Portal to clean up when they finished the tunnels up there; I was living in Lone Pine at that time. Then we put water boxes in Parker Meadow. From there I came down to Bishop and worked out of the yard there for Joe MacIver, Bill Calloway and Jim Irwin. Dave McCoy was the hydrographer. We lived in an old bunk house the city had down where Steve's Auto is now. I went to Independence for a while and then back to Lone Pine for Lasky.

Then I worked for Cecil Lewis, superintendent, for \$135 per month. Rode ditch some of the time. Instead of doing labor which I was getting paid for, I drove all kinds of equipment that I wasn't supposed to be doing — dozer, dragline, motor grader, cat.

When the war came along and everything was rationed, they parked their pickups and used horses to patrol the aqueduct. They had stations at Intake, Inde-



be shown in Lone Pine.



pendence, Alabama Gates, Lone Pine and Haiwee. All the packers sold their spoilt horses to the city — horses, saddle and all, the whole thing for \$100 a head. The city got a bargain whether the ditch riders could ride a horse or not. They pulled me off labor and put me riding horses for more than a year. I rode from Lone Pine down to Slide Creek by Bartlett, twenty-five miles a day. I was still paid labor wages versus \$165 for ditch riders. Cecil Lewis came up and said a cat skinner job at \$190 would be open, that Casey Jones who had it was going to move to Van Nuys. I said okay for that big a jump in pay, but Casey decided he wanted to stay before his two weeks notice was up so I quit and came to Bishop.

They had this one old horse called Tonopah something. He was a good horse, good saddle and everything, but he'd get a notion and he'd start backing up. He'd back right into the aqueduct or the fence. Couldn't stop him. Gilmore started out with him one morning. The horse started acting up when he got him to the gate going from the main road to the aqueduct road. The aqueduct was on one side, with cement sides and about a forty-foot dropoff, and another dropoff on the other side with a barbed wire fence. They were dividing the water there with a metal flume. He went through the gate and locked it, tried to get back on the horse and the horse wouldn't let him.

Ed Hogue was superintendent there. Every time he'd get a horse that couldn't be ridden, he'd get me. I had my saddle at home so I went by the house to get it and my boots, spurs and quirt, and went to take a look. I said I wasn't going to try him with the aqueduct full of water on one side and fence on the other. I took him out in the flat and worked him over pretty good; took him down to Tuttle Creek. I got him through the first gate and he was doing good until we got to the next flume crossing the aqueduct. The horse decided that he wasn't going to cross it and started backing up. I fought him a few times, but he kept at it. There was a drop off of about twenty feet so I figured I was either going to break the horse or walk back without him. He started backing so I helped him out, heading him right for the dropoff, gave another jerk and stepped off, letting him go. He ended up twenty feet below. I got down there and got him back on his feet and he was all right. Got him back on top and rode up to the flume again — same thing. I dropped him a second time, and then a third, and he was a broke horse. Never had any trouble with that horse from then on.

We were down by Carrol Creek. I was about half asleep, sort of hypnotized, had my rope with me, got pretty good with it. I came around a turn on the aqueduct and here was a city painter. I don't know what he was doing, he was putting numbers on something. They were putting something on the other side; there was a bunch of paraphernalia and tin cans. This old horse swapped ends and was heading back to Lone Pine. I got him stopped after a quarter of a mile and rode him back. Let him smell the paint cans and he was all right. The guy said, "Isn't that the horse that they used to

have in Independence?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "They couldn't do that with him up there."

I rode that horse from then on; you couldn't ask for a better horse. Don Boyer was water keeper then. I went on vacation and they gave him to Don. He never got him out of the corral. When I came back, they had sent the horse south. Pinky Hopkins was water keeper at Alabama Gates and riding ditch. They gave him to Pinky and he bucked Pinky off by Cottonwood. They they sent him to Haiwee and he bucked the water keeper there off. Next thing I knew, he was in Mojave, still going south.

They had another horse called Tonopah. If he didn't get his way, he'd go right up in the air like he was going over backwards. Everybody would bail off. Harry Austin, an Indian living at Laws, had made me a good heavy quirt, best breaking quirt you ever saw. They brought me in and the horse tried the same thing on me. I hit him between the ears with the quirt and brought him to his knees, got him out of the notion — no trouble after that.

Had a lot of gates along the aqueduct. I didn't want to have to get off the horse, open the gate, take the horse through, close the gate and get back on the horse. I tried to open the gate without getting off, but old Tonopah balked. I headed him up the canyon toward Mt. Whitney riding hard until he got a good lather up. I brought him back and tried the gate again an hour or so later. Ed Hogue was standing there and the horse was still all lathered up and quivering. He said, "Looks like you're overdoing this."

"Yeah. Let me ride my way or get someone else."

"Okay, you seem to be doing okay." I never got off that horse after that. We'd go right up to a gate, open and close it behind me — that was it.

Later on I quit cowboying and went to truck driving. Put in forty years driving before I called it quits. Met a lot of good people, pay was good.

I started driving logging truck for Inyo Lumber in 1945. I drove the old highway over Sherwin grade. It was quite a road. You can look back now, the way we had to drive (and Moffet demanded) and wonder how you ever survived it. Every truck made three trips a day, seven days a week, regardless of how long it took. Then we got 2-A trucks which were faster with a five-speed transmission and 200 horsepower motors so we had to make four trips a day. Hauled from all over - June Lake, Crestview, all the Mammoth country, Tom's Place and also east of Crowley Lake. We went across the dam to Casa Diablo Mountain. Also Taylor Canyon, Bald Mountain and all that country. Had some awful big timber up there around Mammoth — fir so big it couldn't be lifted off the ground. They'd buck it into eight foot lengths, boom the crane straight up and we'd back under it. I hauled one load one time running ten pounds to the foot; had three logs on the truck, three on the

trailer and it scaled out 13,000 board feet in only six logs, 130,000 pounds in weight. I came out of Rock Creek Canyon with 1,800 pump and hit the bottom in first under, as low as I could get; went into the last turn on the wrong side of the road with my pump cutting out on me, rifle flattened out. I went into the last pitch with the governor cutting out, pulled as hard as I could, got down to 1,000 rpms and recovered fast. That was all I had left.

I went to work at \$1 an hour, worked seven and a half years and got up to \$1.35; made a lot of money though. Moffet paid time and one-half over forty hours and we'd get our forty hours in the first three days. It was a good job. Little reckless though.

Then I hauled ore for Union Carbide and worked on the gorge for a year when they were drilling the tunnels.



Johnny Harris (left) and Leroy Cline with "just a regular small load." c. 1945, Leroy Cline photo

Before they brought the Japanese into Manzanar, I helped out in the first water lines for the City of Los Angeles. Then I quit the city and went to work for P.M.T. hauling into the camp all the time it was in operation. Hauled all the dry wall to line the barracks. P.M.T. had the mail and express contract from Mojave to Bishop so I went into the camp with it.



Leroy with log truck, piggyback trailer, and logging crane on lowboy. c. 1945, Leroy Cline photo

The first year camp was in operation, all supplies were shipped in. The second year it was self supporting, except for staples like rice. There were thirty-eight blocks in the camp. Each block had its own kitchen. They used thirty-eight sacks of rice per day — two truck and trailer loads per month. The Japs did a lot of good, no trouble, except about a year after Pearl Harbor, had a little trouble then. The camp was closed down for about a week, nothing in or out. They separated the bad ones and sent them to Tule Lake. Then everything went back to normal operation. They had been making camouflage nets for Africa. They wouldn't do it after the trouble. P.M.T. hauled all the burlap out and took it to New Mexico where the work was done.

## "It was a good job. Little reckless though."



Leroy with P.M.T. rig. c. 1941, Leroy Cline photo

In 1951 I went to work for Leo Smith at Western Gillette in Bishop and stayed there until I retired in 1974.

We ate good, nobody went hungry. No one was every turned away. We always had a full table — eight or ten and always room for one more. My uncle Asa was the same way at Laws. Had a table, don't know how long it was, always a place for any old tramp or hanger-on that came along. Always a place for them, if they wanted to split wood it was all right; even if he didn't it was still all right. Stay as long as they wanted. Aunt Lola would start cooking at the time she got up in the morning and wouldn't quit until she went to bed at night — always cooking.

They and their son Everett lived north of Laws on the Jean Blanc ranch. They raised pigs too, sent us one a year. They caught wild horses and raised mules, had rodeo string, and put on rodeos. Asa was killed in 1928, kicked by a saddle bronc. Dad told stories of chasing wild horses in the Huntoon area. Everett was quite a cowboy, but he liked to hit the bottle. They'd take off for mustangs from Laws to Yellow Jacket and River Springs, then to Whiskey Flat out of Adobe Meadows. Everett had a saddle horse and a roping horse. He'd put a gallon jug on the saddle horn.

Dad told me up by Fish Slough on their way to get mustangs, they found two sets of tracks, human foot-

prints. One set was enormous, the other alongside was regular size, just dwarf compared to the big ones. They had formed when the rock was liquid. I never got a chance to check it out myself.

I remember one time, grandmother was on the old Sherwin ranch in Round Valley. We'd go up to Mammoth and camp out. We were at Lake Mary one time. George Byles was with us and he went up to Lake George for some fishing. We didn't have spinning rods then so to get distance we would take a coil of line off the reel, fasten a weight to it and then spin it over our head and let it go as far as possible. Byles caught a big fish — I don't know how big it was, we didn't bother to keep any records those days. We cut the head off and cut the rest into steaks. Thirteen of us had all we could eat and there was still fish left. We had an old Dodge. Byles went back to Lake George to see if he could catch another. We were going down to Twin Lakes, so my dad wrote a note to Byles, too the head of the fish, opened its mouth and set it over the wheel of the car with the note.

I've had a good life. I've fished, I've hunted, I saw this valley when it was a good valley, agriculture, lot of farms, camping where you wanted without asking anybody. See what it is today. I've seen the good and the bad.



Leroy and Louella Cline

Photo by George Garrigues



"This Old House:" Built by pioneer Bishopite Burdick in the 19th Century, this house on West Line Street was purchased for Kate Watterson by her daughters Mary and Grace. Kate lived there from 1906 until her death in 1929. Today, the house is occupied by Kate's great-grandson, David Jarvis. Photo by Rosemarie Jarvis, 1991

## THE WAITERSONS OF BENTON Part II

by Demilla Jenner

At the turn of the century, in California as on the Isle of Man, the Wattersons were a many-faceted breed. This second article dealing with the Wattersons of Benton follows Kate Gracey Watterson and her family in their move from Benton to Bishop, where they lived out an important portion of their adult lives.

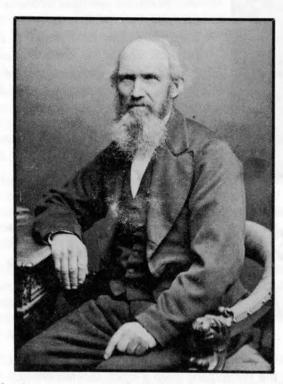
The Watterson bank failures that wrought havoc in so many lives in the Valley involved only two members of the proliferant clan: Mark Q. and Wilfred W., sons of William, who were born and raised in Bishop. It has never been suggested that any other member of the extended Watterson family either participated in the embezzlement or profited from it. It is a tangled tale involving depredations in Owens Valley by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power; community divisions as desperate fear filled Valley people who saw their land and an entire way of life slipping from them. (SEE SIDEBAR).

Of the original four Watterson brothers who emigrated to the U.S. from the Isle of Man, only the oldest, sheepherder-turned-rancher William, initially settled in Bishop; he gave to the community four daughters who evidenced grace and intelligence, and the two sons whose bank failures brought disgrace to the Watterson name. When Kate came to Bishop to join the rest of the Wattersons there, that disgrace was still decades into the future and came after energetic careers of financial success and contributions to community enrichment.

Following the death of James Watterson at Benton in 1881, the other two brothers, Mark and George, lived on in the mining town but by the end of the century they both were firmly anchored in Bishop business life.

In 1906 when Kate disinterred her husband's body from its 25-year rest in the Benton graveyard and reburied it in the Bishop cemetery, she herself settled comfortably in the house on West Line Street which her daughters Mary and Grace had bought for her. All Kate's children and her Watterson in-laws were now bunched in Bishop. None, however, were likely to have been part of the "good attendance" that Socialist H. Gaylord Wilshire drew in October of that year when he lectured on behalf of socialism in Bishop. Likewise, one would not deduce a Watterson was among the 25 Bishopites who, in 1907, comprised Bishop's first Socialist Local; it is not a matter of record that sharing-thewealth was a large part of Watterson credo. Records to indicate that Wattersons did not hesitate to sue Watterson in court, but that came later.

In June of 1904, the **Inyo Register** reported the death on the Isle of Man of Mark Watterson; now only William, the oldest of the four brothers, and George, the youngest, were left. By then George was a member of Bishop's Board of Trustees, was postmaster and notary public, and was Bishop dealer for hardware and farm equipment, including the McCormick Harvesting Machinery Agency. He and Bea Symons were parents of two young children, though, sadly, the young mother had serious heart problems resulting from rheumatic fever.



Mark Watterson, patriarch of the Isle of Man family. He was the father of William, Mark, James, and George, all of whom immigrated to California and lived out their lives here. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection

Kate's son Tom, who married Katie Arcularius and worked for many years as telegrapher and railroad station master in Nevada, now lived in Bishop. He and Katie owned the Inyo Store (see p. 32, **The Album**, Vol. II No. 4 for photo) which Katie operated while Tom tried his hand at other enterprises, one of which was partnering the Owens River Canal Company. Early in February of 1909, near the construction camp of P.N. Snyder, eight miles northwest of Bishop and about one and a half miles below Hiram B. Smith's place, Tom witnessed a strange and tragic scene:

... Attorney L.C. Hall and T.G. Watterson were accompanying contractor Snyder on an inspection of the canal and when they came within hearing distance of the group of workmen, they noted a lot of yelling and commotion. On running over they found four men on the ground writhing in agony. The victims were partially disrobed and their friends were rubbing them with snow. The new arrivals took over and while they were rubbing them the elder man, 55-year-old Pete Magos, threw up

# WATER AND THE WATTERSONS

Watterson Bank failures — Owens Valley Water — Los Angeles Department of Water & Power; the three are forever linked in any history of Bishop. And the tangled skein of the linkage will be forever unresolved because of the differing concepts embedded in the minds of participants. These concepts range from the simplistic "Those Watterson crooks just loaded the people's money into their wagon and drove off with it," to this reasoned (though some would say biased) explanation:

The Inyo County Bank, owned by Wilfred and Mark Watterson, closed its doors on Aug. 4, 1927, the result of a report by the State Superintendent of Banks of a sizeable discrepancy in assets. The Watterson brothers gave leadership to ranchers and local businesses in their resistance to the City of Los Angeles land purchasing policies, and insisted that the missing funds were used to keep Inyo County business and farming going. The bank failure and the brothers' subsequent convictions for embezzlement marked the end of unified resistance in the Owens Valley to the City of Los Angeles, as well as spelling financial ruin for many citizens and businesmen who had lost their savings and were without credit. (Foothote. pp 30-31, Recollections of Life in the Owens Valley, 1913-1946 by Anna T. Kelley, as told to Kathy Barnes, 1990. Oral History Division of Eastern California Museum, Independence.)

One thing is indisputable: The bank failures touched practically every Invoite, from the student who lost her college tuition savings, to the biggest rancher in the Valley. W.A. Chalfant, author of The Story of Inyo, published 1933, wrote that The Inyo Bank included its branches at Big Pine, Independence, and Lone Pine as well as the First National Bank at Bishop, all owned by W.W. Watterson and his brother Mark Q.: in failing, says Chalfant, the banks dragged down with them several corporations including the Natural Soda Products Company at Keeler, which Chalfant declared was "a wreck when the Wattersons took it over and built it to a great business." They also owned the Coso Springs

his arms with an agonized cry and died. The younger Greek, 32, died on the way to town after they finally got a wagon to the scene. Dr. Dorrance came later after the other two men (an Irishman, 40, and another Greek, 35) were temporarily out of danger. Justice Shannon was acting coroner.

Facts developed that the men of the camp, including 60 or more Greeks and three Americans, were working on the canal line. Pete Magos dug up a root which he peeled, telling the others it was celery. He cut off pieces and he and three others ate them. In 20 or 30 minutes, some of them were already feeling the effects of the poison. From then on all efforts failed to save the lives of the poisoned ones who were suffering the most excruciating agonies. Both men had families back in Greece. It (wild parsnip) is the most poisonous of native plants. (Inyo Register, Feb. 18, 1909).

The story quoted the State Agricultural Department as saying that "wild parsnip" was an incorrect term, that parsnip never became poisonous even if it grew without cultivation, and that "water hemlock" was a more appropriate term; the botanical clarification was timely, though a small comfort to the faraway families of the dead Greeks.

As for Lester C. Hall, an able if cantankerous lawyer who happened to be an uncle of the soon-to-be-famous writer Ernest Hemingway, due to the Owens River Canal connection he and Tom Watterson were destined down the years to have legal confrontation that at times turned violent. Hall's court cases involving that flammable subject, water, would place him in life-threatening situations rivalling the imaginative fictions of his famous nephew.

George Watterson twice knew death's visitation in 1909: first he lost his best friend and then more tragically his companion and wife, Bea Symons.

Marriage to Bea and removal from Benton to Bishop had not severed the friendship of George with Billy Weiss, who stayed on in Benton until 1904 when he left for a delayed rendezvous with death in a Goldfield, Nevada mine. The **Inyo Register** took note from time to time of Billy's visits to George, as when Kate's boarder William Shimmin passed through Bishop on his way to Independence to prove up on his land claim; Billy Weiss and George Watterson accompanied him.

Mary Gorman in 1983 remembered the red hair and moustache of her Uncle George's "big and burly" bachelor friend who had a millionaire brother back in Germany, and wondered "Whatever happened to Billy Weiss?" It is not surprising that Mary did not hear about it from her uncle, as family feuding was a way of life for the Wattersons: "Uncle George was not in our house for years." But if Mary had read her local newspaper back then, she could have known "whatever happened" to Billy:

WILLIAM WEISS KILLED IN MINE ACCIDENT. A Bentonian for many years, having many acquaintances Company, Tungsten Products Company and Watterson Bros., Inc., a hardware and farm business, and securities from other concerns. All failed when the banks closed their doors.

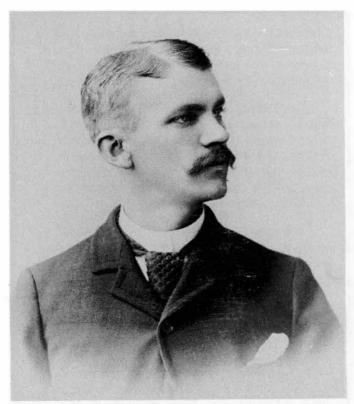
A third Watterson was inextricably involved in Inyo's ruinous land and water policies of the time: George, the only surviving brother of the original four who came to the U.S. from the Isle of Man. George teamed with William Symons and L.C. Hall against George's nephews, the banker-Wattersons:

Local opponents of the [irrigation] district included George Watterson, L.C. Hall and William Symons. In March 1923 they obtained options for the city of Los Angeles on lands watered by the McNally ditch, in the vicinity of Laws. Hall was credited, after that buying had progressed, with having boasted that he had "cut off the left arm of the irrigation district." Other lands and rights east of Owens River had been or were then secured, placing that territory wholly under Los Angeles control . . . (W.A. Chalfant, The Story of Inyo, p. 385).

And then there are other versions. In an unpublished manuscript, **Insights**, Patricia Symons Baldwin, granddaughter of William Symons, presents opinions she obtained in 1978 when she interviewed descendants of participants in the land and water struggles. As was to be expected, she got differing viewpoints as to what happened.

ITEM: Mildred Wells Symons:

- Q: What, in your opinion was the reason for George Watterson, William Symons and L.C. Hall to resist joining and being a part of the Irrigation District which the Watterson Brothers were trying to form?
- A. George was aware of the encumbered condition of the bank and wanted his friends to be saved from bankruptcy. I don't remember too much about the time except that everyone went down to the "Gates" in 1924.
- Q.: Was Paul Watterson convicted of embezzlement at the same time his father and uncle were?
- A: No, he was a young man and not too involved. Wilfred was very charming and well-liked. Paul was his son. Mark was Wilfred's brother. I remember Mark was fat and not as nice looking as Wilfred.
- Q: Did you ever discuss any of these matters with your husband, Robert Symons?



William Frederick Weiss, native of Wurtemburg, Germany, friend of Beatrice and George Watterson. Weiss died in 1909 in a Goldfield, Nevada, mine at age 44; Bea Symons Watterson died the same year, age 32. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.

in Bishop, Weiss was accidently killed at Jamestown, 30 miles from Goldfield, last Thursday. The details come from the Goldfield Tribune & Chronicle: Weiss was interested with the James brothers in developing a mine. At the time of the accident, he was working at the bottom of a 240-foot shaft when his partners operating two buckets used for raising water noticed that one of the buckets had dirt and gravel which had been scraped from the side of the shaft, but thought nothing of it until the bucket was lowered again and no signal came from Weiss to raise the bucket. One of the partners was lowered and when about 15 feet from the bottom, he saw Weiss lying beside the pool of water. His head was crushed and he was unconscious, though still breathing. Examination of the shaft showed a hole 40 feet up from which a rock had been dislodged; in falling it had inflicted the fatal injury. Weiss was hoisted to the surface; a doctor was summoned from Goldfield but arrived after the victim had died . . .

William Frederick Weiss came to this country at age 10 with an aunt now residing in Elgin, III. The body will be shipped there for burial. He was a man of high character and warmly esteemed by those who knew him. He was a member of the Inyo Lodge, Knights of Pythias (Bishop), of the Uniform Rank in Goldfield, and the Masons in Tonopah. He had spent the last five years in the Goldfield neighborhood and is said to have put more than \$6,000 into the development of the mine in which he was killed . . ." (Inyo Register, Feb. 18, 1909.)

A: Yes. He was sure his father acted in the best interests of the Valley.

ITEM, Clara Wells Montague Dinsmore:

"It was an exciting time for one of my age; Dad sleeping with a shotgun near his bed; we kids from high school climbing into cars (without our parents' knowledge or consent) and tearing off to watch the water flow out of Alabama Gates. Exciting times, but we didn't pay too much attention to the basic reason for all of it, I'm sorry to say.

While "our" faction (Symons, Wells, George Watterson) did not agree with the Watterson brothers in many of their ventures, there was a basic respect for Mark and Wilfred Watterson and I can remember my father being saddened by their final sentencing . . . I cannot understand the inclusion of Paul Watterson [son of banker Wilfred] at this time. Paul later did all he could to try to reimburse victims of the bank closure. My impressions of Mark and Wilfred Watterson: kind gentlemen. My contact was too limited to make a character contrast . . .

ITEM: Clara Watterson Bergfried, daughter of George Watterson and Bea Symons:

Wilfred [Watterson] was a leader, a perfect gentleman, but crooked. Mark was a follower, a very agreeable person. Mark was weak; Wilfred was strong . . . Once I was visiting there [with Mary Gorman, sister of Wilfred and Mark] with some of my cousins from England and the other Watterson sister was there. One of the cousins, Edith, said "poor Wilfred and Mark" when this water situation came up. This other sister (not Mary) said "Poor Wilfred, nothing! He knew exactly what he was doing all of that time . . ."

As I remember, the Inyo County Bank held so many mortgages; that implied the Inyo County Bank had these people where they wanted them. People didn't want to lose their ranches. I think they were afraid to express themselves against the Watterson brothers . . . I think, on my father's part, his motivation was to stop Wilfred Watterson. He knew [his nephew] was crooked. My father and Wilfred just didn't get along in any way . . ."

Though more than half-century has passed since the State Bank Examiner closed the Inyo County Bank, present-day comment is as emotionally charged as ever: "As the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power bought up the farmers' ranches, they put their money in the Wattersons' bank. They trusted

On Nov. 11 of the same year, the newspaper ran a shorter and even sadder commentary on the life of George: "Mrs. George Watterson is dead at the family home. She came here with her parents Mr. and Mrs. William Symons and brothers from Goldhill about 18 years ago and married Watterson [in March of 1900]. Her death deprives two children of a mother's care." Hilda Beatrice Symons Watterson, born at Toronto, Canada, dead at 32.

Life, as well as death, goes on: In 1912, Kate's youngest daughter, Grace, was appointed a member of the California State Probation Board for Delinquent Children. Grace was at this time a substitute teacher for the Bishop school. When Helene Banta broke her collarbone that fall, Grace was called to teach her classes. Shortly after, on April 12, Kate was summoned to Virginia City where her sister Emma Gracey Keig lay terminally ill; she died 10 days later.

Kate returned to Bishop after the funeral to find turmoil in the life of her son Tom who had brought suit in the Independence Court against the Owens River Canal Company for infringement of water rights. L.C. Hall, attorney for the company, argued a motion for a new trial for his client which Tom opposed. Tom's attorney, P.W. Forbes, to emphasize his objection "drew his Smith & Wesson .38 down on the head of his fellow barrister . . . Hall, weaponless, had his skull gashed and was cut across the bridge of his nose. The Judge had to

them as Bishopites, and then the Wattersons betrayed them and stole their money."

As a consequence of the embezzlement, many people left Owens Valley to start life over in Southern California, where, once a year, they would migrate from such towns as Fontana and Riverside and gather for a reunion picnic in Los Angeles' Griffith Park. After the Watterson brothers were sentenced to San Quentin in 1927 and had served their terms, they showed up one summer in Griffith Park. All over the picnic area, ex-patriate Owens Valleyites sat silently watching the brothers approach. As they came nearer many turned their backs, but one forgiving lady, whose family had also been victimized by the embezzlement, said to her young daughters: "Girls, they have served their time. Come, join me and we will greet them." The Wattersons gratefully took the hand of Mrs. Harry Shaw and thanked her. Other picnickers were not so charitable.

(NOTE: A close relative of Mrs. Harry Shaw had invested money from the sale of his property in the Watterson bank: "He lost every dime of it. His wife was so devastated she shot herself in front of her children . . .")

In the Matter of ORDER CONFIRMING SALE Bankrupt No. 16,818, ) Consolidated with In the Watter of A. W. Higgins, the Trustee in Benkrotey of this estate, having filed herein his Return of Sale of certain items of property of the bankrupt estate, vis., The capital stock of the Tower Mining Company, a corporation,
 50,000 shrees of Big Silver Mining Company, a corporation,
 A general claim against the bankrupt estate of Tungsten Products lo., a corporation, for \$6570.27, to D. E. Irwin for the sum of \$110.00. And it appearing and the Referee herby finds that due notice of the proposed sale has been given to the creditors of the bankrupt by mail, and that the sum named is the highest price obtainable for the said property and that it is for the best interests of the estate that the said sale be confirmed, and no adverse interest being represented and no objections having been made thereto, IT IS HEREBY GRDERED that the said sale be and the same is hereby confirmed and that the Trustee, p suant to the terms of the sale, be and he is hereby authorized to quit claim to the said D. E. Irwin that certain real property described in that certain Mineral Certificate recorded February 28, 1899, in Book 5 at Page 417 of Mining Deeds, Records of Inyo County, California. DATED: September 19, 1935. Endorsed and filed September 19, 1933, at 10 A. M. A. B. KREFT, Referee. I hereby certify the foregoing to be a full, true and correct copy of the O titled matter dated September 19, 1933. No.149 Filed for Record at the request of J. S. OTST Mar 20 1934 30 minutes past 9 o'clock A. M. Geo. C. Delury, Jr., County Recorder

"Exhibit A." The Brothers Watterson had been sentenced to San Quentin for embezzlement of bank funds five years before this bankruptcy order was filed. Only W.W. Watterson and his brother Mark were involved in the bank failures. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.

come down from the bench and grapple with Forbes, who handed over his revolver and was fined \$50."

The violence did not deter Tom Watterson; three years later, he was still in court — with the same adversary:

The Watterson vs. Owens River Canal litigation is again in the courts. T.G. Watterson has asked to amend his former complaint and the issue will be heard in Superior court next Saturday. R.S. Miner has become associated with P.W. Forbes as counsel for that side of the contest. L.C. Hall is counsel for the company. (Inyo Register March 4, 1915).

What was new in the case was Attorney Miner. Back in 1913, this Benton lawyer was retained as counsel for more than 100 actions taken by residents of Mono and Inyo counties against Los Angeles for stealing water from Owens Valley. By 1915, Miner had shifted his base of operations to Goldfield: "Judge Richard S. Miner, recognized as one of the greatest experts in the West, returned yesterday from Independence, where he is engaged as counsel in a water rights suit." (Goldfield Tribune, March 25, 1915.)

But life was not all death and litigation for Kate's family; romance also reared its lovely head. Mary, the oldest daughter, met Inyo Surveyor Archie Strong when he was surveying mines on Benton's Blind Springs Hill back in 1903. Mary Gorman, cousin to Kate's children, supplied details: "Mary Watterson's husband Archie Strong came of a very good Pasadena family. He was a very difficult person, all brains. Didn't mix socially; didn't care for it. They had one daughter, who was very bright indeed."

(Indeed! Chalfant's **Taboose** column, **Inyo Register**, June 24, 1926: Marion Strong, daughter of Archie M. Strong, will be the only girl from Pasadena in Stanford University next year. That University now rigidly restricts coeds. Marion graduated from Pasadena High School at the early age of 16 years, three months. The strange ending to Marion's life was supplied by Mary Gorman: "Marion graduated from Stanford and married into a very nice Pasadena family. She developed premature senility; her husband and his mistress took Marion to Mexico with them to live, and took care of her in her senility. She died in Mexico.)

Grace, Kate's youngest, married home-grown Albert Shiveley. Mary Gorman: "Allie's father was station master at Laws for years and years and years. There were two boys, Allie and Arthur; Arthur married one of the Jones girls. My sister Elsie was engaged to marry Allie, but someone from the East came by that she liked better and she turned Allie down. Grace married him years later; not on the rebound, no. Grace went down south to live with her sister Mary and taught school in Los Angeles. Allie went down and courted her and they were married there shortly afterward."

The marraige took place July 8, 1914, just 10 days

after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo in Yugoslavia, a country and town totally unknown to most Americans. When German submarines sank the Lusitania off the Irish coast the following year with the loss of 128 American lives (among 1,195 total dead), World War I moved closer to the United States: "The considerable sympathy for Germany which had previously existed in the United States to a large extent disappeared, and there was a demand from many for an immediate declaration of war." (The Columbia Encyclopedia, Third Edition.) A pacifist President Wilson managed to stave off the declaration for another couple of years but when Germany declared an unlimited submarine campaign and began deliberately sinking U.S. ships. American neutrality vanished. The U.S. entered World War I on April 6, 1917 and put Major-General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing in charge of the American Expeditionary Force. Soon American boys were "Over There" and the American Press, including Bishop, was instantly on a war footing:

A reward of \$50 will be paid for delivery of a deserter to the nearest Army camp. A deserter can also be one who fails to report to the local exemption board, and the same \$50 can be collected by anyone who informs the Board that someone has failed to report. (Inyo Register, Aug. 23, 1917).

On November 1, under the heading "Indians as Soldiers," the newspaper noted that S.J. Alderman of Benton was one of the "Committee for Whites" which met at Mono Lake to discuss whether Indians are citizens, and therefore eligible for the draft. "Local opinion is yes, but they're still awaiting official word on the question." The official word was also "yes" and Tom Buckley, a Benton Piute still alive today, served willingly in both World Wars.

A big flap in Bishop was reported in November, 1917, when the newspaper editor learned that North Inyo School was teaching German to kids in the district, since that section was populated chiefly by persons of German extraction. It came to light that of three ladies who formed the Board of Trustees of that school, "two are German and one American"; it would seem that Bishopites who were of German descent suddenly weren't Americans any longer. And "while there is no evidence of disloyalty, still under the circumstances such activities [as teaching German to school children] can't go on."

Patriotism ran rampant in 1918: The Inyo County Sheriff told "idlers" either to get a job or go to jail. Two men from Keeler were tried in Independence for vagrancy; one of them pled not guilty, saying he was physically unable to work. The judge gave him 180 days in jail but suspended the sentence if both men would either go to work in three days or leave Inyo County.

A Bishop drugstore clerk named Stover or Stofer was asked by a woman for a donation to the Red Cross; he said he didn't have the money. The woman informed his boss, who sacked the clerk on the spot, saying they



Native American Tom Buckley of Benton, who served the United States in two wars. Tom had to delay his enlistment in WWI until his government officially declared Indians to be citizens of their native land. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.



Marion, daughter of Mary Watterson and Archie Strong. A brilliant student, Marion was admitted to Stanford University at a time when women students were restricted. Marion died a victim of premature senility. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.



Grace Watterson, left, and Miss Edwards, of Benton. Both families later moved to Bishop, where Grace met and married Albert Shiveley, whose father was a long-time station master at Laws. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.

wanted neither slackers nor poachers in Inyo County. Stofer's wife called the newspaper saying Stofer didn't refuse to donate, he just said he wouldn't have the money until the 28th and the wife pleaded that her husband already had bought a liberty bond. On the 28th, though he was out of a job, Stofer gave one day's pay to the Red Cross and left Bishop that day on the train for Southern California. Editorial comment: "Even if he was telling the truth, it is apparent he takes too lukewarm a view of the Red Cross to make his continued residence here desirable." (Inyo Register, May 9, 1918.)

And what of the Wattersons? Back in 1916, the Register reported from the Isle of Man the death in France of Fred Quayle, brother of Eliza Quayle Watterson, widow of William Watterson of Bishop: "A 27-year-old dentist, when the Lusitania was sunk, Fred resigned a fine position and enlisted in the 7th London Regiment for the duration of the War . . . Sixteen years ago to the very day, W.O. Quayle got word that his brother Frank, during the Boer War, fighting with the Duke of Devonshire's Regiment, was killed in South Africa."

On Nov. 8, 1917, the newspaper reported that Eliza Watterson had received another letter from her brother; Walter, writing from the Isle of Man, told of German U-boats and the island's bountiful grain harvest: "We have made a notable contribution to the war. We've given 7,000 men out of a population of 50,000 and supplied about \$4 million to the last war loan . . . We have a large German camp not far from Peel where 25,000 prisoners are kept." Quayle noted that the English "expect vast things of us" and wrote "personally, I'd like to see the air fighting given over entirely to America."

On June 28, 1918, the **Inyo Register** reported the demise of Kate's oldest daughter: "Death of Mrs. Mary Watterson Strong, 43. Native of Virginia City, Nevada, she moved to Benton as a child; attended Inyo Academy in Bishop. She moved to Bishop 18 years ago and married Archie Strong here. About eight years ago she moved to Los Angeles and died there. Amiable and kind, she is survived by husband Archie and their daughter Marion, eight years old; also by her mother Kate Watterson, brothers Thomas G. and James, and a sister. Mrs. Grace Shiveley, all of Bishop."

A little more than a month before the Armistice was signed, there appeared in Bishop the first signs of a scourge almost as virulent as war itself: the first notice of influenza. There were six "imported" cases, among them that of a Mexican married to an Indian woman; all Indians were ordered off the streets. Social gatherings were curtailed; all Inyo libraries where flu had appeared were ordered closed. Inyo county health officers ordered all young men 20 and younger to stay away from pool halls. The same issue noted that Dr. Turner went to Sixte Chabre's sheep camp eight miles beyond Benton and brought back a flu case. "There are four flu cases in the hospital, one from Tungsten and one from Mono Lake. Some authorities say that the flu is simply reappearing as what was years ago known as the grippe." A

week later:

Sixte Chabre died last week at Quarantine hospital of pneumonia. A native of Hautes Alpes of France, he would have been 49 on Dec. 1. One of the best known of the sheep owners of the region, he had been in America about 30 years and began bringing his flocks from Bakersfield to here 17 years ago. A part-time citizen of Inyo and Mono, he prospered and was generous. He deposited in the First National Bank \$1,000 to the credit of the first five young men to be drafted here for Army service, the money to be used solely for the benefit of Inyo's soldiers . . . (Inyo Register, Oct. 24, 1918.)

Same issue: Dr. Doyle reports 70 cases of flu; Dr. Turner has 70 cases also, but estimates there are 200 more. The October 31 issue of the **Register** headlines the flu, and at the bottom of the front page: "Wilfred W. Watterson, head of the Board of Trustees, warns citizens against spreading false reports of health conditions and deaths from flu . . ." The editor also reports that in San Francisco every person on the streets, residents and visitors alike, is required to wear a flu mask or face a fine of \$5 to \$500 or 10 days in jail. And, inevitably: Bishop residents must wear flu masks! Kate's Christian Scientist son, T.G. Watterson was among those who dutifully donned a mask.

The Armistice was signed on Nov. 11; on Nov. 21, the **Register** announced the flu epidemic was nearly over; "the hospitals are emptying." Then why, two months later, do we find Tom Watterson in the Bishop jail for refusing to wear a mask?

T.G. Watterson brought about his own arrest Saturday by refusing to wear a mask, with the intention of testing the mask ordinance. Having done so, he donned the gauze and has worn it ever since. His claim in part was that the ordinance was not properly enacted, and asked for a jury trial, which Judge Yaney set for Monday. The court was crowded with spectators and Yaney postponed trial until Wednesday. Yesterday, all except the summoned jurors, Lt. L.C. Hall, attorney for the town, and Col. J.H. Ruberson, Watterson's attorney, and of course the defendant himself, were required to leave the courtroom. The jury was challenged and a new venire necessitated a delay until this morning . . .

Those opinions which connect this case with Christian Science beliefs are wholly wrong. Members of that creed have been positively instructed to be obedient to the law, whether it requires vaccinations, which the members do not believe in, or anything else. This action of Mr. Watterson's is his own idea, with no more connection with or sanction of the Christian Science Church, than his political beliefs or fraternal connections. (Inyo Register, Jan. 23, 1919.)

The jury found Tom guilty and fined him \$5; Atty. Ruberson asked for a new trial. The newspaper printed a letter from Tom giving his reasons for his actions:

The Constitution of the United States and of California provides for a way a law should be enacted and enforced, and unless our established form of government and mode of action is maintained, the nation and the individual is unprotected. Ordinance #94 is not constitutional either in its enactment or enforcement and while it was an apparent necessity in the beginning, and cheerfully complied with, it should have been re-enacted before being again enforced on Jan. 17, 1919, to say nothing about the doubt of its necessity on that date. The law gives me the privilege of testing all laws and does not make me a lawbreaker thereby. It is a citizen's right and I do not have to ask permission of any fraternal organization nor of a religious denomination. I had to "break the law" in order to test it. I was tried behind closed doors and was not permitted to put any evidence before the jury for my defense. Hence, the verdict of quilty - and the real issue is left untouched. (Inyo Register, Jan. 30, 1919.)

Col. Ruberson's motion for an appeal of Tom's case was denied without a hearing. The story petered out and a few years later so did the life of Col. Ruberson; on April 5, 1923, the **Inyo Register** related that Col. Ruberson had died at the Soldiers' Home in Sawtelle. "He had practiced law in Idaho and other Western States before coming here two or three years ago. While he was in

Bishop, some informalities of his discharge from service during the Civil War were straightened out and he became an inmate of the Home."

Kate's daughter Mary had passed away in 1918 at age 43; in 1924 her daughter Grace died from breast cancer at age 42. Their brother Tom in 1925 took time out from family deaths to deliver the Christian Science eulogy for Harry Shaw, brother of Margie Shaw who had married Watterson-kin Johnie Kewley. When her Johnie died the following year, Margie evidently decided it was time to take a holiday from death. Mary Gorman: "Tom had never visited the Isle of Man after Kate went there for Tom to be born. When her husband Johnie died, Margie took Tom and Katie to Europe; I think they were in Switzerland at the time of that famous Nativity Play. Then they went over to the Isle of Man . . ."

Four years later Kate herself crossed The Great Divide to join her daughters:

Kate Watterson, 78, died at her home on West Line Street. Natives of the Isle of Man, Kate and her husband and children lived at Benton where her husband James conducted a store business until his death at 29. Kate and her four children remained at Benton until she came to Bishop in 1906. She had the grief of losing her two



Matriarch Catherine Christian Gracey, Isle of Man, mother of Kate Watterson who drew strength from the role model furnished by her mother. Catherine was widowed early, as was Kate, left to single-handedly rear six children. Catherine's husband, Bob Gracey, was a shipwright on the Isle of Man. Cooling off in a local pub on a June evening, Bob was delighted when a jackdaw landed on his shoulder. The jackdaw, smallest of the crow family, likes to build its nest in chimneys. The bird flew out from the pub fireplace and Manxman Gracey felt lucky that the "daw" chose his shoulder for a perch. Minutes later, the shipwright lay dead on the floor of the pub. Challenged by another bar patron over ownership of the bird, the two men fought, resulting in the trivialized death of Catherine's husband. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.

daughters, Mrs. Strong and Mrs. Shiveley, in the years since. Her two sons, Thomas G. Watterson, merchant, and James, American Railway Express agent, are residents of Bishop. Burial will be in Bishop. (Inyo Register, May 23, 1929.)

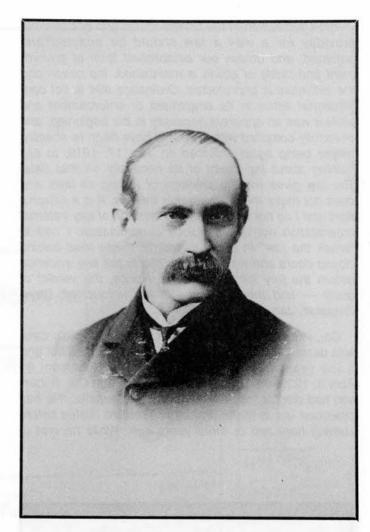
In 1935 Katie Arcularius Watterson died painfully, without medical assistance, from breast cancer. Tom, who had never before been separated from his beloved wife, travelled to Boston and became a Practitioner in the Christian Science Church. Subsequently he married a fellow Christian Scientist, who did not like her in-laws: they cordially returned her dislike. But then, according to Mary Watterson Gorman, the Wattersons were not a friendly family: "Uncle George and my brother Wilfred fell out because they both filed on the same property. George and my brother Mark filed for a mining claim and Wilfred filed on the same land for agriculture and that caused a rupture. They were enemies ever after. Worked against each other; it was terrible. Both George and Wilfred thought they were in the right and neither would give up the claim. I never saw my Uncle George again until after Wilfred died. Then we became friends. and I lived in Uncle George's house when he was away.

Kate's son Jim thought well of his brother Tom, though he didn't think much of his Christian Science. Jim was working at the Railway Express Agency and giving Tom money for taking up land around Mammoth and Long Valley. Tom was supposed to be taking it up in both their names, and instead was just taking it up in his own name. We were very much in sympathy with Jim."

Rosemarie Jarvis, whose mother was a Watterson: "As it ended, Tom died and left the property to his widow and none of them seemed to think it should go to Jim and he had to go to court. No, Jim didn't win; he didn't get any of the Mammoth property at Lake Mary."

Tom had moved to Pasadena; when he died there his wife buried him in the Pasadena cemetery, over the protests of his Bishop family. The Watterson drive to unite their family in death was strangely at variance with their divisiveness in life; powerless to remove Tom's body without consent of his legal spouse, the Watterson stubborness nevertheless prevailed. And so in the family plot on West Line Street in Bishop there stands an assertive marble among the Watterson gravestones which bears the inscription "Thomas G. Watterson, 1873-1946." Underneath the burial mound lies an empty coffin.

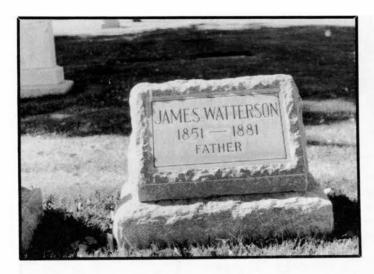
No, let's amend that word "empty": there are no mortal remains in the casket. But who can say where the rests the restless soul of Manxman Tom Watterson?



Robert Gracey, brother of Kate, who preceded her to Virginia City in the 1870s. Robert was the grandfather of Anna Kelly of Independence, who is contributing material for the Gracey saga, scheduled for a future issue of THE ALBUM. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection



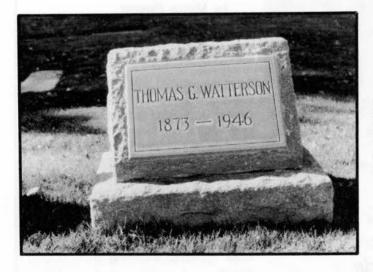
"Whichever way you may throw me I shall fall on my feet."



Family Plot: James Watterson, father, died after only two years in Benton, but his body lay in a graveyard there for 25 years until his wife Kate brought it to Bishop with her.

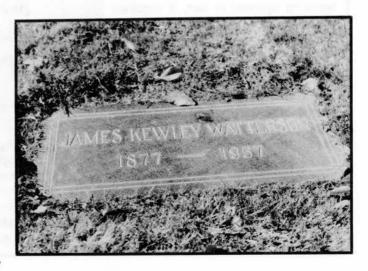
Catherine Watterson ("Kate") lived on in Benton for a quarter-century near her husband's grave despite pleadings of family members to join them in Bishop. Only when arrangements were made to remove James Watterson's body to a Bishop cemetery did Kate take up her abode in the house on West Line Street.





Thomas, son of Kate and James, traveled from Virginia City in Kate's womb to be born in his parent's ancestral home, the Isle of Man in the Irish sea. As much difficulty attended finding his final resting place: his gravestone in a Bishop cemetery stands above an empty grave.

James Kewley Watterson, grandfather of Rosemarie Jarvis, who took these photos, was the last of Kate's children to die. Her two daughters, Mary and Grace, preceded their mother in death.





Mammoth's first course

Marye Roeser putts the 8th hole.

## Mountain Golf

by Marye Roeser

golf course, it won't be its first mountain golf. The first one boasted nine holes and contained enough natural obstacles to challenge the most avid golfer, mainly sagebrush and rocks. No manicured lawn covered the courses, but maintenance was low and did not depend on an elaborate watering system; in fact, it required no watering at all. It could not be called labor intensive nor did it quarrel with the natural surroundings.

Summer guests of Camp High Sierra in Mammoth Lakes loved the course and many a foursome spent happy hours trying to best other guests' records. The old dining hall rang with challenges and cheers of victory at the weekly "Camp High Open" results. Camp High Sierra was built in the 1920s and is owned and operated by the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. The

While the Town of Mammoth picturesque lodge building has a Lakes eagerly awaits the advent of a small game room where the "golf" equipment is stored along with other game equipment and a small library.

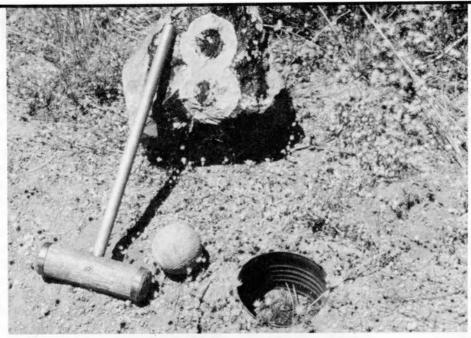
> A hole in one was nearly impossible

This challenging mountain golf course was actually a trail carved out of the sagebrush southwest of the rustic lodge, and wound up and down over low hills and past a large Indian grinding rock. Motorized golf carts or even wheeled golf bags never could

have negotiated the terrain, so players shouldered their one club - a heavy duty, specially-designed croquet mallet - along with the wooden croquet ball - and hiked the course. Each hole consisted of a coffee can carefully buried in the soil with a painted hole number on a nearby boulder. Special golf shoes and attire were not necessary and would have looked a bit silly among the denim clad "golfers" wearing their hiking boots.

A hole-in-one was nearly impossible and woe be to you if your shot went out into the sagebrush. But, there were some remarkable brush shots amid much laughter. Golf scores were posted in the lodge and yearly records treasured.

One of my tasks, as program director at Camp High Sierra in the early '50s, was the yearly maintenance and preparation of the course

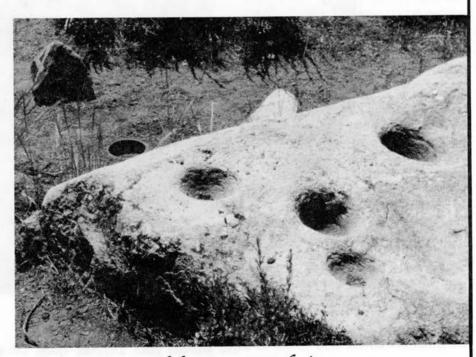


..... and bogies

for the summer "golf season." This consisted of raking the trail, pruning back sagebrush, scooping sand out of the rusty coffee cans and repainting the numbers on the rocks. Infrequently, a coffee can had to be replaced. The entire operation could be completed in a morning and the course maintained itself all summer despite heavy use.

The Mariposa lilies and golden brodeia bloomed among the sage-brush and the fresh scent of sage after an afternoon thunder shower made the game even more appealing. Near the grinding rock, occasional obsidian arrowheads and scrapers were discovered (trophies of the game) and displayed in Camp High Sierra's museum case.

The golf course is still in place at Camp High Sierra but is now bordered by a Mammoth Mountain ski area chair lift. The Indian grinding rock stands guard by hole #4, a silent reminder of previous inhabitants. The "golf clubs" and balls can still be checked out by guests challenging each other to an 8,000 foot elevation "Mountain Golf" game.



Hole 4...your choice

## THE SHERWIN STORY Part III



The Sherwin girls: Dorothy, Guen, Carol

An account of one of Inyo-Mono's first pioneer families, as recorded by Dorothy Sherwin Joseph and told to Louise Kelsey. Photographs by Louise, and courtesy Dorothy Sherwin Joseph.



Tanglewood, the James W. Sherwin home one mile west of Bishop.

Dorothy Sherwin Joseph Born in Bodie June 28, 1905

In May of 1905 Jim and Dell Sherwin, with their young daughter, moved to the Bodie Ranch. Jim went to work in the Bodie mine. On June 28th their second daughter, Dorothy, arrived. Eventually the Sherwin family, Jim and Dell, children Guen, Dorothy, Carol and Raymond moved to Tanglewood one mile west of Bishop. As long as the children were growing up and in school Jim refrained from returning to the mines he loved so much.

Tanglewood had an orchard and a garden, a delight to the children from town who visited the Sherwins. They grew up in an atmosphere of warmth and strength. There was always room for one more friend — it appeared to be only the effort of putting on another plate.

When Dorothy's maternal grandmother died, Dell took her small inheritance and purchased a piano, determined her children should have a musical education. She deprived herself of small luxuries to further this ambition. Dorothy started lessons in the sixth grade and for many years was led to believe she could accomplish something worthwhile. It was fun, as the teachers at that time didn't expect much. If the students learned to play a few pieces moderately well, on several instruments, they were considered good pupils. Stringed instruments

were popular, so Dell bought a mandolin. In the band Dorothy played a clarinet, then a saxophone, and she joined the quartet to play at high school games.

Dorothy took her first job when she was in the seventh grade — putting books back on the shelves in the public library under the supervision of Bessie T. Best. Her salary was \$2.50 a month with a bonus of a lovely string of beads at Christmas. From then on, she always had a job for her spare time, which sometimes proved difficult as the family lived a mile from town and walking through storms was not always what she wanted to do. She worked at the soda fountains in the drug stores, and in a cleaning business; she worked on maps in her uncle's engineering office, and in the music store, where most of her salary went back in the purchase of music.

Guen, the older sister, was a quiet and retiring girl. Guen did not want to go on to college but took a bookkeeping job in town and before Dorothy was ready to graduate, Guen married. In place of schooling her father gave her a half acre of land and helped build the couple a home. Dorothy was the first to leave for school; it was the first time in eleven years that she had been farther from home than Big Pine to the south or Round Valley to the north. To say that it was an overhwelming experience was to put it mildly . . . it was agony!

1922 to 1924 saw Dorothy attending San Jose State

College. Again, music seemed to be the opening wedge so she signed up for every music course she could take, together with the requirements to become a kindergarten and primary teacher. In the orchestra, the only opening was bass viol — so the big bass it was. In another class, the first question asked was, "How much Bach have you studied?" Bach? She had never been introduced to his work. Dorothy realized how inadequate her training had been, and how much sacrifice her mother had made for so little.

Dorothy's course at San Jose State Teacher's College was to be two and one-half years. It was during the early years of City of Los Angeles activity in Owens Valley. She firmly believed it possible that she might not have the opportunity to complete her course. She persuaded the college to allow her to take her last semester in summer session and graduate in August rather than the following February. It worked well, since in the first year at San Jose State one took the "heavy" courses to get them over with and have fun the last semester. Dorothy's father's arrangement on education was that he would give his children the first year and anything after that they were to pay back, in order that the next in line would have the same advantage.

Dorothy did graduate in August and in a few days she began teaching in the Burlingame schools. It was a cold community to anyone in the working class. In order to fill her time she again turned to music and made arrangements to study pipe organ under Warren D. Allen at Stanford University. He was considered the outstanding organist on the Pacific Coast. He would permit Dorothy to sit with him in the choir loft of the chapel each Tuesday and Thursday when he played his four o'clock concerts, then go to his home for lessons. To pay for the privilege of practice, she played at the Methodist Church in Redwood City, and used that organ. Needless to say, she soon ran out of money and had to give up that dream.

Dorothy next joined the Peninsula Players, a dramatic club that entertained hospitals, military posts, etc. Unforgettable was the night they went to Alcatraz to perform "Green Stockings" for the prisoners. It was frightening enough to cross the bay to the prison in a small boat. They were then taken through seven locked doors to the room in which they were to perform. One player, a bit of a smart aleck, nearly got them all in trouble by trying to offer a trustee a drink.

During her second year of teaching in Burlingame, Dorothy moved to San Francisco and commuted. Again she took up music and what started as two hours of study a week ended as twenty-six hours of supervised work. She would get home about five o'clock, grab a bite to eat, and rush over to the studio home of George and Corabelle Piner, both former Metropolitan artists. It was a difficult study, as Dorothy never seemed to accomplish what others with real talent did. Her associates were all types of people with one thought: music.

The studio was a beautiful place with treasures from all over the world and five beautiful pianos. The study was both vocal and instrumental and was made up of a give and take, sometimes individual but most of the time — for Dorothy — accompanying, or playing dual piano. In the summers there was the privilege of going with the Piners to their summer home in Kelseyville for intensive study. Finally, after pleading for the truth, she learned that she would never rise above the mediocre and become a soloist as her ear was not accurate, but she could become an accompanist with hard work. They loved Dorothy, and would have liked to adopt her and keep her with them — but she would have to give up her own family and friends and make music her life's work. She could not do that.

After four years, discouraged in accomplishing anything outstanding in music, Dorothy resigned her job in Burlingame and returned to Bishop to teach, where she could include music and art, as well as kindergarten. She taught in the Bishop schools for another four years.

After resigning from the Bishop school system, Dorothy decided to take advantage of her early training with her uncle, an Inyo County surveyor, where she had learned to work with surveyor's maps.

In 1939 Dorothy went to work for the State Division of Highways and became secretary to Charles Shervington, district engineer. In addition to the usual requirements for state employment — merit and ability — she had the added qualification of heritage. Her grandfather had helped to shorten the two-day trip from Bishop to Bodie by constructing the first road, a toll route, over a steep grade on the Inyo-Mono county line. It is still named Sherwin Grade, on both the old and new Highway 395.

On October 4, 1915 the state authorized highway construction between the Inyo-Mono county line and Sherwin Hill, a distance of 5.8 miles on US 395.

Before work could actually start, it was necessary to make arrangements for labor, equipment, stock, fuel, groceries and supplies. A two-ton truck, chain driven and equipped with solid tires, was assigned to the Laws-Bishop-to camp route, carrying the needed supplies and material.

By June 1916, the grading and structures were completed to Sherwin Summit. In order to continue the northerly descent from the summit into Rock Creek, a work order was issued on April 4, 1916 for an additional 4.8 miles. The cost of the 10.6 mile project was \$63,910.

After working long and diligently for highway progress in this area, it was only natural that the people of Inyo-Mono would want to celebrate their first highway project completion. For thirty five years since J.L.C. Sherwin created his toll road over that rock-strewn slope and into the canyon beyond, humans and horses had labored



50th wedding anniversary of Jim and Idell Sherwin. Raymond, Carol, Dorothy, Guen, Jim and Idell.



Bodie town, cemetery, mine. The Sherwins and the Gregorys, parents and grandparents of Dorothy Sherwin Joseph, were close to the history of Bodie. Nathan Gregory developed the Bodie Ranch and Jim Sherwin was involved in mining. Bodie cemetery is not protected by the Bodie State Historical Park, therefore maintenance is desultory, a concern of Dorothy, who was born at Bodie Ranch, and whose mother, Idelle Gregory Sherwin, and other family members are buried there.

over its punishing climb and decent. The local newspaper carried headlines in large capital letters and, framed in the center of the front page, this announcement: "CELEBRATION OF SHERWIN HILL CONQUEST TO OCCUR ONE WEEK FROM MONDAY IN ROCK CREEK CANYON." Invitations were sent to the owners of 300 licensed cars to come and bring as many friends as their cars would hold, as well as a basket lunch, except for meat. Five hundred and seventy five steaks and two hundred pounds of trout were served to the crowd. On September 4, 1916, about a thousand people shared the pleasures of an outing on Rock Creek when El Camino Sierra's first unit was dedicated.

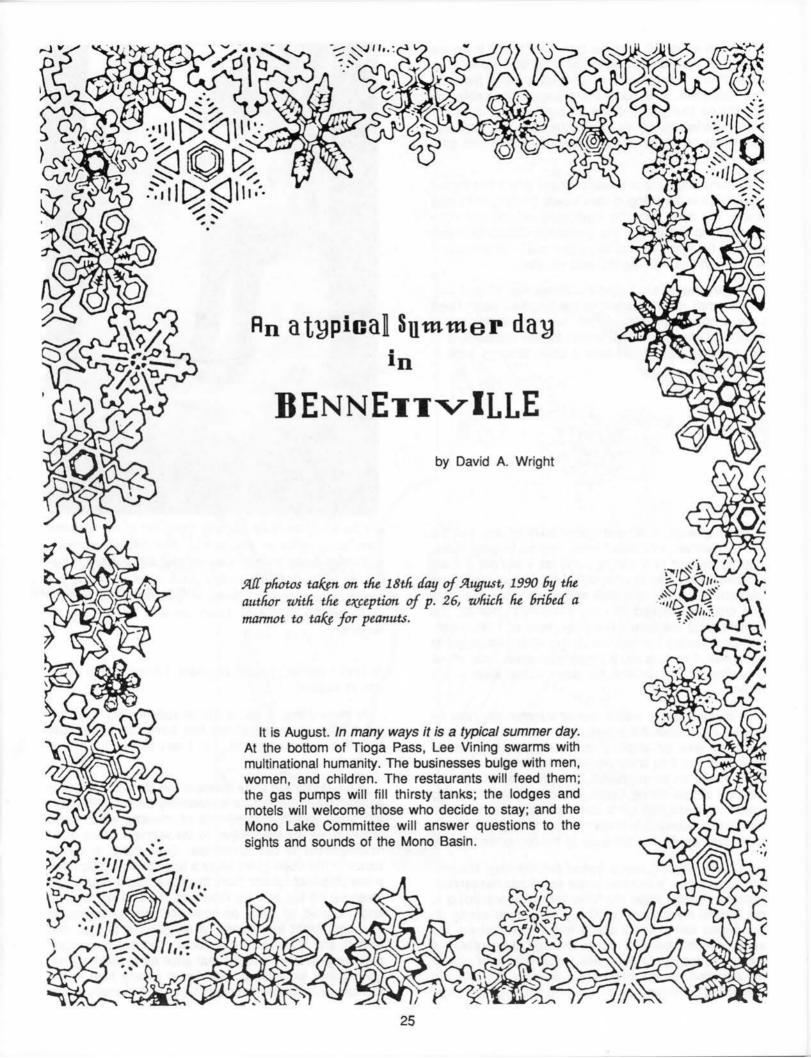
The ceremonies took place in a deep, rocky cut below the summit. A barrier of vines and flowers had been erected. On the upper side a band of mounted Indians in paint and feathers, typifying the old order, rode to the barrier. An official car was driven to the opposite side by a young lady who took a machete from the auto and walked to the barrier as the Paiute Chief raised his hand in the command to halt. After a brief parley, the cord was severed and the procession permitted to pass. This auspicious dedication and celebration was the beginning of what was then known as El Camino Sierra, now U.S. Highway 395.

In 1927 and 1928 there was discussion of a route at a five percent grade on the mesa east of Sherwin Hill. A project report was submitted Dec. 17, 1953 covering the proposed twelve-mile relocation of U.S. 395 between Birchim Canyon and Whiskey Canyon, eliminating the Sherwin Hill-Rock Creek Grade bottleneck and other steep pitches and curves, and culminating in the present Sherwin Grade.

Author's Note: Dorothy's life has been a full one. In addition to raising her son Lee, a retired Commander in the submarine service, she shares the joy of five grandchildren. Her cultural activities include Athena and Eastern Star. She has been an active member of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, the Hospital Auxiliary, Community Concert, and Laws Museum from its beginning. She is known for her efforts in the field of education, such as the Foundation for Excellence. The Bishop Auditorium was dedicated "The Dorothy Joseph Auditorium" because of her support and determination that students and community should have such a facility. Perhaps the most gracious of Dorothy's gifts to the community is her generosity in opening her gardens to young couples who wish to be married there. She has returned full measure to the community in which she grew up and the area she deeply loves. -



New Sherwin Grade dedication: Art Hess, Frances MacIver, Dorothy Sherwin Joseph, Dorothy Doyle Morrison, Frank Millner, 1974 Queen IMA Linda Zeutzius, Alma Crosby.



In many ways it is a typical summer day, but there are clouds on the horizon. Some of the traffic siphons up Tioga Pass; the wildfires of Yosemite are out; the pass has reopened. The hordes are eager to sample the grandures the grand Lady Yosemite has in store. Among darkening clouds I begin the ascent, mixing with this string of people from other hometowns and cars from other nations.

In many ways it is a typical summer day. I find myself stuck deep in the string of cars slowly climbing the steep grade. My eyes note the darkening clouds; my nose cannot help but notice the darkening clouds of diesel exhaust pouring from the large tour bus — the reason I am here in line, inching my way skyward.

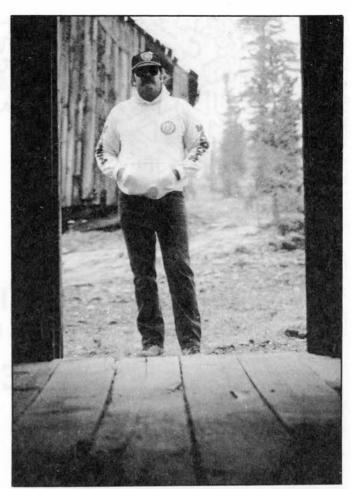
In many ways, it is a typical summer day. When I stop at the small resort nestled in the boulders near Tioga Lake, I notice an unusual chill, too chilly even for the 9,600 foot elevation. My intention for the afternoon is to leave people behind and take a quiet, leisurely stroll in the woods.



In many ways, it WAS a typical summer day. But the Sierra weather, in classic form, begins to play tricks. Parking my car in a campground lot, I wonder if I am dressed for the unexpected chill. I feel a cold drop upon my face as I study and dark and gloomy sky. But jerky and drink are stuffed into my sweatshirt pockets, the camera strap wrapped around my neck, as I take hesitant steps toward the trail wondering what I am about to encounter. I venture on. If things get worse, I can make a beeline for the car and the warm coffee shop at the resort.

In many ways, it was a typical summer day. But no longer. As I ascend the trail, the increasing raindrops begin to take on another characteristic; they metamorphose into little white crystals that sting the exposed flesh. Press on or run back? The sights of the rushing tributary of Lee Vining Creek lure me onward. Dancing waters cascade through a deep granite chasm clothed with plants blooming in brilliant colors through the gloom of the odd weather in the quiet of the dampening forest.

In many ways, it was a typical summer day. But with wind driven fury, a summer snow squall has descended. Heavy wet snow slaps my face, somehow managing to get around my glasses to hit my eyes dead center. In the dense forest, there are a few pockets where the snow doesn't make it down through the protective canopy of lodgepole pine, and I stop and take size of my situation. In the decreasing visibility, I make out something unfamiliar, yet compelling, pricking my curios-



The author, framed by doorway and floor of the company barn, assay office in background. Just like the marmots and other fuzzy rodents that inhabit this subalpine region, he must stuff his pockets with supplies: lenses, filters, lens caps, a small bottle of Gatorade, beef jerky, a small tripod, and cold hands on this snowy day in August.

ity until I cannot stand it anymore. I head in that direction to explore.

In many ways, it was a typical summer day. But during a brief moment summer has turned to winter, and time has turned around; yet I am still in the same location.

In the thickening snow looms a two story building with another smaller structure immediately behind. The swirling snow and muffled sounds of creaking wood seem ominous. As my eyes adjust to the scene, I notice other modifications to the landscape. Over there, a disturbance of the slope gives away a large tailings pile; here, a few planks of lumber mark the site where a house had given up on life and lay down, its remains unmourned and unburied; up there, an open ditch and three-quarter inch pipe recall the attempt to bring water to man and animal; and scattered about, rocks piled in an unnatural manner give away the fact that once other buildings sat upon these foundations. Nearby, a gaping hole in the face of the granite mountain hints that someone was

looking for something here, and his task was as hard as the granite of this orifice. Just outside of the gaping vacuity is a set of rails from a civilized way of mining, but the rotting lumber, broken glass, twisted metal, and the emptiness memorialize a site of failed dreams and abandoned hope.



Tracks into the tailings pile of the Sheepherder Mine.

The surreal scene, brushed upon a snowy canvas, calls up a winter, almost a century and a quarter in history past, where men toiled in an unbelievable fashion.



In many ways, it is a typical winter day. Wind driven snow swirls about, creating white-outs. In the distance, silhouetted against blinding snow, are more than a dozen men toiling with a bulky object. Men in sled dog fashion pull against the tremendous weight of huge iron

objects on large sleds. To any available tree are fastened block and tackle; where there are no trees, these pulleys are fastened to steel bars that had to be drilled into stone. Inch by inch, hour by hour, day by day, month upon month, until time and distance mean nothing, the massive load is dragged. Even in this artic weather, the men sweat. They speak little, with the exception of a curse now and then, for even to speak drains a man of his vital strength.

The load is at the end of a slack in the rope now; the men undo the block and tackle and take it to the next anchoring point. As their backs are turned, the sled and its load begin to slide; when they turn around, their hearts sink lower than the mercury in the thermometer, for their efforts have been in vain, and the pain in their lungs and muscles will now be doubled.

The burden again inches forward, the snowy air thickens with the mists exhaled with groans, sighs, and curses. Eyes sting from the snow driven into them; lungs burn in the high elevation; muscles ache from pulling a payload more suited to the strength of animals. Suddenly, a sickening crunch and a shift to one side. The sled runner has broken through the snow and wedged itself into an invisible rock. The men drag out the crowbars and steel rods, and in a superhuman effort to unstick the runner; force every particle of their strength into prying loose the stubborn object. A man stumbles in the icy mire, the runner breaks free and shifts in an unintended direction; a two-hundred pound man is overcome by five thousand pounds of wood, iron and steel. A man is dead, his crimson blood adds color to the monochrome of this snowy canvas.



Why are these men out there, instead of being indoors around the fire? Why is their burden so important that they go to superhuman lengths to bear it? What brings these men up here to exist, labor, and chisel life and death at timberline? What lured them up from either side of the Sierra Crest they straddle?

The chance to unlock riches from the bosom of the earth, the siren song, the lure, the bonanza motivates men to do strange things. Whether it is heard across endless plains, over impossible mountains, or over blazing deserts, the men who hear the call strain through unthinkable pain to attain their golden reward.

That call brought men to the top of Tioga Pass. In their efforts to rip open and sample the riches of the earth, they forever changed the landscape of the mighty Sierra. Because of the toil of these men who braved the elements and lived their lives in difficulty, our travels over Tioga are smooth and comfortable. Why did the difficult Tioga beget the easy one? Let us take a closer look.



In many ways, it is a typical summer day in 1859. Two men, George Chase and Joshua Clayton, climb Mono Pass to return to Sonora after a summer prospecting around Monoville. On topping the summit, they are bitten again by the bug that plagues all prospectors, even though they had been manipulated by it for an entire summer. Northward they prospect until they find a bit of silver on a bald granite ridge forming parts of the Sierra Crest. The find is rich enough to entice them back the following summer.

One of the men melts the solder on a can from the day's breakfast and flattens it; with a knife he scratches the name and location of his find, and the names of his partners and himself. He piles some rocks and places the makeshift location notice among them, stuffs his pockets with all the ore he can, and returns to his associates. They swear each other to secrecy, then continue their trip down to Monoville.



In many ways, it is a typical story. New finds of rich ore lead to high excitement; in the excitement, new priorities overshadow old ones. And so it is with the silver ledge high up Lee Vining Canyon. Before these men can get an assay, the rich treasure troves of Esmeralda begin to sing to the population of the Mono diggings, inducing them to disregard their former dream.

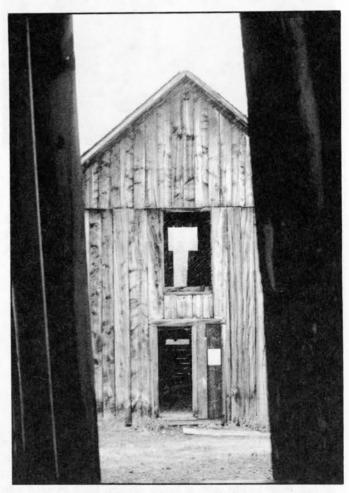


In many ways, it is a typical summer day in 1874. In the grassy meadow at the base of the granite mass, a young man attends the sheep entrusted to his care. An unnatural indentation in the rock catches his eye. Anything to relieve boredom is welcome so he investigates. There in the small portal are a rusty pick and shovel, nearby the tin with now indecipherable scratchings from fifteen years previous. The young man has heard whispers of a rich lode here, and hoped one day to find it. His elation turns to disappointment upon having his samples assayed: it is worthless. But the boy is persistant, and subsequent summers of working the mine he names the Sheepherder finally pay off in 1877 when samples bring a good appraisal. By then Esmeralda, the sweetheart of America, the town that made Clayton and

Chase forget their mine, is old and used. The Sheepherder begins to sing a new song, and people listen.

Men swarm all over the Sierra Crest, from Mono Pass to Mt. Conness, from the eastern base to Tuolumne Meadows. New names begin to fill the books of the recorders: Ahwaga, Atherton, Bevans, Hancock, High Rock, Lake, Sonora, Summit, and Tip Top. Finally, it is summed up as Tioga District. The Great Sierra Mining Company is formed, with all major claims under its control. Boarding houses and buildings to house equipment and animals are built and christened Bennettville after Thomas Bennet Jr., the company president. Other settlements cluster around the backbone of the Sierra Crest. The mines show much promise. Soon, a steady population is provided with steady work, exploiting a mine that is speculated to swell Bennettville to rival San Francisco.

By March 13, 1882; the Post Office recognizes the town and places its services there. A telegraph line is built in from Lundy. Ambitious plans are made, those to be carried out, and those to impress company backers on both coasts. One calls for scrapping the present tunnels of the Sheepherder and Great Sierra mines, and to create another massive tunnel below to tap richer veins, and to aid in the extraction of ore and water.



Company barn, from doorway of the assay office.

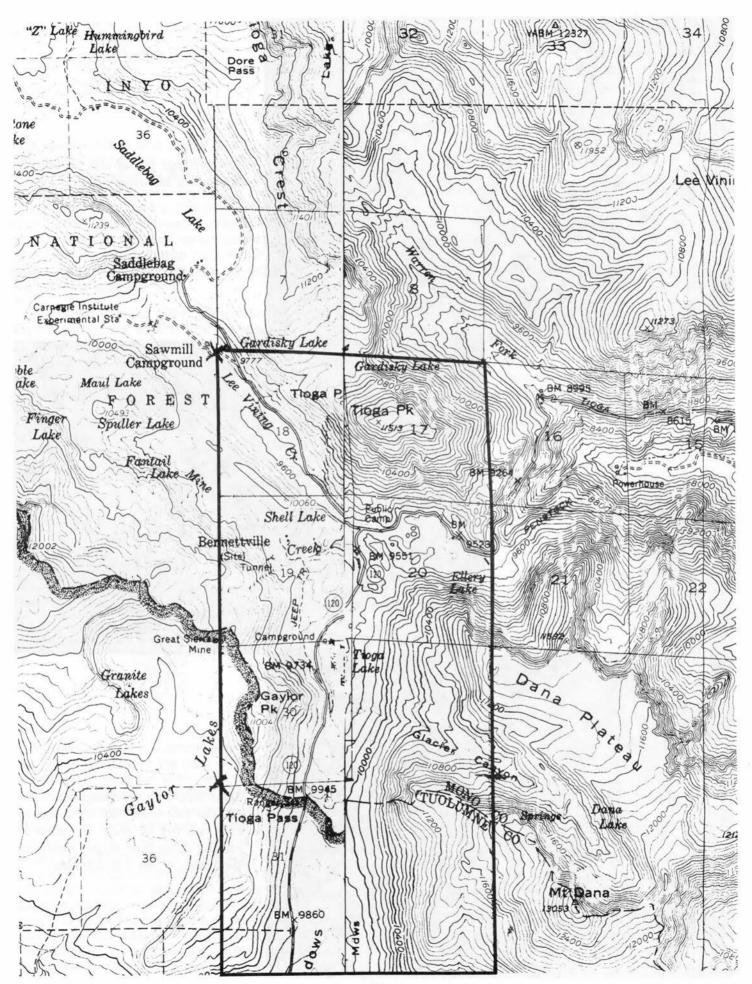


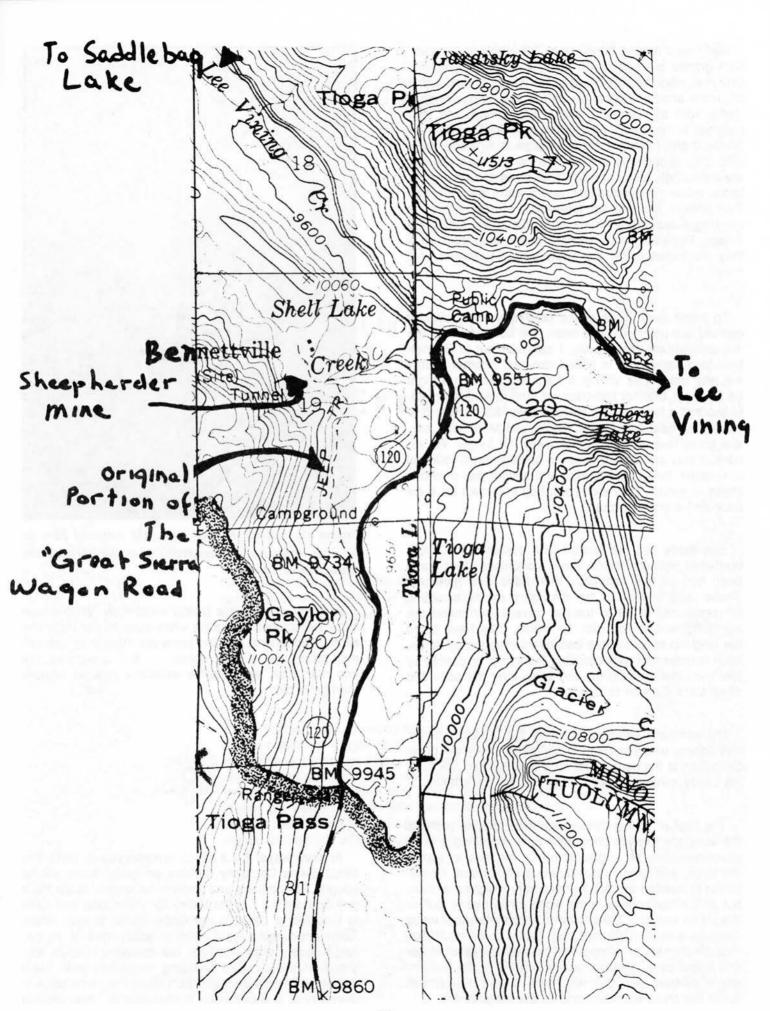
Left: Tailings pile of the Sheepherder Mine, from the assay office.

Right: Portal of the Sheepherder Mine; this tunnel bores into the mountain 2,000 feet.



Left: View into the Sheepherder tunnel. Ore cart tracks still are spiked to their ties, but lay under six inches of running water from tapped springs in the bowels of the Sierra granite.





Men sweat around the clock to drill a hole in the stubborn granite big enough to insert a stick of dynamite. One man risks the well-being of his hands to hold a drill bit, while another hopes his aim is true and swings a sledge with all his might, swing after swing, and little progress is measured. Finally, the next shift comes in to relieve them, freeing them to indulge in whatever pastime they choose. In this remote camp those choices are agonizingly few. For most, it revolves around a glass bottle, a few old newspapers, and a warm fire. How can they endure life without television, stereo, Kmart, a morning Gazzette, a trusty auto, Southern California Edison, Petrolane, a hot shower, and a flush toilet while they are bured under the snow from September until June?

To these men, most of the conveniences I take for granted are unknown. The snow, the cold, the toil, and the isolation are real. Today, I can walk out of Bennet-tville to a parked car in fifteen minutes. Another twenty will take me to Lee Vining. If I am interested in a night on the town, another half-hour will land me in Mammoth, or two and a half will do it Nevada style. But the world of these men held only Lundy, Bodie, and Mammoth, several hours to a couple of days away. Or longer. Horseback, if they are lucky enough to have a horse, to travel in summer, their own two legs and a stout pair of snow-shoes in winter. They didn't just hop into town for a six pack and a frozen pizza.

Somebody call the doctor! The doctor is in Lundy, burdened with the same travel conditions. Men have been hurt on this mountain; men have died here too. Those lucky enough to live through a mining accident, an explosion, or other trauma have experienced the agonizing wait to see him. Or worse, they have faced the long trip strapped to a backboard dragged by horse, each boulder and rock prodding the injury, or carried by four men through blizzard and snow over the pass and down Lake Canyon to Lundy.

The company attempts to rectify the situation. Since they cannot take the camp to civilization, they will bring civilization to the camp. And so a road hacked out from the Lundy mines in Lake Canyon will be undertaken.

The task of drilling through stubborn granite prompts the company to seek pneumatic drills, requiring a large air compressor, an engine to run it, air lines to supply the drills, and other miscellaneous equipment. Horse-power is needed to haul in machinery weighed in tons, but all the horsepower in the world cannot yank, pull or drag it up and over Lake Canyon. Solid wheels of wood capped with iron do not roll easily over boulders, through thickets of willows and twisted trunks of limber and foxtail pine. Another means to bring in the machinery is devised, and that will mean a wait until winter, when the snow will cover and fill the irregularities.



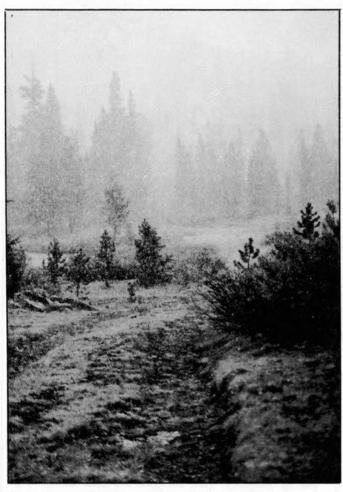
Beyond the twisted ore cart rails, the company barn in the main townsite of Bennettville is visible through the summer snow squall.

In many ways it is a typical winter day. Wind driven snow swirls about, creating white-outs. In the distance, silhouetted against blinding snow are more than a dozen men toiling with a bulky object . . . It is a success, but one man dies, and another exclaims, "It's no wonder men grow old."



In many ways, it is a typical summer day in 1882. The Great Sierra Company decides an easier route will be sought. Early miners and packers have used Mono Pass trail up from the Central Valley for years, and that route is selected to become the Great Sierra Wagon Road. Surveying begins for a road to accommodate legged and wooden wheeled traffic, but company officials also envision that smoke snorting machines with steel wheels will follow a steel ribbon along the same route to Bennettville and terminate at Mono Lake. Thus another

corporation organizes, with the moniker of California and Yosemite Railroad. The road will run fifty-six miles, from Crockers Station (near Big Oak Flat) to Bennettville. It will take a summer of sweat, blood, and blisters to push it through the dense western Sierra forests and granite domelands.



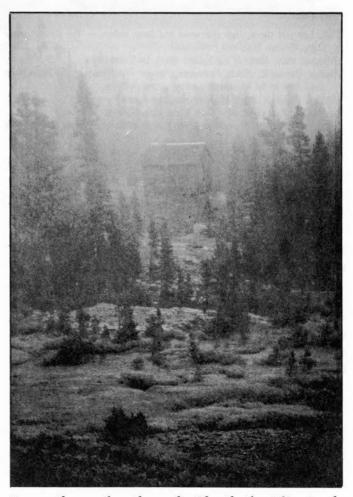
View down the faint tracks of the Great Sierra Wagon Road. The company barn is just visible in the trees.

Company accountants finally realize the rock they are drilling and blasting is more solid than their bank account. Fights and litigation among stockholders erode the company, and on July 3, 1884, operations are closed down, 1,784 feet into the solid Alp. Most of the miners are laid off; those left will be busy preparing tools and equipment for storage in the mine tunnel, sealing up the portal; buildings will be boarded against the coming winter. The post office will close in November. The Sheepherder's song has run out of breath.

A new company arises from the ashes as the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company. In 1889, men begin to return to camp, pull boards from the doors and windows, and reinstate the task of boring the tunnel deeper. When the miners reach 2,000 feet, promising ore is as elusive as ever, and word again is given to shut down.

The property will be kicked around among stockholders for years to come as one by one the original principles die off. During these slow years, a watchman is always on company payroll to keep it all safe. In 1933, a stockholder's widow decides to continue her departed husband's dream of finding the elusive Sheepherder. Work again begins with twentieth century equipment, but dreams and work stop with her death.

Maintenance of the Great Sierra Wagon Road ended with the mines, but it was not forgotten. With the coming of the automobile, grandiose plans with roads for autos to conquer the Sierra were made. The old wagon road presented a ready-made opportunity to do just that. In 1911, the state built the road up to Tioga. In 1915, Stephen T. Mather, who later became director of the National Park Service, bought the wagon road to improve and present to Yosemite National Park, completing a trans-Sierra route. It was a narrow and scary route, wide enough for one car, no guardrails, and dropoffs deep enough to make strong men feel faint. Through the years it has evolved into the smooth, easy road we use today.



Across the meadow from the Sheepherder Mine is the townsite of Bennettville.

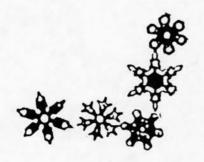
From the portal of the Sheepherder Mine, I ponder the scene, thinking of the work of the men who toiled in the tunnel, always believing that the next charge would reveal great riches. This mine always revealed a little, always teasing with just enough color to entice men just another foot of sweat and blood.



In many ways, it is a typical summer day. The painting on my imaginary canvas begins to sharpen. I snap out of my daydream and realize the snowfall is decreasing. I walk along fading tracks of the Great Sierra Wagon Road toward the remains of Bennettville, the summer storm adding a sense of historical continuity to the aura of my visit.

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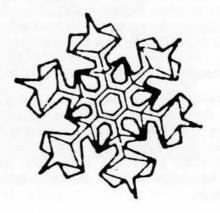


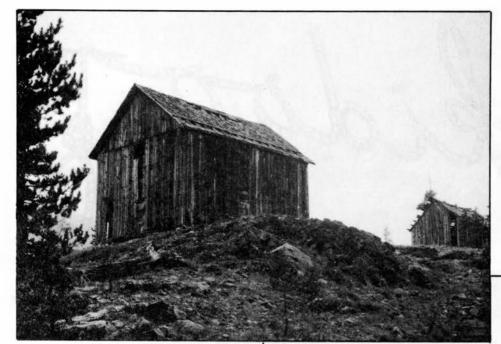
# From the Journal of the Mono Basin Historical Society

On a cold, snowy and windy September 22, 1990, several members of the Mono Basin Historical Society assisted the US Forest Service in a restoration project at the ruins of the mining town of Bennettville. That's only about 11,000 feet high!

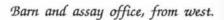
Society members Floyd Griffin, Augie Hess and Irv and Pat Grier joined Inyo National Forest employees Charlie Simis, Rick LaBorde, Linda Reynolds, Wally Wolfenden and Nancy Upham in shoring up the old buildings. According to the workers, the smallest was falling and was braced with wires and turnbuckles. A new underlayment was built for one of the roofs (the shingles are still there). The crew boarded windows in the two-story building.

The restoration was a project suggested by Tim Kelly of Tioga Pass Resort who volunteered to find historically correct lumber and square nails for the job. Tim coordinated with forest archaeologist Linda Reynolds to get funding from Washington, D.C. for this project.





Barn and assay office, as viewed approaching Bennettville on the trail.





Assay office and company barn at Bennettville, viewed from the north. These are the only standing structures at Bennettville. Nearby are other foundations and sites where buildings obviously stood.





Death Valley view, from Skidoo

by Marguerite Sowaal

She sat down on the outcropping of what was once a stone wall. It had been a hard climb up the hill. Taking a few minutes to catch her breath, she studied the remains of the old mill which clung to the mountain for its life. Wood beams were splintered and so weathered that only the hardwood core was left. Most of the sheet metal siding which had housed the precious metal was rusting in the canyon below. She gazed out over the painted

Panamint Range and watched cloudshadow creep over the distant hills. Death Valley, 5,700 feet below her perch, shimmered in mirage waves. Closing her eyes she ran her hand over the rough surface of the beam imagining the mill when it was new and miners, full of hope, raced up the Tucki Mountain from Harrisburg to try their luck at the richer lode of Skidoo.

It was eighty five years earlier that Pete Aquereberry, a Basque sheepherder turned prospector, and "Shorty" Harris, legendary lode finder of Death Valley, started their trek to Ballarat for the Fourth of July celebration. They had camped for the night on a flat in Wildrose Canyon intending to leave the next morning, but what they found when they awoke was a prospector's dream. Gold! They immediately staked their claims but Shorty, being a garrulous boaster of his fortune, soon found that all his friends had also made claims. A tent city, called Harrisburg after Shorty, sprang up practically overnight. Owing to the fickle lusts of miners, it had a short life. A richer strike was found over the hill to the north and the miners quickly made a move, en masse, to Skidoo.



Mine entrance, Skidoo

Who actually made the original strike is a matter of conjecture. Names mentioned are John or Harry Ramsey, Art Holliday, John Thompson, Frank Flynn and Steve Hovic. One story is that John Ramsey and John "One-Eye" Thompson camped in Emigrant Canyon one night and let their untethered burros take advantage of the lush grass on the flat. As burros will, they strayed, finding their way up Tucki Mountain and when finally recovered, were straddling an outcropping of gold.

Whether it was one or a combination of these people, they were miners with miners' itchy feet, and very shortly after its beginnings Skidoo was sold to Bob Montgomery, of Rhyolite, who paid \$60,000 for the claims.

For a time water was hauled up from Emigrant Spring and sold for \$2 a barrel. Montgomery, seeing a need, began laying a six-inch water pipe from Birch Springs on Telescope Hill down to the mines. The distance was an imposing twenty-three miles. Potable water in Death Valley was such a rarity that the town became famous not only for its gold, but for its water. A popular expression of the day was, "Twenty-Three Skidoo," meaning, "get out of here." Either because gold was discovered on the twenty-third of the month or because water had to come from twenty-three miles away, the saying fit the town and thus it was christened, informally, "Skidoo."



Remnant of 6" pipeline

Within weeks there were seventy-five buildings in Skidoo, mostly tent top, the standard mining town shelter. Between 1906 and 1917 Skidoo boasted a camp of seven hundred people and produced over \$1,500,000 in gold. There was a telegraph from Rhyolite which brought news from the outside world, and freight and stage lines to Randsburg and Rhyolite. In 1907 choice town lots sold for as much as \$1,000. In its

heyday Skidoo had a post office, three restaurants, two boarding houses, a hardware store, a bank, a weekly newspaper called, "The Skidoo News," and several bordellos. Of the latter, a poem remains:

There was a cat house in Skidoo, That was perched on a peak for the view.

But the miners who climbed it Seemed never to mind it, For the girls always knew what to do.

... and a story about one of the ladies named Blonde Betty. According to Shorty Harris, "she was as pretty as a curly ribbon." Since there were no other women in Skidoo but ladies of the evening, and Betty had the voice of an angel, she was asked to sing at the funeral of "Skagway" Thompson. A traveling preacher, who just happened through Skidoo at the right time, was asked to say a few words at the graveside. Unaware of Betty's profession, he found her irresistible and by the time he found out. he didn't care. He gave up his profession and ran away with her. Rumor has it that they ultimately married and raised a "fine brood of children."

Nor was Betty's story the only scandal known to Skidoo. The most infamous concerned Joe "Hooch" Simpson, a saloon keeper who liked his merchandise a bit too much. The headline April 5, 1908 in the Skidoo News read "MURDER IN CAMP. Murderer Lynched with General Approval. Joe Simpson shoots Jim Arnold dead and is hanged by citizens." One early April morning, a Sunday, business had been a little slow at the tent saloon where Joe Simpson tended bar, and Joe was a little restless. The establishment was nestled next to the bank and the general store. Joe started drinking nothing unusual - after all, his nickname was "Hooch." But he became a little more than socially drunk and decided he needed some money. He staggered into the Southern California Bank next door and demanded \$20 of Jim Arnold, the town banker. He was pointing a gun at Arnold when some bystanders took it away from him and told him to go sleep it off.

Three hours later Joe recovered his gun and went back to the bank where he told Jim Arnold he should prepare to die. He shot him through the chest and turned to shoot Joe MacDonald, also of the bank, when another drunk, Gordon MacBain, attempted to arrest Joe. In the confusion Joe was disarmed and handcuffed. Later that evening when Jim Arnold died, Joe was taken to Club Skidoo, a poker parlor temporarily converted to a quardhouse. The sheriff was not expected until the following Thursday but the miners decided they didn't want to wait. On Wednesday night the guard watching Joe was overcome by angry citizens and Joe was taken outside and hanged from a telephone pole.

The hanging was a quiet event, but Joe was not allowed to rest. Skidoo's telegraph wires sang of the lynching and it was not long before news reporters came from all parts of California to cover the event. They came with photographers expecting to graphically share the hanging with their readers and were disappointed to find Simpson was no longer dangling. Most of the reporters had traveled a long way and had negotiated Skidoo's hazardous approach road in order to get their story. The townspeople, unable to resist the limelight, reenacted the lynching and strung up "Hooch" again, although not on a telephone pole.

That should have been the end of

it, except that a physician needing a skull happened to come through Skidoo and "Hooch" was exhumed again. After the beheading, "Hooch" was placed back in the abandoned mineshaft which was to be his grave.

Unfortunately two "ladies" from Beatty came to Skidoo to see that Joe was given a decent burial. "Hooch" was raised again, but on the way to Beatty (during an especially warm spell), the funeral party decided it was absolutely necessary to hold services immediately and Simpson was buried in an impromptu grave, the whereabouts unknown.

The death of the Skidoo was not quite as dramatic, but affected more



Collapsed mine shaft

Old mill in the gulch



Three views of

the largest mill and



trademark of Skidoo

people. Just as water began to flow into Skidoo from the newly completed pipeline a dispute erupted between the builders and the lessees. Mysteriously a large section of pipe was torn out and Skidoo began to deteriorate. The mines were petering out, and the lack of water was the last straw. Used to finding gold easily, the miners moved on, leaving only the most persistent to continue digging. The post office closed in 1917, about the same time Bob Montgomery sold most of the pipeline to Standard Oil at a price far exceeding his costs.

During the depression in the '30s a few hardy miners came back to work the old diggings, and some were still there until the '50s. Today all remnants of the "city" are gone, leaving only rusted memories of an old truck, a few ore dumps and mine shafts, the skeleton of the stamping mill, and still one of the most spectacular views of Death Valley.





The sun's rays were lengthening and there was a slight chill to the breeze. She shivered, not entirely from the cold. The afternoon sun glinted on the white quartz rock and she understood, now, the lust inspired by a place where every rock glittered with the promise of gold, the madness which can come from solitary quietude, the special awareness of sound — songs in the creaking timbers, laughter in the salt bush, and footsteps in a heartbeat. •





This is a picture of the hearse the last time I remember seeing it, which was during the Big Pine Pioneer Days parade in April of 1931. The driver is Charles Uhlmeyer. Others on the hearse at that time include Malcolm McDonald and Jim and Alfonse Nikolaus. The rest are not identified. From the picture it appears that the ornate windows had been removed or broken out and the black finish had begun to deteriorate quite badly. Photo courtesy County of Inyo Eastern California Museum.

by Thomas W. Uhlmeyer

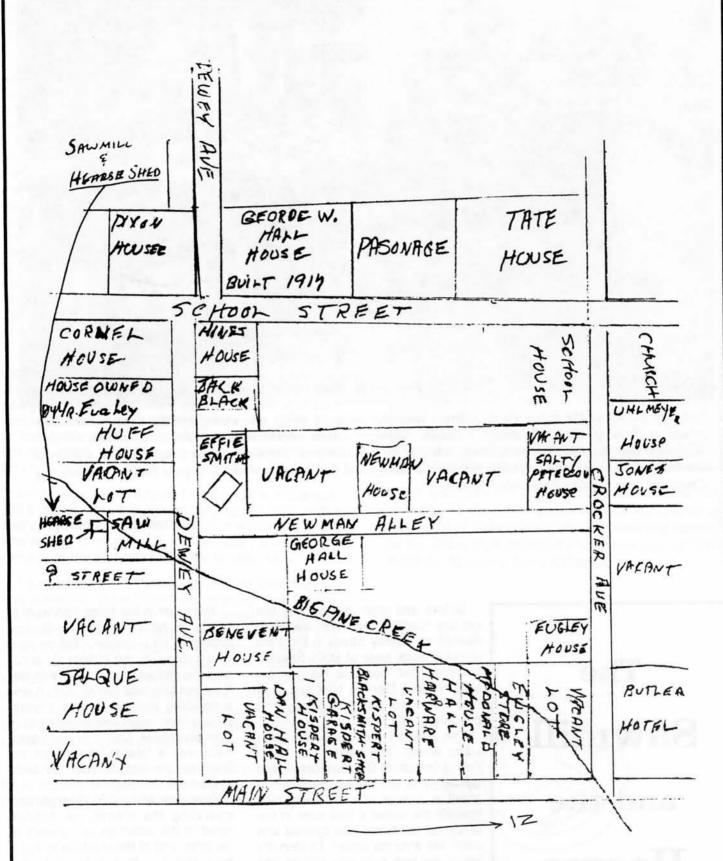
# The Sawmill and the Hearse

Before and after the turn of the century "Old" George Hall owned a sawmill on Dewey Street in Big Pine about a block west of Main Street. I call him "Old" because his nephew was "Young" George Hall and they had been so designated by the citizenry of Big Pine.

The sawmill was powered by a water wheel. The water was taken from a branch of Big Pine Creek and delivered to the wheel by a flume about a quarter of a mile long. To operate the wheel a trap door in the bottom of the flume was opened and water ran onto the wheel. To stop the wheel the trap door was closed and the water was returned to the creek branch which ran through Big Pine and was used for various other purposes down stream.

The water in the flume was wont to freeze in the winter so Old George depended on a gasoline engine as a contingency. To be historically accurate, the mill was not a sawmill in that it did not turn logs into lumber. It was a finishing mill and made smooth lumber from rough timbers shipped in from elsewhere. One piece of equipment was a "planer," which put the finish on the boards that had been made from the rough timbers.

One day while Old George was operating the planer, he noticed blood in the shavings so he went to the other end of the machine to see if his helper, Lee Cornell, had cut a finger; Lee was okay so Old George took inventory of his own fingers and found that the tips of three of them had been planed off to somewhere



A map of Big Pine west of Main Street, prior to 1924, as remembered by Alan Hall

between the tips and the first joint.

In the modern vernacular, Old George might have been called an entrepreneur. Not only did he own and operate the sawmill, he was the town undertaker. To go with the undertaking business he established a separate room in the mill to make and display caskets. Being a practical man, Old George also kept a dray with high sides handy to be used as a hearse to carry his freshly milled and newly built caskets (when occupied) from the place of the funeral to the cemetery on west Crocker Avenue. The dray was also used for hauling wood but when used as a hearse a matched team of beautiful bay horses was hitched to it, adding dignity to the occasion.

The dray was a very practical hearse; being a low-slung wagon, pallbearers had an easy job of lifting caskets on and off. As handy as it was, the dray lacked class so George ordered a real hearse. The new hearse was a thing of beauty with large glass windows on each side frosted with angels and lilies, double doors in the back with frosted windows, black velvet curtains with tas-

sels and a gorgeous black outside finish. The matched team was also used to draw the new hearse. The two-horse wagon tongue was detachable for easier storage and the wheels were rubber tired. George even built a lean-to shed on the mill to store it in and included a place on the wall to hang the tongue.

The new hearse was used for its intended purpose for a number of years. My cousin, Alan Hall (son of "Young" George), remembers that while the hearse was in use his uncle, Dan Hall, drove it and would pick Alan up on the way to the cemetery and let him ride on the high seat. Alan claims during that time he attended more funerals than anyone but the preacher.

Time and progress took their toll and with the death of Old George the hearse was finally retired to the leanto, replaced by a modern, motor driven hearse from the funeral parlor in Bishop.

All was not lost for the old hearse, however. Some would-be Romeo, or Juliet for that matter, figured that inside the hearse would be a fittin' place for a fast game of "Kiss and

Giggle" and more than one enamored couple used it for that purpose. My cousin Alan tells of one cold, wintry moonlit night with about a foot of snow on the ground when he and a young lady decided to avail themselves of the comforts of the hearse. Things were going pretty well when they heard another couple approaching. The only way out of the hearse was through the two back doors and not wanting to be caught red-handed, (or red-faced) Alan had to think fast, so he let out a yell that was a mixture of a screech, a holler and a squawk and I guess it was loud enough to wake the dead, so to speak. The approaching couple took off and was not heard from again.

The hearse survived in its lean-to until the late '20s. The last time I saw it was in the parade during a Big Pine Pageant. It was entered as a float driven by a bunch of youngsters dressed as clowns. A rather ignominious end for such a grand, horse-drawn vehicle that had served two noble purposes in the history of Big Pine.



North Main Street, Big Pine, c. 1920. H.W. Mendenhall Collection



Indian women carrying home harvested seeds along Eugley's picket fence, behind which they gambled, in Joe's time. H.W. Mendenhall Collection

# MAHALA JOE

by Clarice Tate Uhlmeyer



Indian woman wearing the type of clothing Mahala Joe always wore

This is the story of a man who dared to face his world as a woman for over 60 of his 75 years because his word meant more to him than his life. Mahala Joe, known by many as Squawbuck Joe, was a Paiute Indian. The only available facts about his early life and how he came to wear women's clothes are told by Mary Austin in her book of short stories "The Basket Woman." Here they are, briefly.

In the middle of the last century Joe Baker, a cattleman, came to the Owens Valley with his herd, seeking range. He settled near what is now Independence where he found good pasture. His wife was well along in pregnancy. When her time came she was without ample help and died.

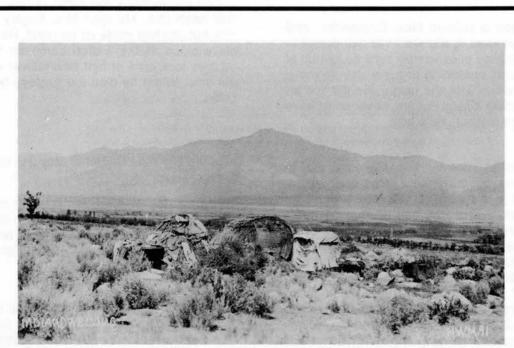
At that time the Indians and Whites merely tolerated one another, but Baker had no choice but to go to the Indian camps, which were not far away, and try to find a wet nurse for his newborn son. By sign language he indicated his wish and a squaw who had a papoose a few days old took the boy, who had been named Walter, and suckled him with her own son.

Walter thrived and he and his Paiute brother, whom he later named Joe after his own father, became inseparable. As they grew from babyhood into young boyhood they spent almost equal time between the Indian camp and the Baker cabin. When misunderstandings arose between the two peoples, the boys swore by an exchange of blood, by scratches on their wrists, that they would never fight against each other.

War broke out when they were in their mid-teens. At the opening of hostilities Baker took his son, Walter, east. Paiute Joe did not know that Walter had gone, so when called upon to fight he refused, knowing full well that the penalty might be death. The penalty however was not death, but that he should wear woman's clothes and do woman's work for the rest of his life.

To my knowledge Joe's later life has never been recorded. Following is Mahala Joe as I remember him. The people of Big Pine took him for granted. He was an oddity, but just another Indian. He grew up with the town. Early in his life, with the coming of white customs, it was his lot go to out with the squaws and work for the families of the town, doing their washing in the back yards where tubs, wash boards and a place for heating water and boiling the white things were supplied. Or he would iron in the hot summer kitchens where there were ranges for heating the irons, so that the houses could be kept cooler and the irons amply hot. Joe soon excelled in these duties and was in demand at almost every household, as he was a gentle, kindly sort of person.

He was tall and powerful, with clean cut features and a stoic expression, his teeth gleaming white and his long hair glossy black. His piercing eyes looked menacing under heavy brows. He seldom looked at anyone. A life of being scorned had taught him to look the other way when approaching people for he dreaded being snubbed.



Indian dwellings in the hills west of Big Pine, in the early 1900s. H.W. Menden-hall Collection

The squaws had early adopted the dress of the pioneer women. There was a trail through the schoolyard, a short cut to the Indian camps, and that trail was across the street from my home. I watched Joe many times taking that trail. His long man's strides spread the long full skirt and his big man's hands dangled from the sleeves of the woman's waist. There would be a shawl around his shoulders and a colored silk kerchief folded into a triangle over his head and tied under his chin. He was always alone and looked straight ahead. If he met anyone he grunted only if they spoke, and moved only his eyes.

It was in the nineties that Mahala Joe was befriended by one of the town merchants - A.K. Eugley, at whose home he had sometimes washed and ironed. A little at a time, Mr. Eugley had asked Joe to help him in the store with lifting and other heavy work, until it became a steady job, and they called on him to do many things around the house. Eventually he moved into an unused cabin in the yard and went only occasionally to his wickiup at the camp. The Eugleys became very fond of him and in his reserved way he reciprocated. In time he came to do much of the housework and all of the laundry, as well as helping around the store by sweeping out each morning and relieving Mr. Eugley of all the heavy work there. He made his own clothes from material Mr. Eugley gave him, from calico and other material from the shelves of the general merchandise store. The colors were always sober. In cold weather he cooked his meals on their kitchen range and, suffering from winter colds, he sometimes spent nights on a cot in their kitchen where they watched over him and at times even gave him a hot toddy.

Mrs. Eugley was a refined New Englander, and because Mr. Eugley liked it, she wore her hair parted in the middle with a myriad of corkscrew curls caught up at the back of her head, cascading to her waist. To make these curls was tedious until she taught Joe the fine art of hair dressing, telling a neighbor she never could have kept up the fashion without Joe's help.

Joe had learned to stay in the background and to control his emotions, but there were times when his tribal instincts burst to the surface. One day a drummer came out of the store where he had been showing his wares to Mr. Eugley. Joe was sitting on the porch, which he often did. The drummer took out a camera and aimed it at him. Joe rose to six feet of masculine fury. With clenched fists and right lips he said, "You do that and me kill you!" The drummer hastily retreated and thereafter was very careful to avoid the man whenever he came to town. To the natural superstition the Indians had at that time against having their pictures taken was added Joe's sensitiveness about his dress, as it was a constant reminder in the eyes of his world that he had failed to uphold his position as a man.

Joe's only companions among the Indians were the squaws. The men either spurned or completely ignored him. He sat alone and walked alone. After the day's work was done the squaws liked to gather for a game of pangingi. One of their favorite places was the Eugley orchard which paralleled one of the side streets of the town. It was hemmed in by a white picket fence. Here Joe would join them. Seated around a blanket with a small stake in the center they often played until darkness drove them home. Going on errands to the store for my mother. I had to pass this place. I could not see them because of a thick hedge of berry bushes but I could hear them chattering in Paiute and their intonations showed glee or disdain mingled with occasional laughter. I always hurried by as it gave me an eerie feeling.

Whether Joe ever regretted his act, or even ever spoke about it, no one will ever know, but this I do know: no one would dare pry into his thoughts. In idle times he would look into space and an occasional tear might appear on his cheek, but his thoughts were his own and his reserve respected. I have heard of other Indian men relegated to his fate who lived and died in bitterness. Joe was helped through bad times by the kindness of the Eugleys. It is said by some that perhaps in his later years he could have gone back to his natural dress, as tribal customs relaxed. Others say that once the decree was made it was for life and there would have been some who would have killed him if he had tried.

One day in 1920 Joe came to Mrs. Eugley and said "Me heap sick. Me die." Mrs. Eugley tried to comfort him, but Joe had made up his mind. He went back to his old wickiup at the Indian camp on the hill and the squaws took care of him in whatever was their way at the time. When he died the Eugleys bought him a fine coffin.

In the Big Pine Citizen of May 21, 1921 is this tribute to Squawbuck Joe:

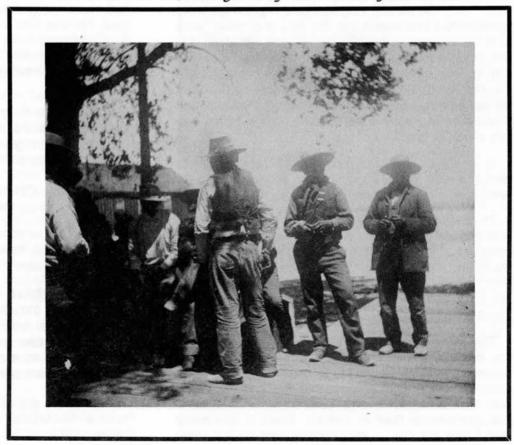
Mahala Joe is dead. His passing marks the end of one of the most unique characters in Owens Valley history. Because of his love for a white brother he had the courage to wear the badge of being afraid all of his life.

The irony of the whole thing is that the Bakers never returned to the valley, and because communications at that time were poor it is likely that Walter Baker never knew nor even suspected the life of silent devotion and shame to which his blood brother, Joe, was doomed because of him. •



A dwelling at the Big Pine Indian camp, 1950s. Uhlmeyer Collection

Paiute men at a Fandango, early 1900s. Uhlmeyer Collection.



# AND IN ADDITION



Dan Young searching pine tree for Convict Lake shootout bullets, September 1990. George L. Garrigues photo

#### CONVICT LAKE UPDATE

by George L. Garrigues

When the 1871 shootout in what is now Convict Creek Canyon occurred, the convicts hid behind a large pine tree. (*The Album*, Vol. III, No. 2, April, 1990). My grandmother had shown me the tree with bullet holes from the episode. Judge Verne Summers confirmed that the pictured tree was the same tree. It was shown to him by his mother, Sybil (McGee) Summers (*The Album*, Vol. I, No. 1, Dec. 1987), daughter of Alney McGee who was present at the shootout. I decided that it would be of historical significance if some of the bullets could be found.

In the fall of 1990, Dan Young and I spent the major part of a day in close examination of the tree. There were surprises and disappointments.

To reach the tree involved climbing down the canyon wall through rocks, loose dirt, wild rose bushes, aspen trees and other unidentifiable shrubs. When we reached the creek, running higher than expected for fall in a dry year, it took rock hopping and knee deep wading to reach the other side, where the same tangle of growth faced us until we found sunlight again.

The tree itself is best described as huge. From across the canyon, it appeared to be three to four feet in diameter. Reaching it, we discovered that it was six to eight feet in diameter and over two hundred feet tall. It was well rotted, mostly small particles of decayed wood that crumbled to dust on contact. There is little doubt that it was the tree. It was the only one on the south

side of the canyon. Although it was too rotted to determine its age, we judged it must be several hundred years old.

Using a high sensitivity metal detector, Dan searched and re-searched the tree remnants and surrounding area. Nothing was found except a rusted *Copenhagen* lid, obviously of more recent vintage, and a small pocket of iron oxide, rusted metal that could not be identified. Disappointing results perhaps, but this is a part of historical research.

You can see the tree, lying against the south side of the canyon on the left as you drive to Convict Lake. Look at it and imagine that you are there with the posse, shooting at convicts hidden across the canyon.

#### **CHARLEY'S BUTTE**

by George L. Garrigues

A story is seldom complete. In spite of intensive research efforts, new facts come to light. (*The Album,* Vol. II, No. 1, Jan. 1989).

When the Native American Indians captured Negro Charley Tyler, they had never seen a black man. They thought he was a white man with some sort of coloring on his skin. It appeared to them that Charley had made himself black as a noble gesture to help defend the McGee-Summers party.

The natives decided they should give Charley a bath to clean him up and remove the foreign substance from his skin. They took him to the river and proceeded to

scrub his skin with sand and water. Their efforts failed to produce the expected result. Vigorous washing continued. Eventually Charley was drowned in the attempted cleaning.

For this information, my thanks to Richard Stewart, great grandson of Fort Jack, so named because he hung around Fort Independence. Jack was also called "Porty Jack" because he could not pronounce "fort." There is no "F" in the Paiute language. [Julian Steward, Two Paiute Biographies, University of California Press, 1934.] Jack was a Native American living in the Owens Valley at the time of the incident.

#### THE COTTONWOOD CREEK SAWMILL

by Clarice T. Uhlmeyer

I was greatly interested in the story of Colonel Stevens and his sawmill, so well written by David A. Wright (*The Album*, Vol. III, No. 4, Oct. 1990). Immediately, I dug into my files and found the picture of the sawmill that I had taken in 1921.

My husband, Ira, our small son, and I had spent the summer at the Tunnel Ranger Station. Ira was the fire guard and I operated the mountain telephone line, owned jointly by the Forest Service and the Cattlemen's Association. In June we had gone into the mountains by way of Monache with the Fred Crocker family from Big Pine, who summered their cattle there, but in September we had decided to take the more direct route out by way of the Hockett Trail.

We spent one night at Mulkey Meadows, so it was early in the day when this odd looking structure loomed up in front of us. Ira was in the lead on my gentle mustang, carrying our seven-month-old son on a pillow in front of him; I was riding his long-legged gray, who was not too anxious to be second. The one pack mule followed. I unstrapped my 2A Brownie and was lucky the horse stood still long enough for me to aim and shoot.

We soon stopped for a break to feed the baby and it was then that Ira told me the building was the Cotton-wood Creek Sawmill, which had been built about fifty years before. He explained that the timbers had been sent to the valley by flume, and many long stretches were still in fairly good repair along the creek. He had seen them in the spring while working on the trail.

It was not until 1950 that I went on a horseback trip to Big Whitney Meadows, this time following the Cotton-wood trail up the canyon, where we found only short stretches of the decaying flume. Those thirty years had taken their toll and to my great disappointment the saw-mill itself was completely destroyed.

Later I asked Lizzy Carrasco, who had cooked for the trail gang in that area for many years, when the mill had burned. She told me it had been during the Second World War years. It still stood immediately before the war but when she went in a year or so after, there was nothing left but scrap iron, the result of careless campers who had not completely extinguished their campfire.



Cottonwood Lumber Mill, 1921. Clarice Tate Uhlmeyer photo

# FISH TAILS

George Garrigues is back in time for spring fishing.

#### THREE MEN IN A BOAT

It started out simply, ended in exasperation. Some twenty plus years ago, three Bishop fishing and boating experts, Paul Skaggs, Bud Deming and Tom Styx, wanted some adventure. Their target was Crowley Lake trout.

Arriving at the lake, they rented a City of Los Angeles boat completely equipped with fine-tuned (?) engine, a pair of emergency oars and a red distress flag. Now, there is slight bit of confusion in the story. The adventure, or more properly misadventure, began. Whether caused by faulty equipment or the ineptitude of the boaters, what followed was disheartening.

According to Skaggs, "The boat had a top speed of five miles per hour." Nevertheless, fishing was good and all limited out just about the time the wind started to blow. They were quite a way from the landing dock and wanted to get back as fast as they could.

They soon found the engine would only run in reverse. They proceeded across the lake backward as the water became more choppy. Skaggs was driving and he got a good bath when the boat started shipping water. Deming and Styx manned the oars to help the ailing engine.

Then, in Skaggs' words, "That blank-blank motor wouldn't even run in reverse."

They broke out the distress flag to signify trouble. Skaggs said, "We waved the red flag, all right, but all we got was a lot of exercise. Those other fishermen must have thought we were playing games, they went by so fast. We never did see the patrol boat."

After what seemed like hours, battling the wind and the waves with only oars for locomotion and an empty bait can to remove the excess onboard water, they reached the landing.

The ultimate blow came at the dock. The attendant looked the trio over in disgust and asked, "Why didn't you wave the flag?"

Skaggs' comment was, "That guy didn't know how close he came to getting slugged."

(My thanks to Phyllis Skaggs for passing this Fish Tail on to me. glg)

#### NOW, THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT ...

I was returning to my truck on my favorite trout stream at dusk one evening, my creel bulging with enough fat brown trout for the family dinner. Suddenly I heard a loud thrashing in the willows ahead and wondered what kind of creature was there.

As I rounded a bend, another fisherman (I guess you could call him that) appeared. He was a large man, wearing hipboots, fishing vest and an old hat decorated with an odd assortment of fishing lures that wouldn't even attract a starving fish in a landlocked pond. He reeked from a combination of strong alcoholic beverage and mosquito repellant. His two-day-old whiskers made his face look dirty and he squinted through bloodshot eyes as he spoke:

"There ain't any fish in these waters. Chamber of Commerce and the newspapers are in cahoots — telling us the fishing's good and I drove three hundred miles for this!"

He ranted on, with invectives and obscenities I won't repeat. I tried to break in, but he was so obsessed with his tirade, he didn't hear me.

Finally, I glanced at the stream and noticed a nice little hole under the opposite bank. I made several false casts and luckily dropped my fly right in the middle of the hole. Wham! I had a good hit. The "fisherman" stopped his raving to watch. Ten minutes later I had successfully maneuvered the fish across the stream through the swift water. I slid him up onto a sandbar at my feet; he must have weighed over two pounds and I held him up for "my friend" to see. He was speechless.

I couldn't resist saying, "The next time you complain about no fish in the water, make sure you know what you're talking about. Here, the fish is yours."

He gingerly took it from my hand and I continued on my way. I have often wondered what kind of a fish story he told about his catch that night.

#### BACK ROAD DITCHES

I save these for meat-fishing — those times when out-of-town friends to whom I've bragged about my fishing prowess, are coming. Moon is wrong, water is high and muddy, can't score at any of my regular spots and I've got to have fresh trout for dinner I promised when I opened my mouth more than I should have. It's then that I head for one of my favorite back road ditches.

Innocuous looking, seldom more than three or four feet (often only a foot or two) wide and usually only a few inches deep, with water moving along at a leisurely pace. These are frequently unnoticed, given little thought — waterways that crisscross the valley all around us. You've seen them, driven by them hundreds of times without giving them a second glance. Usually quite straight alongside of the road, across an open pasture, or meandering through the brush, shaded by intermittent cottonwood or willow trees, diverted or controlled here and there by headgates.

On the other hand, I don't think it's any secret; almost all have a limited number of native trout beneath their banks or hiding in clusters of moss — fish that have wandered from the river or from the larger streams coming out of mountain canyons, or that have been spawned and grown to catchable size right where they are.

These are one-person fishing waters. The fish spook easily and don't return to a normal feeding pattern for quite some time. I use a short two- to three-foot one-pound leader, size eight or ten hook and no weight. For bait I usually use plump garden worms or, if I plan far enough ahead, native grasshoppers or hellgammites.

I stand well back from the bank of the ditch, fishing the length of my rod or more ahead of me, just letting the bait tumble down the ditch with the flow of the water. If it stops, it is often because a trout has swallowed it. I give the rod an easy flick of the wrist, upward movement, and bag my catch.

There are fringe benefits also. I proceed leisurely, observing the serenity of Mother Nature around me. A startled cottontail may scuttle for its burrow, killdeers and meadowlarks skirt the pasture, a kingfisher or blue heron gracefully flaps his wings to get out of my way. Swallowtail or monarch butterflies flutter from flower to flower in the multitude of wildflowers along the banks of the ditch. A covey of quail may hustle into the bushes.

I stop in the shade of a lone cottonwood on a warm day, or out

in the sun if it's cool, to take a long, slow look at the lofty Sierra peaks or bleak White Mountains that surround me, perhaps watch and be watched by a lone golden eagle lazily circling high overhead. I do stay alert for skunks; unexpected contact could be embarrassing.

A water snake slithers out of the grass at my feet and disappears upstream, a hen mallard scrambles from the water, making inaudible clucks to her little ones, who find immediate cover on the opposite bank. I talk gently to the cattle as I walk by, extra careful not to get between a cow and her calf or I'm in big trouble. Ignore the bull, but give a wide berth as he eyes me and leaves me alone.

It's happy, peaceful, easy fishing and before I know it, I have enough for my dinner. It's time to stop, leaving some fish for the next time. These ditches are easily fished out so I confine my expeditions to any one of them to once a year, hope that no one saw me fishing there and, above all, never tell anyone where I caught my fish.

I want to emphasize that what I relate is strictly fact. I have called upon my conscience to be 100% accurate even though this may sound like the beginning of another fish story. If you have a favorite fish story that meets these requirements contact me, c/o The Album. Please be sure names and places are spelled correctly, dates are accurate and include your phone number in case we need to contact you.



Frasher photo postcoard, George Garrigues collection

# Home on the Range with the Rossis

... more great recipes swiped from the Rossi cookbook

#### CARROT PUDDING (Evalina)

1 cup grated carrot

1 cup grated potato

1 cup sugar

1 cup raisins

1 cup chopped walnuts

1 cup flour

1 teaspoon soda dissolved in a little milk

butter size of egg

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1 teaspoon cinnamon, pinch of salt

Steam 3 hours

#### EDITH'S ICE CREAM

1 qt. milk (scalded well)

10 eggs beaten separately

2 large cups sugar

1 qt. cream

Beat yolks thoroughly, add sugar gradually, beating constantly. Pour this 1 cup scalded milk slowly and beat constantly so as not to curdle eggs. Then add this to the remainder of the scalded milk. Then last add the whites of eggs beaten to a stiff froth. This makes 1 gallon.

#### COOKIES (Nora Cox)

Cream 1 cup butter and 1-1/2 cups sugar together, add 3 well beaten eggs, 1 cup chopped walnuts, 1 cup chopped raisins, 1 teaspoon soda dissolved in 2 tablespoons hot water, 3-1/4 cups flour, 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Drop in slightly greased pan.

#### BROWN BREAD

1/2 cup wheat flour

2-1/2 cups yellow corn meal

1/2 cup cornstarch

1/2 cup rye flour sifted twice

1-1/2 heaping teaspoon of soda into wheat flour Sift rye flour, corn meal and teaspoon of salt together and add flour. Add 1 cup syrup. Stir in gradually 3-1/2 cups sour milk. Steam 4 hours.

#### MUSTARD PICKLES (Evalina)

1 qt. onions, 1 qt. cucumbers, 1 qt. green tomatoes, 3 heads cauliflower. Let each soak in separate vessels 24 hours in salt water, then heat all together except cucumbers, in vinegar. For paste: 1/2 gal. vinegar diluted with water to taste and add salt to taste, 1/4 pound mustard, 1/2 oz. tumeric powder, 3 small cups of sugar. Mix dry ingredients with a little cold vinegar, stir all together and boil a few minutes.

#### STRAWBERRY PRESERVES (Lillie Murphy)

Wash berries with the stems on, let them drain and then pick the stems off. Put 1 cup sugar to 1 cup of berries, let stand overnight. In the morn put 1/2 teaspoon salt to a gallon of fruit. Boil 20 minutes, no longer, and they keep their own color.

#### CHOCOLATE FILLING (Carrie Evans)

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup chocolate

5 tablespoons cream

1 egg

Cook together until rather thick and spread.

#### GREEN TOMATO SWEET PICKLES (Mrs. McNally)

14 qts. green tomatoes sliced medium Sprinkle with 1 cup salt and drain 24 hours Boil in 2 qts. water and 1 qt. vinegar 25 minutes, drain. Slice 6 large onions, 2 lbs. sugar, 1/2# white mustard seed, 2 even tablespoons each of allspice, cloves, cinnamon, ginger and mustard, 1/2 tablespoon cayenne, 1-1/2 qts. vinegar. Boil all 20 minutes.

#### CHILI SAUCE (Loretta)

8 qts. tomatoes

3 cups chopped peppers

2 cups chopped onions

3 cups sugar

3/4 cup salt

2 teaspoons cloves

3 teaspoons cinnamon

2 teaspoons nutmeg

2 teaspoons ginger

1-1/2 qts. vinegar

Boil 3 hours.



See Vol. II, No. 3 (July, 1989) for the Rossi cookbook story

This fish story has not been submitted to George for his "Fish Tails" because I'm not 100% sure of its absolute accuracy. However, extensive research through careful attention to the stories of great fishermen, told over campfires and at local watering holes, leads me to believe this is the real history of fishing. It was first recorded in "Home Town in the High Country." (Written by me.)

In the beginning, and for some time afterward, there was only greenery and brownery and rocks, and volcanos to make rocks. But things were too quiet by half. So God said, "Let's have a little action down there!" and fish appeared in many colors and sizes. They swam in the oceans and rivers and streams and bogs of Earth and didn't make any noise to speak about. Fish ruled Earth and didn't eat the apples.

After a few thousand centures, God got bored with fish. They did nothing but swim around all day. They never played water polo, nor did they hold wet tee-shirt contests, in spite of the ideal environment. They failed to give thanks and often just laid in the water facing upstream with their mouths hanging open.

"This is not my best idea yet," decided God.
"Let's have something more entertaining here.
Let's have man and he can chase the fish. He
will be called Fisherman and never in a thousand
centuries grow bored with chasing fish. Think
about that!"

So man came along and God made woman as an afterthought because someone had to build the fires and cook the fish. Man got pretty tired of chasing fish through the waters of Earth in nothing but a fig leaf, especially on those chilly pre-spring Saturdays, so being born crafty, he gave the matter some thought. That's really how blind bogeys, trout derbys, early openers, fishing gear and trout planting were invented. And God expanded the length of man's arms so he could tell about the ones that got away.

As man became more and more clever, some of God's favorite creations began to disappear, such as saber-toothed tigers, carrier pigeons, unicorns and innocent maiden ladies. It occurred to Him that perhaps a little control over cleverness might be in order. Whereupon there appeared Fish and Game Commissions, the U.S. Forest Service, National Parks and the Sierra Club. They strove mightily, but fishermen had come on the scene many years ahead of them and the deck was already stacked with centuries of practice.

Besides that, all the original apple crop had been crossbred and hybrid and man had invented pruning, thereby nipping in the bud anything new that God might try to put over on him.

Mankind became so puffed up with his accomplishments that he forgot who created this sport in the first place. He became so involved with cleverness and craftiness and polyvinylchloride fishing poles that lawyers had to be invented for making up new rules. God figured they could just go at it, and let Himself off the hook, as it were. From then on, it's been one darned problem after another. Limits, licenses, laws, no-fishing signs, sharks that insist on changing the rules and women who keep forgetting they were created to build the fires and cook the fish.

Worst of all, it didn't take too long for fish to catch on to the game, and even when they were hand-raised on chopped liver and programmed to come rushing right to the bank when man showed up, they began to practice craftiness, too. Female fish, especially, worked up quite a resentment at being caught and thrown back.

Don't lose too much sleep over the whole situation, though. It has been rumored, on good authority, that God is tired of war and income tax and is beginning to take a renewed interest in what's been happening down here. There are going to be some new rules, soon. Women will do the fishing. Men will build the fires and cook the fish. Lawyers and apples will become extinct. Volcanos will make new rocks; greenery and brownery will return, and sharks will walk on land. If that doesn't level things out, a mighty voice will announce, "Peace!"

And there will be peace. 🚓



Walters – Fisher family photo. (Before DFG regulations in the High Sierra.)

#### Editor's Corner



In this issue, we present our writer George L. Garrigues. George says, "My roots are kind of deep in this valley," and they are indeed. His great-grandmother, Elizabeth Gunter McGee, was born in a covered wagon crossing the Sierras east of Placerville. She came here at the age of sixteen to teach school in Round Valley. She married Alney McGee who had come into the valley in 1861.

George's grandmother, Eva McGee Yaney, and mother, Mildred Yaney Garriques, were born in Bishop, as was George.

He attended Bishop schools and served in the U.S. navy during World War II. After the war he attended Stanford University where, he somewhat reluctantly admits, he flunked English A.

George's father purchased the Bernard Book Store in Bishop and renamed it the Pinon Book Store. He put George to work in the store at the age of twelve and George returned to take an active part in the business after graduation from Stanford, eventually buying the store.

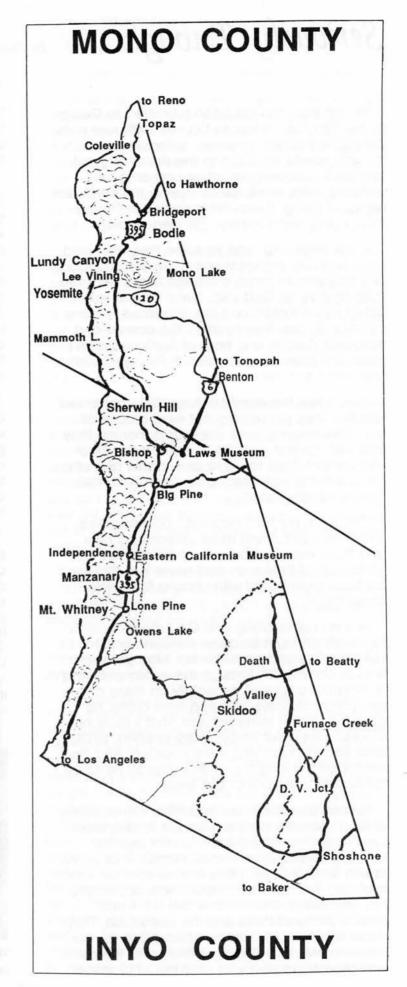
George and Barbara Robinson were married after their Stanford years, raised four children: Sally, Bill, Tricia, and John, and now have eight grandchildren.

Barbara passed away in 1986 and George retired from the world soon after. He took up a new vocation of writing, something he had wanted to do for a long time. He is a regular contributor to THE ALBUM. He dabbles in poetry and admits he will read his "junk poetry" to anyone who will listen. One of his main accomplishments is CLICKETY CLACK, a ballad of Art Hess' ride to Bishop on the Slim Princess in 1906 (available at the Laws Railroad Museum).

He became a member of the Bishop Rotary Club after graduating from the old Bishop 20-30 Club and is active in St. Timothy's Episcopal Church. When not writing, he likes to garden and fish. His annual spring plant sale has become a popular event. He fished only for native trout and after he has caught enough for a meal, he releases the rest. He has served on the Elementary School Board, the Bishop Planning Commission and various school and city advisory committees.

With his background in local history, George says he has so much material that it would take two lifetimes to write it all.

Look for his Fish Tails (p. 50 this issue) and his stories of the Eastern Sierra regularly in THE ALBUM.



## Letters to the Editor

#### MEMORIES OF INYO-MONO

Roscoe thought you might be interested in this photo of him, his brother and Dad, showing off their 15" and 16½ " Golden trout from Lake Valentine.

Roscoe, Vince and I hiked up past the beautiful spring, with pure white sand in the bottom and clear, clean water bubbling up through it. Roscoe and Vince made it to the lake, but I stopped at the bottom of the last steep pitch and fished the stream, getting four fat little Goldens. The boys cast their small Colorado spinners in the lake and let them settle to the bottom. When they retrieved, they each had a big fish on and landed it. They fished and fished and not another bite. Guess that was the last two Goldens in Lake Valentine. Year 1945.

For several years we camped in Shady Rest Campground at Mammoth. There was a big Husky called "Gus" that came to see us every day. Of course, we petted and fed him. In 1950 we were coming back from a trip up north and stayed at the old Pine Crest. What do you know! There was old Gus, still making his rounds. He was the town tramp, but a lovable old tramp. That was the last time we saw him, and we missed him. *Margaret Severtson, Dalsy Hill, CA* 





I received my first copy of THE ALBUM and I am glad that I had the good sense to enter my subscription. I have not quite finished reading it, but enjoyed the two articles by my cousins, Clarice and Tom Uhlmeyer.

Thank you so much for including THE ALBUM index, 1988, 1989, 1990 for I find that I need more issues . . . I am especially interested in "The Spirit of Glacier Lodge" for my father, George W. Hall, was one of the original owners. *Alan W. Hall, San Antonio, TX* 

See pages 41 and 44 of this issue for more stories by the Uhimeyers, including a map that Mr. Hall prepared from his memory of Big Pine in the 1920s. Once again we see the spreading tapestry of relationships in the pioneer families of the eastern side of the Sierra.

In reply to your letter concerning the Hutchison and Hines families material, I am still researching. However, the Hines story, taken from the REAL WEST magazine which I borrowed and must return, has "Ambush at Black Rocks" by (the late) Katharine G. Connable (of Independence) pages 14-20, with pictures, one of which I was pleased to see was the Independence Courthouse in 1894. She also gives the reference sources with the note: "The only person mentioned in this article living today (October 1974) is John M. Gorman's sister, Mrs. Edith Strathern.

I hope this "Ambush" could be used just as she wrote it. REAL WILD WEST stories interest me as part of my grandfather L.R. Ketcham's history tells of his coming to California in a cattle drive and settling in San Joaquin Valley.

I found this last issue of THE ALBUM exciting, reading Raymond Steffen's story of "Other Days at Aberdeen," for we went to school in our Junior year in Big Pine and I have the yearbook, 1926-1927, with his picture. He said he was unhappy that his picture wasn't included with the basketball players — so was I when my picture wasn't with the Junior class because I had returned the last semester from St. Mary's Academy in Los Angeles. So I telephoned him and plan on coming to the Valley in the spring, hopefully, for we are both 81 years old now.

Thanks again for THE ALBUM and the Times and Tales. Another Native Big Pine Pioneer. Eva Ketcham Maltzberger, San Bernardino, CA

Sorry to say, we cannot publish articles that have already been published in another magazine. Let's hope Mrs. Maltzberger is writing her own memoirs for THE ALBUM.

This picture is of Velma Watkins, Ray's oldest sister, age 90. She is still very active. The Indian baskets were made on the Tinnemaha Ranch that was located nine miles south of Big Pine. A few Indians lived on the ranch while we were there and one lady made these baskets for us many years ago. Ray and Capitola "Cappy" Alcorn, Fallon, NV

Fairview West Publishing Company has published Ray Alcorn's book "The Birds of Nevada," a must for anyone serious about birding in Nevada. Mr. Alcorn was born in Bishop December 1, 1911, and has devoted his career and his life to wildlife biology. In 1929 he and his family moved to Fallon, where he worked for the U.S. Biological Survey (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) in 1936. In 1939, he joined the University of California at Berkeley, where he worked as a technical assistant in mammology. He returned to Fallon and the Fish and Wildlife Service from 1941 to 1946, during which time he wrote many articles on Nevada birds for scientific journals. In 1947 he moved east to the University of Kansas, returning to Fallon and the Wildlife Service in 1959. During his career, he traveled from Alaska to Central America, collecting over 30,000 specimens and over 10,000 pages of field notes. In 1973, he retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service to devote much of his time to writing projects. "The Birds of Nevada" reveals a history of 456 species of birds in Nevada.

#### HELP!

Please send us a card when you change your address. It costs \$1.33 to mail THE ALBUM, \$1.33 to have it returned with the post office's sticker showing your new address, and another \$1.33 to re-mail it to you.

#### **APOLOGIES**

In the last issue, I overlooked a typographical error which gave James Sherwin's year of birth as 1974. It should have been 1874. (Vol. IV, No. 1, page 2). So I gave him an extra hundred years; I hope someone does the same for me someday.

We also identified the wrong person as George Brown of Olancha in Leroy Cline's story. (Vol. IV, No. 1, page 49). We have h ' conflicting information on who actually is in the picture, and hoped to be able to give you a correct photo. So far, we have been unable to locate one.

#### STUFF WE LOVE TO SHARE

As a long-time resident of the Northern Mojave Desert, my deep interest in the history of the Inyo-Mono in general and in the Owens Valley in particular spans many years. I have read (and collected) much of the published literature and books of the area. I have also been a "plank owner" subscriber to your fine publication. In addition to being most informative and interesting, THE ALBUM makes a significant contribution to the body of recorded history and adds greatly to the scholarship of a most fascinating and unique region. John DiPol, Ridgecrest, CA

I hope this convinces some more of you who have memories and historical facts about the area to send in your stories: long, short, polished manuscript or rough draft. Please read the paragrphs below the cover picture identification on page 1 and give it some serious consideration. Your stories are valuable.





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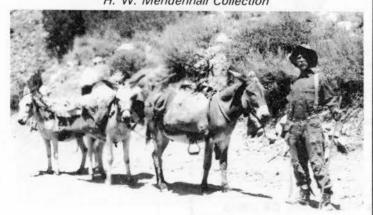
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Opening of State Highway, Sherwin Hill, 1916 See Story Page 20 H. W. Mendenhall Collection



A Typical Prospector. Story on Page 36 H. W. Mendenhall Collection

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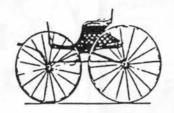
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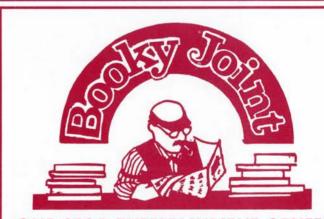
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