

The Album

Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono

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

Vol. IV, No. 3



INSIDE

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Anna Theresa Kelley,
continuing the tapestry
Vada Cline's Laws town
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and more

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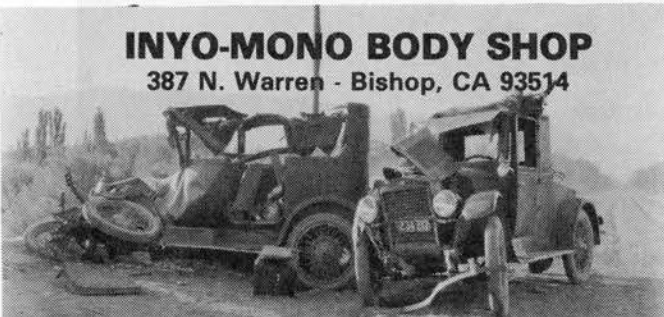


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THE ALBUM, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono

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Cover photo: CATHERINE CHRISTIAN GRACEY is featured on this cover as symbolic of the intricate tapestry of pioneer family ties in the Eastern Sierra. She appeared in our last issue in "The Wattersons of Benton, Part II," in her role of mother to Kate Gracey Watterson, whose story took place in the northern end of Inyo-Mono. Matriarch of the Gracey Clan, born on the Isle of Man in 1813, she was the great grandmother of Anna Gracey Kelley, whose life Demila Jenner recounts this time, as she continues to wave the warp and woof of local history. Rosemarie Jarvis Collection.

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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CLASS OF 1940

by George Garrigues



BISHOP UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS OF 1940 Left to right, top row: Mabel K. Amon, teacher; John Byrne¹, Beverly Watterson², Jack Chamberlain, Nancy (Smith) Henderson³; second row: Betty (Utter) Walton^{1,2}, Murrill Killian, Evelyn Dixon², Don Nelligan^{1,2}, Pat (Goodwin) Norton¹, Lorin W., Barbara (Mandich) Marker^{1,2}, Edgar Ray, Betty Smith; third row: Ben Stromer, Charles Kinney¹, Herbie Olds², Lester Banta, Verne Reinmuth, Vera (Reinmuth) Hillis, Lloyd Young¹, Leona Skeilenger, John Merrill¹; bottom row: Norma Cyrus, Alvin Wallace¹, Eleanor (Hillis) Swingle^{1,2}, Aubrey Bell, Velma B., George Garrigues^{1,2}, Marty Kelso^{1,2}, John McMurry¹, Amelia Jones.

¹ Contributed to this story; ² attended BUES kindergarten through eighth grade; ³ attended BUES first grade through eighth grade.

This is one of those stories that is hard to start and hard to end: there is a beginning and a finish, but so much happened in between. A group of twenty-six five year olds started kindergarten; nine years later thirty-one, including nine of the original twenty-six plus five others who joined in the first grade, said farewell to Bishop Union Elementary School, commonly known as the "Grammar School."

We spent that summer in anticipation, perhaps not too eagerly, of entering high school in the fall. Today, fifty years later, many memories remain, individual and

shared, of that nine years spent in the halls of the Grammar School, now Bishop's Civic Center.

Of the thirty-one members of the Class of '40, sixteen have been located and ten responded with their recollections and impressions of those years. In retrospect, all agree that they were happy years over all, without the threatening situations that exist on earth today. Although the depression years were not easy for anyone, we received a good basic education in preparation for continued learning and successful, productive lives.

Don Nelligan said, "It was a fun time for kids with the troubles and worries, which must have been there, generally forgotten. Hard times, in retrospect, for most of our parents."

Marty Kelso commented, "Our parents went through the depression and we were oblivious of it with the exception of well-mannered men coming to the back door asking for food and volunteering to help for it. Certainly not like today."

Some classmates did not want to be quoted, desiring to remain anonymous. For this reason, I have used the pronouns "we," "our" and "us" throughout this story. They do not mean all the members of the class — rather, one or several persons in most instances. If errors have crept in, blame it not on senile minds, but on the natural distortion of facts that can occur over a fifty-year time span.

We were not bored. We made our own entertainment: bicycle rides, picnics, swimming, playing ball when the weather was good, building snow forts when it snowed, climbing trees, fishing, rubberband gun fights, marbles, hop scotch, kite flying, the Friday night movies; the list goes on and on. Then, too, household chores played their part: splitting kindling, washing dishes, taking the trash out to the backyard burner, mowing lawns, weeding gardens.

Recess was one subject that didn't come often or soon enough or last long enough for most of us. Various activities, changing as we went through the grades and the seasons, made these periods all too short and infrequent.

The slide was a perennial favorite during our early years. It never seemed to be fast enough. We soon discovered that if we saved the waxed paper from our lunch sandwich, we could use it to "grease" the slide. Rubbing the waxed paper up and down the slide or sitting on it as we slid down made the trip from top to bottom much faster, and insured more turns for everyone. (Also it was especially entertaining to watch the younger kids, not used to the extra slick surface, come down sideways, backwards or upside down with arms and legs flailing.)

The teeters were always fun, though their limited capacity necessitated a rush at recess. The additional problems of equal balance often required two small kids on one end to counter the weight of a larger one on the other.

The sand box was added to the playground sometime during the middle of our elementary years. Most of us felt too old to play in the sand, but the bench around it was a good resting place in the shade.

Another favored activity of the lower grades was to grab a handful of the wire grass that grew in places on the school ground. Tough but pliable, it made excellent braiding material. It was fun to see who could make the

longest or fanciest braid during a recess period.

The artesian well with its little gazebo cover was probably the most popular spot on the playground, the gathering spot for small talk. Cool, continuously flowing water from the fountain was always refreshing, and we didn't worry about the green stain on the basin from fluoride, the anti-cavity effect of which was unheard of. People came from all around the area to fill their jugs, avoiding chlorine-treated water in the city mains. John McMurry recalls accidentally bumping a girl trying to get a drink of water: "Miss Truscott called me into her office. She gave me several strong whacks on my knuckles with her ruler."

Springtime was marble time and in spite of the best efforts of our teachers, playing for "keeps" surreptitiously occurred. Lloyd Young, one of the better players, says, "I ended up with several thousand marbles." Mel Homfeld, the shop teacher, was quite effective in controlling the situation. He determined when marble season should be, set the dates and closely supervised the games. Whenever he found some of us not following the rules, such as having marbles at school before the designated date or playing "keeps," he gently and persuasively confiscated our marbles. By the end of marble season, he had a large can, sometimes two or three, full of marbles. He'd line us up at one end of the playground, stand at the other side, and start throwing marbles. A wild scramble followed, with everyone running and grabbing as many marbles as possible. Some of us got back all the marbles we'd lost and maybe a few more, but everyone had a good time.

Recesses and physical education periods are somewhat confused and intermingled in our minds. Organized outdoor play was important to expend our excess energy. On cold, rainy days when we couldn't use the regular balls and other equipment, one favorite game was "Red Rover," hard on our clothes and knees. We'd line up at one end of the playground, a few would be chosen to be "it" and stand out in the center. They'd call, "Red Rover, Red Rover, let all come over!" We would run as fast as we could to the other side, while the "it" people tried to tag us as we went by. When tagged, we had to join the "it" group and catch the others. It was especially exciting when only one or two of the fleetest runners were left.

On Halloween night, large gangs of high school kids roamed the town, sometimes playing rather destructive tricks. Picket fences were a particular challenge: remove them intact or pull the pickets off one by one? Out-houses routinely found their way to unusual locations. Every window on Main Street and most cars left unattended were decorated with soap or some substance even harder to remove.

The best prank of all appeared on the top of the Grammar School on the morning after Halloween. A group of ingenious boys, identities forever unknown, would manage to place a wagon or buggy atop the roof.

To the consternation of school officials, it happened every year for several years. Most of us couldn't wait to get to school that day, to see what was on top.

During our first few years in school, May Day was a special occasion. Dressed in their finest, the older girls would dance around the May Pole, holding pastel colored streamers. As they danced in and out the streamers wound around the pole. At the conclusion, it would be wrapped from top to bottom with pretty spring colors. Somehow, along the way this tradition has been lost.

We didn't have many parties, but a few come to mind. One summer John Byrne's parents gave him a birthday party at their house on Home Street, near Bishop Creek. We cut a bundle of long, straight willow sticks beside the creek; a large fire was built in the backyard and when it had burned down, we sat around it cooking hot dogs on our sticks. Afterward we used them to roast marshmallows.

I think it was about the sixth grade, springtime, when our teacher decided we should have a picnic and picked the present location of Bulpitt Park as the site. A hot dog roast with all the trimmings and homemade ice cream were to be the feast. To simplify transportation, we were

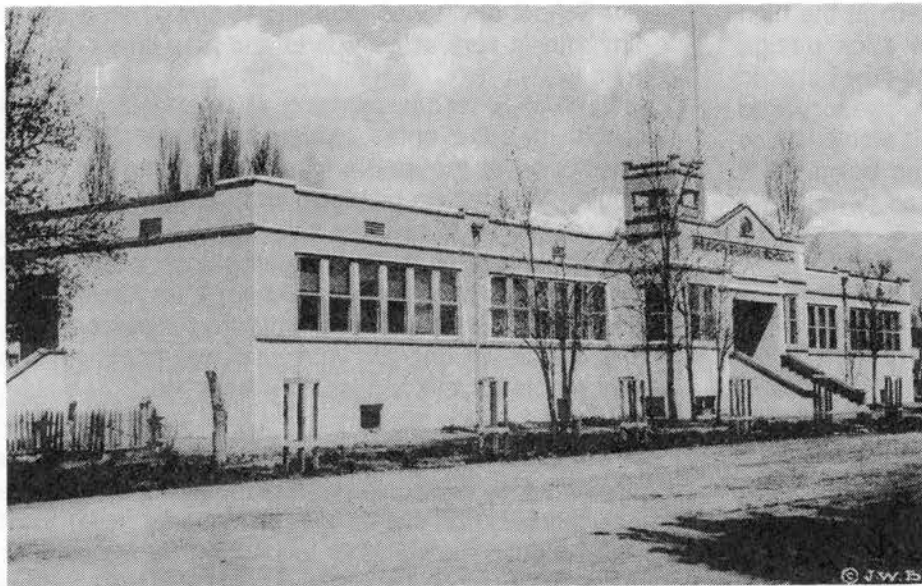
to play a game called "Wolf and Lamb." Half of us were lambs, the other half wolves. The lambs were given a five-minute head start (destination unknown to the wolves) and were to leave a trail of paper scraps for the wolves to follow, objective: lambs to reach destination before wolves caught them. I was one of the lambs and when we reached Barlow Lane we turned south, trying to throw the wolves off our track. After several hundred feet, we cut west again across the field toward the picnic site. When we finally got to the park, the wolves were waiting for us. They had discovered the destination and hadn't been fooled by our diversionary tactics.

Don Bush moved to Yakima, Washington when we were in the seventh grade. Our teacher, Luceal Dixon, let us have a farewell party for him at her home. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a book, *Tree of Liberty*, which he still has.

When we were in the eighth grade, a surprise birthday party was given for Charles Kinney. Betty Utter's home was offered and we all gathered there. Betty called Charles, complaining about trouble with homework, asking Charles to come help. He was thoroughly surprised when he walked through the door, and "homework" was an evening of fun and games.



Charles Kinney's surprise birthday party, William Utter residence, 1940. Left to right: Mrs. Utter, Evelyn Dixon, Mabel Amon, Beverly Watterson, Jack Chamberlain, Edgar Ray, George Garrigues, Vera Reinmuth, Alvin Wallace, Nancy Smith, Eleanor Hillis, John Byrne, John McMurry, Barbara Mandich, Don Nelligan, Betty Smith, Lester Banta, Marty Kelso, Charles Kinney, Aubrey Bell, Lloyd Young, Pat Goodwin, Verne Reinmuth, John Merrill.



Yesterday, Bishop Grammar School at time of this story. J.W. Barnard photo



Today, Bishop Civic Center. George L. Garrigues photo



Below left: Beverly Watterson and Herbie Olds; artesian well gazebo and old schoolhouse; former city offices (now Police Department) and fire station in far background.



Below right: Edgar Ray; sandbox at far left; shop/crafts building center, and corner of lunchroom, right.

Marty Kelso Collection

Kite flying was always a big thing in early spring. Most of us made our own and usually flew them at the high school football field. I liked the three stick design because it had a greater surface area and flew better in gentle breezes. It was hard to launch, though, and required about thirty feet of tail to keep it stable. I also made little kites less than a foot tall from balsa wood covered with tissue paper and used thread to fly them.

The highlight of the season one year was when Mel Homfeld decided to join us. He helped us build a kite nearly five feet tall. The sticks were one-by-one pine strips and we covered it with a double layer of heavy wrapping paper. He even designed a special reel to handle the heavy chalk line we used for cord. Launch day arrived and we took it up. It flew perfectly, dwarfing the other kites around. In the ensuing days it made several successful flights. We took turns flying it. The pull was several times greater than our smaller kites and winding it in to bring it back strained everyone's back and arm muscles. One day the north wind was stronger than usual when we put it up. It gained more altitude than it ever had. It was at the end of the cord, flying beautifully several hundred feet in the sky. The chalk line suddenly snapped and we watched in dismay as our wonderful kite fluttered down, still headed south. Several days later we found it in the field south of Mandich Lane.

On rare occasions, if the weather was particularly bad, school would be called off. Usually such closings were only for a day or two, but January of 1933 was a different story. Heavy snows began on the sixteenth and continued off and on for the rest of the month. The big snowfall came on the nineteenth, dropping over three feet on the ground with drifts to five or six feet. Mobility halted and schools were closed for three weeks. Snow removal equipment in those days couldn't handle excessive amounts of snow, so it was a long time before city streets were cleared. Milk was delivered by a team and sleigh, coal for heating by a caterpillar pulling a sled. We enjoyed the extra vacation, but were glad to back to school when it reopened.

1938 was another memorable weather year, only this time it was rain. West Line Street, and many other streets in town, became small rivers, and the classic picture was taken of men fly fishing at the intersection of Main and Line Streets. It was the only time during all our Grammar School days that we were permitted to use the front door of the school building. A two by twelve plank was placed on the second or third step and extended to a wooden box filled with rocks in the middle of the street. Our parents would drive down the street and stop the car at the end. We would walk the plank, only a few inches above the rushing water and jump into the car.

Don Nelligan commented on "the bitter cold windy days, layers of clothing, amazed by Indian kids at school coatless and tough, but also lacking any variety of cold weather wear."

Alvin Wallace said, "The toughest (part of my Grammar School days) was returning to class hot, dusty and dirty after a very active sports and play time outside."

Each Wednesday morning at the beginning of the school day, the entire student body gathered on the playground at the east end of the building for the flag salute. We lined up by class, one member of each chosen (an honor) to hold the flag on the steps. Miss Truscott would lead us in pledging allegiance to the flag and then the reading of the preamble of the United States Constitution. It was a very impressive ceremony and a memory we all cherish. Afterward, we marched to our classrooms for the regular daily activities.

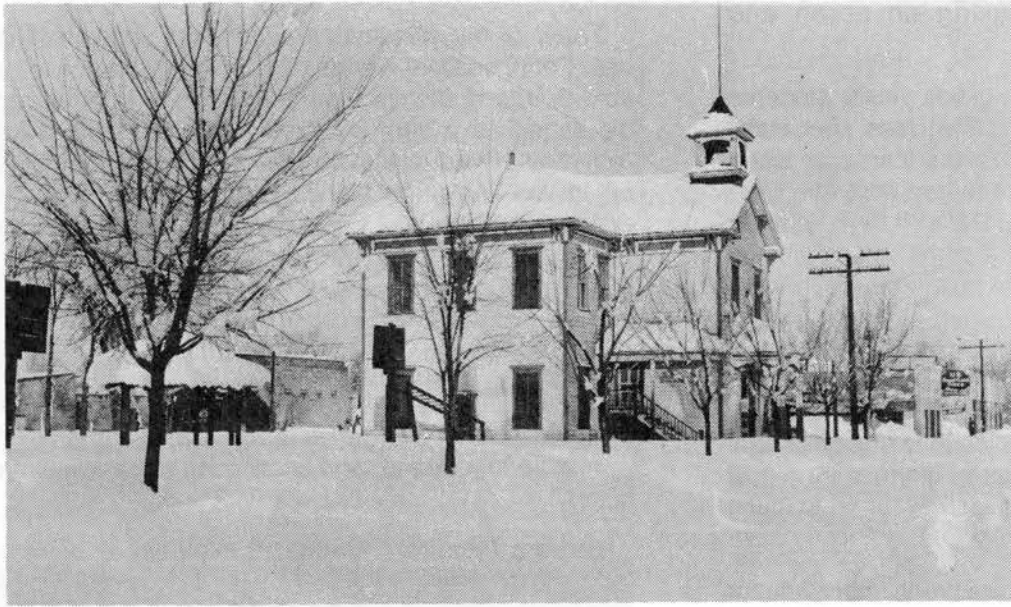
The lunch room provided hot lunches, milk and many pleasant memories. Ably operated by Jane Tibbets, it was primarily for the benefit of students living too far from school to go home for lunch. Sometimes parents of those who lived closer would permit us to take our lunch — usually a sandwich and an apple or orange — and eat at school also. This was a treat because it gave us extra play time when we were through eating — and waxed paper to grease the slide.

We ate by grades, the lower grades first. There was always pressure to eat and get out to make room for the next group. Hot lunches cost five cents; milk was five cents. The lunches were good, probably the best meal that some students received. Alvin Wallace said his "daily highlight was the good five cent hot lunches, especially the spaghetti."

An annual event we didn't exactly look forward to was the visit of County Superintendent of Schools, Ada W. Robinson. We were primed for weeks by our teacher with stern warnings to be on our best behavior, to be certain to give the correct answers to questions, not to chew gum or whisper among ourselves. We were ordered to keep the blackboards, all the other classroom displays, and especially our desks, neat and attractive. It was imperative that we do everything we could to pass the "inspection." We were given the impression that the visit was as important as if the President of the United States were coming.

We didn't know the exact date of the visit, but when it arrived, Miss Truscott and Mrs. Robinson would march into the room, take a fast look around and walk out. It was always a terrifying experience, but we never heard any complaints so we must have passed the tests.

Mel Homfeld held woodshop classes for the older boys while the girls went to the high school for home economics instruction from Audine McLaren. We boys learned how to use hand and electric tools, making simple pieces of furniture: footstools, waste baskets, kitchen stools and book ends. John McMurray recalls, "Mel Homfeld was a good guy, but one day someone did something they shouldn't have. He grabbed the kid by the ears and shook him good."



Artesian well, gazebo (former) city hall and fire station after snow storm, January 1933. This building was the schoolhouse until new one was built in 1914. Louis Garrigues photo



Front steps of schoolhouse after snow storm, January 1933. School closed for three weeks because of snow. Louis Garrigues photo

Below left, looking east: Barbara (Mandich) Marker on snowball; Eleanor (Hillis) Swingle, left; Barbara Gooseman right; others unknown.

Below right: The teeters, Barbara (Mandich) Marker, left on ground. Left to right: Pat (Goodwin) Norton, Burta Fairchild, Betty (Utter) Walton. Marty Kelso Collection



The girls learned basic cooking and sewing skills. Pat (Goodwin) Norton recalls making an apron and pajamas.

During our seventh and eighth grade years, students interested in music could attend band class after class at the high school. Fred Craig was the instructor when we were in the seventh grade. He retired and 'Aim Morhardt took over the next year. Betty (Utter) Walton remembers it vividly. "Mr. Morhardt came . . . to replace our instructor, who was in poor health. Some of us, myself included, decided to cause him as much trouble as we could by putting orange peels, broken crackers, etc., in the musical instruments. Those of us who did this mean little act only got ourselves in trouble and Mr. Morhardt remained and became dear to many of us." Our music teachers provided a good elementary music education and one of us, Don Nelligan, went on to make it his lifetime vocation.

As you well know, holidays are very important for school children. Not only are they a welcome change in the routine, they shorten the school week. One of our most important holidays, at least as far as excitement and anticipation were concerned, was Fish Day.

At the time we were in Grammar School, we didn't have the year around valley fishing that exists today. Fishing season opened on May 1st and closed on October 30th, regardless of what day of the week it was. May 1st was designated *Fish Day* and it was a legal school holiday. In the weeks preceding fish day, all the talk (among the boys, anyway) was where we were going to try our luck, what bait we were going to use and "I wish I were out fishing right now!" After the holi-

day, we all had fun exchanging fish stories.

Three of my classmates summed it up better than I can. Pat (Goodwin) Norton: "I feel so lucky to have been able to attend Bishop Grammar School. I came from a big school to a very small one. It was great to know everyone in your class. Teachers took a personal interest in you and really helped you. I felt a part of school and had pride in it. I just wish my children could have had the fun of their school days as I did."

Betty (Utter) Walton: "Attending Grammar School fifty years ago provided us with a closer relationship with and more individual attention from our teachers. Looking back, our class numbers were few in comparison to most today. This allowed us to be more like a family. We were able to relate to, and know each of our classmates better."

Barbara (Mandich) Marker: "I think we all were very fortunate to have been raised in Bishop and that our elementary education was good educationally, emotionally and psychologically. We had a very special and close relationship — very much like a family — I love the members of our class."

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This story is the culmination of a dream I have had ever since I started writing.

My sincere thanks to who permitted Interviews. I hope they enjoy reading it as much as I did writing it. So much interesting information came forth that there is enough for another story about our Grammar School days, non-school related activities and events, but that IS another story.



Labor Day reunion, 1989. Six members of BUES Class of '40. Left to right: Don Nelligan, Barbara (Mandich) Marker, (Mary Louise Milovich Goff, West Bishop School '40), Lester Banta, George Garrigues, Eleanor (Hillis) Swingle, Alvin Wallace.

TEACHERS AND MEMOIRS

KINDERGARTEN: Erma Blaser. Twenty-six students. Class was held in an old house located at the west end of the school site. A twenty minute rest period was a required part of the daily schedule. We brought blankets to school, spread them on the floor and lay on them quietly for the required time. Recess was held before that of the older, larger students. Their size and roughhouse antics were frightening.

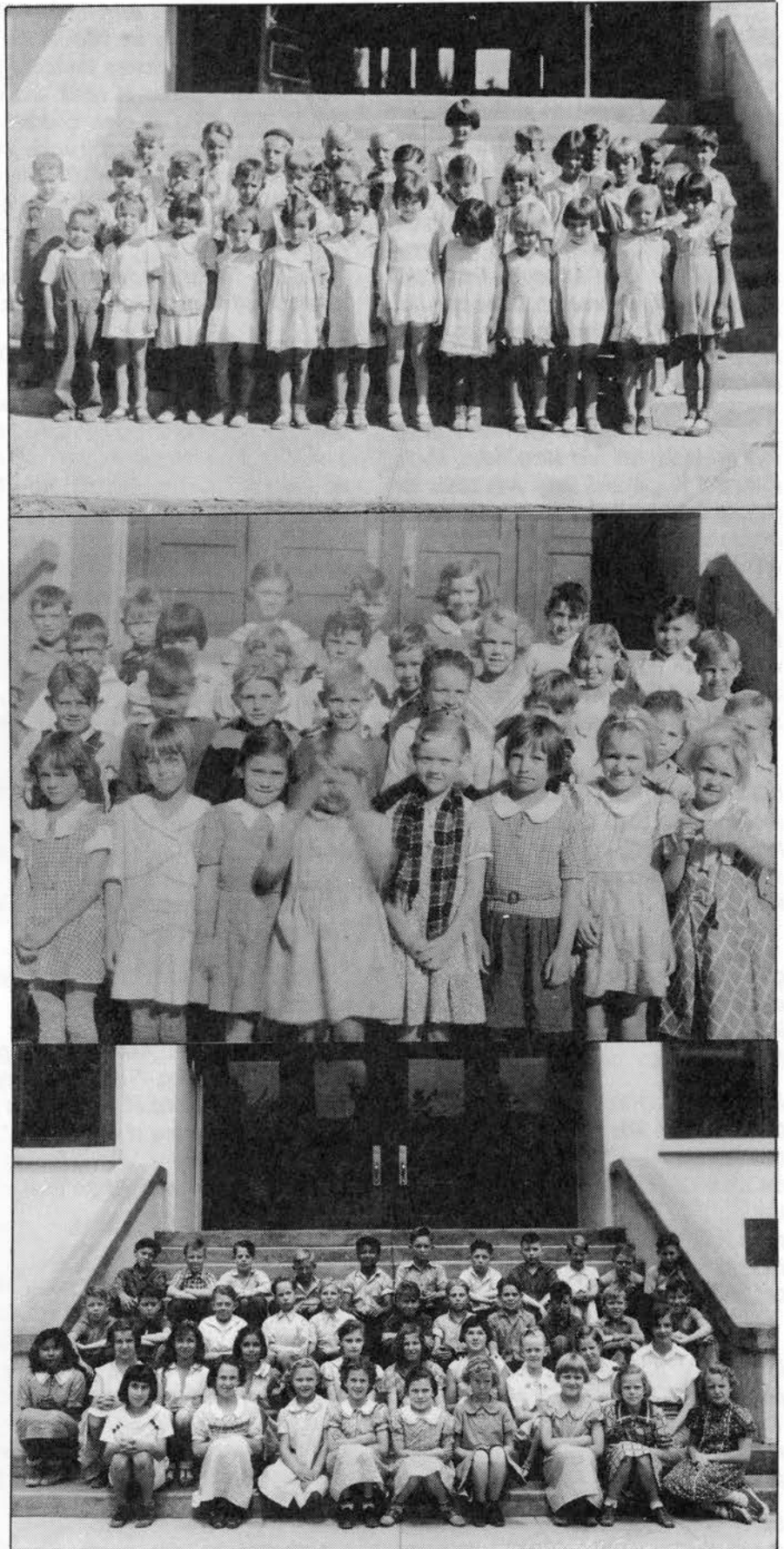
FIRST GRADE: Helen Johnson. Forty-three students. We began our earnest study of reading, phonics and writing. We missed three weeks of school because of the big snow storm. Don Bush recalls a large, colorful clown holding colored balloons. It was drawn on the blackboard to teach us colors. Someone erased it during recess one day which greatly upset Mrs. Johnson.

SECOND GRADE: Vivienne Drake (Ferber). Thirty-six students. Spelling and numbers were added to the daily routine. It became a favorite pastime to purloin some chalk and write on the sidewalks as we went to and from school. This practice was sternly forbidden by Miss Truscott. Don Bush and I didn't heed the warning and were busily marking the sidewalk in front of the high school on our way home one day. Don said, "Don't worry if we get caught. My dad's on the school board."

Suddenly we heard a loud voice behind us, screeching, "Boys! boys! boys!" We looked up and Miss Truscott was bearing down on us. We ran as fast as we could and escaped. I dreaded the next day at school and managed to come down with whopping cough that night. I didn't get back to school for several weeks and the incident had been forgotten. Don was not so lucky. The next day he was called into the office, receiving Miss Truscott's fiercest glare and the threat of being marched to his father's drugstore.

Don says, "I would not have lived to go that short block. I would have died of a seizure, thrown myself under a speeding car, or God would have thrown a deadly lightning bolt at me."

THIRD GRADE: Carol Faure. Thirty-six students. The highlight of Barbara (Mandich) Marker's year was, "She made me stand in front of the class with bubble gum on my nose for chewing in class."



*Top: 1st grade, Spring 1933. Don Nelligan photo
Center: 2nd grade, Spring 1934. Marty Kelso photo
Bottom: 5th grade, Spring 1937. George Garrigues photo*

Eleanor (Hillis) Swingle related, "Another girl and I hid a ball in the girl's restroom at recess. One at a time, we got excused to go there in the next couple of hours. We played dodge ball against the wall in the restroom. We heard someone coming so we quickly took charge: she left and I went into a stall."

FOURTH GRADE: Iva B. Taylor. Thirty-six students. Arithmetic and grammar were now a part of the daily schedule. Don Bush thought Mrs. Taylor was great: she paid him and Don Nelligan twenty cents to crawl under her house and remove a long-deceased cat.

Barbara (Mandich) Marker recalls being sent out in the hall with Marty Kelso, Myrtle (Stowers) Knight and Betty Ann Lewis for giggling in class. This caused more severe giggles so Mrs. Taylor gave them all a swat with a yard stick.

FIFTH GRADE: Marion Bulpitt. Most of us agree that she was one of the best teachers we had. Don Bush commented, "She kindled an interest in history. I never really had to study history after the fifth grade."

The classroom was located down a short hall from Miss Truscott's office and we could see the office door. Occasionally we could hear her berating an errant student and sometimes the crack of her ruler on their knuckles.

Mrs. Bulpitt's favorite expression of disgust with a student's behavior or answer to a question was to toss a blackboard eraser in his direction. John Byrne was one of her favorite targets.

From Eleanor (Hillis) Swingle. "Mrs. Bulpitt told one of the kids to tell me to turn in my homework. I got smart aleck and didn't think the kid would tell Mrs. Bulpitt. I said tell her that I'm not going to turn it in. Mrs. Bulpitt sent me to Miss Truscott's office. I was petrified of Miss Truscott, she never smiled that I can remember.

I was mad at my classmate and shaking in my boots. I got a hard spanking with the paddle Miss Truscott had on her office wall. Then she called my parents and I got another spanking when I got home. It was the first and last time I did that."

SIXTH GRADE: Lois Tindell. Thirty-eight students. Alvin Wallace comments, "She was the prettiest teacher we had in school. She was young, good looking, nice, and single." One day she had to leave the room for a

few minutes and gave us a reading assignment. She had hardly stepped out the door when a spitball flew across the room. Soon more spitballs, pieces of chalk and other objects were flying all over. Suddenly the door opened and she stepped inside just as an errant spitball hit her bosom. Thirty-eight students hastily put their noses back into their books.

We also had a special period in which Natalie Nicoll taught us arts and crafts.

SEVENTH GRADE: Luceal Dixon. Thirty-five students. Composition, book reports and social studies were added to the lesson plan. The girls went to the high school twice a week for domestic training. Boys had manual training from Mel Homfeld. Pat (Goodwin) Norton came to Bishop that year. She says, "I was very scared starting a new school, but all the kids were so friendly to me. Betty (Utter) Walton came over to talk to me. It was good to have a friend. Then Marty Kelso walked home with me."

EIGHTH GRADE: Mabel K. Amon. Thirty-two students. Memory work and United States Constitution were added. We were the upper classmen at last.

Don Bush remembers speculating on how wonderful it would be to sit at one of those big desks with the shelf above the top. Alvin Wallace said, "As eighth graders, we were THE upper classmen."

Marty Kelso adds, "Being an eighth grader was the best."

Several times Mrs. Amon waved a paper in front of us, saying, "This is the only A+ I've given. I know none of you can do a paper as good as this one of Bob Butler's." She may have been trying to stimulate us, but the effect was to point out the impossibility of equalling it.

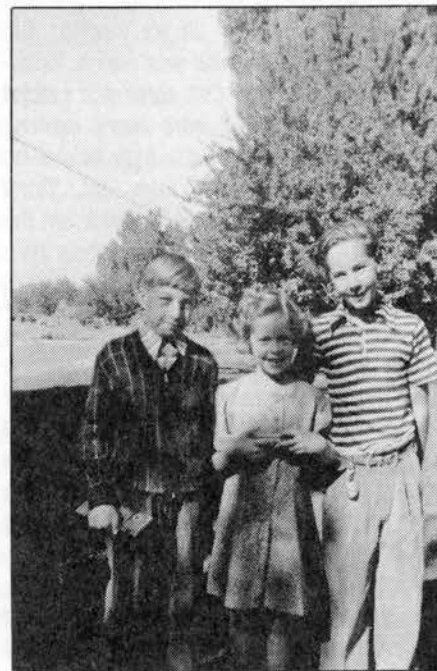
Each class had a large box and we all put valentines in it for our friends, to be distributed on Valentine's Day. Pat (Goodwin) Norton recalls sitting at her desk when all of a sudden, "A big box of Valentine candy was put on my desk. The card said from Herbie Olds. When I thanked him after class, he didn't know anything about it. Some of the other boys bought it and played a trick on Herbie because he was my 'boy friend.'"

Alvin Wallace describes the most undeserved moment: "Near the end of the year, Mrs. Amon and Miss Truscott scolded the class for something we did and then stated

that our class has been the most troublesome throughout the years and they would be glad to get rid of us."

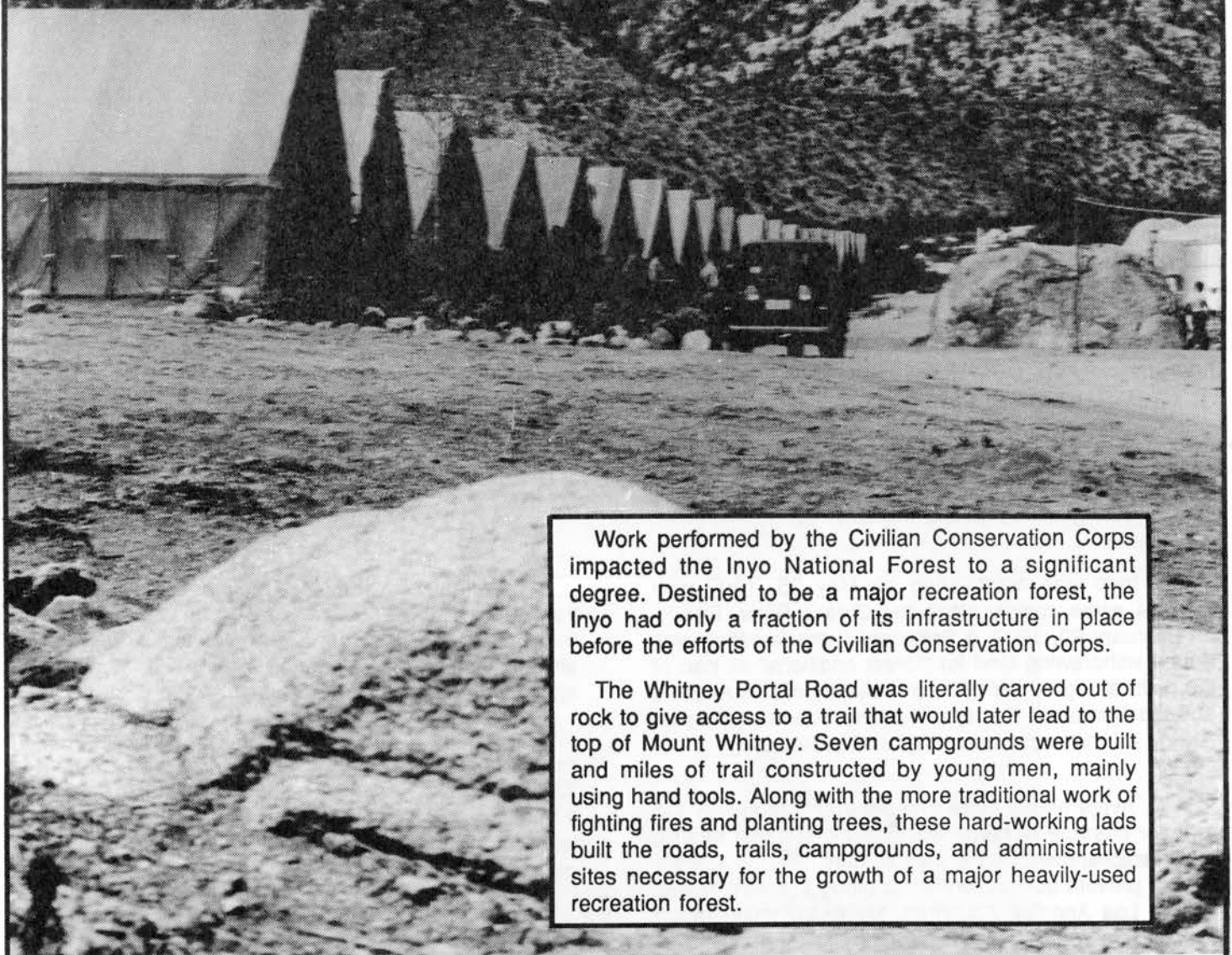
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS: From Marty Kelso, "Two of the substitute teachers, Noreen James and Winifred Deibert, were very influential in my life. I consider Win the greatest of them all — she was inspiring, a good teacher and she always passed on a bit of philosophy for us. She kept me spellbound."

JANITOR: Mr. Mac. Marty again, "I'll never forget 'Mr. Mac.' I can't remember his complete name. He was the janitor and his sanctuary was in the basement where he kept the fire stoked. He also rang the school bell. When he forgot or something happened, Miss Truscott would go over to the nurses office and pull the rope." The rope ran from the basement through a hole in the floor of the nurse's office and up through the ceiling to the bell. *



David, Beth and George Garrigues, ready for first day of school, September 1939., Garrigues collection.

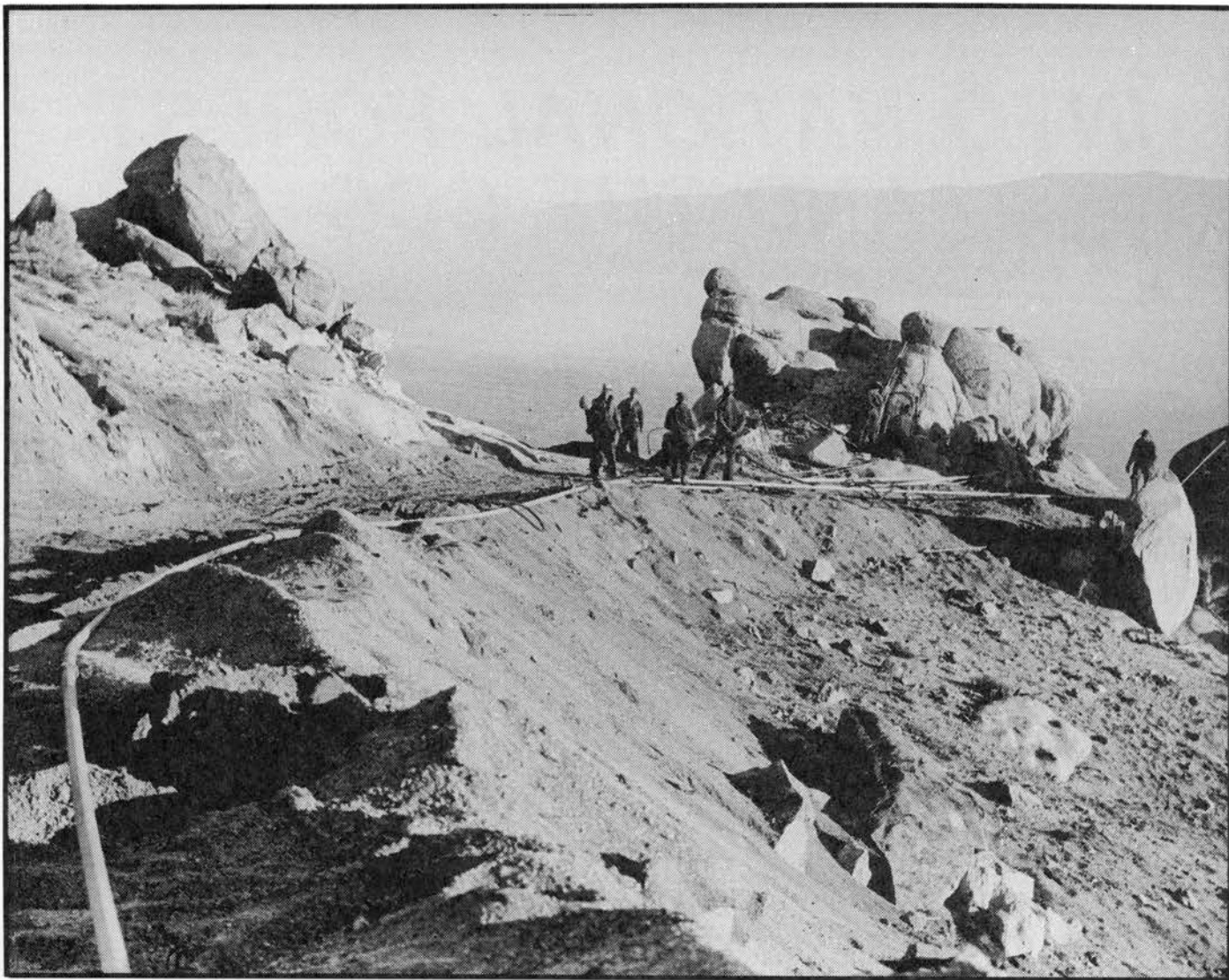
INYO NATIONAL FOREST AND THE CCC



Work performed by the Civilian Conservation Corps impacted the Inyo National Forest to a significant degree. Destined to be a major recreation forest, the Inyo had only a fraction of its infrastructure in place before the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The Whitney Portal Road was literally carved out of rock to give access to a trail that would later lead to the top of Mount Whitney. Seven campgrounds were built and miles of trail constructed by young men, mainly using hand tools. Along with the more traditional work of fighting fires and planting trees, these hard-working lads built the roads, trails, campgrounds, and administrative sites necessary for the growth of a major heavily-used recreation forest.

The summer of 1933, this tent camp was established at the site of the present Lone Pine Campground for Civilian Conservation Corps Company 2921.



A major accomplishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps stationed at Camp 2921 at Lone Pine was building the Whitney Portal Road from the CCC campsite at the present Lone Pine Campground to its present end at Whitney Portal campground.

by Emilie Martin

Inyo National Forest photographs

The Inyo was established on May 25, 1907 with 221,324 acres, mainly along the Owens River. Earlier, on February 20, 1907, a Presidential proclamation was issued withdrawing land for "forest additions" as part of the political tug of war between the City of Los Angeles and the Bureau of Reclamation over how to use water flowing off the east side of the Sierra Nevada.

R.W. Ayres and Al Redstone were sent to survey the area for possible withdrawal status the summer before. "The establishment of the Inyo of May, 1907 . . . were (sic) to prevent obstruction filings along the right of way for the Los Angeles Aqueduct. My examination report was a mere formality for the addition had been asked for by the city, the withdrawals made, and approved in Washington long before I ever got to the Inyo," Ayres wrote in a letter of May 14, 1943.

A year later, on July 2, 1908, an executive order transferred 1,350,537 acres of land on the east side of the Sierra Nevada in the Sierra National Forest to the almost treeless Inyo National Forest. A.A. Hogue was appointed supervisor of the forest at that time.

In response to angry letters and editorials from local residents, plus a change in administration, President Taft issued an Executive Proclamation which eliminated 270,000 acres from the Inyo National Forest, those lands along Owens River, and opened them to settlement on February 25, 1911.

The Inyo National Forest still had a very small amount of timber compared to the other forests in California. Its budgets that first decade were miniscule, according to the few records that can be found. Home Lumber Company in Mammoth was cutting timber, requiring the ser-

vices of a Forest Service scaler. Two small sawmills operated during 1914-15 on Bishop Creek, but that was the extent of logging on the new forest.

By 1912, the Inyo had 18 employees and 1,341,075 acres of land. It had a payroll of \$8,143 and a total budget of \$17,235, old records show. The bulk of the ranger's time was spent on grazing issues. Rangers were occupied surveying the boundaries of the huge forest and learning about the vast high desert and its mountain ranges.

At that time, a forest ranger was paid anywhere from \$60 to \$100 a month. Out of that salary, he had to provide the equipment needed for himself and his family. Rangers were required to buy their own equipment such as saddle, shovel, axe, and horse and feed. "Men Wanted, Invalids Need Not Apply," a poster advertising for employees proclaimed.

STEPCHILD OF THE REGION

Before the Inyo was established in 1907, the Wells Meadow Guard Station was the " 'East Side' outpost for the Sierra Forest Reserve each summer. A guard or summer seasonal would be assigned each summer from the Northfork Ranger District on the Sierra Forest Reserve, later Forest. Oldtimers recalled that the guys on the west side would always joke that whomever might get in trouble with the ranger the winter before would be the one assigned to Wells Meadow the next summer." (Henry Thorne oral interview July 6, 1989.)

"For many years the Inyo was only a spot on the Forest Service map. Roy Boothe, Supervisor for 25 years, told me the regional forester never made the forest an official visit while he was supervisor. Probably seventy-five percent of the mail issued in the regional office was headed 'all Forests except the Inyo,' " one retired employee said. (Robert Carlson)

When Supervisor Roy Boothe arrived on the Inyo in 1926, he found few roads, trails, or campgrounds. He came to the Inyo from the Sierra National Forest, where he had established a close relationship with Brigadier General Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Service, later in charge of all the CCC camps in California for the Army.

Trails would be constructed when some maintenance funds could be spared. Lawson Brainerd, Big Pine District Ranger from 1924 to 1929 recalls that his first job when he arrived on the Inyo was to find a route for, and then oversee, the building of the Bishop Pass Trail.

Brainerd wrote, "Supervisor Tom Jones informed me that they had \$3,000 with which I was to build a trail over Bishop Pass from Long Lake, east end of present trail, to King's River. The trail had to go over the summit, from Long Lake to King's River. We wasn't allowed over a fifteen percent grade. But we had no tools to measure that. My equipment was an abney level, compass and the little Forest Service handbook on trail construction.

The mountain Gods must have been in a generous mood, because among the crew was an enormous Dane. This robust Viking had that much desire and rare ability of a natural administrative leader. I selected him as Camp and Trail Boss which was unnecessary as he had already appointed himself to that position . . . He was such a help in laying out the trail and what seemed Herculean tasks to me, he would take care of on the way to work." (Lawson's log)

Having \$3,000 to build a trail was a special event. The following year, Brainerd was told to survey and build a trail to the top of Mount Whitney, in the southwest corner of his district, for \$1,000. But the money did not come through and it would be a decade before CCC labor would help to blast rock to improve the trail to the top of Mt. Whitney.

That illustrates how frugal the budget had to be. "The Forest Service worked a miniscule operation as far as equipment was concerned. You cannot believe what they got along with then compared to what they have now. When we first moved to Bishop in 1926 they had one big old truck and one pick-up truck," Helen Boothe Dixon recalled in an interview July, 1990.

Triggered by the collapse of the economy in 1929 and the effect of the Great Depression, the 1930s were tough times. Teenage tramps roamed the country; young people whose parents could not afford to feed them were looking for jobs or any way to support themselves. They had lost hope, and lost faith in the United States. The national landscape had suffered from abuse and decades of neglect and exploitation. Federal agencies managing the land were grossly underfunded.

When President Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated on March 3, 1933 he created a novel program to heal both the resource problems and the country's human problems. The Emergency Conservation Work Act was passed by Congress and on his desk by March 31, 1933. Goals of the act were to provide 1) relief of an acute condition of widespread distress and unemployment in the nation, and 2) restoration of the nation's depleted natural resources.

When President Roosevelt signed the legislation authorizing the Civilian Conservation Corp., the ink was barely dry on the bill before Boothe was called to San Francisco to plan for CCC camps on the Inyo. The bill was signed March 31, 1933; CCC camps were operating at Rock Creek, Mammoth Lakes, and Lone Pine by June of 1933, forest records show.

The Department of Army was in charge of logistics and the camps, the state welfare agencies enrolled the workers and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior served as technical advisors. This meant that employees of the forest or park would come in each morning, take a crew, or cadre, as they were called, out to a site and supervise the work project.



This photo shows the rugged terrain over which the CCC crews built the Whitney Portal Road. A combination of primitive tractors and individual labor resulted in access for automobiles to the 8,300 foot elevation in the Sierra Nevada west of Lone Pine.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was acclaimed by many public leaders as the greatest welfare organization in the Federal government. It was labeled an economic and social success as far as strengthening families, providing young men with a way to earn some dollars, contribute to their families' maintenance and perform some needed work. Only later was the resource and conservation work performed by the CCC recognized.

In California in 1941, 79 CCC camps celebrated the CCC's eighth anniversary. Two of those camps were located on what is now the Inyo National Forest. Coleville on the Mono National Forest provided cadres of CCC workers to Gull Lake, Lee Vining, and Mammoth Lakes. An established CCC camp at Lone Pine provided workers for Big Pine, Bishop, and Mammoth spike camp.

THE LONE PINE CAMP

Inyo's main camp F-98, for Company 2921, was established in Lone Pine in the spring of 1933. Later, perhaps by 1937, the Lone Pine camp was moved to the Isabella Camp F-102 in January and spend the cold six months there before returning in June. That first year the Lone Pine Camp was home to 200 young men from CCC Camp 526 in Columbus, Ohio. An advance group of 20 men was "chosen to prepare a site for the balance of our company — 180 more to arrive in about two weeks. We arrived at the Lone Pine railroad station early in the day and were struck by the beauty of the mountains," wrote George Basich.

First the group built a temporary campsite with tents on wooden platforms with the majestic Sierra as back-

drop. The CCC camp was located eight miles west of Lone Pine, along the road that led to Hunter Flat. Today, that is the site of the Lone Pine Campground. "The first month or so we worked long hours. We built one large mess hall and three barracks under the supervision of outside contractors," Basich wrote. By 1936, when Slim L. Bush was assigned to the camp, it had been enlarged to four barracks and five other smaller buildings.

As the camp buildings were finished, the original CCC boys were sent out to work at other places on the forest.

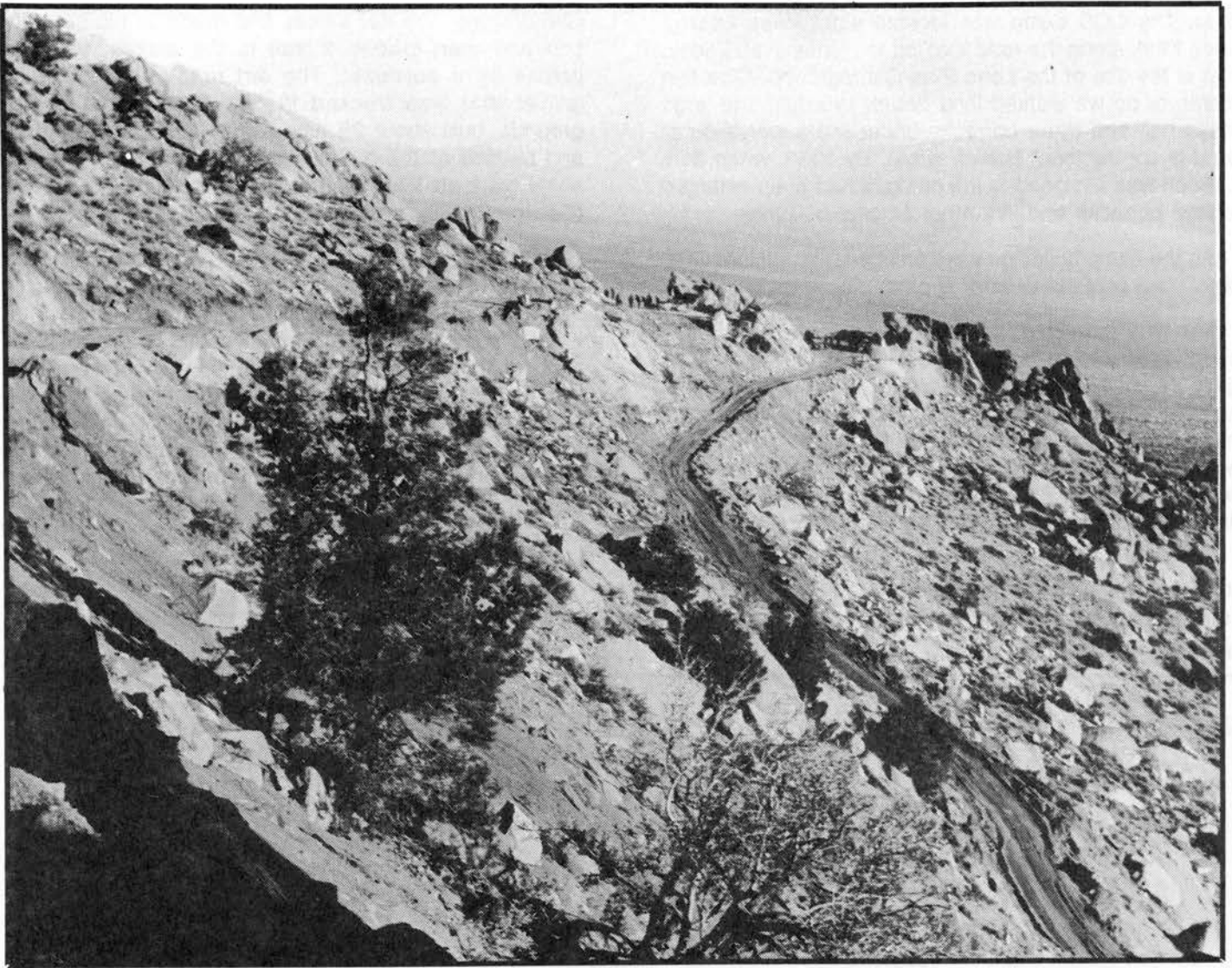
"As time permitted, men were transferred to forestry supervision and to 'spike camps' out in the fields. One gang of 20 men went up to Little Onion Valley for trail work and campground cleanup. They also helped fight a nearby forest fire. Another gang of 20 men started to work on a new road up to the campgrounds between the two waterfalls on Big Pine Creek. We pitched our tents first, and then got down to work with a surveyor, a Mr.

Glendenning. We set stakes and grade to his satisfaction and then graded a trail to the stakes, followed behind by a bulldozer. The dirt road was topped by gravel that was trucked in. We policed the campgrounds, built about 25 new picnic tables and repaired and painted all the outhouses in the area. We also did some work on the trails leading to the glaciers above." (George Basich, Inyo Register, April 2, 1989)

But the biggest effort of the CCC camp at Lone Pine had to be building the Whitney Portal Road. Leo D. Thompson was shipped with Company 526 from Fort Knox, Kentucky to Lone Pine at the end of May in 1933. He describes his work: "Our main job was road building. We first widened the trail in the canyon so that the trucks could get in and out of camp. We then built a road out into the desert to circle the arroyo that cut in the canyon. This road was about 10 miles I would say. It went right to the foothills of the Sierras.

Called a Fresno scraper, this primitive tractor was used to construct the Whitney Portal Road by the Civilian Conservation Corps. One man drove the tractor-like vehicle, which pulled a grader-scraper. The man sitting on the scraper steered it from his perch.





A rough dirt road winds its way up the steep hillside with the Owens Valley in the background.

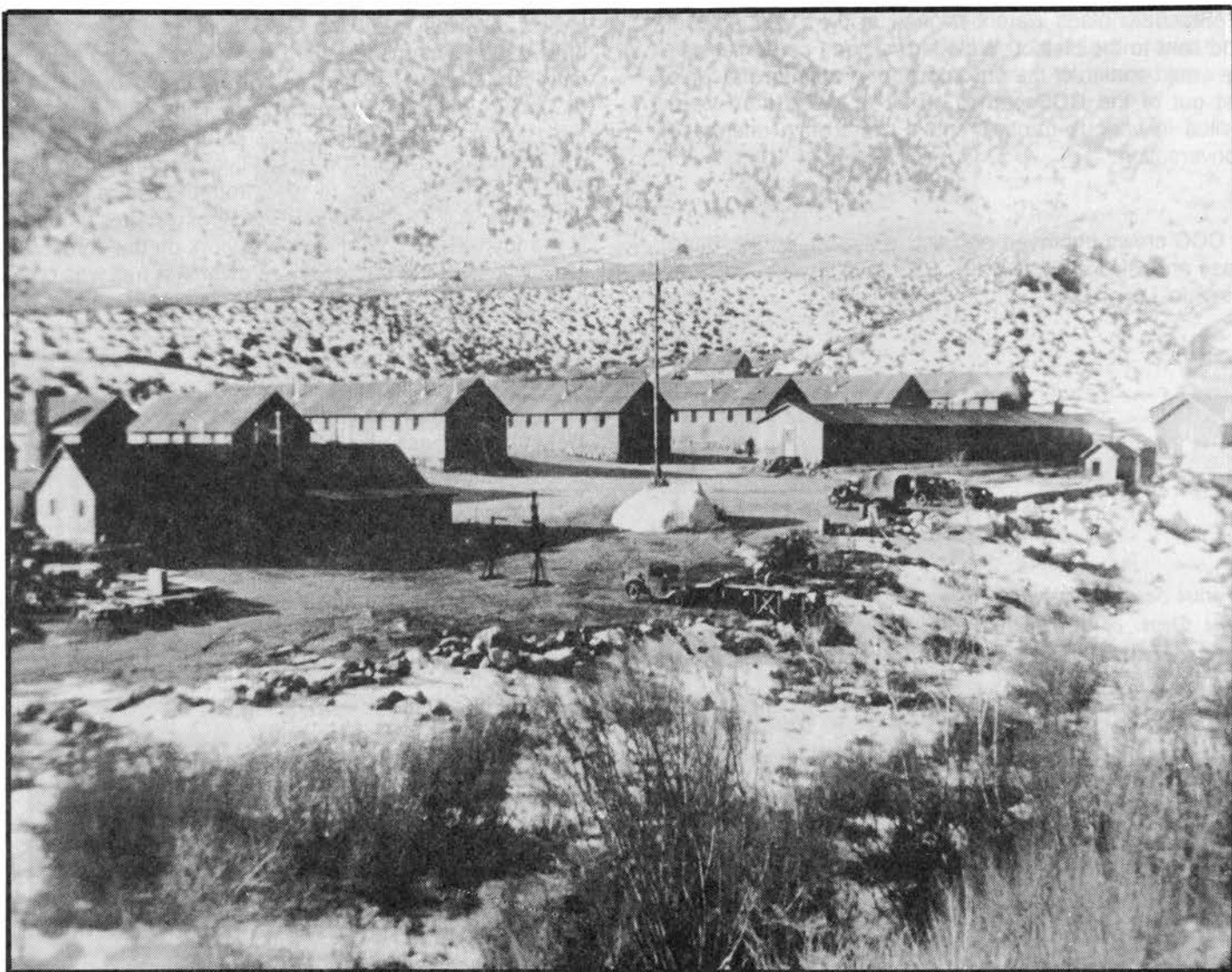
"Then we cut into the canyon itself. This was the hard part because it was practically straight down. We blasted and bulldozed a 30-foot road down the wall of the canyon, it took us about 3 months to do it . . . After reaching the bottom of the canyon we then built a bridge across the Lone Pine Creek, this was quite a job. Most of our materials came from the immediate surroundings. Cement and reinforcing rods were brought in by truck. We cut our own timber, the sand and rock all came from on-site (the bridge site). Then we started to build a road into the Sierras themselves. That was (our) last project and we were all quite proud of it when we left." (Leo D. Thompson, 1989 interview.)

A quote from a camp newspaper, called Hi-Lo Inyo Echo, dated August 10, 1935 illustrates what spike camp was all about. "Bearded Prophets Return from Whitney Spike Camp," read the headline., "Appearing as though a group of disciples of the House of David, ten

men wearily trekked into camp Thursday afternoon, August first, after a two week stay at Mt. Whitney spike camp. Unshaven, sunburned, and much the worse for wear, the fellows were glad to return to Camp and civilization."

The newspaper noted, "Cadre Leaves to Establish Mammoth Spike Camp. Starting the week of July 28, 25 men left to establish a spike camp at Mammoth Lakes, where road and trail work is to be done, and a series of concrete dams is to be built."

One cadre from Lone Pine CCC camp in 1933 was assigned to a base camp up Big Pine Creek. According to a conversation with George Basich, they camped three blocks from Glacier Lodge. Their projects were supervised by Mr. Fields and Mr. Barrett from the Forest Service. They cleaned up the campgrounds, painted latrines, cleared trails and chopped wood. "The job was to get young men working. We were all 18 and 19 years



By 1936, four barracks, a mess hall, a library and officer quarters were constructed at the site of the present Lone Pine Campground. About 200 enlistees were housed at the camp. Their major work project was building the road to Whitney Portal and then improving a trail to the top of 14,495 foot Mount Whitney.

old, never been away from home. We even worked on our days off, but sometimes we went fishing, too," he recalled.

BISHOP AND VICINITY PROJECTS

Inyo National Forest did not own any land at Bishop for shops or a ranger station until 1935, when the forest purchased five acres for an administrative site from the City of Los Angeles for \$60.00. The deed was dated May 2, 1936 and reserved all water rights to the City of Los Angeles.

It is interesting that this date coincides with the Civilian Conservation Corps work on the Inyo, as does the acquisition of the ranger station site in Lone Pine. Most likely, a local contractor was hired under the W.P.A. program to build first a warehouse in 1938 and then later a house, which was occupied by the Roy Boothe

family in 1941, according to Forrest Boothe and Helen Boothe Dixon, Roy's son and daughter. CCC crews most likely assisted with the work. This was common operating procedure in those days, according to Del Fausett, who started his career with the CCC and later was range manager on the Inyo from 1943 to 1962.

"The CCC built ranger stations all over California, hundreds of them. Almost every forest got new ranger stations, including a warehouse. The beams for the warehouse were steel trusses, shipped in from the place they had been manufactured. At the region level, they would purchase a large amount of building materials, and then send them out to the forests. Lumber was pre-cut redwood. At Lake Arrowhead the materials came from Los Angeles, I don't know where those for the Inyo came from. (Most likely from Stockton, according to Henry Thorne.)

"Standard plans were designed at the regional level and sent to the district. We'd hire a head carpenter and he would construct the building with what labor he could get out of the CCC camps. A lot of those men were skilled in various trades," said Fausett in a telephone conversation.

CCC crews improved and finished work on the Piute Pass and Bishop Pass trails. Packer Walt Schober and his wife Lou recall getting the contract to pack in the

crew's supplies when the CCC built trail. "We packed quite a little dynamite to them and it was a good start for the Piute Trail," Schober stated. He recalled about 20 CCC boys camped at North Lake. They also improved the Bishop Pass Trail, a vital connecting link to the middle fork of the San Joaquin River and the John Muir Trail, which was started in 1918 from the Sierra National Forest under the direction of Roy Boothe. After he came to the Inyo, Boothe continued the work on the John Muir Trail, with the help of the CCC crews. The trail was completed in 1939. ✧

Next issue: The account of work performed by the Civilian Conservation Corp at Mammoth Lakes and Lee Vining.

Forest Service personnel survey the work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps men along the Whitney Portal Road. The Dept. of Army supervised the CCC camp and provided logistics for the camp. Inyo National Forest personnel supervised the crews working on the road each day and returned them to camp each night.





The well-dressed Miss Anna Theresa Gracey Kelley, taken at Lovelock, NV, about 1911.

ANNA

THERESA

KELLEY

A LIFE

by Demila Jenner

Photos courtesy Anna Kelley except where otherwise noted

Part I

Oral History is an idea whose time has come — again! Before recorded time, the ancients were storytellers by default; there was no other way to pass on the customs and myths of their peoples. Then came the written word; chronicled history now fills great libraries of the world and the human race need no longer fear losing a sense of its past.

Yet today across this land, libraries and museums are turning once more to oral history, tape-recording memories of a vanished way of life, preserving individual histories that would never get written. Thus, much that otherwise would be lost is being saved and our children and their children can know how their grandparents and great grandparents lived and died, may learn of the intertwining lives of those generations.

We present here events from one such recorded personal history that illumines much more than a single life since its roots reach across the oceans to the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea. Here we get a glimpse of by-gone times in Southern Inyo, enhanced by the added luster of its being an ongoing part of our present-day existence: Anna Theresa (Gracey) Kelley, whose childhood was spent at the narrow-gauge railroad station at Kearsarge in the shadow of Mt. Whitney, is alive and well in Independence. Her vibrant life experience has been part of our country's weathering of two world wars and Anna's legacy of moral responsibilities, inherited in part from her Manx forbears, just might influence avoidance of a third such catastrophe on our planet. Referring to the railroad-ing ethnic mix that formed her childhood memories, a social mixture that included Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans, Italians, Native Americans and "just plain Americans," Anna makes the comment: "Race or color or the difference of your skin meant nothing to us. We were all people . . . My dad and mother would not have tolerated any bigotry, anyway."

We are indebted to the Eastern California Museum at Independence and its Oral History Project director William Michael for portions of the material contained in the article printed below. Museum Staffer Kathy Barnes conducted the interview with Mrs. Kelley; it was transcribed by Leah Kirk and editing was done by Jane Wehrey.



Before there was Inyo County, there was Kearsarge. Near the end of the Civil War, Northern-leaning prospectors gave a mine in the vicinity of Onion Valley that name in honor of the *USS Kearsarge* for scuttling the scourge of Union shipping, a Confederate privateer called the *CSS Alabama*. Southern sympathizers promptly immortalized the raider by giving its name to the Alabama Hills in Southern Inyo County. Since Kearsarge is the name of a peak in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, there seems a linkage here quite unintended by the polarized miners of the area.

Kearsarge mining district was organized Sept. 19, 1864. When Inyo County was established two years later, Kearsarge had more people than did Independence, and made a bid for county-seat honors. Independence was chosen; W.A. Chalfant (*Story of Inyo*) reports that by the time of the county's first election in 1867, Kearsarge "had been swept out of existence."

But the name did not die out in Inyo County, any more than it did in the nation as a whole. A 19th century Congressional Act decreed that all battleships be named for states of the Union, but in 1895 an exception was made when Congress provided that one of two battleships commissioned that year be named *USS Kearsarge* "for the Union vessel that sank the famous Confederate sea raider *Alabama* at Cherbourg, France, during the Civil War." Some years later, Inyo County would also see a revival of "Kearsarge."

In 1910 the narrow gauge Southern Pacific Railroad company established a station for Independence, calling it "Citrus;" by the time the S.P. assigned Stationmaster Robert Gracey to Citrus it had become Kearsarge. History doesn't record what prompted the station's renaming; if it was intended to match the immortality of the Alabama Hills, destiny intervened: in another 19 years, the Kearsarge railroad station would be no more.

Until they reached Kearsarge, Bob Gracey and his pretty wife Kate hadn't lived at one station long enough for any two of their children to be born at the same place. In Nevada, Anna, the first child, was born at Carson City, home of her mother's parents, Charlie and Anna (Nelson) Recker. Mona was born at Lovelock during one of Bob's three stints at that Southern Pacific Agency. Their brother Tom was born "out on the Carson Sink, of all places." In California, during their Kearsarge years Bob and Kate became parents of five more children whom they named Eleanor, Florence, Janie, Grace and Bobby.

Stationmaster Robert Lincoln Gracey, to be known as Bob, was born Aug. 9, 1885 in Virginia City, the last of five children of Robert and Teresa Gracey, natives of

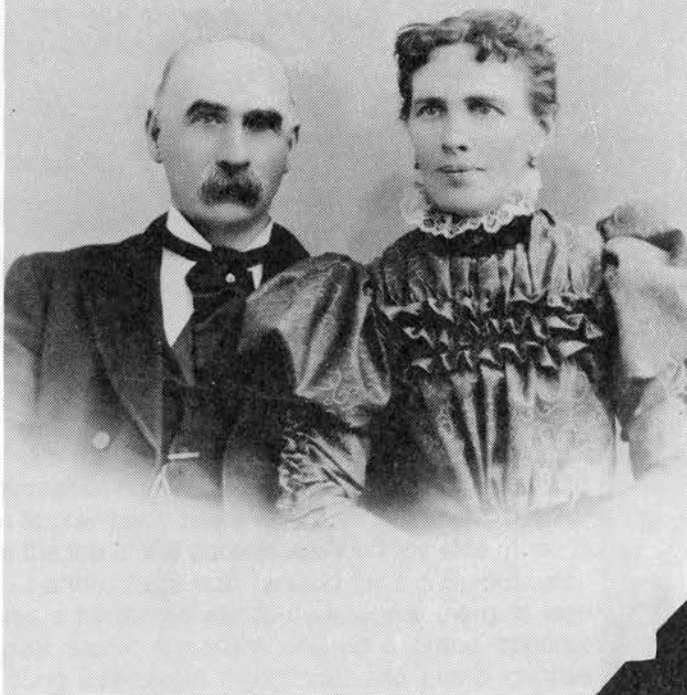


Kate Recker Gracey, pretty mother of pretty Anna Kelley. (When Anna's father died in 1960, the Inyo Register's "In Tribute" noted Bob's graciousness and sociability and made mention of his "pretty young wife and the children, bright little folks, well-clothed and well-taken care of.")

the Isle of Man who had come to Nevada during the Comstock's glory-days. When the patriarch died in 1934 at age 92, Nevada newspapers memorialized him as "one of the few remaining figures of frontier days . . . miner, businessman, county and city official at Virginia City . . . His career had been a most colorful one."

At 14 years of age, Bob Gracey began working as messenger for Virginia City's Western Union, whose office manager, Miss Etta Naylor, taught the boy how to operate the telegraphy machine. Skills thus acquired enabled him to land a job with the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1902 at age 17. His first job was telegraph operator at Montgomery Pass, Nevada, then known as "Summit," not far from Benton, California where lived his aunt, Kate Watterson. Kate's son, Bob's older cousin Tom Watterson, was telegrapher at Soda Springs, Nevada.

Robert Gracey, son of Catherine Christian Gracey (see cover photo) and his wife Teresa Keig Gracey, grandparents of Anna Kelley.



Below: A reproduction of the marriage license of Anna Kelley's grandparents. Note that age is not given; they were both considered to be "full" of years. Actually, Teresa Keig was only 21 years old when she married ship's steward Robert Gracey: quite young to be designated a "spinster."



ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, LIVERPOOL.
(PAGE 127)

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
1872	25 th September	Robert Gracey	full	Bachelor	Shipboard	St. Pauls Square	Robert Gracey	Shipwright
	1872	Teresa Keig	full	Spinster		St. Pauls Square	Thomas Keig	Farmer

Married in the Church of St. NICHOLAS, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by License or after by me

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Robert Gracey and Teresa Keig

In the Presence of us, Robert Keig and Elizabeth Keig

J. Coulson R. A. Curate



Catherine Christian Gracey, center, with daughters Kate, left, and Emma. Kate married James Watterson and, like her mother, was widowed at an early age. As a single parent, Kate brought up her four children in Benton, then moved to Bishop to finish out her life. (See THE ALBUM Vol. IV, Nos. 1 and 2).

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Gracey, aunt and uncle of Anna Kelley of Independence. Born in the Isle of Man on Bastille Day, 1839, Thomas emigrated to California in his early 20s and "with his blankets on his back, walked to Virginia City" when the Comstock erupted, remaining there for more than 40 years. Photo courtesy Rosemarie Jarvis.



After being shuttled from Summit to Lovelock, to Keeler to Mt. Whitney station at Lone Pine to Laws, Bob and Kate Gracey brought their fledgling family to rest at Kearsarge in 1913, where they lived until the Southern Pacific closed down its agency there in 1932.

Six-year-old Anna, three-year-old Mona and infant Tom began their "railroading" life at Kearsarge amid distant rumblings that presaged World War I, but the Gracey's biggest problem at this time was how to get Anna to school. She had already started to school in Lovelock, Nevada. In Inyo, the railroad was built on the east side of Owens Valley and the towns and schools were all over on the west side of the valley. Bob Gracey owned neither horse nor car, so Bob and Kate decided to send Anna to Virginia City, where she lived for a year with her grandfather Gracey and his daughter, Grace Geyer who was Anna's great-aunt.

Once more with her family in Kearsarge, Anna still had a transportation problem: how to get to Independence to begin her third-grade education. Eventually her parents came up with a romantic-sounding solution: "We (Mona and I) wound up riding the stage coach to school" — though arrangements were complicated: "You see, the hours wouldn't coincide. I had to have somewhere to stay until the stage was going across the valley to meet the train. The stage didn't start until they knew the train was coming." Since there was a telegraph line between Kearsarge and Independence, Stationmaster Gracey found the solution. When he knew it to be a fact, Bob would tap out the message: "The train is on its way" and someone would be on the way to meet Anna and Mona.

They rode the stage for a while, then Mr. Weaver, the pumper for the railroad, bought a horse and buggy and the two children rode to school in a buggy. Then someone bought a car and "eventually we got a car and I drove to school in a Model T Ford." Though her first driver's license stated 16, Anna was a mere 14 years old when she began chauffeuring Mona to school. "The car had a flat every morning because of the blue limestone on the road" and Anna became quite adept at changing tires and cranking the Model T.



While school was fun for Anna and Mona, home at the railroad station was an international adventure. "In the early days it was a big deal for the whole town to come over to watch the train." Indians, Chinese, Italians, Mexicans. Anna's father handled passengers and freight; Mr. Weaver kept the machinery going to pump water out of the well into the tank that supplied the engines and the people who lived at the station. The section crew of four consisted of a Japanese, a Chinese named Wong Chong and two Mexicans. At one time the section foreman was a Japanese named Shiboya, newly married though most crew members were single men. When Shiboya and his wife had their first child, the stationmaster's wife Kate doubled as midwife, even as stationmaster Bob Gracey had "mid-wifed" one of their own

children, when no doctor was available. Midwife Kate's "pay" was the gift of a beautiful tea set from the grateful Shiboyas.

Section-hand Wong was a delight to the children. He was a tall Cantonese who had deserted from the Army in Canton. On Saturdays, when they were cleaning the yard, Wong would entertain the children by going through military maneuvers with a broomstick. Notwithstanding the ancient animosity between Japanese and Chinese, Shiboya and Wong worked well together and would play-wrestle for the children.

"Wong was always a little late getting to work," Anna recalled. "He smoked opium, which was normal and which was his downfall. Quite a few of the Indians smoked opium, too, because they could get it from the Chinese at Keeler, as Wong did. Wong used to go to Keeler every weekend. But he was never violent, never hurt anybody. It never affected his work."

Wong was working on the railroad tracks the day the Federal marshals picked him up. Somebody had squealed on him, says Anna; the "Feds" searched his house and found opium in his wood box. He was put in the Independence jail, and the entire Gracey family visited him:

"My dad got cigarettes and took them to him; asked if there was anything else he wanted. We felt so bad because you see, Wong had told us about being a deserter and said that if he ever was sent back to China, he would be beheaded. So that's what made us so sad; we knew what was waiting for him. He was not a U.S. citizen. He couldn't stay here. He'd be deported."

Later, an Italian family named Graziani came to work at Kearsarge station. They had eight children to match the Gracey eight; Mr. Weaver had four and there was the Shiboya child. So that Kearsarge station, while isolated, was a sort of community all its own, with lots of fun going down.

However, the fun stopped when the 'flu epidemic of WWI hit Independence. Out at Kearsarge they knew the 'flu was coming: "We didn't have highways; we had only county roads. But we did have the railroad and there was outside communication that way." Everybody wore 'flu masks; at Kearsarge they made their own: "You took an old sheet or cheesecloth, or whatever you had. It was folded several thicknesses, and it would be triangular and would fit over your nose up to your ears, with string on four corners to tie it onto you in the back of your head."

Bob and Kate Gracey both came down at the same time with a very bad case of the 'flu and then Mona got it. Only Anna was well enough to be nurse, cook and general factotum. She even had to meet the trains.

"Dr. Woodin (or Wooden; see p. 40, Vol. 2, No. 2, *THE ALBUM* for photo and more information on the life of this remarkable Keeler citizen) was the doctor. I don't

know how he survived. He worked night and day, made house calls all over. Everybody had the 'flu."

A Mr. Bovard who homesteaded near the depot and lived alone, got pneumonia along with the 'flu, and Anna had another patient. "I did what I could for him" — but he died anyway. That was very hard on the young girl: "I didn't quite know what to do with that kind of situation." Then Anna herself got the 'flu: "One day I didn't feel very good. After the train came in and everything else was more or less under control, I laid down on the bed to rest." Dr. Woodin came in but there was little he could do. "I lost my hair because I had such a high temperature; that was a common thing with the 'flu . . ."



Anna's beautiful cousin, Kate Keig, daughter of Emma Gracey Keig of Virginia City. Anna and Kate visited each other often, shuttling between Virginia City and the narrow-gauge railroad station at Kearsarge, which was home to Anna from 1913 until its closing in 1932.

In 1925 Anna finished high school and there was the question of college. Her friend Louise Walters (*aunt of Jane Hurlbut Fisher, editor of THE ALBUM*) was going to the University of Southern California and proposed to

Anna that she do the same — "and we can live together." Anna liked the idea, but there was a hitch: "The University down there frowned on students working and I knew I had to work." So she settled on Oregon State Agricultural College, a land-grant college established in Corvallis in 1852, now Oregon State University. "There they valued those students who couldn't go to college unless they worked."

Anna lived in the dorm and worked in the dining room, making 25 cents an hour. "I worked banquets on the side. Of course I didn't have anything; couldn't do anything but study. I didn't care; that was the reason I was there. It took four years and a summer school."

Summers, Anna returned to Kearsarge, worked at jobs in the valley. That first summer she worked at pre-war Manzanar, then a thriving fruit-producing area: "I was housekeeper, laundress and what not, taking care of the baby for Harold and May Bandhauer. I was at Manzanar when the Watterson banks failed (1927); that put a kink in me because I had my tuition money in the savings account so I'd be sure to be able to pay out-of-state tuition. I lost it all — but I made it, anyway."

Anna's post-college plans centered on becoming a research dietician. She was accepted for scholarships at a clinic in La Jolla and a hospital in Los Angeles, but Anna's timing was a bit off: she graduated from college in 1929, "right smack in the depression; I wound up slinging hash back in Independence."

It was while working a supper dance at the American Legion Hall in Independence that Anna met filling-station manager O.K. Kelley, her sister's beau. Anna married him in 1931, at Kelley's home in Downey. Their honeymoon?

"We loaded our stuff on the Model A we'd bought together before the wedding for \$125, and came right on back to Independence." Kelley was renting a filling station out on Highway 395 at the south end of town from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power; the bridal couple lived in a house on the adjacent property. There, on Nov. 8, 1932, was born their first and only child, whom they named Jimmy. In 1938 Anna and O.K. bought the service station property and the adjacent house from Los Angeles.



When building began out at Manzanar for the war-time interning of American citizens of Japanese origin, Anna got a job there when the young man in charge of the first-aid station maintained by the construction company's insurance carrier was called to Navy service.

"Dr. George Schultz in Lone Pine had been more or less in charge through the insurance company doctor. So he came to me and said 'would you do this?' And I said 'Well, I don't know whether I can.' And he said 'Yes

you can because you have a lot of experience patching up people and taking care of them.' " Which was true; too, Anna had an educational background in physiology. Besides which, there was no one else to do it.

"So I took on that job. It was a short-term job, because it was over when they did what they were supposed to do: get the camp going." The camp "got going" as soon as U.S. officials rounded up 10,000 Japanese-American citizens and re-located them in compounds at the Manzanar facility. Now that officialdom was in charge, amateur nurse Kelley found herself expendable.

What with "wartime gas rationing and speed limits and all the rest" the O.K. Kelley Service Station and Garage went on hold for the duration. Kelley kept the station open on weekends for their regular customers, and Anna took employment in the local office of the City of Los Angeles, working half-days until 1942, when she became Inyo County Welfare Director.

When approached on this matter by County Supervisor Earl Hurlbut (father of Bishop's Mayor Jane Fisher), Anna protested that she was totally unfamiliar with the legalities of the position. Hurlbut knew that, but he pointed out that "with everybody going off to war, there is no one else."

"So I became Inyo County's Welfare Director in 1942, thanks to a good district attorney and a good judge of the Superior Court, who gave me all the help that you could want in the legal angle. And I studied; I studied hard. I worked five days a week and studied too. When I took the job, I told them I had a son to raise, and I was old-fashioned enough to believe that the mother should stay home and take care of her brood . . . I would never have taken the job if we hadn't lived where the business was; Kelley was there when Jimmy got home from school. It wasn't as good as it could have been, but it was pretty good." Jimmy liked to play mechanic, and was happy to be "helping out" at his dad's garage.

Anna's "draft-happy" husband carried a 1-A draft card all through the war, ready, able and eager to serve his country, but he never got called. Anna figured it was because Kelley was over-qualified: "He kept all the county equipment running. If a motor grader dropped a belt and you couldn't get a replacement, Kelley made one. That type of thing."

Anna herself worked out the war years with the Welfare Department, making home calls from Independence clear to the south end of the county. "The County paid me seven cents a mile; I drove my own car and I put 90,000 miles on that little Chevy in four years. It only let me down twice, but that was all right because I had a good mechanic on hand."

Anna enjoyed her welfare work because "I got to renew acquaintances with Indians and other older people that I had been out of touch with for a long time. Indian kids I went to school with when I was young. And others in the north end of the Valley I hadn't known

before . . . Over at Darwin there was George and Mamie Gregory; she was a top basket-maker. George Gregory became my guide." ✱

OATH OF POST OFFICE EMPLOYEE
(TO BE FILED IN THE POST OFFICE)

I, R. L. Gracey, being employed
as Keeper of Mails, at Kearsarge Sta
in the County of Inyo and State of California
do solemnly swear () that I will support and defend the Constitution
of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true
faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any
mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge
the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God. I do
further solemnly swear () that I will faithfully perform all the
duties required of me and abstain from everything forbidden by the laws in relation to
the establishment of post offices and post roads within the United States; and that I
will honestly and truly account for and pay over any money belonging to the said
United States which may come into my possession or control. So help me God.

Given to and subscribed before me, the undersigned, a County Recorder,
for the County of Inyo, this 22 day of June,
1916.

G. L. H. H. H.
County Recorder,
W. L. H. H. H.
Deputy County Recorder.

NOTE.—This oath may be taken before a justice of the peace, mayor, judge, mayor, public, clerk of a court of record competent to administer an oath, or any officer, civil or military, holding a commission under the United States. If the oath is taken before an officer having an official seal, the seal should be attached to the certificate.

At Kearsarge, Stationmaster Bob Gracey was also postmaster. Above is the oath of office required of him as "Keeper of Mails" in 1916, on the threshold of U.S. entry into World War I.

(NEXT: Anna's welfare work takes her to Death Valley where she experiences a near-lethal cloudburst — plus jokester Johnny Shoshone and his sidekick Tom Wilson at Furnace Creek. At Trona she visits "the one and only" Billy Hyder and out near Tecopa she finds client "Cranky Casey" who, because he was tired of people, lived in a dugout near the Noonday Mine. Anna reveals why "Cranky Bill" had to be buried in a square box — and what happened when she hurried over hazardous roads in Saline Valley to save the starving watchman at Hunter Creek.)



Kerry's Kitchen; Kerry Roeser

FEEDING HUNGRY PACKERS

by Marye Roeser

The rustling of mice caught my attention as I walked into my tiny pack station kitchen at 5:30 a.m. The crafty little creatures had found another way to get into the cooler when I thought I had plugged every possible entry! The cooler, my substitute for a refrigerator, kept food moderately cool but in my daily skirmishes with the mice, the furry critters were winning.

High above Lake Sabrina is a lovely alpine lake, Hungry Packer Lake, the name inspired by a very hungry packer who spent a night there during a fish planting expedition. Packers are notoriously hungry, and pack station wives, daughters, and cooks spend hours attempting to assuage that relentless hunger. Cooks not only have to make sure the packer has groceries in the back country, but must provide sumptuous, hearty meals in the front country also.

In 1960, when we bought Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit, electricity had not arrived in Mammoth Lakes

basin and generators were the only means of providing some amenities of modern living. In particular, this meant no refrigerator! Unless, of course, you wanted to run a noisy generator twenty-four hours a day, shattering the mountain stillness along with the purse strings.

But there were various pre-electricity systems used in rural California to store food. We had a cooler — a burlap covered outside shelf contraption that opened by a cupboard door into our tiny cook shack. A small copper water pipe at the tip of the cooler dripped water onto the burlap and the cool breezes passing through the wet sacking were, in theory, to keep the food inside passably cold. However, in the corner of the cook shack there were few breezes and the air wasn't always very cool. My father, Ed Russell, an electrical engineer for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, was constantly challenged by this Rube Goldberg arrangement and continually tink-

ered with it. He was only moderately successful periodically and this frustrated his engineering mind.

I was constantly challenged by the legions of mice who found ready access to the cooler. There was almost no container they could not conquer but disposing of the "killing fields" and their drowned contents each morning at 5:30 was a poignant chore.

With the pack station, we had inherited an old ice box which helped to keep a small amount of fresh produce, meat and dairy products. The S and L Ice Co. provided block ice for the village of Mammoth Lakes along with dry ice which we used for refrigeration on pack trips. In the early days, before the advent of ice machines, ice was cut at Twin Lakes in the late fall and stored in ice sheds packed with sawdust for summer use. The early lodges in the area had walk-in coolers and used the ice to keep the coolers chilled. Fishermen packed their fish

in dry ice before journeying through the fearful Mojave desert heat.

The Summers family, previous owners of Mammoth Pack Outfit, had used a small cabin near the kitchen as their meat house and Dorothy Summers' father, Don Douglas, kept them well supplied with fresh meat from his ranch in Coarsegold. We needed to remodel that screen-sided cabin into a cook's sleeping cabin and since we didn't have a ready source for ranch beef, there went the walk-in cooler with the ceiling hooks for hanging meat.

Meals for the hungry crew necessitated careful planning since the market in Bishop, 50 miles away over old Sherwin Grade, was an all-day expedition. I planned the week's menus to begin with fresh meats and vegetables which evolved to canned products by the end of the week. The shopping list on my clipboard also included such necessities as horseshoes and plumbing supplies.

In Mammoth Lakes, some groceries were available at Schermerhorn's Market, located near the old post office, and Lutz's Ice House at White's Lodge, at Lake Mamie, to

supplement our menus. We learned to adapt recipes using any available substitutes since dashing to the supermarket for a missing ingredient was never possible.

Then civilization came to the pack outfit in the form of a Servel gas refrigerator. Woods Lodge, at Lake George, had replaced a Servel gas refrigerator with a larger, newer model and we were the delighted recipients of the old one.

Servels operate on butane gas making refrigeration possible in areas not served by electricity. At McGee Creek Pack Station in the early '50s, Russ Johnson had even rigged part of one of their Servel refrigerators to serve as a small freezer. With the installation of the gas refrigerator, the menu possibilities increased dramatically, as did satisfied grins on packer faces. I could scratch tuna casserole and macaroni and cheese from the seventh day's culinary efforts.

Shopping trips to Bishop were long and hot but I always looked forward to the cold iced tea at the old Kittie Lee Inn, later the Copper Kettle, as a treat from the heat. It was also an opportunity to visit with



Above: Ed Russell, Mary Russell Roeser, Elizabeth Russell, Dorothy Russell Fitzhugh, baby Lee Roeser, 1955

Below: The four Roeser children, Mary, Lee, Leslie, Kerry, 1964





A crew dinner, 1967

pack station, where occasionally her eclectic taste ran to wild onions. I skimmed the cream off the top of the milk, saving it for ice cream which I made in the ice tray of the Servel gas refrigerator.

After we purchased Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit, I tried to convince Lou, my husband, that we needed a cow. He pointed out that we didn't have a pretty little meadow below the pack station complete with wild onions for a cow to graze, and furthermore, he didn't want to have to milk her every day. Since I had made it my policy not to learn certain chores very well, it was powdered milk at the pack outfit except on shipping days. We just had to satisfy our ice cream cravings in town.

And then there were dirty dishes — a never ending chore! Leftovers were seldom a problem as the pack station abounded with canine garbage disposal units. Packers and wranglers come with dogs in many shapes, sizes and colors, always loving to eat. Looking out the kitchen window at wildly happy grins with pink tongues lolling expectantly, we knew the freeloaders would take care of scraps.

Hauling trash and garbage to the

The crew helps with washup.



other pack station and lodge people doing their weekly shopping.

Joseph's Market and Bishop Wholesale were completely customer oriented. Bishop Wholesale section in the back filled our order while I shopped for produce and other small items up front. The employees carefully helped pack my station wagon and even helped with ice on very hot days. Joseph's was so customer oriented that when I was shopping for the pack station one hot day with a new baby in my arms, Mr. Joseph arrived on the run. He seized the shopping cart saying, "I'll push the cart while you carry the baby!" And he did!

On another memorable hot August day, my mother, Elizabeth Russell, accompanied me to Bishop as my third baby was past due. We did the weekly pack station shopping, loaded up the station wagon and prepared to head up the hill. However, Dr. C.L. Scott had insisted I stop by his office before leaving town and, needless to say, I remained at the Northern Inyo Hospital where my daughter, Maryl, was born that evening. My mother was thrilled at being present for her new

granddaughter's arrival but equally worried about pack station groceries waiting out in the station wagon.

It was a challenge to take four young children on the weekly shopping expeditions to Bishop, but the two older youngsters did help ride herd on the two younger ones. Someone once remarked that I resembled a mother quail with her covey of little ones flocking around her. Lee, the oldest, could be bribed occasionally to help shepherd his three sisters if he could go to the Toggery or Pioneer Hardware for some "cowboy gear." But the brunt of weekly shopping trips fell on Kerry, number two child. She helped load shopping carts, held toddlers' sticky hands and could be bribed with less expensive ice cream.

The one item we couldn't keep frozen in those days was ice cream so naturally we craved it. Chisum Ice Cream from Reno was a special treat when we went to town and how we savored it. When we were at the Rainbow Pack Outfit in the early '50s, the Boothes kept a cow that gave wonderfully sweet milk, and rich, thick cream. She grazed in the pretty meadow below below the

local dump, before dumpsters, was always exciting to true traders. Located on Highway 203, it was known locally as the "Mammoth Variety and Exchange." With a pick-up truck you could always return with as much or more than the load you took to the dump. We furnished the pack station, exchanged our clothes and acquired almost-current reading material. Some traders even followed trucks loaded with treasure as they headed through town to the dump.

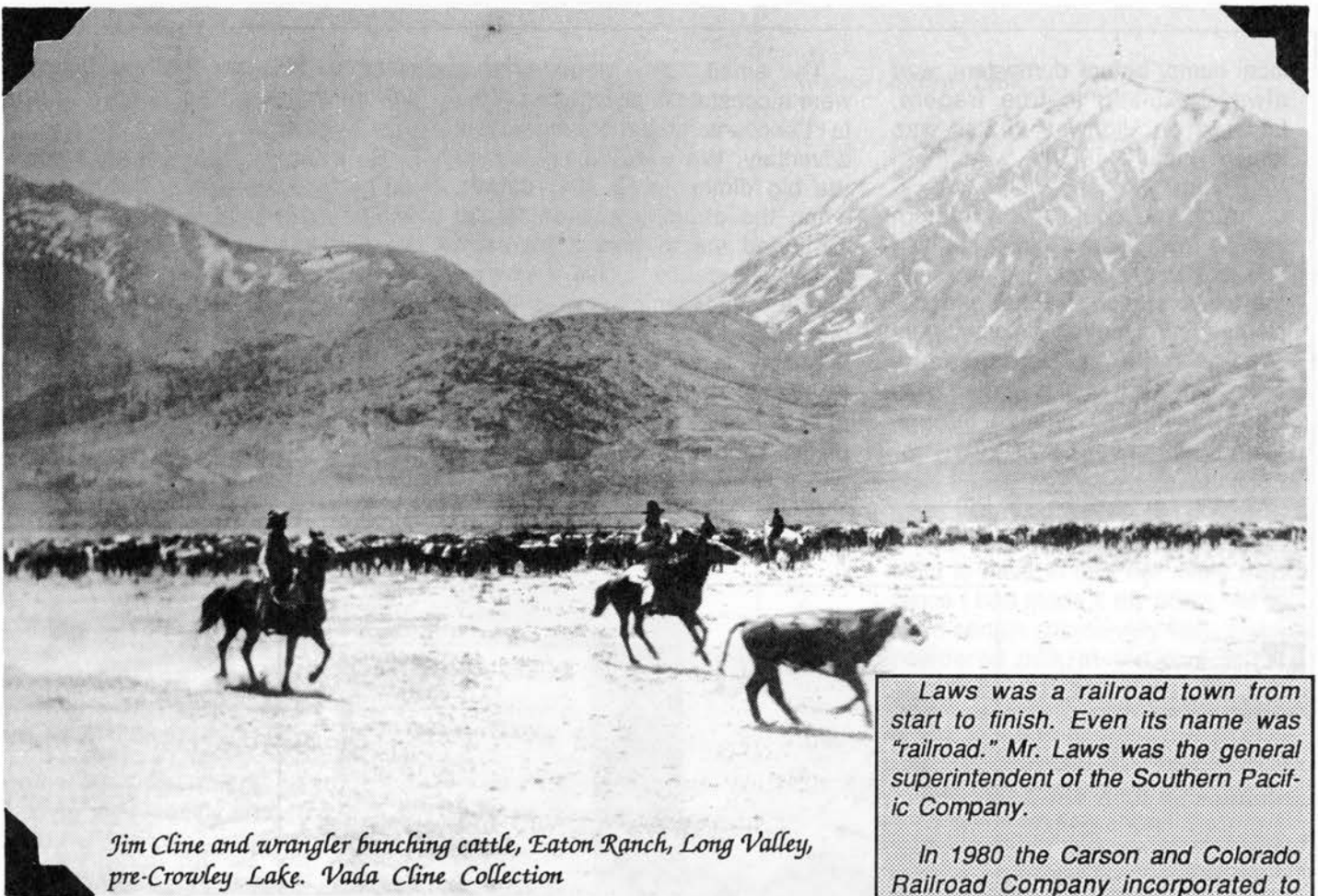
The small, furry mouse-critters were a constant challenge but in the fall I encountered a more formidable adversary. We were sitting around the big dining table after dinner, when the dripping kitchen faucet reminded me to give it an extra twist. As I started to rise, I saw we had a visitor enjoying the water drips. This large, grey furry creature appeared to be a monster mouse. Red, one of the packers, immediately wanted to dispatch it with his pistol. I looked more closely and

gasped, "Oh no, that's a bushy-tailed woodrat and they're rare!

So a brazen, bushy-tailed woodrat had located a cozy den for that winter and a number following. Stay he did, and was able to get into everything, eat everything, and cleaning up the kitchen after him the following spring was more than a challenge! I even developed an affection for the legions of tiny mice when I took up the battle for rights to the cooler once again. *



Marye and Kerry Roeser, 1990



Jim Cline and wrangler bunching cattle, Eaton Ranch, Long Valley, pre-Crowley Lake. Vada Cline Collection

“LAWS WAS THE SWEETEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE WHOLE WORLD”

*by Louise Kelsey,
based on the recollections of Vada
Sproul Cline, along with the laughter
and memories of her sisters, Ina, Wil-
ma and Velma.*

Dr. Shute made one last check through his black bag before he walked out into the clear air of a July morning and climbed into his buggy. He wouldn't need a coat, even if his call lasted a day or more. Summers were hot in the high desert of the Eastern Sierra Nevada, and especially in Owens Valley. As the doctor drove his horse along the dusty road from Bishop to Laws he thought of Mabel Sproul, the expectant mother waiting for him in the small railroad town, six miles north.

Laws was a railroad town from start to finish. Even its name was "railroad." Mr. Laws was the general superintendent of the Southern Pacific Company.

In 1980 the Carson and Colorado Railroad Company incorporated to build a narrow gauge railroad whose original plan was to run from Mound House, Nevada to the Colorado River. Building began in Mound House but was completed only 365 miles south . . . to Keeler.

The narrow gauge, less expensive to operate and whose track was easier than standard gauge to lay over rugged terrain, was surveyed to run east of the Owens River. The course of the roadbed was designed to serve the mines of Nevada and northeastern California. Cattlemen, sheepmen, ranchers and farmers saw the advantage of a rail line for both supplies and sales.

The station at Laws was an important one with its depot and loading platform, its turntable and switching yard, its gantry and stock corrals.

Train crews needed boarding houses and entertainment, ranchers needed supplies and children needed schools. So Laws grew on demand into a solid community with answers to the needs of both railroad and ranches.

Jim and Mabel Sproul were married in California's gold country. Jim was mining in Sonora when they decided to move to Laws. It was 1904 and the Farrington ranch, belonging to Mabel's family, grew most of the things they needed for a self-sufficient family . . . vegetables, fruit trees, a grape arbor, sheep, chickens for eggs, cows for milk and beef cattle for meat. Jim planned to raise his family in this promising valley. Their home in Laws was filled with the laughter and sisterly squabbles of Mona, Ina, Wilma, and Velma, and later, Madeline.

Mabel's friend and neighbor, Katie Parks, waited with the again mother-to-be. With four girls Mabel, half joking, told Katie that if this baby was another girl, she could have the child.

Katie Parks had been a "mail order" bride but her marriage to Clarence had not given them the blessing of children. Some strange but strong bond seemed to have built on the joke between the two women for Vada was the Sproul's fifth girl and while nothing in the wide world could have induced Mabel to even think of parting with the baby, Katie Parks always had a special feeling for the child.

The same feeling grew in Vada. The Parks house was like a second home to her. She knew that it was always a haven where she could count on fresh-baked cookies or some surprise that would delight any youngster.

Streets in Laws were the children of dusty trails, left by the railroad survey crew who had laid out the town site for the Carson and Colorado Company.

When a new kid moved to town every youngster in Laws followed him down the street. That one walk told them where he lived, how many were in his family, what his dad did, and if they were lucky, whether or not his mom baked good cookies.

The Sprouls now had five daughters and were expecting their sixth child. This time Dr. O'Neill arrived at the Sproul's home just as Clarence and Katie Parks drove up in their touring car. They gathered up the girls and went for a drive around "the six-mile block."

They rolled along in a gentle cloud of dust and headed toward the Sierra on Highway 395 where Vada and her lifelong friend, companion and husband would live . . . in a home surrounded by flowers and with horses close by.

At Brockman Lane, Clarence maneuvered the corner and turned south. The Shippy ranch house, with its corals and tack shop foretold a future time when horses and cattle would be Lester and Vada's lifestyle.

Next came the Nelligan and the Keyes homes, sitting across from each other on the Lane. Belle Nelligan Holland and Lizzy Keyes mid-wifed each other's babies and chatted and picked raspberries as two women will do

who depend on neighbors for their daily touch with life.

Mr. Parks drove the car slowly, with its top down so his passengers could fully enjoy the days of summer. Locust trees hummed a low song as bees gathered their share of the food chain. Wild roses and asters decorated the edge of the road, and the sky was building cumulus clouds which promised a summer storm. The party stopped where Brockman crossed over Bishop Creek. It was shady, the water was cool and if it had not been for the excitement of a new member of the family on its way, they all would have taken a nap.

Brockman Lane ended at Line Street and Clarence steered the bulky touring car in a wide turn, heading east on the third leg of "the six-mile block." To pass a little time Katie had packed a picnic lunch. Clarence pulled to the side of the road, in the shade of a grand old cottonwood tree. They suddenly remembered that excitement had taken away the thought of food . . . until the girls spread a cloth on the ground and Katie unpacked crunchy homemade dill pickles, fresh bread with creamy butter, jam from the blackberry patch, hard cooked eggs from the morning gathering, and a cake. No cookies for an occasion like this. It was a chocolate cake, round as a drum and three layers high. It seemed as if the frosting between the layers was as thick as the layers themselves. Such a cake. It was the kind that only youngsters could eat all they wanted. Clarence and Katie enjoyed just a slender sliver. Lunch finished, they quickly gathered up what little was left, waved good-bye to the fields of wild iris and turned north on Bishop's Main Street. They were six long miles from Laws, and home, and . . . a boy or a girl?

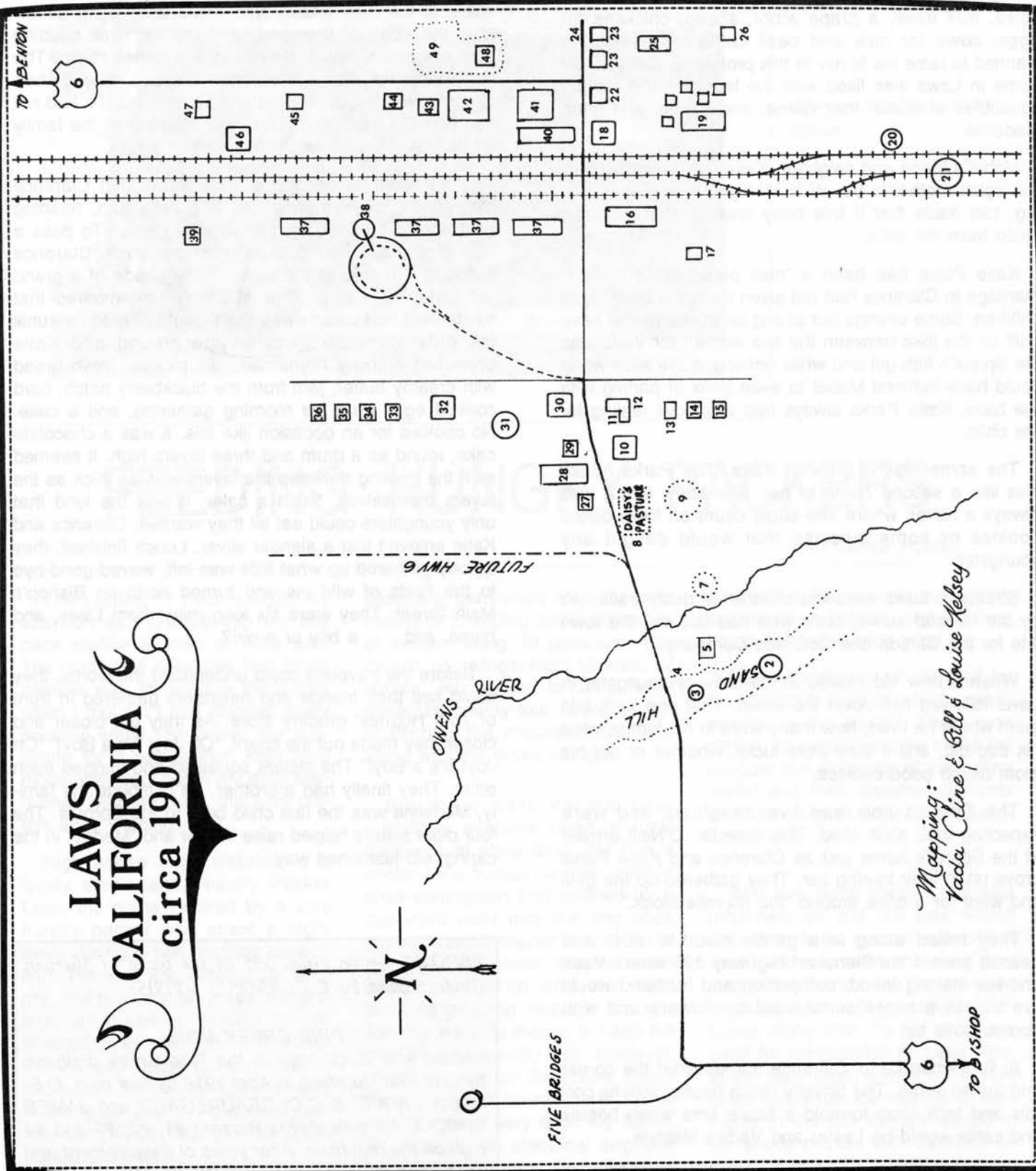
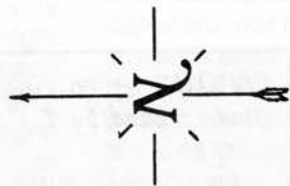
Before the travelers could understand the words, they could see their friends and neighbors gathered in front of Tom Hughes' grocery store. As they got closer and closer they made out the chant, "Oh Joy! It's a Boy!" "Oh Joy! It's a Boy!" The sisters squealed and hugged each other. They finally had a brother. To complete the family, Madeline was the last child born to the Sprouls. The four older sisters helped raise Walter and "Maddy" in the caring, old-fashioned way.

PLAQUE — on Hwy. 395 at the base of Sherwin Grade. Placed by E CLAMPUS VIRTUS:

PINE CREEK MINE

Gold was discovered in the Pine Creek drainage by Civil War Veterans in April 1916 by four men, O.E. VAUGHN, A.E. & C.C. BEAUREGARD and JAMES SPROUL on their claims Blizzard #1, #2, #3 and #4 high on the mountain. After years of development and production the mine was acquired by U.S. Vanadium, a division of Union Carbide Corporation on May 14, 1936. This mine became the world's largest tungsten mine, now known as "The Mine in the Sky."

LAWS CALIFORNIA circa 1900



Mapping:
Hada Cline & Bill & Louise Helsey

1. Five Bridges
2. Sand Hill
3. Will Farrington Ranch with cement silo
4. Water trough
5. MacIntoosh's slaughter house
6. Highway #6, Bishop to Benton (broken line - present #6)
7. Fort (before Vada's time)
8. Daisy's pasture
9. Indian Village
10. Lee Sheppey's deli/dance hall/theater
11. Barber Shop (Able's)
12. Stone Hotel, rooming house - Mr.& Mrs.Able
13. George Schleser home
14. West Amon home
15. Deyo home
16. Depot and loading platform
17. Agent's house
18. Recreation Hall, owned by James Henry "Jim" Sproul
19. Inyo Hotel and cottages, operated by "Ma" Huckaby
20. Water tower
21. Turntable
22. Clair Wells, Montague, Dinsome
23. Gish and Rogers (little houses)
24. Road up Silver Canyon
25. New schoolhouse
26. Francisco home
27. Moser' home
28. Lumber Yard
29. Uncle Carl and Aunt Hazel McAfee's home,
later owned by A. Beauregard
30. Hughe's Store
31. Court Yard
32. Fletcher's Hotel, later owned by Ray's
33. Shingle House
34. Ed and Ella Dehy's home
35. Billy and Winnie Vaughn's home
36. Clarence and Katie Park's home
37. Four storage and warehouse buildings
38. Gantry
39. First Sproul home. they later moved as family grew.
40. Stockyard and loading chute
41. Compton Store
42. First Post Office
43. McDonald's Blacksmith Shop
44. Joe and Florence Smith's home
45. Jim and Mabel Sproul's home
46. Old Laws Schoolhouse
47. Bedford's home (piano teacher)
48. Lem and Merle Gish's home
49. Gish farm



Jim Sproul and Charles Gifford, good friends and close neighbors, 1907. The Gifford Ranch was just west of the Sproul Ranch. Vada Cline Collection

Life in Laws was not all births. There were family outings and holidays and celebrations. One of the happiest of times was when Papa said, "Help Mama pack. We're going to Mammoth for a few days."

"But who will milk the cow while we're gone?" Vada questioned. "She's too big to get in the car and take with us."

It was no problem. Mr. Shaffer was the postmaster for Laws and a neighborly thing like milking a family cow was no big chore. He said he would gladly do it.

So off they went. A summer outing to the mountains always meant a stop at Whitmore Tubs where they could splash and squeal and cannonball into the naturally warm water. The walls of the pool were the Sierra and the Glass Mountains. A cloudless blue sky was its roof. In a beautiful setting such as this, why did it always end in a water fight?

Late in the afternoon Jim pitched their tent on Convict Creek. Mama wouldn't let the family anywhere near the deep, cold waters of Convict Lake. A warming campfire was welcome after wading and fishing and chasing around the meadow, looking for treasures to take home

... treasures like a pretty piece of weathered wood, or a rock, washed down from the colorful face of the canyon walls.

Even the most perfect trip must come to an end. Jim drove his family out of the mountains and back to Laws just as the sun was about to meet the Sierra. In spite of the wonderful time, Vada was eager to get home. When Jim slowed the car near the house he said, "Something's wrong. The cow hasn't been milked or she wouldn't be bawling like that."

Wilma and Vada hardly heard what their father said as they raced each other around the corner of the house to see who would be the first one in. Turning the corner, Vada sprawled full length and face down as she tripped over a pair of legs. "A pair of legs!" her mind screamed ... and above the legs was the body of a very dead Mr. Shaffer laying on the ground beside her.

Mr. Shaffer had died of a heart attack. The cow had not been milked. And Jim Sproul had to talk his two hysterical daughters into something close to calm. For days, when the sun started to set, the girls dreaded the quiet of the night and the grizzly memories it brought.



A Sproul outing at Whitmore Tubs. Vada, Velma, Wilma, Ina holding Maddy, Papa holding brother Walter. Vada Cline Collection

Jim ran the White Mountain Cafe, a two-story social/recreation hall in Laws. Off-duty train crews would come in to play pool. There was a soda fountain out front, and at the top of the outside stairs on the side of the building . . . ahhh, there was heaven for the Sproul kids. There was a hardwood dance floor where the girls learned to roller skate; the piano offered a grand opportunity to young self-taught musicians; and public dances were held in that wonderful second floor.

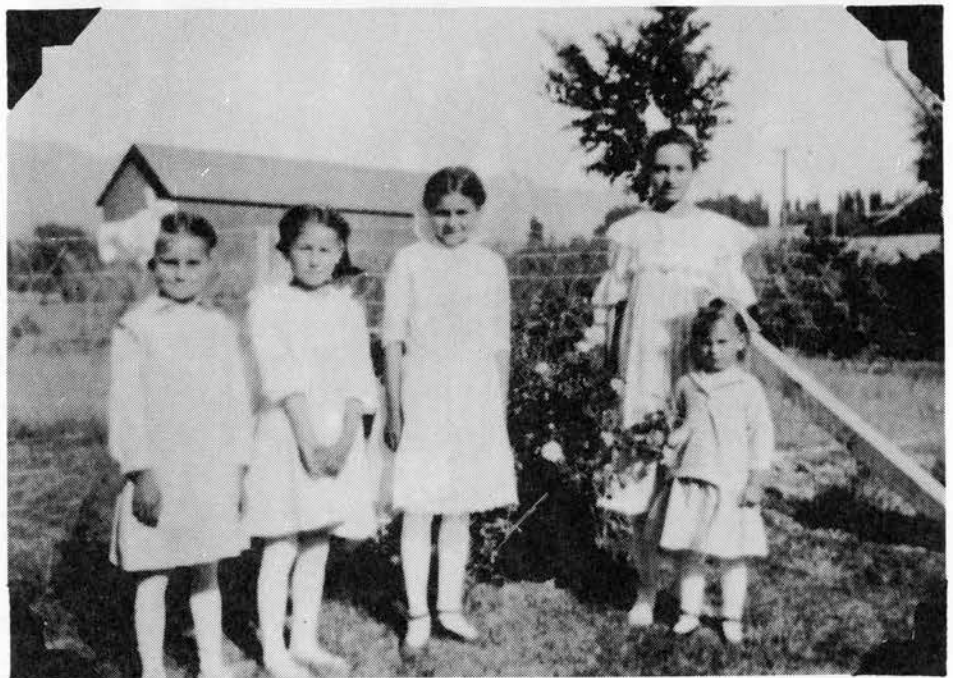
Lee Sheppy's "Opera House" showed motion pictures making it the movie house in the little town. Lee would stand at one end of the hall, cranking the projector, and the audience would watch a pull-down screen. Lee had a delicatessen and ice cream stand but Mama wouldn't

let the children buy anything there. "Too many flies around his food," she would say.

With a theater right in town, Vada's only complaint was when the movies were the least bit sad or violent, Papa and Mama wouldn't let her go; they would just take the older girls.

If the alluring scent of fresh-baked pies wafted through the air it was a sure sign that "Ma" Huck was in the kitchen getting ready for the hungry train crews or anyone else that might be staying at her boarding house or in one of the small houses clustered around the main building. The Huckabys had a large family of six boys and four girls. Mrs. Huckaby ran a clean place with

The Sproul girls at Laws: Velma, Wilma, Ina, Mona, with Vada in front. Vada Cline Collection



good, home-cooked food. It could be called the Eastern Sierra forerunner of the popular Bed and Breakfast . . . except that "Ma" Huck baked bread, cooked three big meals a day, raised chickens, grew a small garden for the table and still had time to love her children who, for all her work, came first. Florence (Huckaby) Smith was one of Mabel Sproul's dearest friends, and friends were a lifelong treasure in a small town. Florence grew up to be, among other things, a postmaster and the one who sorted the final mail drop for Laws in 1963.

At age five, Vada was too young for first grade, and there was no kindergarten. She tagged after Mona and Ina, Wilma and Velma when they left to walk to school. She could amuse herself in the play-yard and Mama didn't have to worry about her running to the tracks, or falling over the top rail into the stock holding pens, or any of the things an active five-year-old might do when turned loose in a railroad town. Ina was there to keep an eye on her. Ina had a natural mother instinct and seemed to have a sense of when brother or one of her sisters was on the verge of trouble.

Getting the girls ready for school each day was a ritual. Mama would have a basin of water and her comb ready, to the chorus of "Me first," "Me second," "Me third," "Me fourth," "Me fifth," "Me sixth, . . . oh darn! Why do I always have to be last!" Brother was the only one who didn't get into the morning hair-dressing line. Mama would slick back the hair, add a braid here, a roll there, and top each precious daughter's head with a ribbon or bow. She didn't have time to fluff the ribbons like some of the mothers, but made up for it with a hug and a kiss as she shooed them out the door. Of course, Wilma always tried to get in line first. She had beautiful, naturally curly hair that Vada "would have died for."

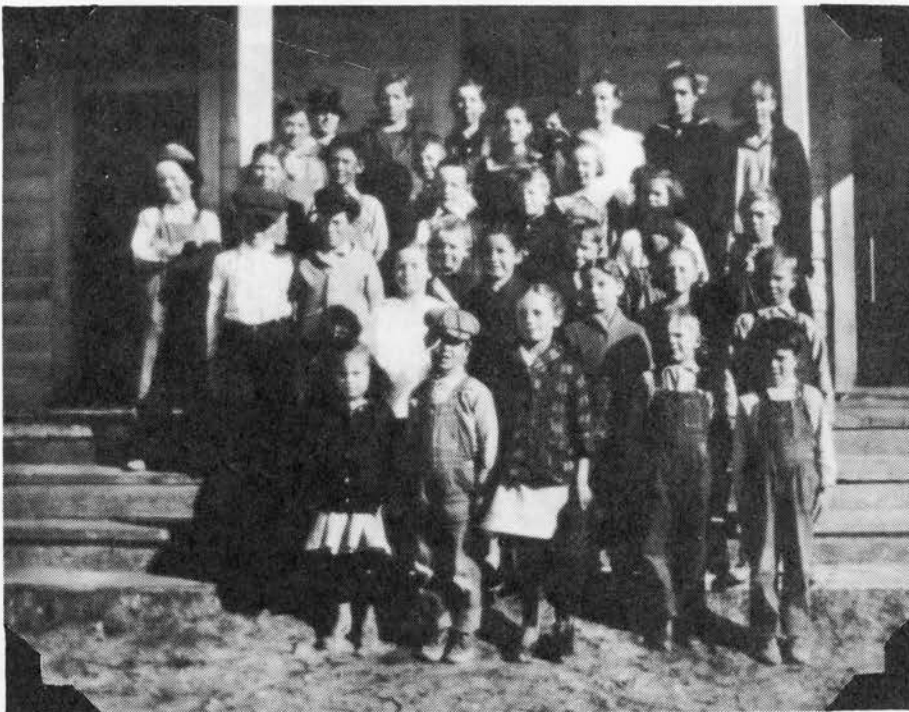
Even before Vada was old enough to attend school she was always in the hair-line, usually in a perky dress. She never knew when the school pictures would be taken and, pupil or not, she was ready to be in the photograph.

Mona had an inborn sense of style. She always looked wonderful, and dressed in just the right thing for the occasion, whether it was Sunday school, parties or just plain school. Many a time she put Vada's choice right back in the closet and picked out one that always turned out to be better.

Velma was the one Mama could count on when time and energy ran low. Even as a small child Velma loved to be in the kitchen when Mama was cooking. She would wash vegetables, stir pots, and always happened to be near when there was a cake bowl to lick. Velma was a good housekeeper, too. She seemed actually to enjoy dusting and straightening. All the girls helped around the house, but Velma took pride in the results of these chores. All the girls took care of Brother and Maddy.

When Vada was five, Jim moved the family to the Farrington ranch nestled at the foot of the White Mountains in Chalfant Valley. Vada started her education in the Chalfant school which was across the line in Mono County, five miles north of Laws. Every morning all the neighboring ranch kids would saddle up a pony, hitch a wagon, or walk to school. No buses in those days.

Four years later Jim moved the family back to laws. Vada talked her father into getting her a milk cow. She also lived to regret it! She loved her "Daisy," but she had to drive her up from the pasture twice a day for milking.



Laws School student body photo, about 1918. Vada Cline Collection

Teachers, Laws Elementary

Mrs. Mabel Amon
Mrs. Kumel
Mrs. C. Symons (substitute teacher)
The three above were sisters
Mrs. Marion Bulpitt
Mrs. Walter Clark (substitute teacher)
Miss Garstang
Mrs. Helen (Walter) Johnson
Mrs. McCutcheon
Miss McKee
Mrs. Grace Nellon
Miss Seabert



The Sproul children in front of Laws School: Mona holding Madeline, seated in front of Velma, Vada standing, Wilma holding Water, and Ina, 1923. Vada Cline Collection

She hated the chore because Daisy had the worst breath in all of cow-kingdom. And another thing that bothered her were the mounds in the field. Right or wrong, she had been told by the town kids that they were Indian graves and as she walked by them all she could think of were those poor Indians under the earth.

It was said that soldiers had had a fort just southwest of Laws. It was a high walled circle of rock, a little like a rock corral but with no opening for sheep or cattle. Stories built up around the so-called fort, but no one seemed to know if they were true. The fights and battles between Indians and settlers were over and the reason for the fort seemed lost in time. Its final function was as holding pen for whatever the citizens of Laws wanted to keep from blowing into their fields and yards.

The Indians drove their wagons along the dirt roads which had been chewed to washboard by trucks and cars. The noise of wagons grinding over corrugated rock roads is a sound all its own.



Dotty the calf. Wilma is feeding Dotty, Mona holding Brother. Vada Cline Collection

The Indian women were a real problem to the kids. There was always a baseball game of "work-up" after school. Just as sure as the pitcher was ready to throw the ball . . . all bases loaded, of course . . . here would come the Indian ladies in their long, full skirts with goodness knows how many underskirts, a bright blouse, and perhaps some jewelry. Without so much as a "S'cuse us," and no effort to go around the players, the ladies laughed and chatted in Paiute and walked right through the game.

The Slim Princess, pride of the railroad town, ran from Mound House to Keeler on narrow gauge rail. These smaller trains, running on a narrower track than their bigger counterparts, the standard gauge, could haul freight at a lower cost and work their way over passes like Montgomery with greater ease.

It was mid-summer. The crew of the "Princess" knew there would be a dance in Laws that night and the

brakeman had a bad case of fish-fever as he thought of his favorite hole.

Coming down from Montgomery Pass north of Laws the crew pushed the engine to give all it had . . . which was just a little too much. The train picked up speed on the steep grade and jumped the track. The young fireman, Bert, was thrown out and both legs cut off by the train. A frantic call went to Laws and an emergency run was made to the accident. When the rescue engine returned to Laws all the townfolk were waiting to see if there was anything, anything at all, they could do. The trip to Los Angeles would take two days at best and it would have done no good. Bert died three days later. The handsome young man was a good friend of Ina. The shock of the 1923 accident is still burned into the memories of the people of Laws but as in any community, tragedy is part of life.



Rails to Keeler. Louise Kelsey photo

Any child of a railroad town can shut his eyes and see the whoosh of white steam from the engine, hear the clack of metal wheels rhythmically marking off the miles as they pass over the ties, smell the acrid smoke from the firebox and hear the long, lonely whistle of the train. But one of the most lingering memories of all was the noise of the gantry chains.

The huge gantry stood west of the track, ready to load or unload freight cars. The sound of the chains being cranked up or lowered could be heard in any part of town. A large turning circle was near the gantry on the far side from the track. There was just one problem. A loaded wagon had to get up a pretty good pace to make it up Sand Hill. Not every one made it on the first try. The story is told of Orville Merideth's failed effort. He urged the team to their fastest possible speed, then in turning the circle he fell off the wagon. Just a case of one too many "lemonades" on a hot day?

It was autumn. The locust trees had turned a lemony yellow and were starting to drop their leaves. Every small breeze would launch a flurry of tiny leaf-kites into the crisp September air.

In the mountains aspen were turning from green to gold and red; it was time for Jim Cline to start gathering cattle for the drive to the valley. Jim was foreman of the Eaton ranch, with summer headquarters in Long Valley. He worked through the early days of fall with bitter-sweet feelings. His son was only five, but he had worked as a hand with his father all through the high country summer. Lester was born in Benton but when the herds were taken to the mountains Jim raised his son at his side, teaching him the skills of a working rider and building a love for this startling and beautiful country in the boy.

As warmth of summer shortened to crisp days edged with a chill that forecast winter, Jim and his men gathered the cattle from the mountain ravines, bunching them in Long Valley for the drive to winter range in the fields between the White Mountains and the Sierra.

After market animals had been cut from the herd they would be headed for Laws and shipped to slaughter. Vada loved the stockyard with the cattle milling to the music of their own bawling and lowing. When sheep were penned in the stockyard they moved about the enclosure like a silent wave, almost as if the band was one woolly animal. The heavy smell of beasts and manure and sweaty cowhands was as comfortable to Vada's young nose as the wild flowers of spring, or summer's new-mown hay.

Papa lifted her onto the porch rail to watch the snake of dust that hung over the herd as it moved along the river, across the valley and on to Laws. Vada saw her future husband, for the first time, riding at his father's side, watching for bunch quitters that might try to break from the herd.

A wise man once said, "All good things must come to an end." Vada's "sweetest little town in the whole world" started its decline when trucks began hauling cattle and sheep, hay and produce to market. Many of the mines were played out. Irrigation ditches were dry, so fewer and fewer ranches could raise feed crops. Market fruit and vegetables were reduced to family gardens, and life changed.

The school closed. In 1963 Florence Huckaby Smith processed the last mail drop from the post office that had served the community continuously for 76 years.

Vada missed her childhood friends as ranch families moved away. Finally, when she was 15, Jim told the family it was time to move to Bishop. Vada was glad to go.

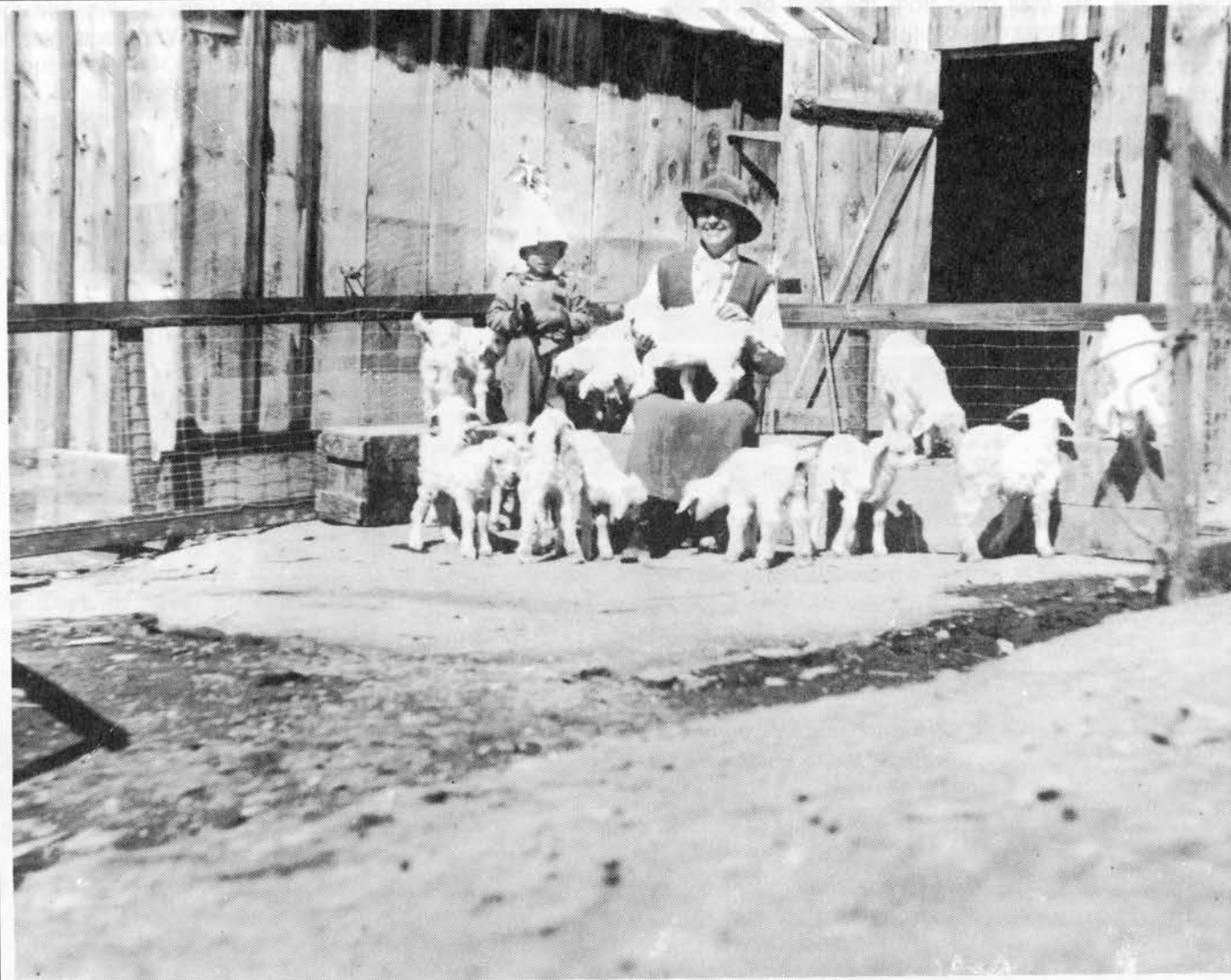


Florence Smith distributes the last day's mail to Laws post office, 1963. Chalfant Press photo

Epilogue

*Vada and Lester were married. Their life together was a long love affair of working cattle, rodeoing and living with the land. On one of their last rides together, beside the meadows and under the trees at the foot of the Sierra, Lester turned to his wife and said, "Vada, they can't take this away from us." **

EASTWARD			(Narrow Gage)	Station Number	WESTWARD	
SECOND CLASS			Timetable No. 190		Distance from Keeler	THIRD CLASS
702			September 27, 1959			
Leave Daily Ex. Sunday			Keeler Branch			
Capacity of sidings		Mile Post Location	STATIONS			703
Yard Limite WOTP		506.8	LAWS	3200	70.4	
19 P		522.7	15.9 ZURICH	3216	54.5	
36		525.5	2.8 MONOLA	3219	51.7	
17 P		536.9	11.4 ABERDEEN	3230	40.3	
11 WP		536.2	13.9 KEARSARGE	3244	26.4	
		555.2	5.1 MANZANAR	3249	21.3	
Yard Limite BKWOP	AM 7.01	559.8	4.6 TO-R OWENYO	3144	16.7	AM 10.00
Yard Limite YP	8.00 AM	576.5	16.7 R KEELER	3270	0.0	9.01 AM
	Ar. Daily Ex. Sunday		(70.4)			Lv. Daily Ex. Sunday
	702					703



Wally with his "kids" and mother, on Paoha. McPherson Collection

PAOHA

Island of Shattered Dreams

by Barbara Moore

Visitors to the Mono Basin frequently bring their cars to a halt, grab a camera, and try to capture on film the mysterious beauty of Mono Lake. Sometimes the lake sparkles from sunrays that bounce off the water. And on a calm, sunny day reflections of islands, mountains, and craters are accented by the white alkali rim that frames the lake like a surrealistic painting. Sometimes the view is ethereal, when fog banks play hide and seek with the islands, allowing a quick glimpse of their tops before they are engulfed again in mists. And on a cold, crisp day thin veils of steam can be seen reaching upward from the hot springs on Paoha, and from which this island got its name — long waving hair of gossamer spirits.

Whatever the visual impact Mono Lake delivers and whatever the time of year, few of those who gaze upon the magnificent scene are aware of the shattered dreams that hide within Mono Lake's secrets. Sometimes questions are overheard such as, "Does anyone live on the islands?" or more frequently, "Are there fish in the lake?"

In answer to the first, "No, not now. In the past some did, but the dreams shattered." And to the second, "No, no fish, but the lake teems with wild life and harbors tiny creatures, brine shrimp, that in some ways helped to lessen the bitterness of those shattered dreams."

Wallis R. McPherson, better known as Wally or Mac (he says "perhaps I was known by a few other names, too") can answer almost any question asked about Mono Lake, and in particular anything pertaining to the islands. Most of his seventy plus years have been spent in the Basin, and for four of those years he lived on Paoha Island, the largest of the many islands that huddle close to each other near the center of the lake on an east-west line. Some of the smaller islands seen today didn't exist when he lived on Paoha, only recently peeking out above the water as diversions lowered the lake level.

Wally was born in Los Angeles in 1914. His first trip to the Mono Basin was in the summer of 1915. The family spent that summer and the following one in a cabin at the camp headquarters of the Rush Creek Mutual Ditch Company for whom his father, Wallis D. McPherson, was chief engineer.¹

The camp was located along the mouth of Rush Creek, where the creek enters the lake between Navy Beach and Lee Vining. Wally's father was a gregarious, handsome man, whose winning personality opened many influential doors. During his days at Stanford University he had become a close friend of Herbert Hoover who would later be our 31st president. This friendship extended to others of prominence, many of whom were instrumental in orchestrating the rapid growth of Southern California and its search for water. Men such as Harry Chandler, Isaac Van Nuys, Frank Jordan who was Secretary of State for California for many years, and a Mr. O.F. Brant, founder of the Title Insurance and Trust

Company. As an unusual episode in one's life can alter destiny, these men, particularly the latter, altered the destiny of Wallis D. McPherson and in turn, that of the family.

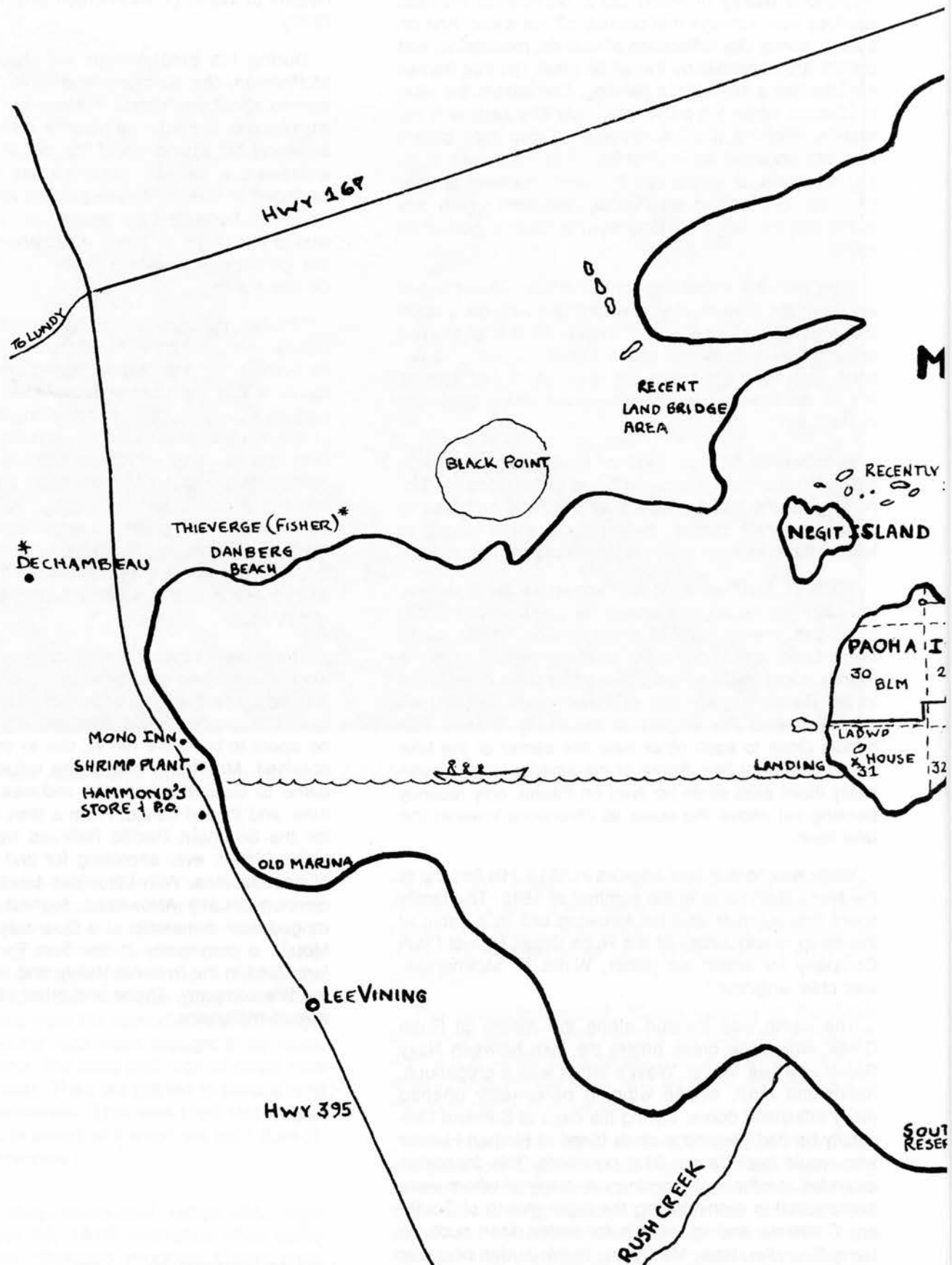
During his employment with the ditch company McPherson, like so many who have followed, became curious about the islands in Mono Lake. During several explorations to Paoha he became aware of the gurgling, steaming hot springs, and the plentiful vegetation that sustained a healthy angora goat herd. The goats belonged to Caesar Thieverge² (known by the Basinites as Fisher because they couldn't pronounce his name), who in the 1870s or 1880s established a homestead on the mainland at Danberg Beach near what is now the County Park.

The hot springs, abundant sunshine and sufficient natural feed clicked in McPherson's fertile mind. What he envisioned was Paoha Island as a unique health resort, which the sale of goat's milk, powdered, could partially subsidize, besides furnishing a generous supply of this nutritious liquid for the guests. Goats' milk was then commanding a hefty price of \$.90 per pint. The method to powder milk had been perfected, with the ensuing product, Klim, accepted by housewives. His imagination encompassed a large hotel (100 rooms as a start) located on shore with motor boats ferrying guests to the island where they could soak their cares and ills away in the hot springs while sipping goats' milk instead of cocktails.

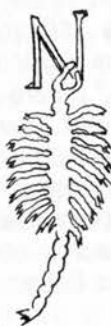
There were several obstacles to overcome, as there always are when grandiose plans are conceived. The first step, and the most important in bringing this dream to fruition, was money. But before any large sums could be spent to build the resort, title to the land had to be obtained. Mr. Brant, one of the influential friends, had come to California from the mid-west to seek his fortune, and indeed he did! From a start as a section hand for the Southern Pacific Railroad he steadily set his sights higher, ever searching for and taking advantage of opportunities. With his midas touch, he successfully developed Lake Arrowhead, formed partnerships that ranged from ownership of a Guernsey ranch in Owen's Mouth, a community in the San Fernando Valley, to farm land in the Imperial Valley and eventually founded the title company. These and other ventures made him a multi-millionaire.

¹ The Album, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 36

² Also spelled Thieverge in some accounts



o WAFORD SPR*



ONO LAKE

EXPOSED
ISLANDS



WARM SPRINGS

SIMONS SPRINGS

- * ALSO SPELLED WOFFORD AND WALFORD
- * ALSO SPELLED THIEVIERGE
- * THERE WERE TWO OTHER
DECHAMBEAU PROPERTIES,
ONE NEAR BLACK POINT,
THE OTHER NEAR WALKER CREEK

'H TUF
IVE
NAVY
BEACH

So it was Mr. Brant who McPherson approached to fund the project. After several visits to Paoha, McPherson's expert salesmanship convinced Mr. Brant that the goat and hotel project had merit so the money problem was solved. Now to obtain the land. That, the U.S. Government provided through the Homestead Law and Desert Entry Act. The former gave 160 acres to the applicant free of charge provided the applicant resided on the land (at that time) for 4 years.³ (There have been frequent changes to the Homestead Laws altering acreage and residency requirements). The latter provided up to a total of 640 acres, including the homestead, at \$.25 per acre for grazing purposes. Thus the project was underway, with 160 acres obtained by Homestead and 470 acres by Desert Entry.⁴

With the major obstacles solved, money and land, the next step was to fulfill the requirement of residency. To do this, McPherson left the ditch company, which by this time was winding down anyway, and directed his energies to developing the goat ranch and building a house on Paoha. By 1917 a seven room home had been completed and the family moved in, residing there until 1921 when they moved to the property on shore where the Mono Inn stands today.

There were several other buildings in the McPherson enclave: a bunk house for the two to three workmen, chicken coop, barn, work house, and an engine house which was a leftover from the oil drilling days of 1906. No oil was ever found (some say Thieverge had discovered a source of oil on the island which he used to fuel his lamps and this started a mad scurry of oil exploration), but the abandoned oil well provided 90 gallons per minute of fresh water at 104 degrees which was partially cooled as it traveled through 300 feet of pipe to the house, where it was further cooled by desert coolers. This water was used for domestic purposes and although it had a sulphuric taste when warm, the unpleasant taste disappeared as it cooled. Kerosene was used for lighting, cooking and heating.

Young Wally ruled as "King of the Island," thoroughly spoiled by his doting maternal grandparents, Mae and Vital Reche who joined the family, grandmother McPherson who spent the summers with them, the workmen, and the Indian women who helped his mother — among whom were Carrie Bethal, the famous Paiute basket maker from the Lee Vining area, and Rosie August. Besides the adults that doted on him, Wally had 200 kids (Toggenburg goats) as playmates and his two pet dogs, a collie and an airdale mix. What young child wouldn't have been green with envy. Grandpa Reche built him a small rowboat which he paddled around close to the island shores. The other islands were too far away for a little boat paddled by an even smaller boy, so Wally was quite content with his coterie of adults and animals, confining his explorations to the fascinating landscape of 1400 acres of island. This was as big as the whole wide world to his young eyes.

There were over 80 varieties of birds to observe that frequented Paoha besides the seagulls that nested in those days (but not now) among the volcanic rocks on the northeast end of the island. There were also two volcanic craters in that area that had filled with fresh water, forming tiny lakes, but those have since dried up. Soaking in the hot springs, swimming in the big lake, and the weekly trips to Hammond's Store (Tioga Lodge) for supplies and mail rounded out the days. Before venturing out on a supply trip they would listen to the songs of wind on the mountain tops or watch for sparkles on the water at the southeast corner of the lake, warnings in those days before radio and weather forecasters, that wind and waves would soon occur and change the mood of the lake from bathtub calm to vicious.



Winter on Paoha: Wally with his mother, Venita McPherson, his Grandmother Reche on the porch, and his Airedale. McPherson Collection

³ The original Homestead Act of 1862 gave 160 acres of land free of charge provided it was cultivated and resided upon for three years, after which a patent was granted in perpetuity. This was amended in 1909 when acreage increased to 320 acres and patent granted after 14 months and a payment of \$1.25 per acre. (Encyclopedia Americana). The Desert Entry Act of 1877 allowed 320 acres at \$1.25 per acre, and at least a portion had to be reclaimed by irrigation. "Paiute, Prospector, Pioneer" by Fletcher states the time requirement of the Homestead Law as five years, and the Desert Entry as 640 acres total at \$.25 per acre with a three year residency requirement.

⁴ 480 acres were allowed; however the uneven shoreline surveyed 470 acres when the land was sold to LADWP.



Left: Wally and his Grandmother Reche, winter on Paoha. McPherson Collection

Right: Summer on Paoha: Wally with his Airedale and car, circa 1920. McPherson Collection



Below: Family and workmen in front of the seven-room Paoha house, circa 1920. McPherson Collection



The land on Paoha varies from craggy volcanic rock on the north and east and around Hot Springs Bay on the south — areas deeply fissured and dotted with hot springs and the steam vents that gave Paoha its name — to soil on the west end consisting of diatoms, tiny underwater creatures that had imbedded in the sediments and risen with the volcanic eruption that created the island less than 300 years ago.⁵ It was here on the west end that the house and gardens were located. The diatomaceous earth provided fertile soil for a bountiful vegetable garden. Corn grew nine feet tall, and many varieties of vegetables were grown, the summer surplus either stored in the root cellar or canned for winter use.

The fertile soil that made the garden possible also provided a hospitable environment for the seven species of shrubs and plants affording the goats a plentiful diet. Among the plants were several varieties of sage, although the common big sage, *Tridentata*, predominant on the mainland and found on the black island, *Negit*, did not grow on Paoha. Hop sage and black greasewood, the latter frequently used as a salad green, were particularly tasty to the goats. Thieverage's angora goats, meanwhile, were either killed for meat and skinned, or sold to keep the Toggenburg strain pure. The 200 Toggenburgs thrived, producing abundant milk for the family and in later years for the guests at Mono Inn. The drying plant was never built, so the sale of powdered goats' milk to the Los Angeles market was a dream that never became a reality.

Most, if not all, of the goats have since disappeared, victims of sportsmen who discovered them years ago after a scheme of Wally's to promote tourist trips to the island backfired. He had invited a writer for "Outdoor Life" magazine to accompany him on a trip to the island in the hope that an article would increase his excursion boat business. Instead of writing to attract tourists, the article was slanted toward attracting hunters who found the hunting easy and successful in this unique setting. To add insult to injury, instead of chartering Wally's boat the hunters used their own and in time most of the goats were exterminated, the house consumed by careless fires and the other buildings vandalized. Not a pretty picture.

By 1921 two events occurred to bring to a close the chapter on Paoha life for the McPhersons. Wally had reached school age and the requirements for title to the land had been fulfilled. The Brant-McPherson partnership could proceed to the second step, construction of the 100 room hotel on shore. However, early in 1922, tragedy struck with the sudden death of Mr. Brant.

Brant's life had been productive in another way besides making money, for he had sired ten children who inherited his millions along with his portion of the island and shore properties. Brought up as they had been with all the accoutrements and activities of city life, they couldn't see any future in the Mono resort plan, and were shocked to find an area in the mountains that had no pine trees — an area 180 degrees from their accus-

tomed life style. They wanted no part of the resort operation yet in spite of their inherited wealth they didn't see fit to deed outright their father's interests to the McPhersons nor to continue the partnership. Their reluctance to negotiate quite possibly was influenced by friends of Brant and McPherson, men who dominated Los Angeles' search for water, knowing that acquisition of water rights in the Mono Basin would be necessary in the near future. Indeed, even by 1918 Los Angeles had been quietly buying land in the Basin.

Whatever the reason, Brant's unexpected death brought the grandiose plans of goats on Paoha, milk in Los Angeles and a luxury 100-room hotel on the shore of Mono Lake to a disappointing end, made all the more difficult by lengthy litigation to untangle the complicated affair. When settlement was finally reached years later, the Brant family received the 160 acres of Homestead on the island, plus 110 acres of DeChambeau land on shore that had been acquired for horse stables and pasture, with the McPhersons retaining the 470 acres of Desert Entry and the 135 acres of Mono Inn property.

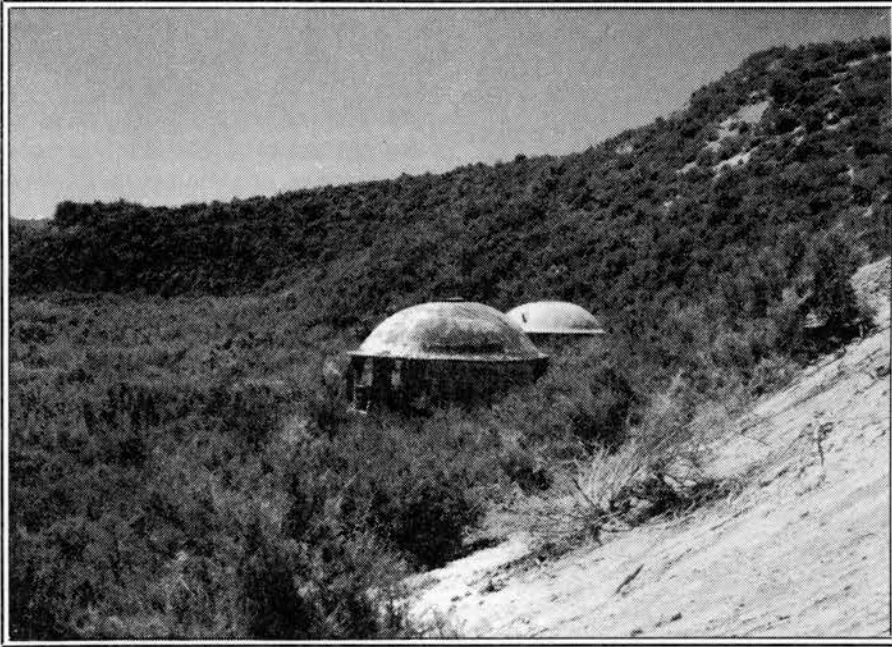
As predicted, Los Angeles did come north for water and both island properties were eventually sold to Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. During this time the property owners along the shore of Mono Lake were involved in an expensive and drawn out lawsuit which became known as the Sonora Condemnation Suit (Nina B. Aitken et al). LADWP introduced this suit to acquire littoral rights: "Ownership of land of, or along, a shore pertaining to the natural shoreline regardless of high and low water." Los Angeles, knowing that the lake level would drop after diversions started, wanted the rights to any newly exposed land. Although the suit was won by Los Angeles and the property owners received compensation for damages, the die was cast. The sores caused by that verdict have yet to heal. The receding shoreline left muddy flats discouraging recreation and devaluing shore property. Paoha no longer appealed as a unique resort location. By 1974 it was time to accept Los Angeles' offer, and thus the final chapter was closed on Paoha's dreams, but not before another dreamer fell victim to Paoha's temptations.

During the summers in the 1930s Wally escorted the curious to Paoha in an 18 foot boat. Dr. Wesley M. Barrett, an osteopath and optician from Los Angeles, was one of his customers. Dr. Barrett was entranced by Mono Lake, Paoha, and the hot springs. He, too, saw potential for a health resort and sanitarium in these ethereal surroundings. In 1937 he leased the 470 acres from the McPhersons but they wisely kept the transportation rights, hoping to make a little extra income by providing boat service to the island.

⁵ Accounts of the age and origin of Paoha vary. 300 years is the age state park rangers claim. Israel Russell states Paoha formed about one thousand years ago when the lake was larger and deeper. As the lake level lowered the island was exposed with the sediments, including the diatoms, above water. At any rate, age and formation are controversial.

Barrett also had big ideas, but no money. Again investors had to be attracted before another Paoha dream could come true. Shortly before World War II, Dr. Barrett completed two cottages, consisting of two rooms each with baths, a third building which served as a dining hall. A fourth building was never completed. Built of concrete, these looked more like igloos than cottages; judging from the howls of indignation from his guests they evidently didn't measure up to the comforts of either. Barrett, in his enthusiasm to attract guests, had grossly exaggerated his project and the facilities. Guests arrived expecting grand accommodations and French

Riviera surroundings. When they set foot on the island and immediately found themselves up to their knees in mud they were no mood to be happy campers even if the igloos had been luxurious. The disruption of WW II, the lack of luxuries that had been advertised and the death of Dr. Barrett in the '50s brought to a close yet another chapter in Paoha's history of dreams gone sour. It has been said that Dr. Barrett's hope to build a sanitarium raised rumors that he was going to run an abortion clinic on the island, but these rumors, even though they persist today, were totally unfounded.



Bathhouses on the island. Japanese entrepreneurs also planned to build a spa, but the sulphurous odor was too strong. Photos courtesy Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power



Still another person was tempted by Paoha, not by its uniqueness, but by its isolation. Mike Lazavitch, known as Bodie Mike, a Martinique immigrant who arrived in the Basin after a short stay in Bodie, approached Wally with a plan to use Paoha for a gambling spot. Wally turned this scheme down, even though Bodie Mike assured him that prospective customers would be willing to pay \$50 per person for boat transportation. This was a dream that evaporated before it ever got started, but another indication of the attraction Paoha had for dreamers.

Wally's years in the Mono Basin were interrupted during his youth by time spent away at school and service in the 10th Mountain Division during WW II, but in the periods that he was back on home turf, using a 35 foot work boat he and Claude Walborn, a June Lake resident, conducted tours to the island explaining the geology and describing the strange moods of the mysterious lake. These excursion trips to the island continued into the 1950s when the boat was wrecked by a wind storm.

For a short time during the depression Wally worked for the WPA⁶ hand-sloping the Tioga Road. Rocks were shovelled off the roadway into wheelbarrows and then dumped over the side. In the crew were many strong Indian youths who competed to see who could fill the wheelbarrows fastest with the biggest loads. As the work progressed throughout the day, Wally recalled the handles bent with the strain and by the end of the day the handles were up to their armpits.

Besides excursion trips and WPA work, the unique biology of the lake produced another source of income for the enterprising young McPherson, the only venture that would become successful.

In 1940 Wally read that the Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco was paying \$1.00 per pound for dried brine shrimp. Mono Lake was teeming with brine shrimp! With a 4'x4' window screen he waded into the lake, scooped up the shrimp and set them out to dry behind the Mono Inn. Complaints from his mother, Venita⁷ and guests about the nauseating odor of drying shrimp brought that to a hasty end and any further thoughts about how to improve upon this harvesting method were delayed by Wally's entrance into the service. After he returned, Wally was employed by the State Division of Highways (now Caltrans) continuing to experiment with the shrimp during off hours.

At the suggestion of Eldon Vestal, a biologist with Fish and Game, the Hot Creek Hatchery became interested in using live brine shrimp to feed the fish. Bob Lewis, superintendent of the hatchery, contracted with Wally to provide 200 pounds of shrimp at \$.20 per pound wet weight per day — a tidy sum at that time — nicely supplementing his State salary. This source of income continued until the late '40s when a new superintendent replaced Lewis and mishandled the perishable live food, allowing the shrimp to die and then disputing the weight.

Hopes for a subsequent financial boost from the lake proved disappointing when the owner of a San Francisco pet food store inquired about buying live shrimp. Unfortunately the projected income from the quantity they could use was far less than the expense involved in transporting the creatures alive and that market had to be scrapped.

However, the lake's bountiful resource didn't go unnoticed, and after almost a half-century of grandiose unsuccessful schemes and dreams and key was finally found to unlock the door to Mono's treasures: fast freezing! This relatively simple method of food preservation, virtually unknown before World War II, (compare an early '40s cookbook to one printed today) attracted several corporations to shrimping on Mono Lake. The first was Pahoa Corporation (an accidental misspelling of the island's name, confusing it with a small town on the big island of Hawaii). They built the main building which still stands, but Wally kept title to the land and did fishing for them after work.

As the demand increased he hired help and went into partnership with Pahoa to buy a larger boat. The Pahoa Corporation froze the shrimp locally but shipped to markets out of a warehouse in Los Angeles. A power failure in the cold storage warehouse turned tons of brine shrimp into a stinking mess and another dream ended in frustration when this unfortunate incident caused the corporation to go out of business.

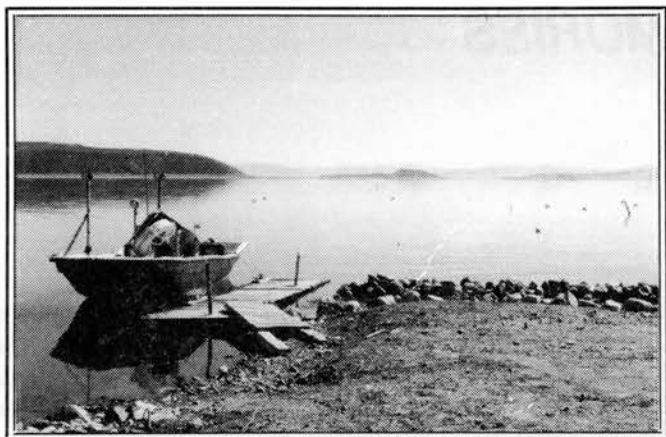
For years shrimping had been done without a commercial fishing license. Even though the hatchery had paid sales tax on the deliveries the need for a commercial license had never been mentioned. Shortly after the Pahoa Corporation failed, an eager warden from Fish and Game appeared and declared harvesting shrimp in Mono Lake could only be done with a permit, and a commercial fishing license. To save his fledgling business Wally travelled to San Francisco and obtained both. His license was the first issued for Mono Lake.

Shrimping in Mono's waters eventually did become a successful venture. Under the present ownership of Jungle Laboratories Corporation, who bought the land and the buildings, freezing techniques have improved and today the corporation ships over 100,000 pounds of frozen shrimp per season. As one travels along the shoreline on Highway 395, only the most observant will catch a glimpse of the sign "Jungle Corporation,"⁸ and

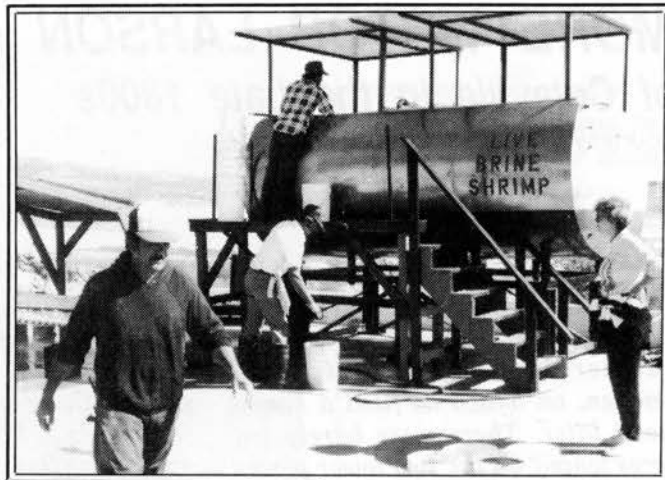
⁶ Works Progress Administration, begun during the depression to provide work. Many outstanding examples of WPA projects remain today.

⁷ The Album, Vol. III, No. 1, describes some of Mrs. McPherson's accomplishments and contributions to Mono County.

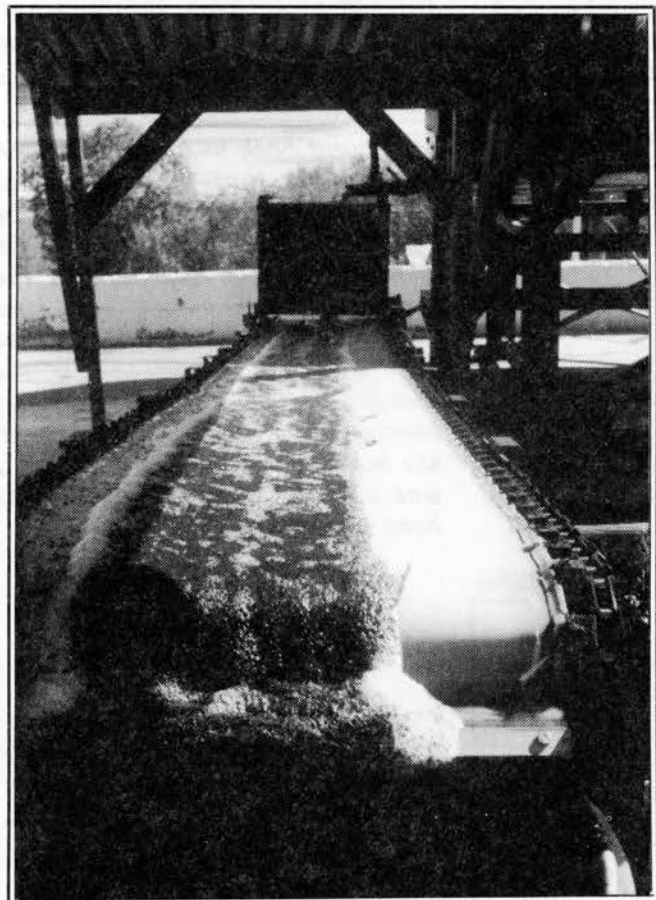
⁸ This company was founded in Florida to import tropical fish, thus the "Jungle" name. Home offices are now located in Texas. Early in 1991 the name was changed to High Sierra Shrimp, a far more appropriate name for its location.



Shrimp boat, Mono Lake. 1989 Photos by Barbara Moore



Boats load shrimp into tank; then they go to conveyor, to pails, and to hopper.



Conveyor belt from tank to pails



Heat sealing packages before quick freezing

those who do see it probably wonder about the name, incongruous in its High Sierra setting. Finally Mono Lake could produce a success story. A story that started out not as a dream, but as an experimental lark by a young man inspired by a newspaper article seen by chance. It didn't take investors, just an inexpensive 4'x4' window screen.

Perhaps the purchase of Paoha by Los Angeles was a blessing. With the lake level continuing to drop, exposing ever more muddy, alkali-encrusted shores, those that saw in Paoha the potential for a luxurious health resort, had their dreams come true, would have seen those dreams swallowed up in a sea of mud. People will continue to gaze out over the lake, inspired by the beauty of the ever changing colors, their photos capturing the reflections of the mountains and the two prominent islands that kindled the imaginations of many, and wonder about this silent, inland sea, probably never knowing the sad story of Paoha's past — the island of shattered dreams. ❀

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MORE VICTOR LARSON MEMORIES

of Coleville in the Late 1800s

Courtesy of Donna Strong, his niece

REVENGE

My earliest recollection was after Dad bought two ranches with a quarter section of land lying between, on which he filed a homestead later. There were barely ten acres fenced on the two lower places which was where we lived. Roads criss-crossed in all directions through the sage brush.

About one-eighth of a mile from our house was an Indian village, consisting of four teepees in which lived the families of Piute Sam, Big Jim, Mark and Little Sam. Piute Sam had two boys, about the ages of my brother Owen and myself. Mark had one boy some older than Owen, and Little Sam, one about my age, but Big Jim had no boys.

As time went on we finally began to play with those nameless boys which Owen called Piute Sam's boys. We learned later they were called Jimmie and Jack. Mark's boy was Johnnie, and Little Sam's boy

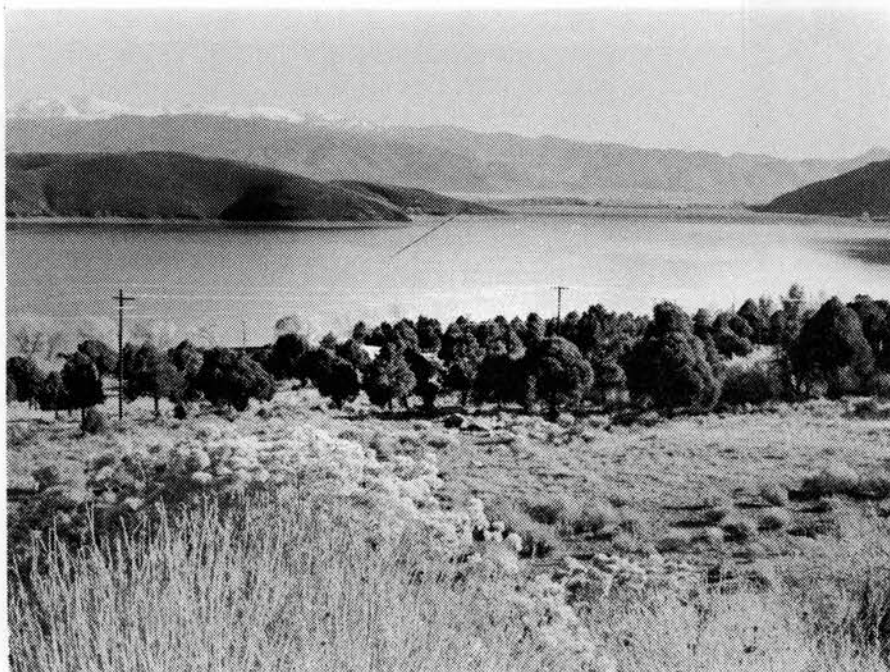
was Pat. These boys couldn't speak a word of English but we wrestled with them and played a few of their games. Soon we began to learn a few words of Piute and they learned some English. By making a few signs we managed very well.

One morning we went there and found the boys jubilant and excited. Their fathers had gone on a mission. They tried to tell us what it was all about but we could only get a faint idea. They pointed across the river, which was in Washo Territory, and said something like this: "Madalow waw way mama loos mahala." (Men talk kill squaw). This was not meaningful to us, but we went home and told what we heard, knowing it was some kind of a tragedy.

Now I will relate the incident and what it led up to, as told by the older Indians.

Piute Sam had two mahalas, Mollie and Susie. Mollie was the mother of Jimmie and Jack. Susie had no children. It seems when Susie was a very young girl, her father was brutally killed by a Piute who at once fled into Washo Territory. After about 25 years spent around Markleville in Washo he yearned to go back, thinking animosity against him had died through the years.

He went back to Antelope Valley. On learning that the Indian was seen at the Coleville Store, Piute Sam with three Indians took Susie, went across the river, found the Indian in the store, grabbed and tied him. They carried him to a Nut Pine Tree and bound him to the tree. With savage instinct for revenge Susie was given a club and she beat him to death. Some said it was an axe she used, however his head was beaten to a pulp.



Topaz Lake looking south into Antelope Valley toward Coleville. Joe Polino photo

**RICHARD GASSAWAY
WATKINS**

Richard Gassaway Watkins, postmaster of Coleville, was a native of Maryland. He was a sailor, lawyer, Indian fighter and gentleman. Watkins was with Commodore Sloat when he took Monterey from Mexico. He was the man who climbed the pole to hang the flag on the Monterey Presidio. He was also with the early Californians at the Sonoma Mission and was instrumental in winning California for the United States. He was one of the men who originated the California Bear Flag.

Later on when Watkins went to Eastern California or Western Nevada he was an Indian fighter. He fought in several of the battles around Pyramid Lake — led in the

fight in Pyramid Lake country where the whites were badly defeated.

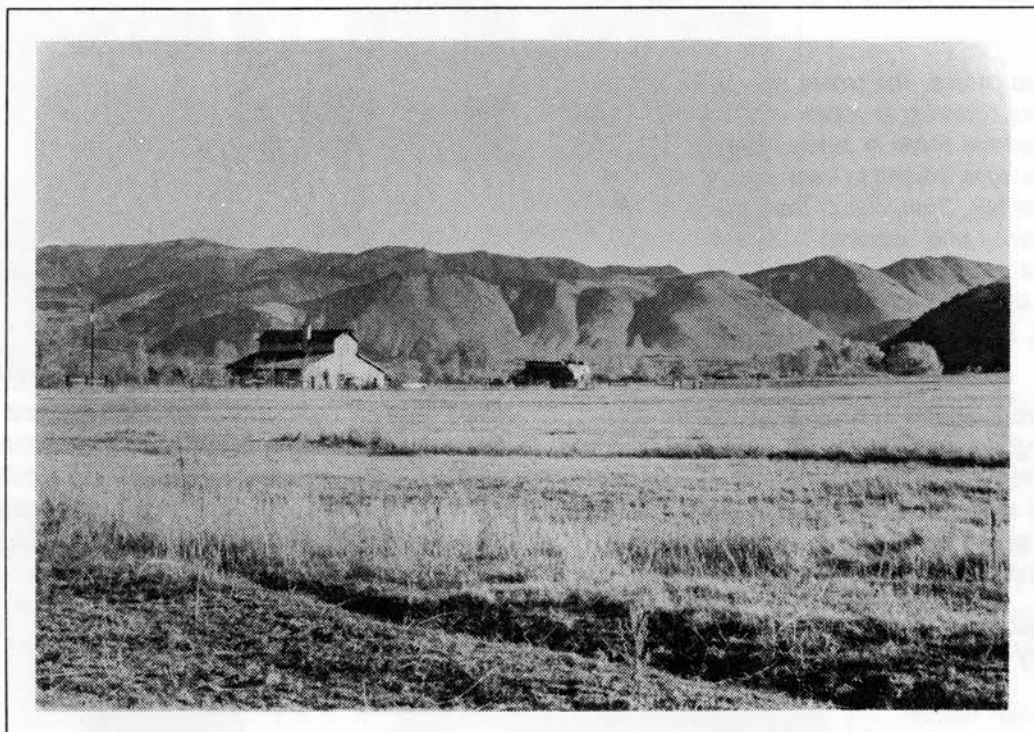
He was a cousin of Colonel Bowie of Alamo fame and the inventor of the Bowie knife.

Being from Maryland, he was a southern sympathizer. He tried to lead Nevada into secession, or worked with the people who were trying to lead Nevada into secession during the Civil War, and served time in the Federal prison, which was at Fort Churchill at that time, because of his learnings toward southern confederacy.

He later became a lawyer (he had

read some law books and was qualified to practice law in the Justice Courts) and was called Judge Watkins. He had been quite a rowdy in his early days, drinking and carousing a good deal, but during some of the early revival upheavals in that country he converted and became a member of the church and a worker in the parish. He was well remembered, well thought of, and a very good friend of the family.

*Stories of his Indian fighting can be found in the early editions of the History of Nevada, and his connection with Sloat and early California history can be found in the "California Bear." He is buried in a family plot in Coleville, California. **



Antelope Valley, near Coleville/Walker area. Joe Pollini photo

FISH TAILS

A LESSON FROM THE NATIVES

George L. Garrigues

Once, when I was on a Boy Scout camping trip at Walker Lake out of Lee Vining and the fishing was poor, several of us decided to climb over the ridge to Parker Lake to see if it was any better.

The air was calm when we arrived and we stopped to fish at a large rock near a steep dropoff into the lake. Our luck wasn't any better than it had been at Walker. We were discussing whether we should try another spot, when several Indians came up the trail and stopped about two hundred feet away.

They looked at the water and pointed. They talked among themselves, but we were too far away to hear what they were saying. They sat down, showing no sign of getting ready to fish. A slight breeze came up from behind our backs blowing out across the lake. One of the Indians pointed at the tree tops bending slightly in the breeze. Another pointed at a cumulus cloud which had suddenly appeared overhead. There was more talk, but no other movement. They lay back and closed their eyes. By then, we were too curious to move so we continued our fishless fishing.

Half an hour or so passed. The breeze was getting stronger and little ripples were beginning to appear on the water. A good gust came along, perhaps fifteen to twenty miles per hour. The Indians opened their eyes, pointed to trees and the lake and made more inaudible talk. Soon, one of them picked up his fishing rod and fastened what appeared to be a fairly large hook. He took out a cardboard box, opened it and looked in. The others looked also and we heard more mumbles. They looked at the trees, the clouds and the water again, studying them carefully.

Another Indian broke a piece of wood about four by eight inches from a rotting pine tree. By now we were quite interested in their activities. They took a small mouse from the box and fastened it carefully to the hook. They looked around some more and examined the mouse and the wood chip very closely. A stronger gust of wind came and their heads nodded.

The fisherman placed the mouse on the wood and set it on the water. He gently fed out his line as the wind carried it out onto the lake.

Soon, the mouse was quite far from the shore, maybe two hundred feet, and the fisherman said something to the others. They shook their heads and he continued feeding out line. All eyes were on the mouse on the chip. Another hundred feet or so farther out and the mumbling became more intense. Finally, all agreed. We could hardly see the mouse by then. He gave

the rod a good jerk, pulling the mouse off the chip and into the water. Louder talk indicated pleasure, everything was right. The mouse thrashed about in the water, swimming this way and that, while they watched patiently.

Suddenly, there was a big splash and the mouse disappeared. The Indians jumped up, the fisherman gave the rod a sharp jerk and then nodded, saying something to the others. He'd hooked a big one. I didn't have a watch, but he battled the trout for what must have been thirty minutes. He got it in close to shore and it lay in the water at their feet resting, then swam two more circles on the shortened line. Finally it lay still and one of the other Indians stepped into the lake and grabbed the fish, carrying it ashore. My guess is that it weighed at fifteen pounds. The Indians admired the catch briefly, and reached into the box for another mouse.

By then the sun was getting low so we headed back to camp. We didn't want to miss dinner, even if it wasn't 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. ❀



COMING EVENTS

IN THE RECIPE DEPARTMENT

The Palisade Glacier Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution printed a cookbook about thirty years ago. I admit that thirty years does not an antique make, but this book was dedicated "To the Memory of those who Came, Conquered and Stayed to build what we have today - A friendly Town with Friendly Neighbors," for the Bishop Centennial 1861 - 1961. The recipes, we were told, were gathered by descendants of local pioneer families.

Peggy Cook is credited with the typing, Betty Utter with cutting stencils (yes, this was before desktop publishing), and May Jones spent many hours researching old cook books for her drawings of early day kitchen utensils.

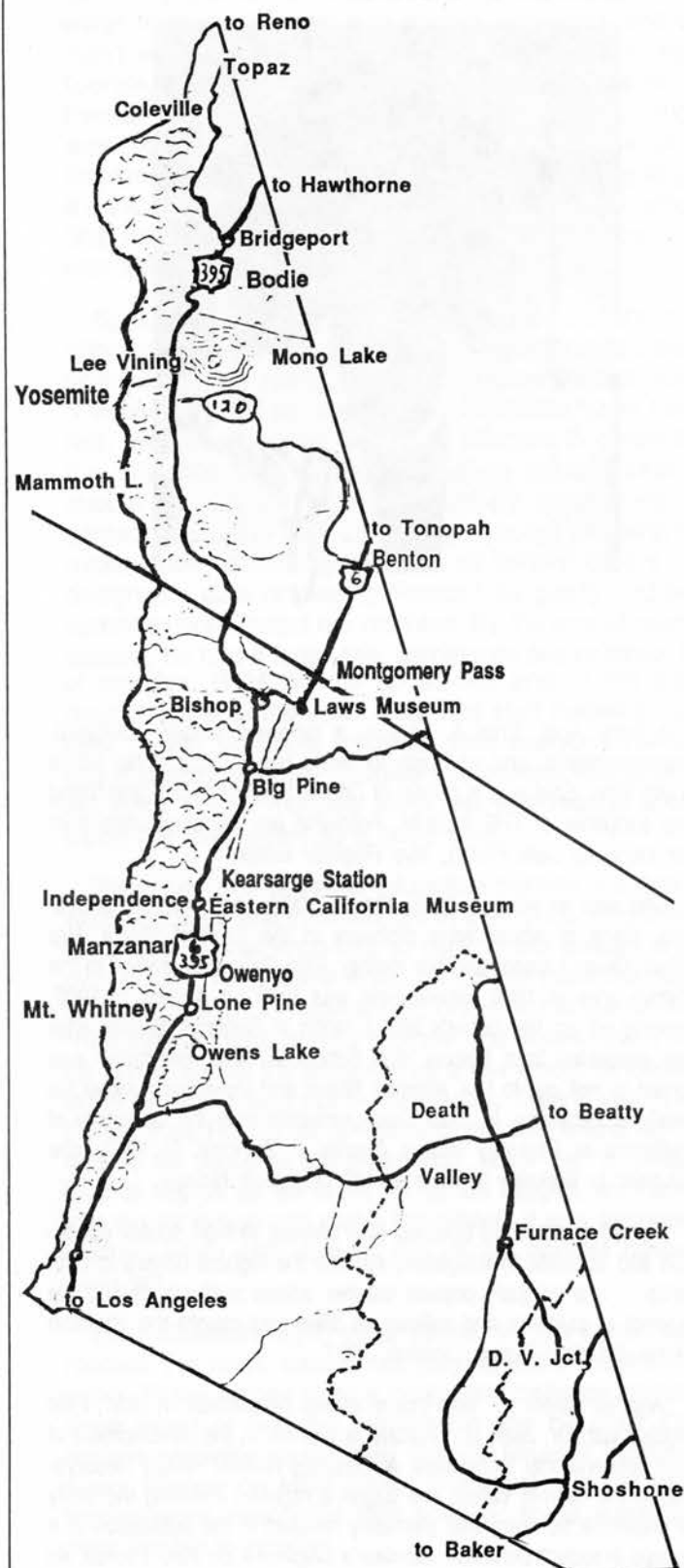
This book is called "A Goo-ood Cook Book" and, having been written B.C. (which, of course, means Before Cholesterol), it features such wonders as Cracker Dumplings, Cinnamon Salad Dressing (with cream!), Green Corn Pancakes, Smoked Trout, Wild Goose with Wild Rice, Real Old-Time Strawberry Shortcake, Dr. Boody's Egg Nog, Pickled Nasturtium Seeds, and Bar-Le-Duc.

If you think cooks didn't work hard, try this one:

BAR-DE-LUC & CURRANTS Made with Honey

Nip off the blossoms and stem ends of the currants with a tiny pair of scissors. Cut a small slit in the side of each currant but do not mutilate its shape. Remove every seed with a needle. Measure currants by weighing. Take same amount of delicate flavored honey. Bring honey to boiling point, add currants and simmer very gently 2 or 3 min. Do not let mixture boil violently as this spoils the shape of the fruit. Each currant must be whole. If currants are too juicy remove them carefully and boil down the honey until rather thick. (And if you don't like honey, you can "make syrup of sugar and water. Cook to soft ball stage - 240 degrees or test in cold water.") Combine with the currants and pour into sterilized jars and seal or paraffin. This is delicious chilled and served with cream cheese and crackers. *

MONO COUNTY



INYO COUNTY

Editor's Corner



In early April, Enid A. Larson, a renowned teacher, biologist, environmentalist, and advocate for world peace, died at her home in Big Pine. Enid was a cousin of Donna Strong (p. 50), and friend and supporter of THE ALBUM. Following are some excerpts from her story, by Dale Plumb, *Inyo Register* Editor.

"She was no stranger to the Owens Valley, nor were her ancestors, many of whom were pioneers in the Eastern Sierra. Her father, Owen Larson, and her mother, Elva Patterson, settled in the Bishop area in 1900, where Enid was born on August 2, 1905, growing up on her father's alfalfa ranch in Sunland. Shortly after she graduated from Bishop High School in 1923, her father was forced to sell out to Los Angeles Water and Power and move his family to Petaluma. In 1929 Enid graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in Zoology. In 1943, she returned to Berkeley to earn an MS degree in biology.

"For 30 years, Enid pursued twin careers in high school education and scientific investigation, earning the highest honors in both fields . . . a uniquely popular teacher whose methods earned the respect of students and colleagues alike and caught the attention of the *Readers Digest*, October, 1957.

"Another career . . . was that of animal behaviorist. In 1951, Enid studied with Dr. Jean M. Linsdale, a pioneer in the development of field observational techniques. At Hastings Natural History Reservation in the Carmel Valley, she began a regimen involving the study of chipmunk behavior that ultimately resulted in the publication of a classic in rodent behavior: *Merriam's Chipmunk on Palo Escrito: An Observational Field Study* (1987) . . . her courage and persistence in tracking and observing her quarry in the remotest wilderness areas are documented in the book, *Baja California* (Time-Life, 1971). As time went by, Enid became known, locally and internationally, as 'the Chipmunk Lady.'

"In 1970 Enid returned to her beloved Owens Valley and never left it again. It was not the same valley she'd known 33 years before. LADWP was installing the infamous 'second barrel.' The swamps, orchards, groves, springs, and much of the native vegetation had largely disappeared under the onslaught of groundwater pumping and grazing. In 1977, she told Ellis Delameter of the Oral History Program at Cal State Fullerton that 'the Owens Valley is important biologically for the good of all mankind and for the development of science. Ecologically, this is an unknown region . . . the most unique in North America . . .'

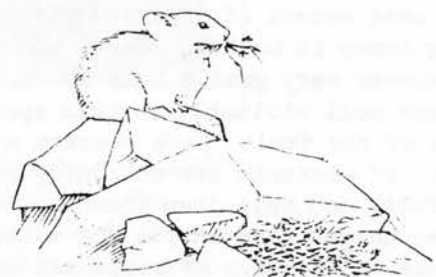
"Her affection for the Owens Valley might best be found in her self-published *Skyscapes from the Land of Pah-nah-wah* (Waucoba Press, 1984), and her *Waucoba News*, a botanical quarterly sponsored by the Bishop Museum and Historical Society, dedicated to the preservation of the local flora and fauna.

"In a *National Geographic* article ('California's Parched Oasis,' January, 1976), Enid said: 'For me the world begins and ends at the crest of the Sierra and there's only one side, this side. Here is home.'

"All those who knew her, even those who did not share her views, respected her. She was not one to mince words, nor one to withhold deserved praise. She was well-liked in the Indian community, and at the end of her life, many of those who attended her were Indian women. One of the treasured experiences of her later years was the visit of a delegation of Soviet scientists (1988) to honor her in her Big Pine home.

"Considering the purposes and attainments of her life, it would not be inappropriate to paraphrase W.H. Auden's lines on the death of Irish poet W.B. Yeats:

Earth receive an honored guest.
Enid Larson's laid to rest." *



Letters to the Editor

We have so many interesting letters we've put "Seriously Enough" on hold to share them with you. We not only have a picture of George Brown in "Leroy Cline Tells It As It Is," (Vol. IV, No. 1) but have identified the photo on page 49 of that story as "the other" George Brown. "The other" George Brown was a highly respected Chief of the local tribal community, and George Garrigues is researching that story for a forthcoming ALBUM. I am embarrassed to admit I didn't recognize him, but proud to say he was a great-grandfather of this editor's own granddaughter.

GEORGE BROWN FOUND

My sister Della Cederburg of Lone Pine sent me the last two issues of THE ALBUM with stories told by our brother Leroy Cline. I don't think he even hinted that he had sisters Ada Brown and Della Cederburg of Lone Pine, Ethel Smallwood of Long Beach, and me — Hazel Truxton of Westminster. (Oops, Leroy! I think we're in trouble here! Actually, he has so many great stories to tell, we can't get them all in one issue.)

The brothers, Charles, long a Sheriff of Inyo County, William, and James have all passed away. He did, however, refer to Asa Cline of Laws. According to the U.S. Census, Asa brought his 16-year-old bride to Bishop in 1900.

The articles about the Wattersons caused me to recall many Sundays after church, having dinner with the Tom Wattersons and other interesting guests: the Chalfants, Parchers, Mary Gorman, and the Schabbells of Independence. I remember there was a girl named Doris, and the Parcher girl. But most of the time, I was the only child present. I would amuse myself playing with music boxes — they had huge metal records — and listening to the wonderful tales the adults would tell. I was completely immersed in the stories of what the Los Angeles Water Department was doing to the residents of the Owens Valley — so much so, years later I did a paper on the history of the conflict including Louise Parcher's "Dry Ditches." It was so emotional I was asked to deliver it to a graduate class in California History.

Another person I remember was a fascinating woman, Helen Gunn. I believe she was related to the Robinsons. She had so many wonderful tales to tell and a presence that captivated this little girl. Somehow I don't think she was quite accepted by the ladies — perhaps she was too independent.

Somehow I wandered from the Pleasant Cline family, as a very little girl, to the Will and Eunie Hall family — a couple without children. I belonged to both families but mostly to Will and Eunie Hall. He was a Christian Science practitioner and a beloved man of everyone who knew him. He became the First Reader in Bishop Christian Science Church. During his term, we would get up very early in Owenyo and drive the "Star" to Bishop each Sunday. After we had dinner, we would drive home — quite a trip in those days. I remember all those people so lovingly, so it has been a special time of remembering since I received the last two issue of THE ALBUM.

When I make the trip from Lone Pine to Bishop today, I do it with a heavy heart and a sadness, remembering the beauty of the Valley when I was a small child. I remember the ranches that were on both sides of the road, the river valleys, the lush fields, and the cool streams one could stop and cool off by. There is something haunting about it today and I seem to hear as Alan Paton said, "Cry, the Beloved Country." Hazel Hall Truxton, Westminster, CA



Ada and George Brown



Left to right: Ada Brown, Hazel Hall Truxton, Leroy Cline, Della Cederburg, Ethel Smallwood.

Mrs. Truxton might be interested in "A Journal for Doris," excerpts from Grace Schabbell's account of her first arrival in Inyo County, written for her niece, Doris Schabbell Partridge. It was published in Vol. I, No. 2 of THE ALBUM. It is also good to note the change in Los Angeles DWP's perception of their stewardship of local holdings. It leaves us with hope for recovery of some of the greenery, at least.

SMALL WORLD

I have the enclosed note from John Eastman who I have known a lifetime. As an ancient yokel I'd like to be a participant in your ALBUM audience. It would be fine if you could start with the last two issues — I'm motivated!

My dad, Milton Hesse is buried with my stepmother out West Line, Elsie. We moved from Los Angeles in 1916 because of WWI to the Clark Ranch about three miles southeast of Bishop. In 1919 we moved into town and the Ranch became LA's for the water rights as did all the Valley.

Dad was a builder; his name is still stamped on a few old sidewalks southeast of Safeway. We had a cabin in Old Mammoth on the creek into the middle '20s. Then Dad built most of the cabins along the Twin Lakes crest, and his own by Lake Mamie, and we were there 'til after WWII.

I was Superintendent/Principal of the Owens Valley High School District from 1939-42. Then I was an administrator (curriculum) at Manzanar to get schools started for the children there. In 1943 I became a naval officer and the Hesses never returned to live in the Valley. We still visit on occasion with friends: the DeDeckers, Loundagin, Austin, and in Bishop, Gary Lake is a nephew. Yes I knew Judge Dehy, Bill Chalfant, George Savage, Roy French, Todd Watkins.

... John Eastman lives about five miles from here and we meet every couple of months for coffee and doughnuts AND talk-talk. I've known him professionally for some forty years, and have stayed in one of the Eastman cabins on Mammoth Creek. Ah me! Those were the days. **Myron "Mike" Hesse, San Diego, CA**

... Ruth MacQueen is my first cousin and the daughter-in-law of Dr. J.S. MacQueen of Bishop 1920s and 30s. Her father Charles Eastman and my father John Eastman together had the "First National Bank" in Bishop 1915-1928. **John Eastman, Escondido, CA**

Since Mr. Hesse didn't know me by my married name, can't you imagine the fun this editor had in discovering a former teacher (one of my favorites) and informing this delightful man that I was one of his students? (Maybe not HIS favorite).

AND MORE PIONEERS

... My husband's family, the Reinhakels, were pioneers in Owens Valley. Lena Reinhakel married Lee Dabney Maupin. Their only daughter, Ada Maupin (Mrs. Ray) Smith was my mother-in-law. Two Reinhakels, two Maupins and two Smiths are buried in Big Pine Cemetery.

I've recently, in my genealogy search, had the "Maupin door" opened to me. Since I promised Laws, Eastern California Museum at Independence and you a historical story re the above, now I feel I can write a more complete story.

Frank Logan, George Logan, Robert Logan (buried in Big Pine) and their sister (Phil and) Clara Logan Smith played a part in the history of Owens Valley, too. Maybe I'll get to write it also, someday! **Ellen Smith, Mojave, CA**

We have you in the spotlight now, Mrs. Smith, and the pressure is on. We look forward to your stories of these people whose names are known and beloved to many of us.

... I just received the January issue and it is "old home week." Kate Watterson was my great aunt, Bob Gracey was my grandfather — by the way he came to Virginia City in 1860 at the time of the Piute War (not 1869). I have visited the Isle of Man several times and found it still to be a delightful place. Anna (Gracey) Kelley is my cousin. **Robert P. Geyer, Reno, NV**

How nice to meet you, Cousin! Anna's sister, your cousin Mona (Gracey) Osborne is my aunt by marriage, mother of MY cousins. Little by little, we'll have straightened out the history of Inyo-Mono, or get it so entangled the web will be fascinating.

My sister, Clara Shaw Eddy, has given me copies of the issues about the Shaw Family. I'm so glad that I lived on our Bishop ranch from the time I was born (1906) through the eighth grade, and ever after have had an interest in Bishop history — or should I say Inyo and Mono counties.

... Hurrah! The Los Angeles Times recently published the article on the Judge's decision that LA could not remove any water from Mono Lake until it is filled again. We used to visit Mono Lake and Bridgeport when we held property at Adobe Meadows near Benton. Our Grandpa Frank Shaw was a Supervisor of Mono County, serving at Bridgeport. His large photo is in the basement of the Inyo County Courthouse in Independence, with others.

The funniest occasion I ever attended was a Fourth of July barbecue celebration at Bridgeport. Part of the program was a singer on the front porch of the Courthouse. A man accompanied her and in the middle of the program, the piano got away from him and kept going until it tumbled off the stage, but she kept singing. Was she surprised! So was the audience, the sheepherders and cowboys who had all come to town for the occasion (free).

You wrote about the opening of the Sherwin Grade. I remember that so well. In the middle of the road, all the cars had to halt, being held in place by rocks, etc. We all wondered why the nearby cars were held up for quite awhile. It seems one of the women passengers had to go to the bathroom. She went around the corner but waited until the cars ahead were all out of sight!

The road was narrow and it was scary. I looked over the edge of the road to the canyon below with Rock Creek looking like a tiny stream. Our Aunt Frankie Shaw Libley homesteaded Rock Creek when she was 18 years old. I wish we could visit sometime — I remember so many funny interesting things. **Asenath Shaw Bailey, Huntington Beach, CA**

These are the treasures of history. Sharing the funny, the interesting, even the sad memories makes the past come alive for all of us.

KUDOS DEPARTMENT

... In the event there is a remaining balance, please forward the amount to the Bishop Museum and Historical Society in Laws in care of Alice Boothe, Administrator. They have done an outstanding job in preservation of area historical material and in restoration of significant historical buildings and early landmarks. **Rudy Schwandt, Wellington, NV**

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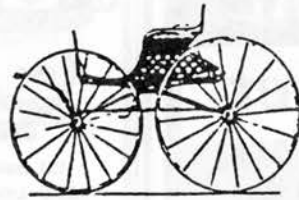
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