

The Album

Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono

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

Vol. V, No. 3



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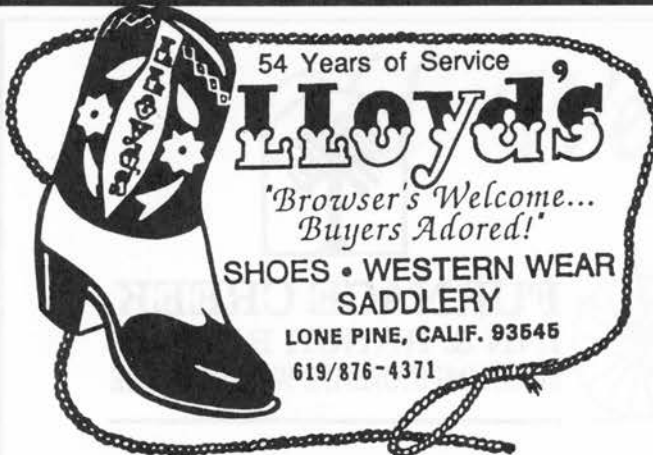
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THE ALBUM, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono

July, 1992

Volume V, Number 3

Published quarterly by Chalfant Press, Inc.

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Cover photo: Nellie Bly O' Bryan standing next to one of her Michigan wheels she "rescued" from Mono Mills and dragged to Happy Landing at Lundy. Circa 1940. Photo from Nellie Bly O' Brian Collection, courtesy of Juanita Kelsea. See story on page 40 in this issue.

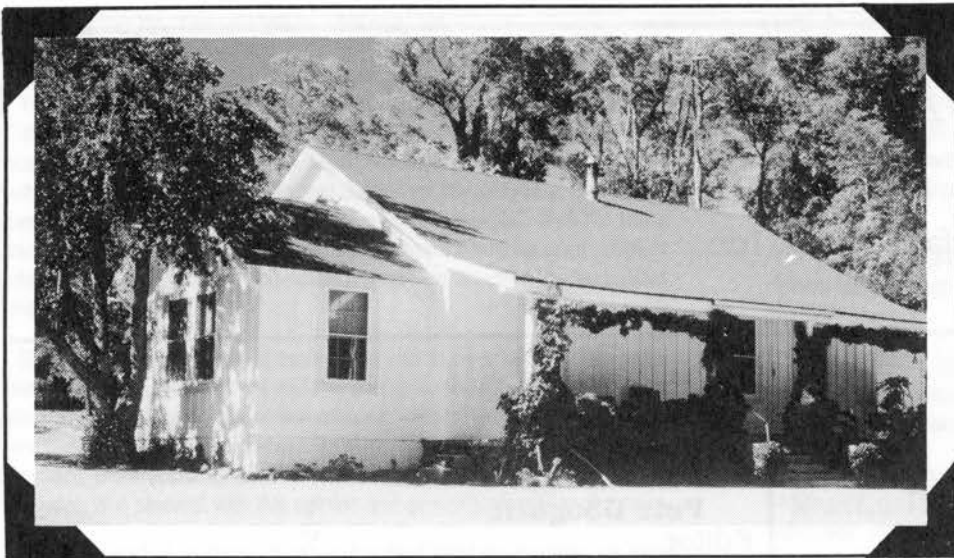
THE ALBUM, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono, is a collection of stories, history, and natural history of Inyo County and Mono County, in Eastern California.

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

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The "honey-house," Mary's Oak Creek home

MARY WATTERSON GORMAN 1889-1990

photos

courtesy Lowell Kunze, nephew

by Demila Jenner

Part II of Mary Gorman's 101-year saga (*The Album* Vol. V, #2) detailed her 14-year exile from Owens Valley, during which time she crisscrossed the American continent from its Pacific rim to the Atlantic shores, following her brilliant if erratic husband, Dr. Tom Gotham. An English physician who became wartime chemist for the U.S. Government, Dr. Gotham brought Mary back to California at the end of World War I, where for more than 10 years they moved up the coastline, following jobs the erstwhile physician secured as creator of fine porcelain art objects.

Their marriage ended in Burlingame, Calif., where Dr. Gotham was making porcelain fixtures while contemplating a career move to South America. In the summer of 1930, Mary, weary of wandering, left him. She spent six weeks in Carson City, Nevada; in November 1930 she married fellow Republican Valentine Francis Gorman, like herself a life-long Owens Valleyite. By coincidence, in changing husbands Mary changed only two letters of the surname she would bear for the rest of her life.

The infinitesimal name change did not, however, signify a similar status quo in Mary's lifestyle, which underwent a drastic switch. Mary would wander no more. For the next 40 years she would stay put at the Gorman acres on Oak Creek near Independence, while death did part her from her husband and his mother. After Valentine Gorman's demise in 1970 Mary would live alone for 13 years in the "honey-house" built in the last century by William Muth-Rasmussen, a young man from Denmark who came to Independence as a Wannabe beekeeper.

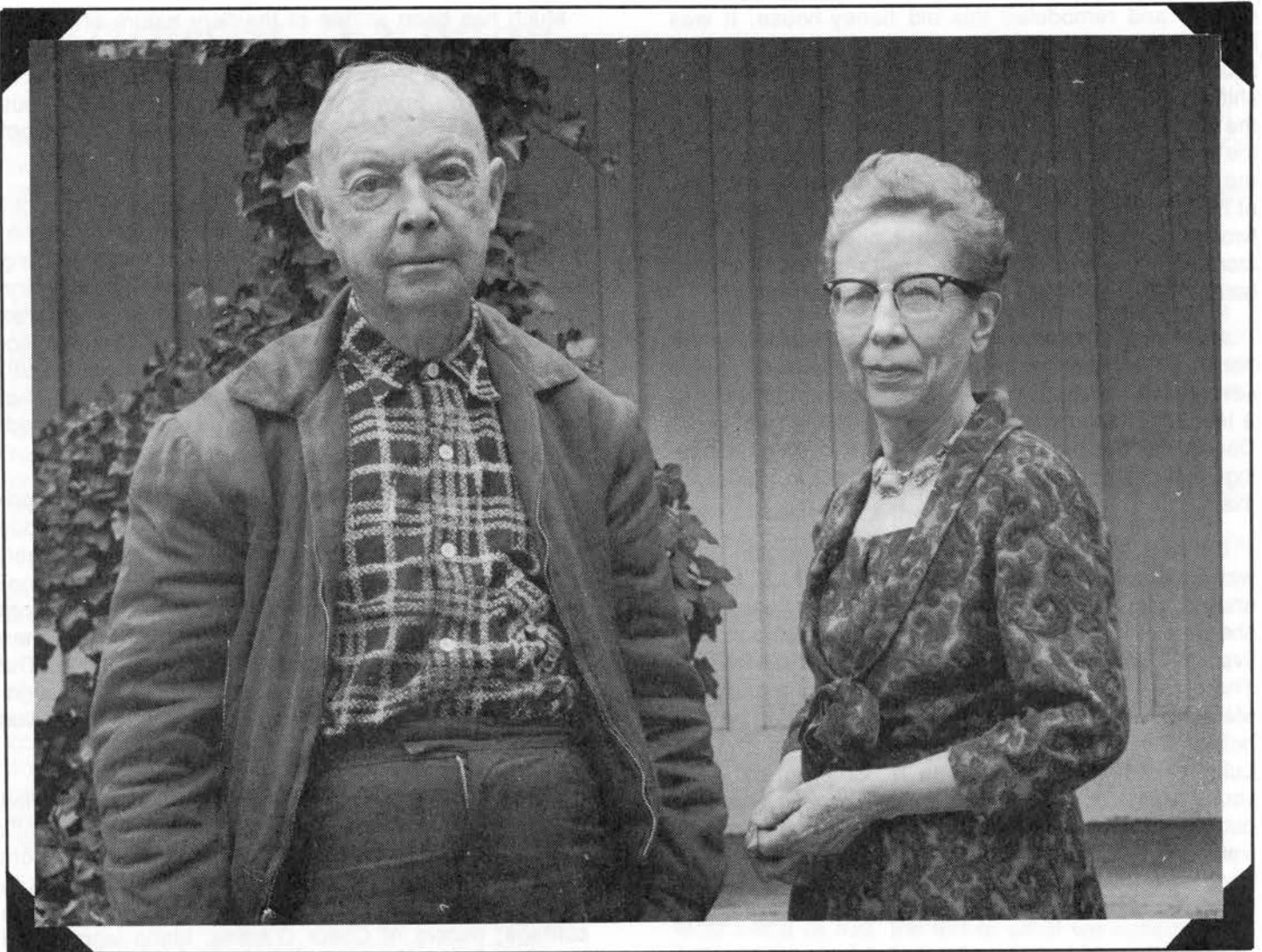
"I never saw him but as a child I had heard his name, William Muth-Rasmussen," Mary wrote in a well-researched article after settling in as a bride at the Gorman home on Oak Creek, a couple of miles west of historic Camp Independence. "I was told he played the organ in church at Independence... I remembered because they said he could move his ears back and forth, keeping time to the music as tunes rolled forth from the wheezy organ..."

Mary recounted that the young Dane apprenticed himself to a high valley farmer who kept bees. After a year with the farmer, Muth-Rasmussen bought seven "stony acres" for his apiary; Mary's love for the land shows in her description of it:

"The land was bisected by a swift rushing mountain stream, about a mile up from the floor of the valley. Aside from the stones, some of them as large as a small house, which were on the land, there was sage brush, birch trees, which were alien to the land but nevertheless had been large trees when the military post was established just below..."

When Muth-Rasmussen first moved onto his stony acres, he built a house which served as his living quarters, workshop, storeroom and warehouse — his "honey-house." Mary's description brimmed with devoted details:

"He built a board and bat house with 10-foot walls of one thickness and ceilings of thin tongue-and-groove which antiquarians now dote on when restoring old dwellings. Later, beaverboard was applied for decoration but this does little to detract from the deep-freeze of the north rooms in winter nor the tropical heat in summer. The double-hung twelve-pane windows bisect each outside wall, one at a time, moderating the floods of sunshine so effectively that the carpets installed forty years and more ago maintain the glow of the original reds and



Valentine and Mary Gorman, early 1960s

blues. Nails which have at rare times oozed out from old boards are square and the door knobs are porcelain..."

For more than 30 years the Dane conducted a successful business from his apiary, helping to establish Inyo County at a producer of premium honey. About 1908 an article appeared in a handsome publication called *Inyo the Peerless*, put out by the Owens Valley Chamber of Commerce and written by apiarist N.J. Cooley, then president of the Chamber. Cooley, himself the recipient of a gold medal for comb honey he exhibited at the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, Oregon, waxed eloquent about Inyo honey. Asserting that Inyo apiarists were wide awake, using the best movable frame hives and up-to-date appliances, Cooley threw in some interesting bee data:

"All bees look alike to you, do they? Well, they don't to the practical beekeeper.

"Some hives of bees will fight you to a standstill without any provocation, others you can handle without gloves, veil or smoke. Some are tidy housekeepers, and

their honey is capped, white and clean, while others seem to take pains to daub and stick up with frapolis everything in sight... Our beekeepers have found that by discarding old queens and replacing them with young ones of improved strains, either Carnolian or Italian... their honey can command fancy prices in the market.

Italian and Carnolian bees will fly farther and rustle harder than the blacks, and thus obtain a greater variety of sweets, that go to make the blend of honey that gives Owens Valley its fame... Los Angeles and vicinity have a reputation for their orange blossom and white sage honey, and still they send to Owens Valley yearly for their fancy trade."

Though his prosperity allowed Muth-Rasmussen to build himself a "proper" house to live in, thus enabling him to move out of his work area, when the Gormans bought the apiary site years later, they chose to live in the honey-house:

"When my husband's people bought this place," wrote Mary, "They left Muth-Rasmussen's home as a guest

cottage and remodeled this old honey-house. It was impossible to scrape all the sticky beeswax from the floors and at housecleaning time when the carpets are shifted about in order that all the wear will not come in the same place, one finds, underneath the cushioning, the gummy smears... These inconsequential reminders are the only unfavorable ones. The original four rooms of his honey-house are the living room, dining room and two bedrooms of the home as it now stands; a little storeroom is another bedroom. The breakfast room, two baths, kitchen and sun porch have all been added."

About the time Muth-Rasmussen was building the honey-house that would shelter Gormans for some seventy-five years, events were coalescing in the life of a teenage mother named Lulu Lewis Wapelhorst down Darwin way that would eventuate in the unlikely happenings that brought Mary to the honey-house in 1930. Like this:

On Nov. 2, 1860 in Walla Walla, Washington there was born to Master Sergeant Lewis of the U.S. Military and his wife a daughter whom they named Lulu. When she was about 15, Lulu married one A. Wapelhorst; they lived in Darwin, Calif., where Wapelhorst ran an inn. There, on Oct. 12, 1876, Lulu gave birth to a daughter, Margaret, who would grow up without her father; he died before she was a year old. In Independence in 1881, Lulu Wapelhorst married John S. Gorman and gave young Margaret a stepfather. Before another year was out, Margaret also had a (half) brother, who was named Valentine Francis Gorman, and who in time grew up to become the second husband of our Mary Constance Watterson Gotham.

Four other children were born to John and Lulu Gorman John, Lester, Vivian, and Edith.

John S. Gorman was born in Ireland and migrated to the East Coast of the U.S. from whence an interest in mining matters took him out to Colorado. Another Irishman, Patrick Reddy, born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island in 1839 of first-generation immigrant parents, was also working his way west. Remi Nadeau in his book "City Makers" noted that in December, 1874, Pat Reddy, by now the famous one-armed criminal lawyer of the Old West, "rode from Independence to Darwin and bought the Defiance Mine for \$10,000."

In Darwin, those two sons of Ireland linked lives by becoming partners in the Defiance mine, situated in Inyo County on the western edge of the Inyo Mountain Range near Lone Pine. The year Lulu married John Gorman, the *Bishop Creek Times* (Dec. 3, 1881) ran a notice that "Pat Reddy and his partner, Mr. Gorman, have written to parties in Bishop Creek that a number of miners are needed in the mines at Darwin." And, later: "Messrs. Reddy and Gorman have at work on the Old Defiance Mine a number of miners extracting ore and loading all the freighting wagons coming back from the Panamints with good ore to ship to San Francisco. The lower grade ore will be processed by a local furnace."

Much has been written of the fiery nature of Patrick Reddy as he blazed through courtrooms of the Old West; his was a life made for legending, full of stories to be passed on from one generation to the next. Thus George Montrose, recalling tales heard as a child from his father, wrote in the *Gardnerville Courier* in 1924:

"As I stood and gazed at that old building, I thought I could hear the vibrating voice of old Pat Reddy as he, undaunted gladiator of the legal arena of that gun-toting day, asked Perley Plane those questions which Plane had sworn would mean the death of the man who dared to ask. I could see old Pat Reddy firm and steadfast facing the witness chair, his good left hand (his *only* hand!) under the tails of his Prince Albert coat and I knew that hand grasped the butt of a .45 as he asked the forbidden questions . . ."

According to author Phillip I. Earl (the Nevada Historical Society's *This Was Nevada* series) lawyer Reddy was "the unfailing refuge of every murderer, forger, claim jumper, petty thief, shootist and general no-account for a hundred miles in every direction from Panamint City, even in one instance having a man who'd beat his wife to death plead self-defense. The man got off with a six-months sentence for manslaughter . . ." Of course at that time *women* were not allowed to serve on juries.

Yet as biographer Earl also notes, when Reddy died in June of 1900 at age 61 in San Francisco of Bright's disease and pneumonia, accolades poured in from every side: Justices wrote that his death was a loss to the bar; women praised him for his support of woman suffrage; miners of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho worshipped his memory for defending in court their right to unionization; the Chinese of San Francisco recalled his efforts to protect their human rights, and "many an old prospector remembered the \$20 gold pieces Reddy had handed out when they were down on their luck."

At the Oak Creek honey-house 30-odd years after Reddy's death, Lulu Wapelhorst Gorman talked "a lot" to her new daughter-in-law, Mary, about the good relationship her late husband John had with his partner Patrick Reddy: "They had a very good partner relationship, very friendly, and after Mr. Reddy went down to San Francisco, Mr. Gorman always visited him when he went there." Lulu lived in the room with Pat Reddy's gift to the Gormans at dissolution of the Defiance Mine partnership: a beautiful bedroom set consisting of dresser, huge chest of drawers, and a magnificent four-poster bed.

Lulu, however, did not sleep in that ornate bed but on a narrow cot pushed into a corner of the room. Later, when Val added a large bathroom for his mother on the south side of her bedroom, Lulu moved her cot in there and slept in the bathroom. "That handsome antique bedroom set was purely ornamental," wrote Mary. Her own attitude toward furniture antiques was somewhat different from Lulu's: "My sitting room, besides the couch and little tables for lamps and magazines, contains three

small red upholstered chairs which belonged to a set purchased by my father-in-law the year my husband was born — 1882."

Lulu's bedroom set was to remain merely ornamental to the end of her life — and afterwards, for by then Mary would have brought into the honey-house her own out-sized bed: "A room on the south (of the honey-house) which I occupy is of ample size to contain the old walnut bedroom set which was in the house when my people bought the ranch in Bishop in 1886. The bed with nine-foot headboard elaborately hand-carved as is the dresser, tall and marble-topped."

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And then Mary editorialized on expenditure of energy: "Think if you can, of the needless tons of freight piled on cumbersome wagons and hauled by horses and mules through deep sand in devastating heat or bitter winds ..."

Long before Mary came to Oak Creek, John Gorman and Lulu bought and lived on a ranch two miles north of Independence, a few miles from the apiary. One of Inyo's first sheriffs, for many years Gorman doubled as lawman and rancher. Under the tutelage of U.S. Engineer Jacob Centennial Clausen (who, incidentally, was

Bishop April 22nd 1881

*J. S. Gorman, Sheriff, Inyo, Co.
Dear Sir*

*Your favor received.
Enclosed, please find receipt for
forty dollars reward. The Cash of
office sent by mail to clerk.*

*If you have a badge and a
pair of handcuffs that you
can spare I would like to
have them.*

*Yours respectfully
Geo. J. Drake*

the "Jake" who Mary's older sister Bess married back in 1906) Gorman tried by various methods to reclaim his alkali acreage. Growing old and discouraged, he gave up the experimenting; the Los Angeles Department of Water bought the Gorman ranch for its water rights and it was then that the Gormans acquired the Oak Creek property.

Because Lulu was not able alone to cope with her husband's illness, Val gave up his teller's job in the Waterson Bank in Independence to help her.

"Mrs. Gorman never learned to drive a horse or car," said Mary. "They lived way out in the country and the children had all left home. So Val and I lived up there on the creek with Mrs. Gorman, whose husband had died by this time."

At the beginning of her new marriage with its attendant change in her life's scenery, Mary the writer had a burst of creativeness. Descriptions streamed from her pen:

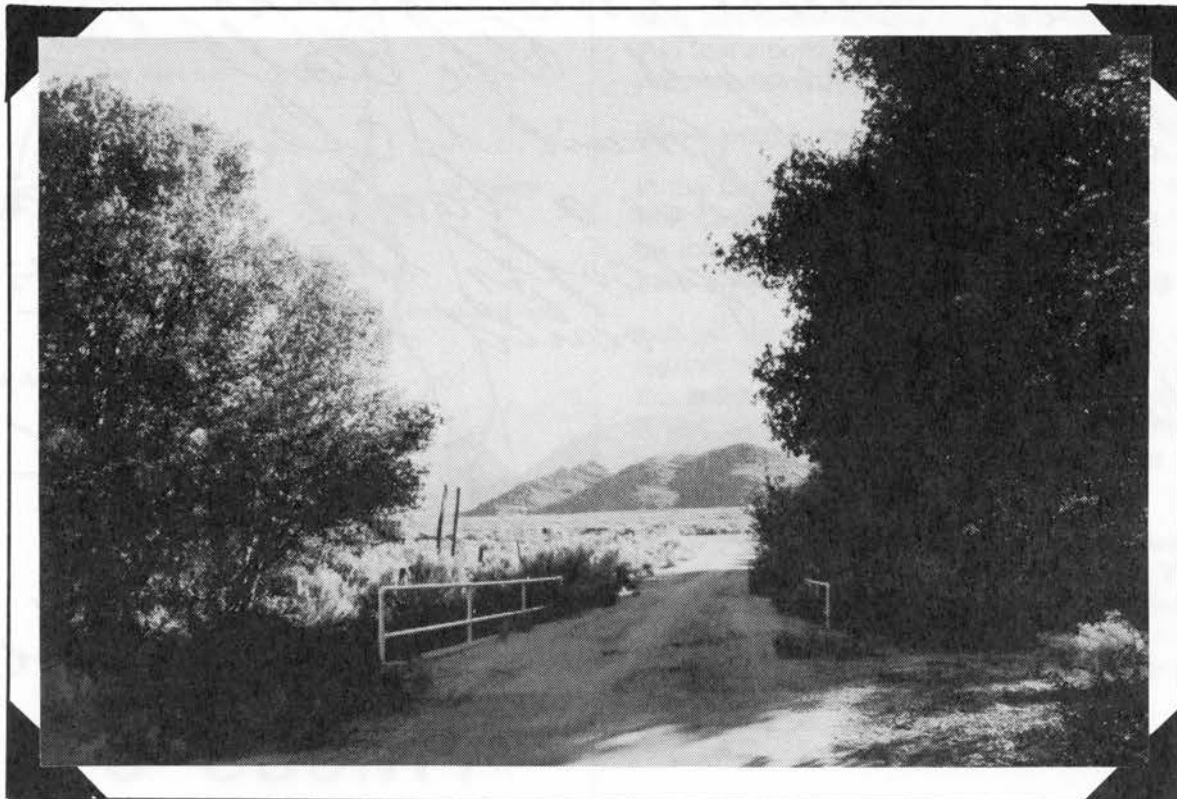
"Down from the 12,000-foot Baxter Pass the waters of Oak Creek run white until at the mouth of the canyon they accommodate to alluvial slope and tumble less turbulently but with sufficient cadence to quicken the hearts of those who love mountain streams. My home is near the creek two miles below the base of the abruptly towering mountains and a mile from the alien highway which skirts the edge of the valley and betokens an outside world.

"The so-called scrub oaks, growing at a small distance from the banks on either side for several miles, give the creek its name. These oaks are as rare on the eastern slope of the Sierra as are the tree squirrels that leap through their branches. Early settlers, eschewing research, believed the oaks and squirrels arrived by way of Baxter Pass, but scientists tell us that neither this specie of oak nor squirrel have been known to be above 7,500 feet. Since both oak and squirrel were well established here when the company of soldiers arrived at Fort Independence, the problems of their presence in this remote area is still unsolved.

"But it is the water birch, not the oak, that makes the creek a joyous thing. This eastern slope is their homeland and here our swift-running streams wash their roots as they cling to the banks. In April and May they extol the springtime, their tiny leaves of tender green trimming the amber brown of the peridium of twigs and branches. In the fall their golden plumes spread from bank to bank and a curving band of brilliant yellow lightens the canyon and the dull gray slope to the floor of the valley. In the occasional pools there are brown trout and rainbow and the water ousel flies for miles in midstream . . ."

Before long, however, the rush of Mary's pen slowed to a virtual stop. Three circumstances during her marriage to Val worked to create a decades-long writer's block for Mary: caring for the house and her ailing mother-in-law took a toll on her physical stamina; her

South toward the Sierra foothills from Oak Creek entrance to Mary's home



husband evinced a total lack of interest in her literary efforts; and a successful Independence-based lady author who signed herself "E" returned a story Mary sent her for evaluation with the curt note: "I found it interesting, but doubt very much that you could get it published."



Val and Mary, the mid-years

But for these negatives that eroded her already fragile self-confidence, Mary might have made greater use of her very real talents by writing about happenings of global significance that permeated her sojourn at Oak Creek. Especially when the realities of World War II invaded her surroundings because of the proximity of Manzanar, the internment camp formerly known as Camp Owens in which were interned 10,000 Japanese, most of them American citizens, for the duration of the war.

A writer's dream of a drama-laden event in itself, Manzanar became more so in 1943 when Ralph Merritt was made project director of the camp (see Katharine Krater's *East of the High Sierra*) and invited his famous friend, Ansel Adams, to make a photographic record of Camp Manzanar. It was naturalist Adams' only work involving human subjects; because of his sympathetic portrayal of the Manzanar prisoners, copies of his book, published in 1944 under the title *Born Free and Equal* were burned in patriotic protests. (*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 7, 1988).

Another writer's-dream of a human interest happening at this time which escaped Mary's pen was probably the only case of its kind in history: The voluntary self-internment at Manzanar of Ralph Lazo, a non-Japanese Los Angeleno. When Lazo died recently, *Time* magazine noted his singular wartime gesture in its "Milestones" department: "... When the internment of people of Japanese ancestry began in California in 1942, Lazo, who was of Mexican and Irish descent, decided to go with his Japanese-American friends to the Manzanar Relocation Center. He later explained, 'These people hadn't done anything that I hadn't done except go to Japanese language school.' Lazo was subsequently

drafted by the Army and awarded a Bronze Star for heroism in combat." (*Time*, Jan. 2, 1992).

For many years Val and Mary were active in the Masonic Lodge and the Order of the Eastern Star chapter of Independence. After Lulu died and then Val passed away in 1970 at the age of 88, Mary began writing again, encouraged by various friends including Enid Larsen, herself a published author. Mary also, at age 82, began trans-oceanic travelling again!

"My cousin, Eleanor Watterson, was the second woman dentist ever to be qualified in England. She wrote me after Val died and invited me to visit her, saying 'your visit will cost you nothing but your plane fare.'"

Mary stayed with Cousin Eleanor for a month but was dissatisfied with the vacation, since Eleanor had no desire to re-visit the scenes of her youth on the Isle of Man. So two years later, Mary made another crossing, this time to the Isle of Man. At last she achieved her goal of spending time at the birthplaces of both her Manx parents, William Watterson and Eliza Quayle:

"It was not until I stood in the doorway at Knockaloe, the farm where my father spent his early years, and looked out across the gorse-covered hills to the sapphire Irish Sea, that I glimpsed the enormity of the resolution and courage that compelled my parents to leave that sea-girt land . . ."

Back home at the Oak Creek honey-house, Mary's writings reflected her continuing retrospection: "Now I have the long years of sheltered and unsheltered life to look back upon. Besides, I have the memory of my people's lives as they lived it in California in those early years." Mary remembered her parents' emphasis to their children of how fortunate they were to have been born in the later years "when it was no longer necessary to adjust life to the seasons. First as herders of sheep then as owners of sheep, the pressure of obtaining pasture and feed was always upon them."

But at Oak Creek, octogenarian Mary was also feeling the pressures of the seasons:

"I am too aware of tall grass and weeds as the season advances, a problem I have tried to deal with in different ways. First I had the green area enclosed with a barbed wire fence which enclosed the house, too. H.G. brought two nags from the pasture below to keep the grass down. The horses were very unhappy away from their kindred and friends and kept close to the house the entire time, their noses pressed against my window and door panes. I felt if I opened the kitchen door they would walk in."

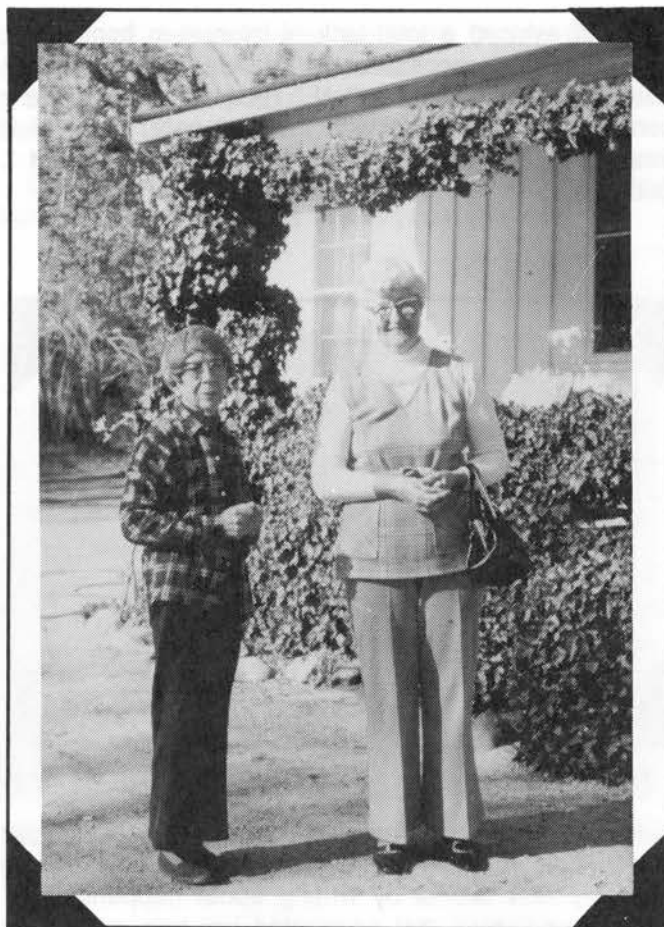
It was small comfort to the solitary Mary to remember that when her husband Val was still alive, they had shared a similar experience:

"We were presented with two half-grown lambs which we enclosed in a small pen which could be moved.

These animals were as wild as dew, and would go bounding up against the fence as if terror-stricken when either of us approached them. The growth inside their pen interested them not at all and I was compelled to gather ivy and throw it to them to keep them from starving. About a month of this and we were convinced the lambs were not the answer to our grass problem . . ."

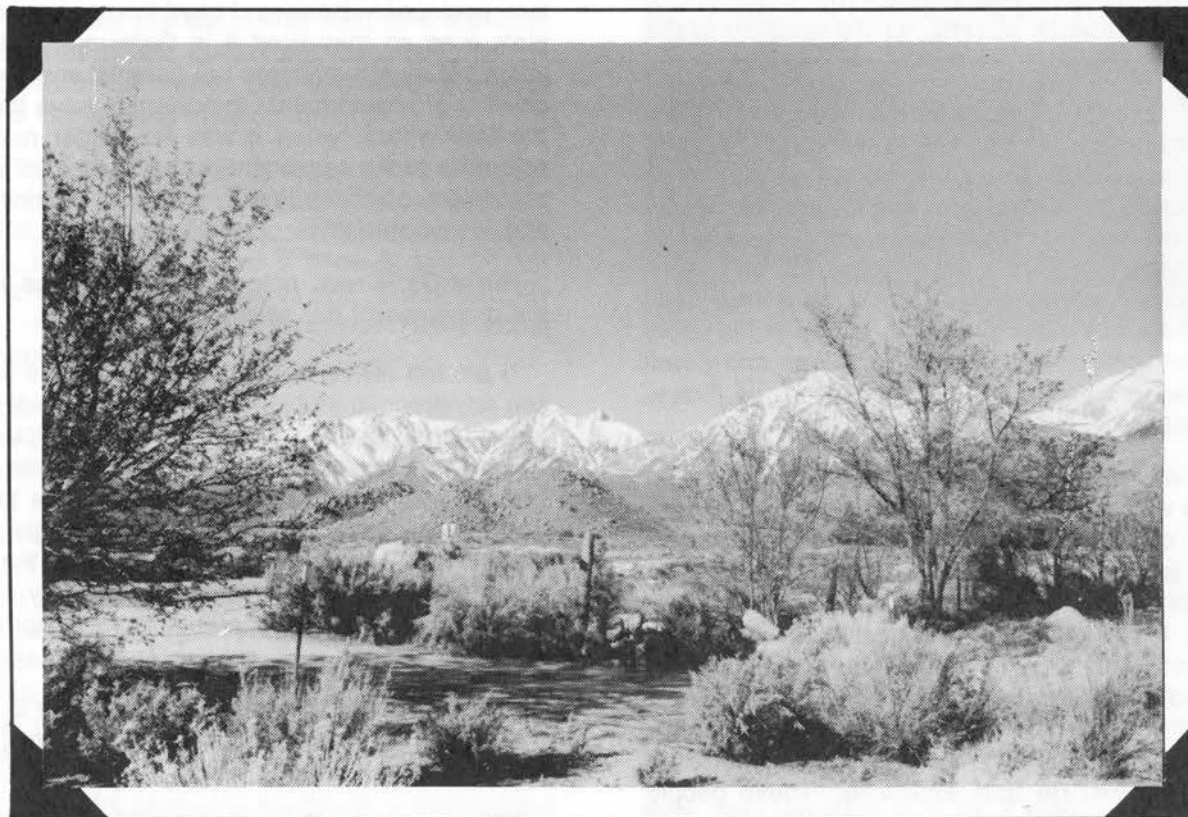
Neither did the "nags" answer Mary's grass problem: "The growth flourishes increasingly and the problem now is mine alone. I am almost persuaded to let the grass and weeds alone until they become dry in the fall and then burn them, in spite of the environmentalists. What is one to do? My time and energy will be pretty well taken up with trying to eradicate the myrtle, strip the ivy and keep water on the things I want to grow . . ."

But her life at Oak Creek was not all problems; Mary wrote also of her joy when the quail came in such flocks "that one looks out on moving ground." Humming birds built their nests in the ivy on her porch; her heart sang as she listened to the music of mating songs "the suddenly gorgeous sparrows" sent forth from the apple trees. She marveled at the accidental camouflage when an "improvident cow" dropped her snow-white calf in the snow; she was flooded with memories of her parents when in spring she would awaken to the smell of sheep being driven to summer range. "There is no mistaking the scent, not an unwelcome one, of their greasy wool, once one has known the smell . . ."



Mary and Elsie Kunze, 1976

"I am almost persuaded to let the grass and weeds alone . . ."



Living in the honey-house also reminded Mary of Eliza's bees back on the Bishop ranch so long ago: "Mother had 15 bee hives which she had to care for herself as no man on the ranch could be persuaded to get near the bees. Comb honey was always served on our table, and the surplus sold to a beekeeper who marketed the Watterson honey as his own . . ."

Rampant growth of grass and weeds was not the only problem Mary faced; even the wild animals which so delighted her presented insolubles, like when Mary moved into the sun room to nurse a painful back. At first it was sounds of soft digging beneath the floorboards; a few days later she sighted a fox near the house and, later, nighttime sounds of "tiny whimperings: the vixen had had her litter." The dilemma the little foxes presented Mary was the inevitable one of loss:

"Every night after that I would listen for the mother leaving in search of food, then after an hour or more I would hear the demanding little whimpering, then the vixen's return as she brushed against the floor boards.

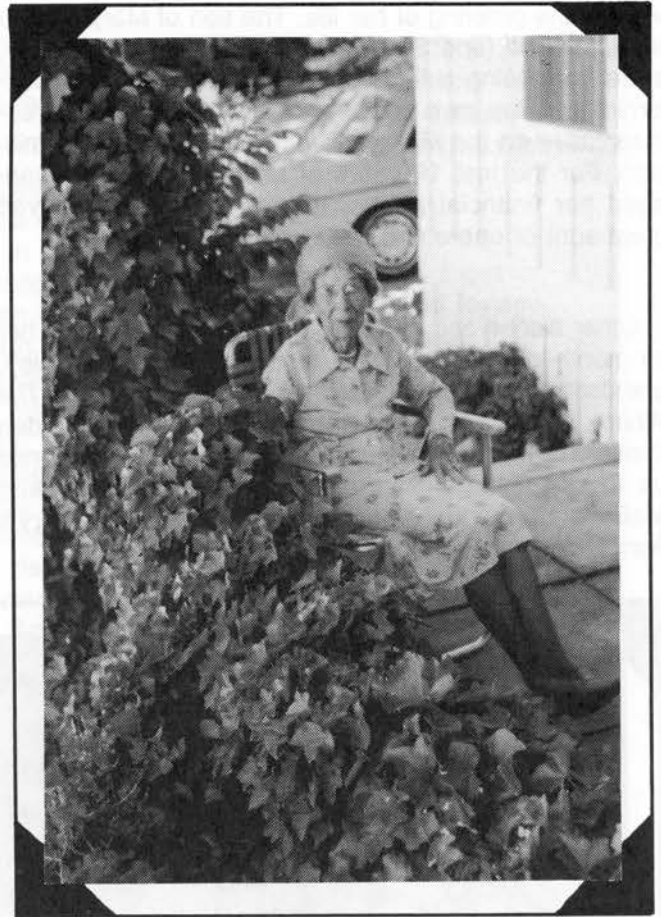
"Later I watched the four little pups playing in and out of a culvert in front of the house while the mother sat on a high boulder, her head turning as a car drove by or to watch anything that moved . . ."

Thus Mary's daily life was linked with that of the foxes — and then they disappeared. Later she learned that "boys newly come to our area had killed the foxes, the usual deplorable reaction to the sight of a wild animal." And the deer that were accustomed to come into her yard to eat the fallen pears and apples: "beautiful creatures but now frightened away." But when a bear broke into her honey-house, Mary was faced with the potential for a real, not simply an emotional, problem:

"On my return from an overnight's absence, I found rooms at the rear of the house in shambles, tables and chairs overturned, cupboard doors open or off their hinges, the contents of the shelves heaped on the floor. It was August and I had left a casement window open. A bear had entered the house. A neighbor boy passing with his fishing rod had noticed the back door open, investigated and reported. No glass was broken, but all cans were crushed and opened by the bear's strong teeth and the contents sucked out — the sugar canister emptied, packages of cereal and flour destroyed, one refrigerator moved from the wall and a smaller turned on its side and emptied of all food stuffs . . . marks of the bear's paws were above the dining room door . . ."

Mary never saw the bear, but word of him drifted back to her: "He moved seven miles away to another creek where he raided summer cabins until shot by the game warden."

Mary did not have to wrestle alone with her problem. All through her widowed years, concerned relatives and friends kept watch on the courageous but increasingly frail Mary. At 90 she was still driving her car, and resisted for another year all efforts to get her to surren-



Mary, 89 and still at home on Oak Creek

der her driver's license and thus give up her precious freedom of movement. When she was 94, Mary consented to a trial move into the Winnedumah Inn on the main thoroughfare in Independence. There each night she dressed for dinner and afterwards held court in the lobby, enjoying the attention of guests who were entertained by her endless stories of times past.

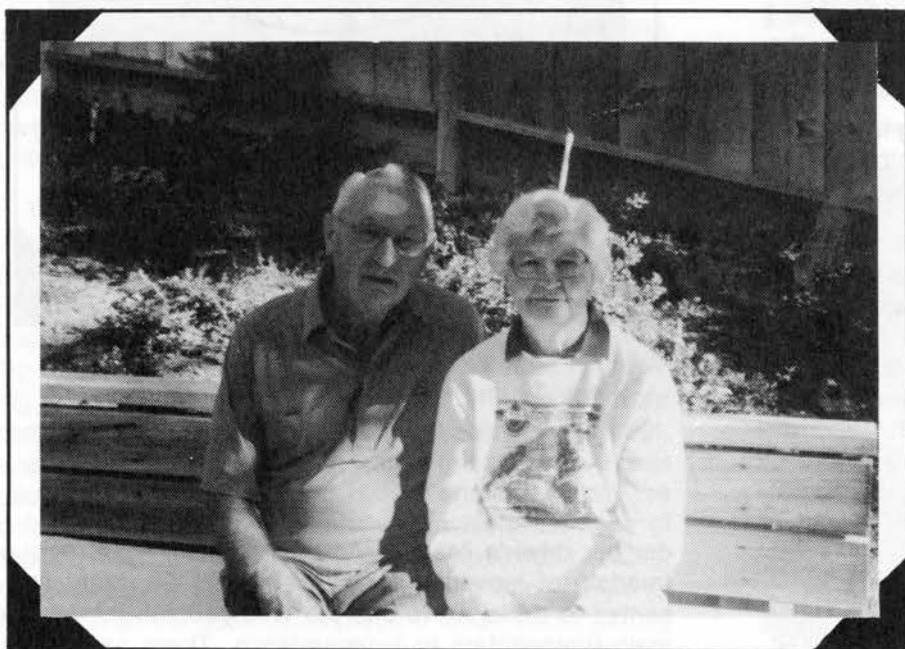
Then the urge for solitude would come strong upon her and she would move back into her honey-house. There she would gaze out over "the inhuman acres" to "these hillsides so untouched, so newly created, so utterly virginal in their freshness," and reflect that "it is to Homer that we owe our conviction that the secret of life rests in poetry." She shared an understanding with "the tree squirrel on the topmost swaying branch of the elm tree, exulting in his aloneness." Mary could express happiness at "the smell of sagebrush after rain," and "the sound of sheep bells after a snowstorm" — and still view her life as "purged of sentiment."

Eventually, she would see the impossibility of living alone out there on the creek and would return to the protection of the Winnedumah. During this difficult period Mary's nephew Lowell Kunze and his wife Elsie, who lived in Santa Rosa, California, worked closely with

Mary in the ordering of her life. The son of Mary's sister Isabel, Lowell (and Elsie) have a daughter Karen, who, aside from being a three-term mayor of Larkspur, California, runs her own business and is Marin County representative on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. For the last 16 years of Mary's life, Karen managed her financial affairs, thus relieving her beloved great-aunt of onerous details.

Other nieces and nephews visited Mary and took her for month-long visits to their homes. Dr. Rober Shiveley, grandson to Kate and the Benton Wattersons (see *The Album*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 and 2) now a successful Garden Grove, California dentist, drove her from Independence up to Old Benton, where she talked old times with MaBelle Bramlette, owner of the town where Mary's Aunt Kate had lived for 25 years.

When the time came, Gwen Watterson Bell, also related, and also from the Isle of Man, with the help of Elsie and Lowell shepherded Mary's final move from Oak Creek and settled her into her last home, the High Sierra retirement home on Warren Street, Bishop, back to her roots, a few miles from the Watterson ranch where she was born. Interestingly, Mary's seven years at High Sierra Manor until her death at age 101, was a period of her greatest freedom. For the first time since her marriage to Dr. Gotham she was liberated from responsibility for caring for people and/or a house, and she luxuriated in her freedom, carrying on an intellectual interest in Owens Valley environment until almost her last day. She became acquainted with a Bishop relative she had never known, Rosemarie Jarvis, the great granddaughter of Kate Watterson; Mary was of invaluable assistance in giving names to Rosemarie's many unidentified family photos.



Lowell and Elsie Kunze, 1990

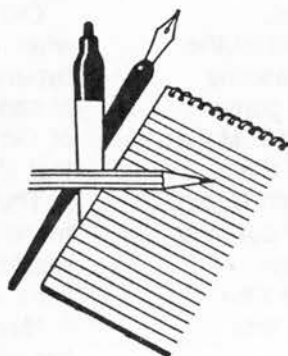
Gwen Bell, Mary, Elsie Kunze, May 1988

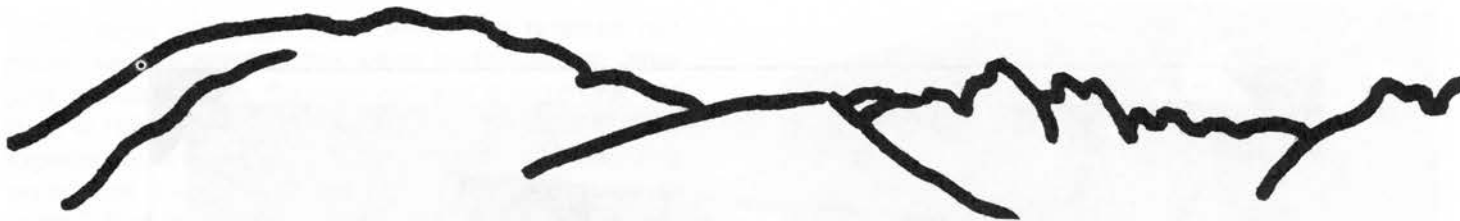




Never in ill health, on Monday, July 9, 1990, Mary passed away peacefully in her room at High Sierra Manor. She came into this life in Bishop and more than a century later, she departed this life in Bishop. The opening sentence of her obituary in the *Inyo Register* could well serve as her epitaph:

Mary Constance Watterson Gorman, who died at home in her native Bishop on Monday, was truly a child of the Owens Valley she loved so dearly. ☼





Some little histories of Mammoth, discovered by Gym E. Williams in his research as County Manager of Chicago Title.

*Photos of Old Mammoth are from the Holeman Collection
(see Vol. V, No. 1, page 55)*

OLD MAMMOTH, THE MEADOW

In 1880 the Mammoth Mining Company shut down its mill, its stock worthless, and the property was sold at a sheriff's sale.

For the next 20 years, the only inhabitants of Old Mammoth were cowhands that ran cattle from Owens Valley into the mountain meadows for summer grazing. The meadow was silent again from the sound of people and machines.

A new generation of people soon discovered Mammoth Lakes in the early 1900s. One of them, Charles F. Wildasinn, founded the Wildasinn Hotel, the first resort to stand at what now is the corner of Old Mammoth Road and the turnoff to the new Snowcreek project in the meadow. In addition to a store, Mr. Wildasinn built a sawmill on Mammoth Creek and a log cabin hidden among the aspens. The cabin still stands today, just behind the Snowcreek rental offices on Old Mammoth Road.

The old Pelton Wheel, after it was brought down from Mammoth City (the first gold camp near what is now called Red Mountain), generated electricity for the hotel.

In 1918, Charles Summers built a new hotel, rooming house and cabins down the road west of the Wildasinn. A store was added awhile later. Gasoline was sold at the store, and a one-gallon hand pump took its time filling the Fords and Chevies and E.M.F.s (Every Morning Fix-its), as Adele Reed called them.

At that time the area was known as Mammoth Camp. Many of the buildings were made from timber cut near Twin Lakes and held together with steel spikes. Charlie's family helped with the resort and the new pack business, and in the early '20s the area was filled with campers and fishermen.

The first regular post office was established at the Summer's hotel at this time, and service finally

became dependable — no longer a hit-or-miss out of Bishop. Lloyd Summers was the first postmaster.

In 1923 passengers came to Mammoth Camp by the Bishop Mono Lake Auto Stage Line. For \$7.50 they could make the trip in a mere four hours.

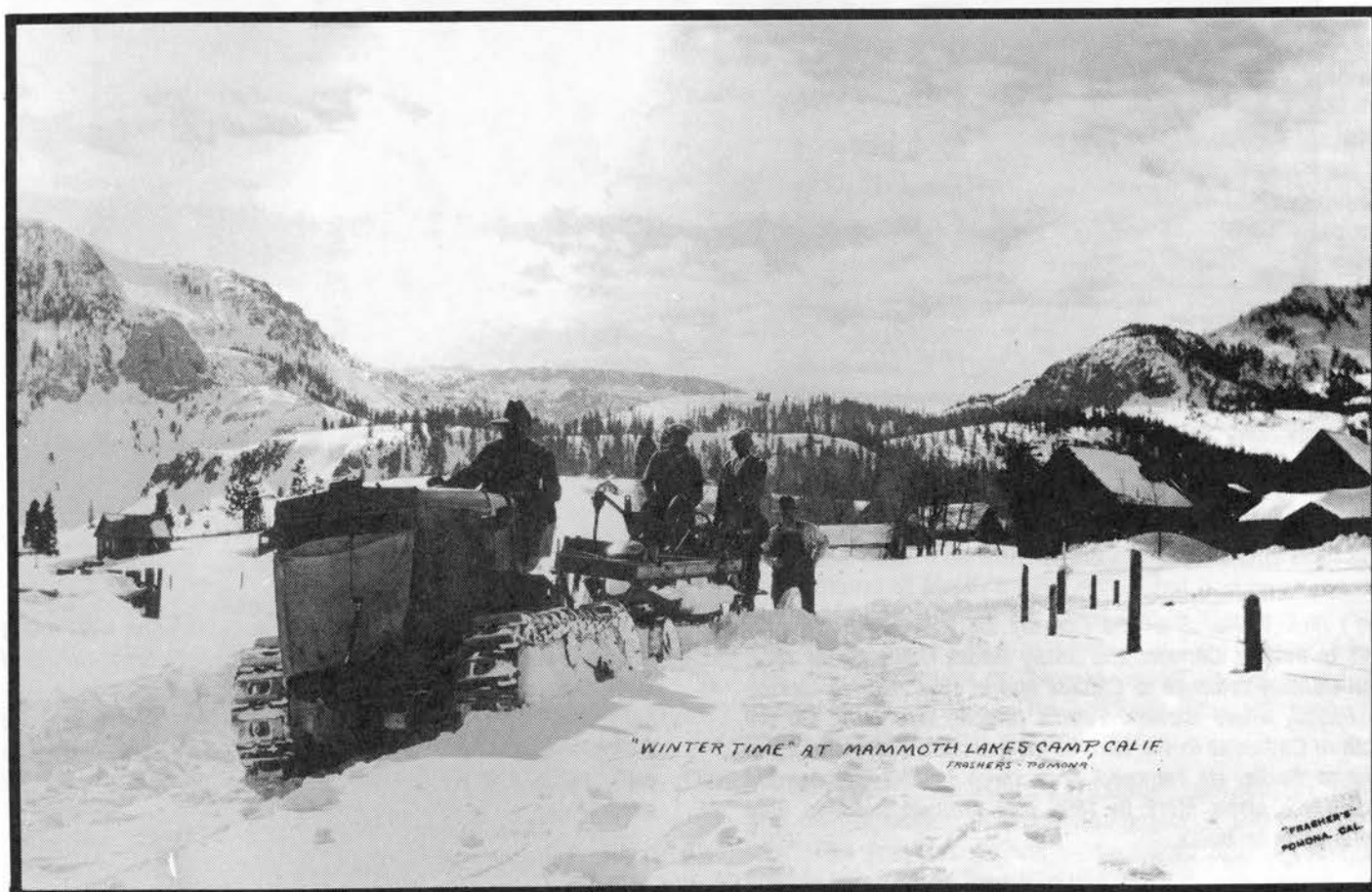
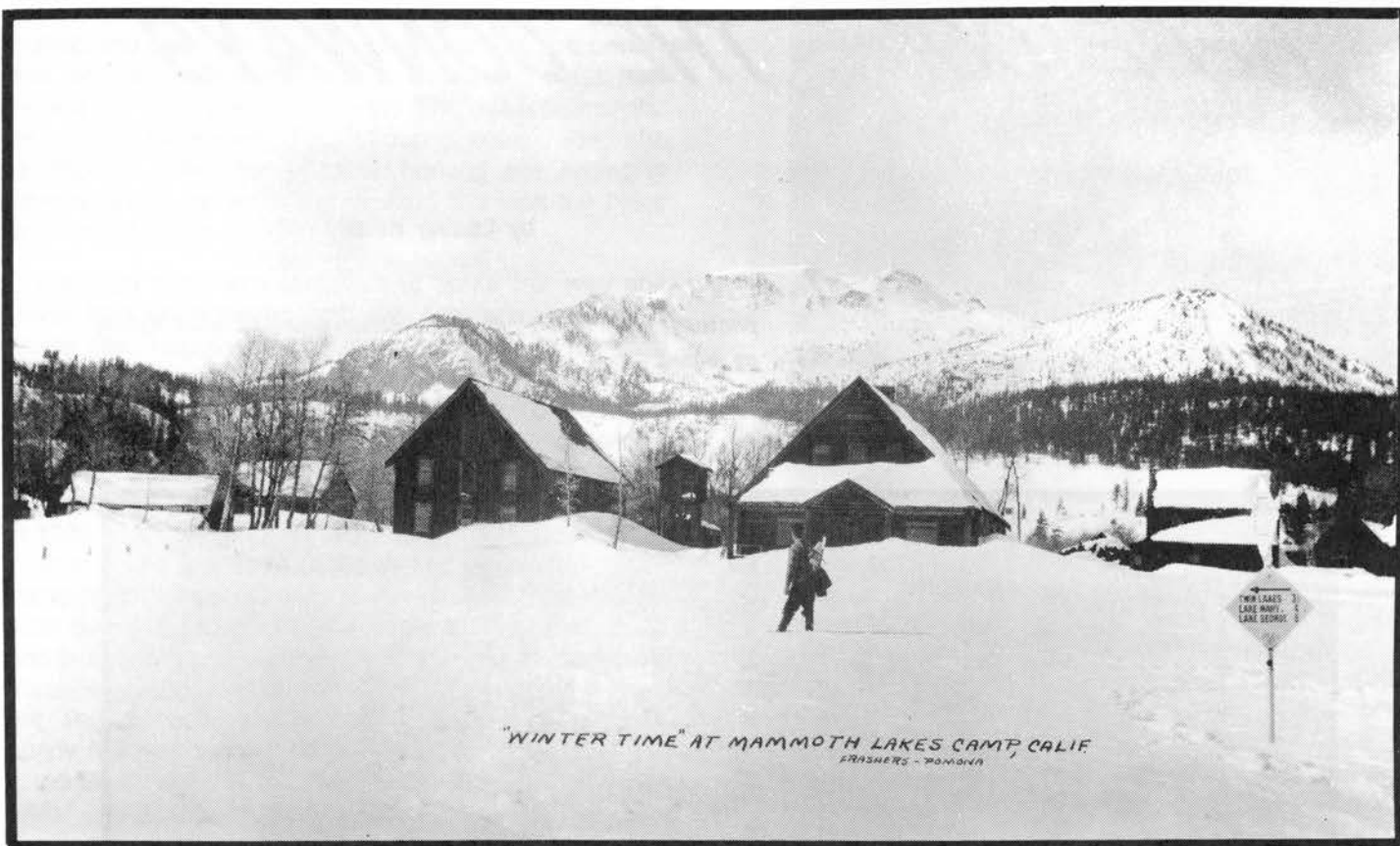
By the '30s, the meadow became known simply as "Mammoth." Many businesses were located on the main street — the Standard Service Station, boasting two electrical pumps, Navajo Johnson's Trading Post, Mammoth Liquor store, and the Mammoth Saloon were all located on the south side. On the north side was Lutz's grocery store, which took over the Summers' store in 1933, the Sierra Cafe, where the first Catholic Church services were held, Penney's Bakery, the Mammoth Garage, and Forest Service headquarters.

The '30s saw the establishment of many resorts around the lakes, catering to fishermen and campers with good food and supplies and rustic cabins. Lloyd Summers ran the pack station at Red Meadows and his son Lee continued to run the Mammoth station until the '60s.

Old Mammoth heyday came to an end in 1937, when Highway 203 was completed and the meadow bypassed by most travelers. A fire in 1927 had already wiped out a good portion of the older buildings of Old Mammoth, and the people of the meadow saw that life would now flow along the new highway.

They moved to New Mammoth and the lovely meadow was once again taken over by fat cattle and wildflowers. Solitary brick fireplaces and ashen timber were all that remained of the rustic resort area.

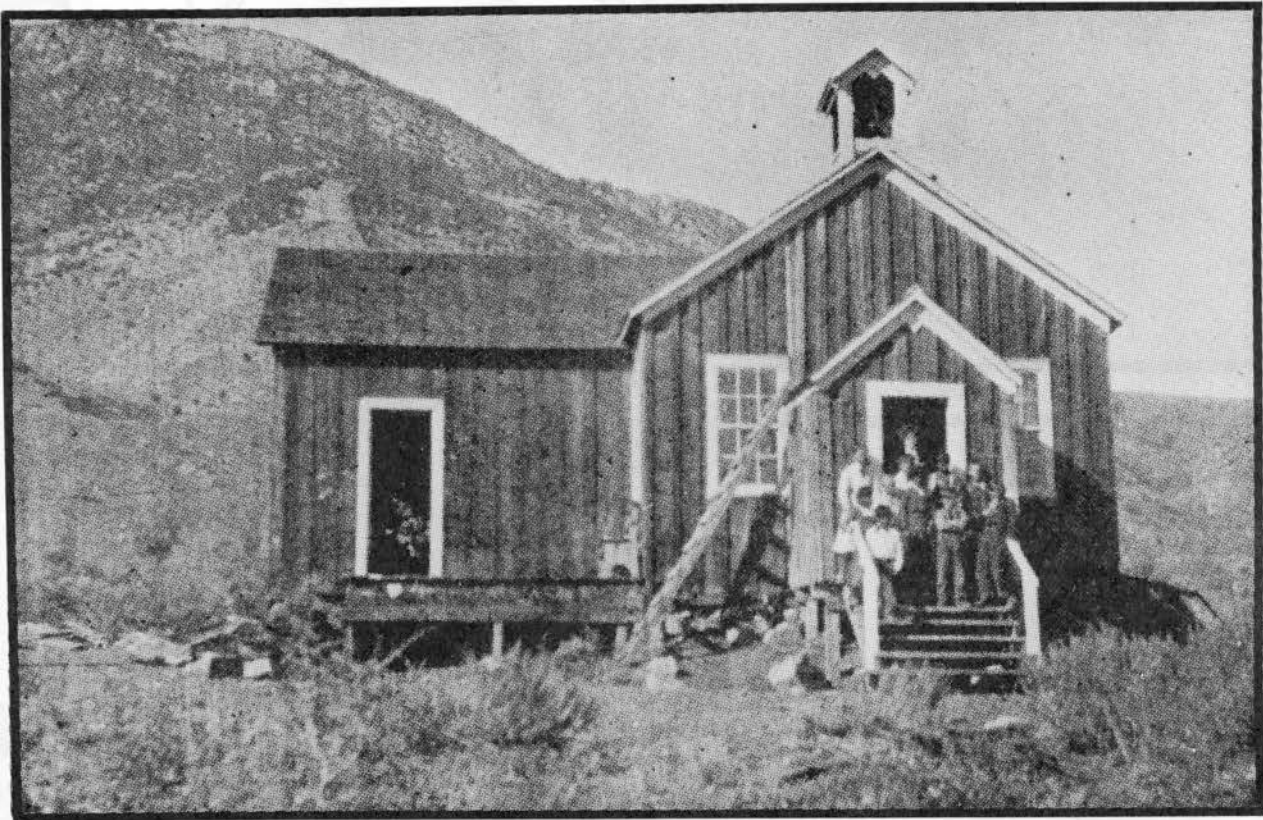
New Mammoth, along the new highway, was booming by 1938 but the memories of the past still hung in the hearts of the old timers as they walked along the creeks and thick grasses.



HERE COME THE CONWAYS

by Louise Kelsey

*photos from Conway Family collection and by Louise Kelsey
as noted*



Mono Lake School

Part I (Vol. V, No. 2) of the Conway story established family roots in Ireland, Canada, and finally Bodie, California in 1878. John Conway returned to Canada and in 1894 married Catherine Farrell, where Richard Patrick (Richie) was born. On the death of Catherine in the birth of their second son, John again went to Bodie. He returned once more to Canada, married Catherine's sister Mary in 1899 and brought her and little Richie back to Bodie.

It was in Bodie and the Mono Basin that John and Mary spent most of their lives, and where their children, George, who died at the age of one, Catherine (Katy Bell), Gladys (Crosby Millner), and Pearl were born. Research and interviews with Gladys describe ranch and farm life in the Mono Basin in the early 1900s and fill out the story of Conway fortunes and adventures.

PART II The Ranch

Although Mary didn't care much for dancing, the rest of the family did. When John began teaching young Richie the waltz, tiny Gladys watched Dad's 1-2-3, 1-2-3 saying, "Me can do that," and she did. Richie, Katie, Gladys and Pearl had a love of dancing that matched their father's and it lasted all their lives.

The trip up Cottonwood Canyon to dances at Bodie never seemed like a long trip. Perhaps because the excitement of going to the handsome Bodie Miners' Union Hall made the time pass quickly. The walls were mirrored all around. Like Bridgeport, the Bodie floor was built on springs which made dancing quite a sensation and an even greater pleasure.

John added to his reputation as a dancer when he won a waltz contest at Bodie by dancing with a glass of water on his head. Every gentleman carried a silk handkerchief in his right hand in order not to get perspiration on a lady's dress as they danced — an important nicety considering lace and delicate fabrics and the lack of cleaning establishments in Bodie at the turn of the century.

The Lundy Hotel held wonderful dances. John and Mary loaded blankets and pillows and children into a buggy and started up Mill Creek to Lundy Lake and the Hotel. Al played the fiddle, Mabel from Lundy was at the piano and once in a while Cousin Maude joined in on her harmonica. Everyone clapped time.

Waltzes, squares, reels, quadrills, jigs and the hop-Scottish, the little group of musicians at the Lundy Hotel played them all. The grown-ups danced all night and as children's eyes grew heavy, parents would wrap them in a blanket, tuck pillows under their heads and the little ones slept until sunup when everyone stopped to help fix breakfast. As the sun cleared the Nevada mountains to the east, and warmed the new day in the Basin, tired but happy families called "good-bye" as they started down canyon to their ranches and homes.

When summer ended school began. In autumn hay was put up, flour by the ton went into the granary along with feed for cattle, horses and chickens. Potatoes, barley, carrots, apples and winter pears were stored in the cellar. Warm clothes came out of camphor balls. Schooling went on all year for the Conway children. In addition to catechism Mary, with her teacher's training, instructed the family in English and French. At the end of summer's haying, formal education began.

In the early 1900s the Mono Lake schoolhouse, which was near the northwest portion of Mono Lake and north of Mono Inn, was a one-room school for the eight grades. A pot-belly wood stove warmed the school and dried out mufflers and mittens frozen stiff from pogonip and Mono Basin fog. A well-filled woodshed, an out-house and a small barn for the students' horses was behind the school at the foot of the craggy Sierra Nevada.

Cousin Maude, Uncle Paddy's daughter from the Conway Ranch in Sweetwater, taught school at Mono Lake. She stayed with John and Mary and was a helpful part of the Conway Clan AND she could play the harmonica!

When the ground was clear of snow the sisters made the trip to school in a cart. On days when snow and ice covered part of the distance, but the rest was melted and free, they hitched up the sleigh to travel over the winter ground then unhitched the horse and rode him the rest of the way. It was a journey different every day. The students would leave home at about 7:30 and reach school in time for classes at nine o'clock.

On one particular day Gladys and Pearl bundled up in a buffalo robe and hand-knit mufflers wrapped about their necks and ears. Dad put oven heated bricks at their feet. By the time they reached the schoolhouse their breath had turned to frost on the mufflers and the bricks had given up all their heat. The teacher had all the students warm themselves and dry their clothes as best they could before she announced that she was sending them home.

Wind was howling through Lundy Canyon northwest of school and the skies held the threat of more snow. It was important to get the children back to their homes, or risk the chance of being snowed into the building with no food except the day's school lunches.

Gladys hitched the horse and sleigh as quickly as she could, then she and Pearl headed for the ranch just as wind hit with its full force. On flat ground the gale blew the horse off the icy track. As he lunged in the snow the singletree broke and the animal headed for the barn. The blizzard blew everything out of the sleigh. Their warm buffalo robe was never seen again. They started to make their way to Copper Mountain where they knew they could get shelter and phone their father from the cookhouse. They walked between gusts, then dug holes in the crusted snow in order to hang on to the distance they had gained — and not blow back.

When the horse returned without the children Dad and Mother were frantic. John hitched his beautiful team of matched mules to its best cutter and went looking for his daughters. He found them and bundled them aboard. Even with three people in the cutter the wind was so strong that it blew them off track, but the mules stayed steady and they reached the warmth of the ranch house and Mother's comforting arms.

In calmer days of late winter and early spring the family would get up before dawn to start the day. The girls put a wrapper over their white pinafores to do morning chores and help get breakfast on the table. After school some of the Indian kids would play "let's chase Katie home" but John saw to it that Katie always had a fine horse, so it was no contest as she flew across the flats, pigtailed straight out behind her. When they reached home, off came the pinafores and "Marydrews" with their



Above and right: Pogonip aftermath in Mono Basin, Winter on Mono Lake. Photos by Louise Kelsey.

button straps, and it was into clothes fit for work. There were eggs to gather, Betsy to milk, coffee to grind, and always wood to bring in.

When they finished, fresh bread sent its fragrant invitation from the table. Mary was usually at her treadle sewing machine, making the childrens' clothes, including the black sateen bloomers the girls put on to ride horseback (or stick horse if the animals were not in). Busy with her sewing, she paid little attention to the girls in the kitchen.

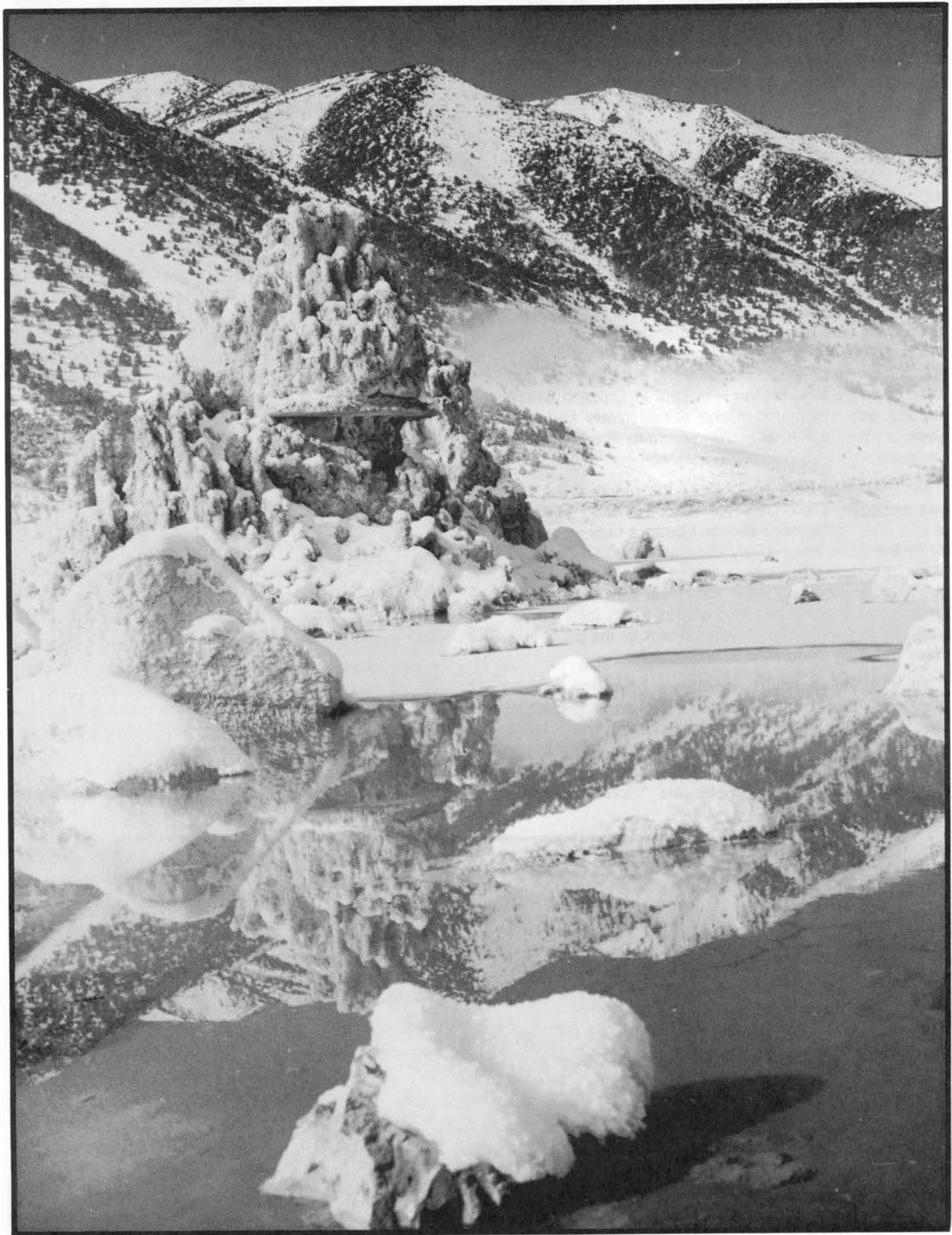
Gladys was right-handed and cut the crust off the right end of a loaf. Katie, being left-handed, sliced this choice part off the left end of another loaf. When Mother came into the kitchen she said, "Girls, I don't mind your spoiling one loaf of bread, but I sure hate to have you cut into two fresh loaves because it spoils them, so get together on how you cut these loaves!" The kids would take their bread, break a fresh egg into one of Mother's nice pie tins, scramble it on the ever-hot wood stove, then go out to sit on the porch steps and feast. Spring

trees were just bursting their buds, snow melt ran in rivulets to make the yard nicely mucky, and the setting sun sent glints of light down the sides of the Sierra.

The winter of 1910-11 went along as many winters did in the Mono Basin. The snowfall of December dropped fine, tiny flakes from a cold sky. A warming spell in January turned the snow to slushy sleet, followed by more deep cold and intensified by the beautiful "pogonip" — as the Indians named the frozen, moving fog characteristic of the Basin. In late February and into March snow began to pile up again.

A few minutes after midnight, on March 11, 1911 a call went to Bodie. The power from Jordan had been cut off and an urgent message cut through the candlelit saloons. The repair crew had found the Jordan power plant and the houses under deep, deep snow of an avalanche. A rescue team was needed.

Two miles away the Conway ranch had been alerted to a request to feed and house the rescue team. Mary began making bread, a job that would have her up at



three or four each morning, as long as the crew needed food. The teams would reach the ranch house cold, hungry and tired. Mary and the girls saw that they were fed while their wet clothes hung by the pot-belly stove. The smell of death rose as their clothes dried and the men fell into an exhausted sleep on the floor.

The bodies of six men were dug from the snow along with one survivor. Mrs. Mason was still alive after over 60 hours under the snowslide. She was given first aid, but her leg was badly injured.

John Conway began attaching steel runners to a toboggan and rigged it with eight pulling ropes. Louise DeChambeau brought all his long, pine skis to help in getting Mrs. Mason to Bodie. The Indian men saved many hours of pulling by switching with the team on skis when a hill was reached. The Indians wore snowshoes which did not slip backward on slopes as skis did. They reached Bodie hospital in record time but gangrene had already set in. Mrs. Mason was sent to Oakland where her leg was amputated. Upon her recovery she was given a lifetime job with the Southern Sierra Power Company.

Mrs. Mason's trunk was left at the ranch when she was tobogganed to Bodie. She may have been on stage at one time, or perhaps she had been a lady of means for in the trunk were lovely dresses that didn't have a place in a power plant or a mining town. The Conway girls loved pretty things, and with great care they played pretend in the green wrapper with its frothy lace, or the ivory silk gown edged in crocheted trim, or the blue linen dress tastefully decorated in embroidery.

All was not tragedy. Andy Sturgeon, on the rescue team from Bodie, took note of the charms of cousin Maude, and the ensuing romance ended in marriage.

To Bishop

John decided that his girls needed the further education of the Bishop Schools. Richie was in the Army and Pearl was still in grade school, but Katie and Gladys should be in high school.

In 1917 he bought the Collins Ranch, 160 acres of land five miles west of town, in the evening shadow of Mt. Tom. Near the Collins house was Red Hill, where Indians used to winter camp on the warm slopes which held the residual heat from its volcanic beginnings. Otey's Store and Village grew up across the road.

The Conway's home in Owens Valley included a beautiful two-story house with four bedrooms. It was surrounded by flowers, berries and fruit trees. The land was planted to alfalfa and there was a barn for the milk cow and horses. Pearl could walk to the West Bishop School on Line Street and the older girls could take a buggy to school. It was just right.

But in 1918 the 'flu epidemic hit Inyo and Mono counties. John died on the Mono Lake ranch at the foot of the mountains he loved so well.

Richie was still in the Army so Mary and her daughters moved to Bishop where they spent their winters, but the Mono Basin ranch was their summer home.

Because of the war, it was nearly impossible to hire help. Mary and the girls would get up early to milk the cows, turn the separator and do the morning chores. Then it was off to school.

Being the new kid in town Katie seemed to feel the need to carve her niche at school. Time and again she would say, "Don't call me Kate. My name is Katie!" At the beginning of the school year Katie drove the buggy

Richie and "Tweed" on a "fun Sunday" before they were married





SNOW SLIDE

Part 3 of 3

In March of 1911 an avalanche of snow hurled down from Copper Mountain and engulfed the buildings at Jordan where Pacific Power Co. had their Mill Creek plant. When the power and lights went out at Bodie linemen from Bodie went to investigate. Finding devastation at the plant site they finally were able to get a message through to Bodie for help for the rescue attempt. Nine men on snowshoes left for the rescue mission.

The rescue party worked in the debris and snow looking for survivors. Herb DeChambeau recalled that after traveling from Bodie and working they were all becoming very hungry. He told the others that he had been to visit the Masons and Mrs. Mason had served him food and he remembered where the pantry was. Trying to find a landmark was difficult but finally he started digging and with the assistance of others they were making good progress. Suddenly a dog jumped out of the snow into his arms. The startled men dug more frantically and uncovered the body of Mr. R. H. Mason. More digging revealed Mrs. Mason was still alive but one leg that was touching Mr. Mason was in bad shape. She was taken to the J. A. Conway ranch and with medical help she survived the effects of her 60 hours of entombment in the snow. Seven men lost their lives in the avalanche at Jordan.

—Anne Johnson

with her high spirited horse east on Line Street. Like any young person with a fast outfit, she decided to show off. Around the flagpole she raced and as fate would have it, the sheriff was watching the show. Katie got her first traffic citation. Judge Yaney did not fine her, but instead handed down a dreadful decision. If Katie ever repeated her racing prowess he would order her horse destroyed! Katie never raced her horse again — in town.

Gladys was more interested in her studies and helping Mary with the household cooking and cleaning. She loved singing and dancing and visiting their friends and neighbors but with Dad gone the family responsibilities weighed heavily upon her.

Not so with mischievous little Pearl. Her enjoyment of dancing led her to give a demonstration of a new dance, the "Shimmy" — on the sidewalk at the corner of Line and Main — to the total embarrassment of Mary!

The first Armistice Day in 1919 was celebrated with a parade down Main Street, and around the flagpole. The girls marched in their middy blouses and navy skirts, each one with a banner across her shoulders. On the front and back of each was the name of a different country that had participated in the Great War. With their Canadian heritage, the Conways carried that country's name. After the parade the group went to the hot

dog and refreshment stand on Main Street, an idea Father Crowley had suggested to the ladies of the Catholic Church as a fund raiser.

The girls and Richie never lost their love of dancing. From Bishop it was a long trip to the home ranch, often with a visit at the Sherwin's up in the Meadows near the top of Sherwin Grade.

In the summertime it was the best part of a day's drive in the Overland touring car from the ranch to Bridgeport. Of course the girls couldn't ride the distance over dusty roads and hope to be the lovely visions that were expected of the Conway girls. So crisp and frilly dresses were wrapped and pinned into sheets, then into boxes for the trip. In Bridgeport, at homes of friends, the dresses were unpacked, travel wrinkles removed with flat-irons heated on the wood stove, and frills and laces straightened. The young ladies freshened themselves, slipped into organdy gowns that Mother had made, and were ready to dance the night away. It was at dances in Bridgeport, Sweetwater, Lundy and Bodie that the Conway girls discovered cheek-to-cheek dancing — but Mother didn't. She always had hot chocolate waiting to welcome them home. Then once again dancing they went, as they answered the call "Here come the Conways!" *

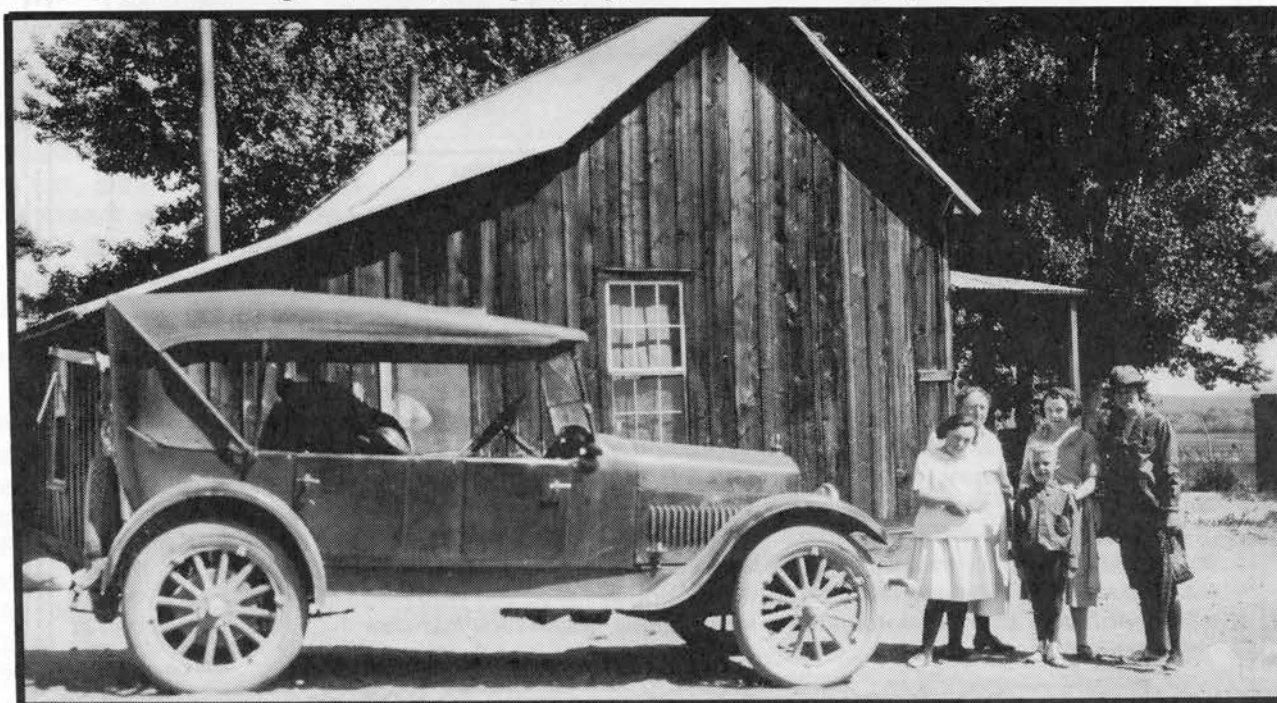
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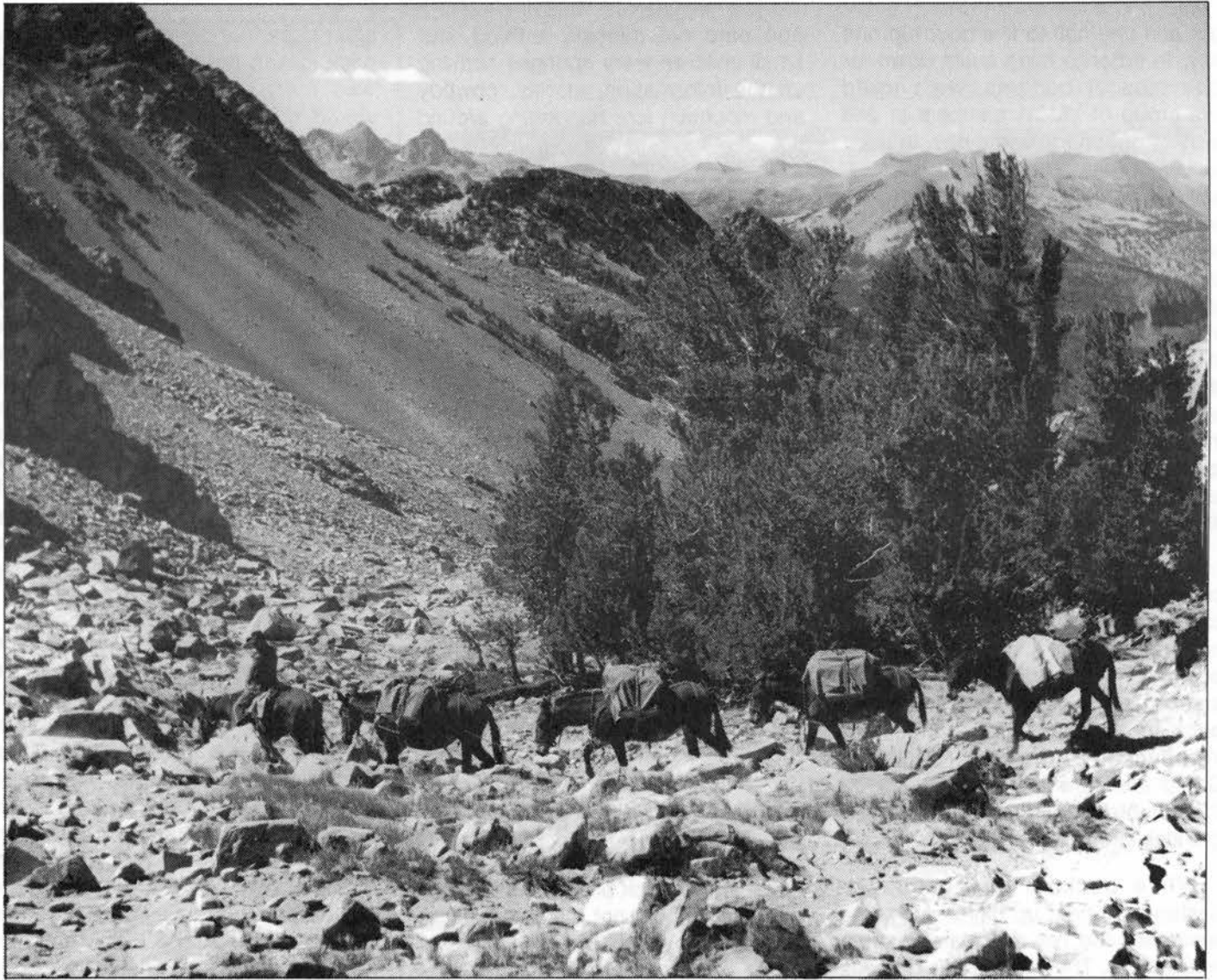
Conway, Rev. J. Harold, O.M.I., "The Conways of Chute a Blondau, Ontario, Canada."

Fletcher, Thomas, "Paiute, Prospector, Pioneer," 1878 and 1898.

Genealogies and records: Catholic records, International Genealogies Index of 1988 (courtesy R.G. Partridge), Mono County Census of 1910, ledgers and records of John A. Conway, Bill of Sale for Sturgeon Ranch to J.A. Conway, Economic Profile of Mono County 1908, family records.

The Overland touring car; Pearl, Mary, Gladys, Mrs. Davis and Rodger in front, c. 1921





Pack string on Duck Pass

ALL IN A PACKER'S DAY

by Marye Roeser

Gathered around the old corner woodstove in the Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit dining room, talking over the events of the day, we would listen for the drumming of horses' hooves and a packer's hoot. Hearing the awaited sound of stock on the trail, the pack station crew would hurry outside into the darkness to turn on pick-up truck lights that would light the pack platforms and saddle sheds, and to help a tired packer unload and unsaddle.

When a packer and his stock were due in late, we would park our vehicles at strategic spots around the pack station yard so we could use the headlights to unpack by. We

didn't have electricity with yard lights, so the vehicles served as our outside lighting, with a few lanterns placed up on the corral posts for additional lights.

In these earlier days, the 1960s, we must have believed our guests as well as the packers were Rambo types as we routinely covered many miles and long, long days. Packers sometimes had to round trip distant lakes which were normally two-day trips and this meant coming home in the dark.

During the summers the Los Angeles YMCA had a backcountry camp at Ram Meadow which is a

four and one half to five hour trip one way. In order to keep costs down for their meager budgets, we packed one group of YMCA campers in and another out on the same day. In addition, each boy rode a horse half way and then riders were switched, a practice we soon discontinued. Not only the riders had to be switched but sometimes saddles as well, and all stirrups needed to be readjusted. The packers and the YMCA leaders had to keep track of young hikers and stragglers, as well as the riders. This was no easy task if the trip ran late in the dark, especially the last few miles to the pack station, when the hikers and particularly the stragglers were tired.

The main camp with tents, stoves, cook gear and lanterns remained in camp for the summer season, but new provisions, sleeping bags and personal gear had to be packed in and out each week. Even today, we pack in "Y boys" who recall their introduction to the Sierras at "Y" Camp and now share their love for the mountains with their children and grandchildren.

While packers unpacked, we hastened to heat up dinner for some tired men and hot chocolate for trail-weary boys. The huge coffee pot was put on the wood stove to heat. "Y" leaders, some very hardy and dedicated men, always looked forward to "real" hot coffee as that staple item was not usually part of their kitchen larder.

Tired as we often were, it was especially cozy to sit around the big dining table and listen to the packers' tales of adventure. Being pack station bound with small children and office duties, I could visualize all the campsites and vicariously relive the adventures or misadventures of the day.

When television became a household word, our pack trip guests often wondered how our children could exist without it, as they weren't certain their own children could. One of our packers quietly replied, "Hells Bells! They don't need TV - they're living it!" And they were! With eyes

and ears not missing a thing, our small children were sponges soaking up the information, stories, cowboy and mountain lore happening around them.

During deer season, there was often snow on the ground, and ropes and knots were almost impossibly frozen. How good it felt to come back into the dining room and huddle around the wood stove, holding a steaming cup of coffee to warm numb fingers. Wet coats and hats steamed in the warm room as the packers hunkered down for a long awaited dinner.

When a packer was coming home late, in earlier times, he would "loose herd" the mules and horses if traveling empty. What that means in layman's jargon is that the packer had packed a spot trip party into a lake, dropped the party off and was returning with saddle horses and pack mules with empty packs. Before returning to the pack station, the packer had to reset the saddles and saddle pads, cinching the saddles well so they would not turn or slip, tying up reins to saddle horns, tying down empty pack boxes and bags so the ropes would not loosen or packs dislodge.

The packer always readied his own saddle horse first and tied that horse securely to a stout tree while he completed the rest of the pack and saddle stock. If he was careless in this chore, his problems would festoon the trail for all other packers to observe and snicker over. No top packer wanted to return to the station minus various saddle pads, boxes, bridles, etc., with ropes dragging, or have another packer picking up his gear along the trail to present to him in the cookhouse at dinner.

When all of the animals were readied, the packer would begin untying the stock and securely tying up their lead ropes. He surely didn't want his stock coming in dragging lead ropes! The last step was to untie his own steed, making a hasty mount trying to get in front of the bunch heading for home. He wanted to set a good con-

stant pace, not bring animals into the pack station hot and sweaty. If there was more than one packer, one would ride in front and one in the rear. If the packer was by himself, he had to try to keep the bunch following behind him, but there were always the smart animals who would try to pass the leader.

My husband, Lou, had one of those trips coming back from Purple Lake after a long day. It was a typical busy August day with many trips going in. Lou helped get the other packers out with their trips, so his was the last to leave the yard. He reached Purple Lake and dropped off his party at the upper end of the lake, then tied up packs and readied horses and mules for loose herding back to the pack station.

By this time it was sundown, and he had just turned the last mule loose when he heard a commotion from his saddle horse. The excited horse, Mogollen, was dancing around when he stepped on the end of a dead branch which popped up and hit him in the belly, whereupon he set back. In those early years, grass and cotton ropes were used instead of the stouter present-day nylon. The grass lead rope broke and Mogollen went joyfully loping after the loose stock leaving Lou afoot.

Lou wasn't alarmed yet as the stock only had run to the meadow and were grazing. No problem, he could still catch his horse or one of the others. Mogollen, a bay gelding, had come off a big cow outfit in Northern Arizona, hadn't been handled until he was six years old, and still considered himself somewhat of a bronc. So Lou thought he would just slip up to one of the gentler horses and catch its rope. Not so easy, each gentle dude horse snorted, kicked up its heels and ran off just out of reach. As they headed up through a series of little meadows which eventually joined the Muir Trail, Lou foot-raced the stock to get between them and the Muir Trail, and spooked them back in the other direction. He tracked after them and caught up with them as they turned

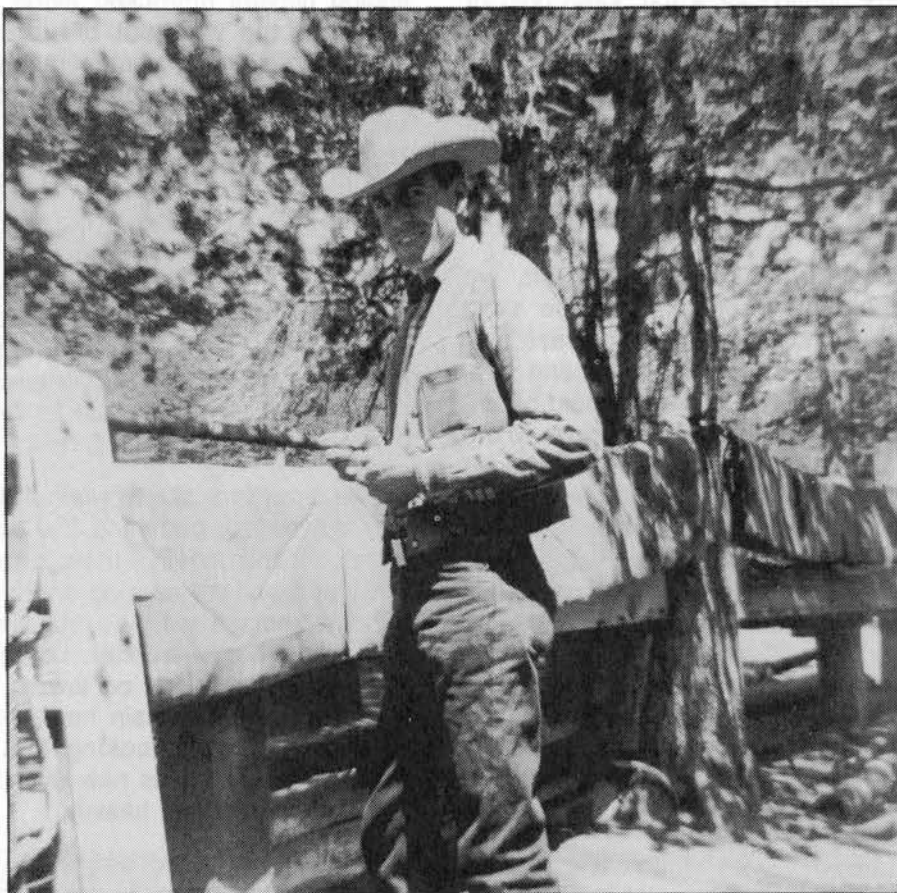
and raced toward him and home again.

Horses and mules came at a high trot down a pine tree covered hillside and Lou tried to catch two or three of the gentle dude horses, but in vain. As the last one, Nimbo, trotted the hill, it was dusk and Lou knew it was his last chance for a mount or a long walk home. When the big black thoroughbred drew near, Lou launched himself at the horse and caught his bridle. He raced alongside the gelding, hanging onto the bridle, until he slowed Nimbo enough to swing onto the saddle with his last bit of energy. He then rounded up the bunch and started them for the trail, driving them from behind.

His saddle horse, Mogollen, was ahead with Lou's Levi jacket and the lunch he hadn't taken time to eat. As he rode by Duck Lake, a chill wind came up and he looked even more longingly at Mogollen leading the bunch. As they started down Duck Pass on the Barney Lake side, Lou saw his opportunity. Jumping off Nimbo's back, he cut down two switchbacks to get in front of the horses, caught Mogollen and at last was able to eat his lunch, snug in a warm coat, and stay in front of the string the rest of the way into the pack station. For a packer to have to walk in, was considered a terrible humiliation.

Occasionally, when passing through a lush meadow in the dark, a horse or two would drop off to graze. Usually an animal would follow after its buddies, as with the bridles tied up it wasn't easy to graze. A clever horse or an even cleverer mule would find a hillside with tall grass for a quick munch. But Midnight, an aptly named black gelding, dropped off one dark night in Cascade Valley and decided he needed a vacation so remained there, returning home the next day with another packer coming through.

One of the hazards of loose herding after dark was low hanging branches along the trail. Unrepeatable curses could be heard, following a thud. It wasn't easy to jump off a horse, and scramble around in the



Above: Lou

Below: Last trip out in 1960



dark hunting for a hat, keep hold of the reins and not lose the rest of the herd as well. Doing a pony express mount was even harder! In more recent times, many packers wear "stampede strings" on their hats which often saves having to retrieve a hat at an awkward moment.

After the Labor Day rush, we would turn out some of the extra stock into Deer Creek to graze until they were needed for hunting season. Horses and mules would be driven back to the lush meadows where they could enjoy some well-earned R & R for a short time. A popular mare was always belled and the other horses and mules would stay within the sound of her bell. Ideally, this mare would not be a "homing pigeon" and would graze where she had been turned out. Then, a few days before the hunting season rush began, packers would ride into Deer Creek and drive the stock back to the pack station.

One fall, with a bitter wind blowing, it began snowing early in the morning of the Deer Creek drive. The packers donned layers of clothing, every warm item they owned, until they resembled Abominable Snowmen. They topped off the layers with yellow slickers, and pulled their hats down tight. "The Wild Bunch," my husband Lou, brother-in-law Lou Fitzhugh, Red, Max, and Jerry made their plans for the horse round-up. They would ride in over the Mammoth Crest to locate any animals in the higher pockets below Deer Lakes, then work their way down Deer Creek through the meadows and finally drive the herd over Mammoth Pass and home. As the Wild Bunch rode up the Rim Trail, the snow became thicker and soon was a swirling white blanket with zero visibility.

On the crest of Rim Trail leading down into Deer Lakes, the always dim trail now became invisible in the falling snow. The lofty palisades to the east plunged precipitously down into the Mammoth Lakes Basin. Lou, riding Mogollen, leading the way and attempting to stay on the trail, kept

finding himself rimrocked along the Crest. In the whiteout blizzard, a false step along this face meant a many-hundred foot drop into space. Misty, a crafty grey mare ridden by Max, kept trying to veer to the right into the teeth of the storm. Finally, after being rimrocked a number of times, Max gave Misty her head, and she carefully picked her way onto the snow covered trail and with the others following, led the way down into Deer Lakes. Misty will always have a special warm place in those thoroughly chilled packers' hearts.

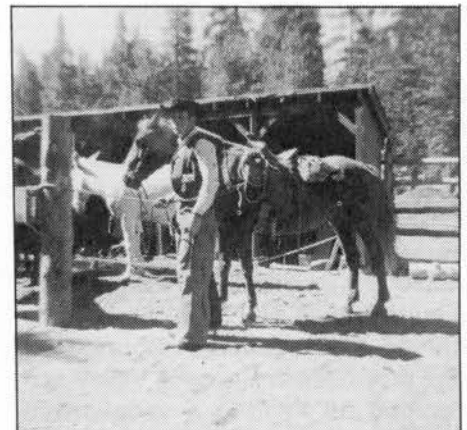
The wranglers slowly worked their way downward, gathering the holed up stock and moving them ahead. But they were still missing one small bunch of horses led by a mare who was somewhat of a loner. Lou sent Max, Louie, and Jerry on toward the Muir Trail with the main herd, while he and Red went looking for the strays. The snow was now over two feet deep and falling heavily.

As Lou and Red continued to search, they suddenly came upon fresh tracks of two riders in the snow. Oh-oh! Two lost people! What were they doing out here in this storm? They quickly decided they had better look for those lost riders and rescue them from the storm. Doggedly, they followed the tracks until suddenly they were joined by another set of two riders' tracks. Now, where did these guys come from and who were they? Sheepishly, Red and Lou looked at each other as it dawned on them who "these guys" were and how the tracks got there. They swore each other to secrecy (their cowboy image should not be tarnished) and struck off to join the Muir Trail. Darkness had set in with only faint visibility. They would have to ride back in the next day to look for the missing little bunch, who were probably holed up in a sheltered draw.

Once again, Lou and Red arrived at the same four sets of tracks, only now there were six sets! This time they were certain they weren't really lost and traveling in circles, as they knew exactly where they were, but since it was late and time was run-



Max Fly riding Misty, 1961



Red Altum, 1962

ning out, maybe caution should be exercised instead of cowboy pride. So they backtracked and unwound themselves to where they had begun this little circle, and soon they were following the now drifted-over tracks of the main herd, headed toward Mammoth Pass and the Pack Station. Mogollen and Idaho Jack definitely sensed their way back to the park station now and nothing could deter their homing instincts.

In those early days, the dining room served double duty and our office occupied a corner of the room. During an especially hectic August season, we were eating dinner around the big dining table, when an assertive woman strode into the cookhouse. She asked if we had a pack train scheduled to Purple Lake in the morning and firmly stated that she and her family wanted to get on that pack train to Purple Lake. Trying to be polite and wondering if I had forgotten to enter her trip into the reservation book, I asked if she had reservations.

"Oh, no, I just decided today that we had to go on a pack trip tomorrow as school starts in a week," she replied. I attempted to explain that we were booked up, but she interrupted, insisting that she just had to board the pack train. My sister Dorothy Fitzhugh stopped serving dinner to come to my rescue, and further explained how busy we were and why we couldn't pack her family into the backcountry the next morning.

As a clincher Dorothy stated, "As it is, we have been going night and day for the past week!"

"Oh," interspersed the lady in a delighted voice, "We'd be happy to take the night train!" When the packers at the dinner table erupted into uncontrollable laughter, she slowly backed out the door totally puzzled about pack train schedules. *



Above: Packing YMCA. Dan Farris, 1964

Below: Lou Roeser, Deer Creek, 1963



HERE MY PEOPLE LIVED

"I am fortunate that some of my friends are Paiute. Like many friends, we share stories and laughter and sometimes we give each other gifts." ...Louise

Baskets - The Beautiful Tools

One day my friend brought me a huba - a baby carrier. It was so pretty with its strong willow frame and its brightly colored beads and yarns in traditional designs. And it smelled good, like a well-tended campfire, because the frame was covered with smoke-tanned deer hide.

It was a beautiful gift and my friend was happy to tell me the meaning of the colors she had used. Blue was the Great Spirit, the sky. Green was south and Mother Earth. Yellow was east and the sunrise. Red was west



LILLIAN, BASKET MAKER,

photo by Louise

and the life blood. White was north and to purify. As she blended the colors into the pattern on the huba a symbolic story was woven. She had made two carriers for our hoped-for grandchildren, but when I looked at them closely I said, "Oh, you have made two boy patterns. Suppose we have a granddaughter?" Boys were put in a huba with a closed design and the girl's design was open. It would be a great mistake to put a child in the wrong huba.

"I can fix that," she said, and with a few deft snips and some plucking and picking at the yarns she soon had opened the closed pattern on one huba.

"There," she stated, "I hope you have twins."

In spring when the willows are slender and supple my friend would go up into the Coyote to gather her reed and bough needs for the summer; she could no longer gather willow in the valley. She stripped the branches for baskets of bark by drawing them through her teeth, and since the valley willows were sprayed for mosquito and growth control she did not dare use the "bad" brush.

But, like most non-worriers, my friend changed a problem into a grand outing. She gathered up the young people in the tribe and they all went up into the Coyote to gather willows and learn the art of basketry and listen to the stories of the old people.

Baskets were most beautiful tools. They not only car-



BASKETS FOR MANY USES

Winona Roach Collection

ried babies, they carried water and foods. They were used to winnow seeds and as vessels to roast pinon nuts. And no self-respecting Paiute woman would go into the forest for pinenuts without a basket hat to protect her hair from the pine pitch.

The designs on the baskets were traditional and the colors came from natural sources close at hand. The baskets were needed and used. As I watched my friend carefully choose just the right size of willow or the correct length of Indian hemp, I thought of the women in

my heritage who spent many hours knitting clothing and bedding for their families.

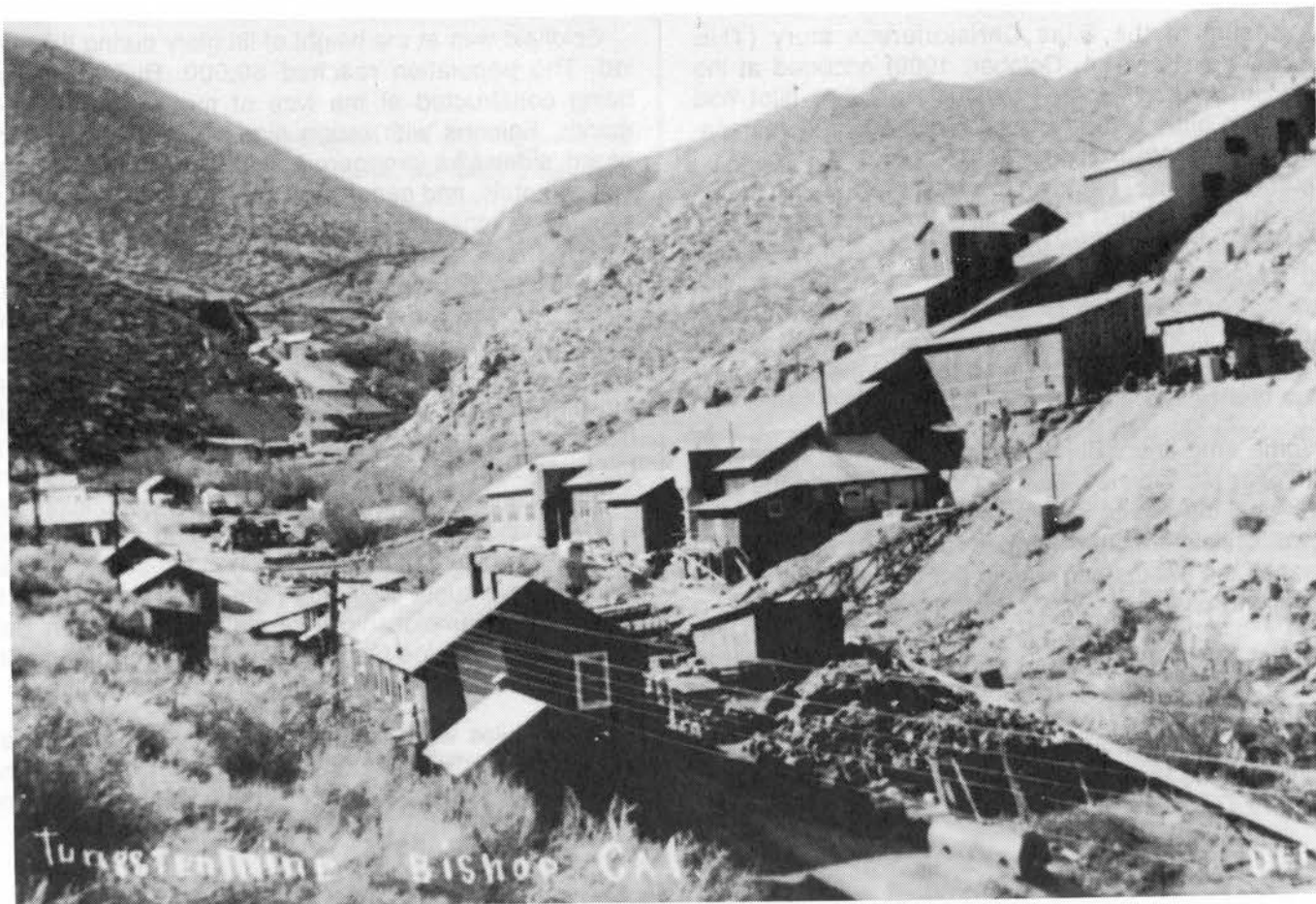
"Well, my friend," I said, as she scrunched up her eyes looking for a blue bead, "this seems like an awful lot of work just to have a basket to carry something or store something."

"Ah, ha, little one, I do not use my baskets for that. Not when white people pay me so much to make them!" ❀



BASKETS, THE BEAUTIFUL TOOLS

Winona Roach Collection



Tunsten City, 1917. Olds family photo

MINER TO MAILMAN ***Reflections of Mannie Olds***

What's in a name? Charles H. Olds, Jr., a six year old boy, came to Goldfield, Nevada from Weed in northern California in 1908 with his parents, Charles Sr. and Mary. Never heard of him? He was the only boy in the family and, despite his youth, was soon running errands and doing odd jobs for his parents. His mother nicknamed him "Mama's Little Man." This eventually became shortened to just plain "Mannie," a name he still uses today. Slight in structure but long on muscle power and determination, his next eighty-four years have been spent in varied occupations and experiences.

Mannie attended schools, five different, in Goldfield until 1913 when the family-owned Commercial Hotel burned. He dropped out of school and began hauling old railroad ties into town which he cut and split, selling

them for firewood and kindling. He later worked for the Consolidated Mine as a miner's helper. The miner that Mannie worked with just loafed on the job and let Mannie do all the work. Mannie didn't know how much he was being paid so he asked the bookkeeper. He discovered that he was getting \$1 per day and the miner \$4. Mannie was so disgusted with the differential that he told the bookkeeper, "I'll draw my pay right now." He wasn't about to do all the work and let the miner get paid for it.

In September 1913 heavy rains struck the area. Mannie recalls sitting on a fence post with flood waters on all sides of him. His sister Elva's Sunday School teacher was caught in the rushing water and washed away. Her body was found two miles from town.

A sequel to the Silas Christofferson story (THE ALBUM, Vol. II, No. 4, October, 1989) occurred at the Goldfield baseball park. Previously another pilot had brought an airplane to the park to demonstrate its capabilities. It was an exciting time as no one had seen an airplane before. The town menfolk with their ladies dressed in their finest clothes filled the grandstand. The pilot backed the plane to the fence in front of the stands and started the engine. The wash from the propeller immediately blew a big cloud of dirt and small rocks all over the audience. The pilot proceeded to take off, but he couldn't get up enough speed to clear the center field fence and had to abandon his attempt.

Some time later, Christofferson, after his successful flight over Mt. Whitney, flew to Goldfield. Again the ball-park was the scene and again the dust covered the crowd. Christofferson revved the motor up fast before he released the brakes and was in the air before he reached second base.

Water was nonexistent in Goldfield. It was brought in from wells near Lida which had plentiful, good water. It was pumped through two pump stations for eighteen miles and then flowed by gravity the rest of the way to Goldfield. The wells never went dry. Jud Collins had a ranch near Lida at that time.

Goldfield was at the height of its glory during this period. The population reached 30,000. Buildings were being constructed at the rate of more than 150 per month. Saloons with rough signs extending over the board sidewalks prospered alongside stone edificed banks, hotels, and general stores. They were mixed and shuffled together like cards in a gambler's hands. Gambling houses, dance halls, and stores of every kind opened their doors. The post office achieved first class status and was the largest in Nevada. The Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad brought in additional goldseekers by the carload. The blast of dynamite and the roar of machinery from the mines could be heard twenty-four hours a day. Incandescent lights blazed at night along the streets. The hustle-bustle of the honkytonk saloons and gambling palaces beckoned all. The population was a combination of the world's riff-raff and its most civilized. At the height of the activity one forty-seven ton carload of ore brought \$574,958 from the smelter. A world lightweight championship fight was held between Battling Nelson and Joe Gans, lasting forty-two rounds with negro Gans winning on a foul low blow from Nelson.

Automobiles were scarce on Goldfield's Main Street, but it did have one taxi cab. In those days it was the custom to turn off the engine and coast when going



Columbia Street, Goldfield, c. 1915

*Charley and Mannie with team,
12.5 tons per trip, Tungsten City,
1917. Olds family photos.*



down hill, to conserve gas. One day Mannie's mother, Mary, was crossing the street when the taxi came flying down the hill. It ran into her, knocking her down and breaking her leg. The accident crippled her and she walked with a noticeable limp for the rest of her life.

In 1916, a neighbor of the Olds family named Zoot decided to make a short trip to Bishop. He rented a mule and wagon from Charley for \$1 per day and asked Mannie to go with him. The trip took three days with the first night spent at Pigeon Springs, the next at Deep Springs, and the third day they reached the Owens Valley. Mannie remarked, "What a beautiful, lush green sight it was — all those ranches growing things, much better than the dried up brush and dead trees of today."

They spent about a week camping out in the valley. A fishing expedition to Birchim Canyon brought forth such swarms of mosquitoes that fishing was impossible. A prospector in the area suggested that they try nearby Birch Creek in the Buttermilk country. They found lots of fish and not one mosquito. They returned to Goldfield by the same route. Mannie described the trip as "sort of a little vacation."

Mannie later moved to the Owens Valley when Jim Reynolds hired Charley to move his family and their possessions to Bishop. The fee was \$100 for a large wagon with team. Mannie and Charley stayed in the valley, working at hauling hay at the Winter's and other ranches. They also used their team to pull stumps for farmers in the area.

A local advertisement for two horses with helpers took them to Tungsten City. This was during World War I and the tungsten market was flourishing. Tungsten City consisted of a large bunkhouse, cook house, commissary, residential structures, a big mill and two mines — The Standard Tungsten and The Tungsten City. A one room school constructed from a canvas tent with wooden sides, with a large wood stove in the center, housed the students. There was only one teacher for all eight grades. After Tungsten City shut down the school was moved to Pleasant Valley near the old Mill Pond site. While at Tungsten City, Charley ran the commissary and Mannie worked in the mines.

The Tungsten City mines were closed at the end of World War I and the Olds family returned to Goldfield for a brief interval. During this time, Mannie and his father hauled drinking water in a big tanker to various mines in the area.

Above: Fishing in the good old days: Mannie with the day's catch in front of Frank Barlow's Dodge; Mannie's Rio in background, 1918. Below: Charley and Mary Olds, Gorge Camp Five, 1930. Olds family photos



When they returned to Bishop, Charley worked as a bookkeeper for Eastman's which later became Watter-son Brothers Hardware and then Lutz's Grocery, located at the northeast corner of Main and Line Streets. He next worked at the rock quarry until he was hurt by a falling rock. Then he was hired by the Department of Water and Power as caretaker for their buildings at Camp Five on the Owens River Gorge. The structures, bunkhouse, dining hall and other related buildings, were remnants of the original power plant construction in the gorge many years previously. This job lasted thirteen years.

In a way, the job was a joke. The buildings were worth less than \$500 and several times DWP employees were dispatched to fire Charley from his caretaker job. Each time, he would wine and dine his guests until the objective of their visit was forgotten. The real truth is that the DWP leaders — Van Norman, Silvias and others — used the facilities as a vacation hideaway. They would come to the gorge to fish, but their fishing consisted of playing cards and drinking in the old bunkhouse. Joe MacIver, foreman of the Bishop DWP yard, would find out they were coming, notify the gorge power plant crew, and they would tell Charley. He would call his grandsons, Neill and Herbie, and they would commence fishing. The DWP boys always went home with a big load of fresh trout to show for their efforts.

Charley died at the age of eighty-nine after spending the last six or seven years of his life as Justice of Peace in Lone Pine.

In the meantime, Mannie worked at various jobs. Among others, he contracted to haul all the white bricks for the First National Bank building at the corner of Main and Line Streets from the railroad station at Laws to Bishop. Each brick was individually wrapped in old newspaper to protect it. They still decorate the building's exterior today. Mannie also helped the glazier install the windows in the building — a feat that caused considerable excitement in Bishop.

In 1923, the Jake Frager Ranch on Sunland was the scene as Mannie married Fay Neill, daughter of Evelyn Gunter Neill and George Washington Neill. George had a store at Line and Main Streets called "Geo. W. Neill French Candies." The Neills lived on East Line Street in a big house, where the Elks Lodge is now, noted for the big snowball and lilac bushes in the yard. When they were in bloom, the people of Bishop always came by to see them. George died from a heart attack at the Casa Diablo Mine in 1922.

In 1932, Mannie and his brother-in-law Archie Beauregard formed a partnership to work the Poleta Canyon Mine. Archie had a mill at Yellow Jacket (Blackrock) and they also processed ore from other mines. Unfortunately, the extremely heavy snows of 1933 created havoc with their operations. They had to cease all activity for

four months. Herbie had spent the weekend of the big snow in Bishop with his Grandmother Neill, but the rest of the family was marooned in their celotex house at the mine in Poleta Canyon. Thirty-three days later Mannie and Neill walked out to Laws. It was fifty-four days before Fay could get out. Archie, his two brothers John and Sim Beauregard, Clarence Adamson, Greg and Bub Neill carried groceries and other supplies to the mine. Most of the time they waded through the snow, although some had snowshoes and John Beauregard had skis. He used a long locust pole, placing it between his legs to slow himself when going downhill.

Water for the mine was obtained from Redding Canyon, the next canyon south. The water line was 3,800 feet long and the cold temperatures froze and split every joint in the line. Later, Ed Stevens, Sr. welded it all back together. They abandoned the mine about 1940 and Mannie says, "Financially, it was a disaster."

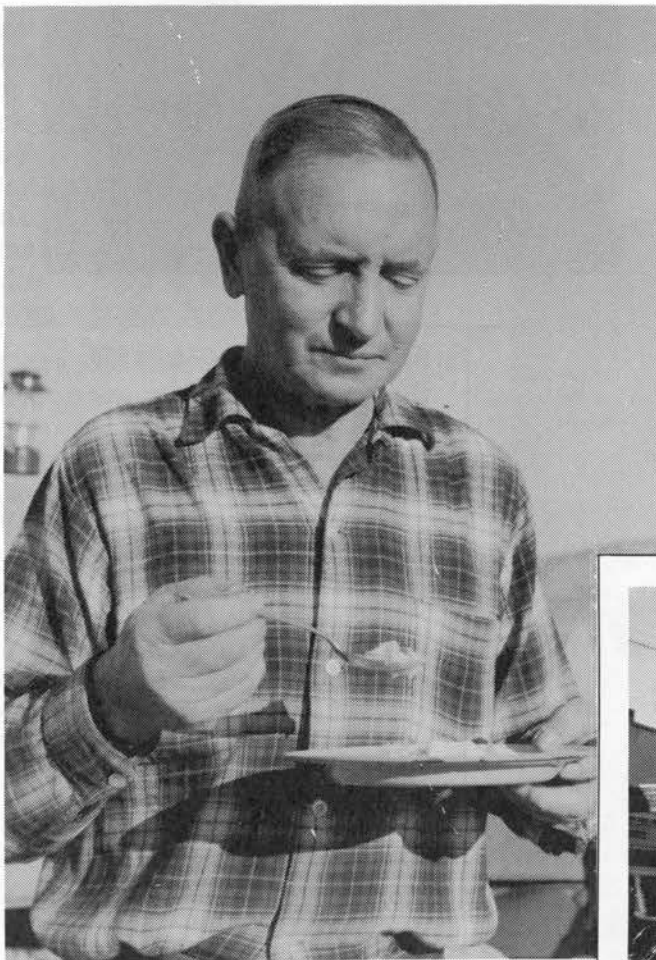
One of Neill's and Herbie's favorite pastimes while living at the mine was to scour the countryside for rattlesnakes. They would skin them and bring the skins, rattles and all, to school. They even wore belts, adorned with snake skins.

Mannie then built a house on Shepard Lane which became his home for many years. It was the third home built on the lane — Art Goodale and Mickey Covington having preceeded.

Mannie worked for H.O. Johansen's El Diablo Mining Company next. He developed what was probably the richest small tungsten property in the Owens Valley. Using a D-4 Cat, he cut a road from the south fork of Bishop Creek into Coyote country where the mine was located. Johansen had acquired the property from Schobers. Harold Schober had the pack station in the canyon.

The lode was pear shaped, soft, crumbly and very rich. Mannie and his boys walked in to work it. Most of the ore could be dug with a pick and shovel. When necessary, they drilled a short hole using a single jack, loaded it with half a stick of dynamite and loosened the ore. A glory hole was developed with a chute for moving the ore to a lower tunnel. They were able to keep a dump truck going steady hauling the ore to the mill. Neill says, "The job was a God's send for me. Working summers and weekends was the only way I could make a buck to keep my '36 Ford going." Johansen became rich overnight, but he lost it all trying to develop the Brownstone Mine.

Opposite, clockwise: Charley Olds, grandsons Herbie on black horse, Neill on white horse, c. 1928; Herbie and Neill Olds, 1929; First National Bank building (left); Mannie puts on the feed bag. Olds family photos



For Many years, Mannie, with his mandolin or sometimes with a banjo, and Babe Bandhauer at the piano provided the music for the Saturday night square dances held at the Masonic Temple. These were popular, well attended events with Les Horton calling the dosi-dos and circle fours.

Tired of mining, Mannie turned to the shoe repair business. He purchased the repair shop on Short Street just south of the present Von's from George Allison for \$1,500. Allison agreed to train Mannie in shoe repairing, but as soon as he got his money he left the valley. Mannie, with Neill helping, learned shoe repairing by trial and error. He spent the next ten years putting new soles and heels on boots and shoes and doing other repair work.

He then contracted for the daily mail run to Tonopah and return through Fish Lake Valley and Big Pine. He carried mail and packages over the 300 mile route in all kinds of weather for almost ten years, wearing out three vehicles. His Chevy was the first to go and then a Ford truck which he drove over 300,000 miles. The last was a GMC truck. He drove six days a week and spent Sundays lubricating, changing the oil and making minor repairs to his equipment.

On one trip, he hit black ice about fifteen miles out of Tonopah. There was a car coming the other way and it hit the ice at the same time. They both skidded, meeting head on in the middle of the highway. The two ladies in the other car were thrown out of their car and were lying unconscious on the roadway. Mannie slid off the road and was jammed under the dashboard of his truck. His horn was blowing and it wouldn't stop. Mannie finally was able to get his pocket knife out and cut the horn wires. The rescue crew arrived and provided medical

care for all. Mannie was not seriously injured, but the two women, one of whom was pregnant, received serious injuries. They recovered and the baby was unharmed. In 1975, Mannie turned the run over to Mitch Vassar, his son-in-law, and retired.

Mannie and Fay had four children: Neill, Herbie, Elizabeth (Libby) and Margaret. Neill now resides in Big Pine, Herbie passed away in 1941, Libby is married to Mitch Vassar and they reside in Bishop. Margaret lives in Hemet.

Fay passed away in 1965. Mannie later was married to Florence Irwin until her death four years afterward. In 1974 he married Sally Clark. He now lives a life of ease with his son Neill in Big Pine.

Mannie's closing comment: "If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't change a thing."✚



*Mannie and Fay Olds, 1955.
Olds family photo*



*Main Street, Bishop, C. 1925.
Garrigues Collection*

Mannie has three sisters. The oldest, Valentine, passed away in 1963. Elva married Archie Beauregard in 1921. They are the parents of Chuck, Don and Mary Tim. Archie was one of the original locaters of both the U.S. Vanadium and Blackrock mines. His lifetime was spent prospecting and in related mining activities. He died in 1946.

Esther married Alfred Shelly in 1926. His family can be traced back to the Kisperts, very early settlers in the Owens Valley. Alfred was a meatcutter and worked in the Arcularius Market (located where the Ben Franklin Store is now.) Later he cut meat for Safeway in Big Pine until that store was closed. He then moved to Lone Pine. In 1945, Alfred and Esther bought the Rainbow Pack Outfit which they operated until they sold it to Ralph Talbot in 1950. They have two children, Joyce, living in Bishop, and Bill, deceased. Alfred's father was a bee man having many hives of bees which he cared for and processed the honey. After he died, Alfred cared for the bees, checking them every day until old age caught up with him. ♦



Elva Beauregard, Esther Shelly, and Mannie Olds, Shelly residence, Bishop, January 1992. Photo by George Garrigues

Main Street, Bishop, C. 1920. Arcularius Market where Alfred Shelly cut meat; George Neill French Candies near car in right center. Garrigues Collection.





Stairstep Springs, summer 1925 (Sunland, just before moving to Chalfant Valley): Father, Dorothy, Betty, Polly, Peggy, Mother with Fred Jr., and Melville ("Rusty").

SENTIMENTAL JOURNAL

The last picture of all the Springers: Fred and Rusty stand behind Dorothy, Betty, Polly, and Peggy



by Margaret Springer
Nahhas (I) and Peggy
Springer Hankins (II)

I

As I take my early morning walk, I gaze up at beautiful Mt. Tom and remember the changes we've seen since we arrived in the area sixty five years ago, when I was five years old.

We lived in Sunland, California, where Dad was a plumber... there were six of us Springer kids... four girls and two boys. Dad dreamed of a farm of his own, so one day he and Mother and our younger brothers (Fred and Rusty) went to Chalfant Valley where he bought the Moxley place and began to build our new home.

Our two older sisters, Dorothy and Betty, soon moved and stayed with the Stark family in Hammil Valley so that there would be enough children in the school to keep it open. (Later Polly and I joined them.) The summer after we moved, we drove from Chalfant to Hammil all summer to keep the school open. In those days, that was a long way... I was young, but had started school in Sunland.

I remember leaving Sunland. Dad came home in a big truck with sideboards... it was soon loaded with furniture, but there was a little spot there for Polly and me in the back which was quite comfortable. Fred and Rusty rode up front with Mama and Daddy.

It was mostly dirt road and seemed endless. Once we stopped for gas. It was dark and I asked Dad where we were. "You're at Dunmovn Sonny," the man said. "I'm not a boy, I'm a girl, and what's Dunmovin?" "It means we're done moving... we aren't moving anymore."

I don't remember when we arrived at our new home, but Dad had told us he had a real Indian working for him. My older sister reminded me not long ago, that when Dad took us out to meet him, I burst into tears and wanted to know where his feathers were. "He's just like us." His name was Jack Mallory and he became a great friend.

At first there were lots of get togethers among the families. The Alpers lived between the two bridges north of Laws. We loved to go there and play with their children... to walk under the trees that lined both sides of the highway there... to visit the North Inyo school. We picked apricots at Giffords, pears at Dunkeys and cherries and apricots at Rudolfs. There at Rudolfs, we girls often played dress up from an old trunk out under the trees by the water wheel. Lovely days.

Sundays, Mr. English drove us all to the Presbyterian Church in Bishop. It was sort of like an old ice-cream truck, and he put wooden benches in the back. He picked up children from Chalfant to Bishop, every Sunday. One day, the car got hot as we were going up Laws Hill... Mr. English got out and got a bucket of water from the creek. We laughed when there was good sized trout in the bucket... where oh where is that water now?

Since homes were fairly far apart, we brothers and sisters were our own best friends, until the Phillips came and then the Bosleys with children our ages. We didn't have much after the City of Los Angeles began buying everyone out, but we had a good life.

When brother Rusty was six, we went to cousin Creighton Springers to celebrate his birthday... (the Creighton Springers were then renting and farming the Ward place in Chalfant.)

It seemed a great day, and that strawberry shortcake looked so good. Brother Fred, Polly and I were bored, so we went for a walk... to the railroad tracks where we amused ourselves by jumping as close as we dared to the passing train. It went quickly by and we marveled at the nerve we had. (If my kids had tried that I'd have flipped.)

The wind came up as we started back, and suddenly we couldn't see where we were going... sand bit into

our hair and eyes, we tried to get behind sand dunes, but that didn't have much effect... we only guessed at direction but were really relieved to see sisters Dot and Betty looking for us, and at last we saw the outline of the house and found everyone had worried about us.

Inside it seemed the tufa walls themselves creaked and groaned. We were scared, even though our parents assured us we'd be all right. Cousin Stella suggested we eat, but everything tasted like sand... suddenly there was a horrible wrenching sound and we thought the world was caving in. Again that sound, only louder and the whole house shook... the roof had blown off and landed (in one piece) in the orchard north of the house, and as suddenly as it began, the wind stopped and all was well.

We returned home to the south of their place, and found the wind had hardly touched there. It just blew a gate shut so the cows couldn't get to water. It was something I will never forget... was it a tornado??

The roof was repaired and the house lived in for years... little by little, after it was vacated, it has fallen apart and our last big earthquake really shook it down... so now when we drive by, it looks sad... only a few walls left standing and the African Cedar (we called them Athol) trees still there where we used to play. Lasting memories of our childhood.

Our house burned when I was 13... some of the trees still stand, and part of the fireplace. There were fewer and fewer children in school — we went to high school in Bishop... finally there were only three in the school our two brothers and Dickie Ward. After the school closed, the building was moved to Crestview where it became a restaurant... (later burned).

Houses emptied, fields and trees dried up, and in some places there is no trace of buildings once having been there, but it was a good place in which to grow up. ✧

II

We moved into our brand new house in Chalfant Valley on May 19, 1927. Easy date to remember — it was my youngest brother Rusty's second birthday. I was upset, because with all the moving I hadn't had a chance to get a present for him. I had tried to make a little mat for Mother's birthday a couple of weeks before. It kept curling up, so Mother showed me how to stuff it with socks and sew it up. Presto: a bright blue ball — one of the first lessons I learned on how to make do.

Our first visitors to Chalfant were John and Lizzie Keith and their two little girls, Jessie and Thelma. Jessie (Keith) Manuelito is still a very special friend.

We had a herd of Holstein cows and Dad bought a mean old bull by the name of Inyo. We were never allowed to go near him. All the cows had long fancy names. Edith Canary Beets lived up to her name by bel-lowing if we were a little late starting the milking, and Little Aggie learned how to unlatch gates with her horns. They all had personalities.

Since we girls were older than our brothers, we were often called on to help with the milking; this was before we had milking machines. It was lots of fun to squirt milk into our cats' mouths when Dad wasn't looking. Sometimes Dad would let us help with the separator — skim milk in the 10-gallon can, cream in the 5-gallon can. The cream went to the Inyo Cooperative Creamery in Bishop, located just off Main Street, about where Sprotsman's Lodge is now.

We had help with the heavier chores. I remember Mr. Link. We were always teasing him; he'd get mad and chase us. We'd run up the derrick and onto the haystack, pulling the ladder up after us. He did get hold of Peggy's leg once, but Dot and Betty pulled her loose. He probably wasn't as mean as he wanted us to think. Then there was Ignacio Fimbres. On my birthday one year, he felt he had to give me a gift too. He

caught a scorpion, removed its stinger and put it in a matchbox. To Mother's horror, I carried it around for days.

Animals were a big part of our lives. Laddie, our dog, looked like a collie, but his father was RinTinTin, the movie dog. I wasn't old enough to join 4-H, but my sisters, Dot and Betty, let me go with them to their meetings. Their leaders were Jack Partridge and Zelma Adams. Dot's project was Rhode Island Reds and Betty's was Plymouth Rocks. When one of the Plymouth Rock roosters grew up, he was mean — you didn't dare run across the yard if he was around or he'd come after you and nip you on the leg. Dad thought it was hilarious, until one day he was the victim. Chicken stew the next day.

Dad bought us a little old pony from Auntie Davies down the road. Fanny had a bad habit of laying down if she didn't want you to ride any more. Didn't matter if you were riding at the moment she'd just quit. We had to walk home several times. One day our teacher, Taxi Brown's niece Anna Federson came to visit, riding their old plow horse, Prince. We traded horses and were having a great time until Prince decided it was time to go home. Nothing I could do would stop him. Our neighbors, Gene and Gladys ("Here Come The Conways" p.14) Crosby were driving by (this was before their Paradise Camp days). They could see I was having trouble, so they chased us in their car up past the Maron ranch, trying to catch the horse. Just as they caught up, I fell off. I wasn't hurt, but I ate my meals off the mantle for a few days.

Peggy and I raised rabbits. All the grown ones had names, but the young ones we sold to Jack Black at his grocery on the corner of Main and Line Streets. We had to clean and dress them, but he paid us fifty cents apiece, which was pretty good money those days. Then there was Johnny pig. He was the runt of the litter and had been rejected by his mother because she had 12 others to feed. We bottle-fed him and he became

quite a pet, following us everywhere. He was clean and there was no problem house-breaking him, but Mother would have none of it. Once in awhile we'd slip him in anyway.

One day Mother happened to walk by our bedroom door when Johnny decided to "talk." Mother rapped on the door. "Girls, do you have that pig in there?"

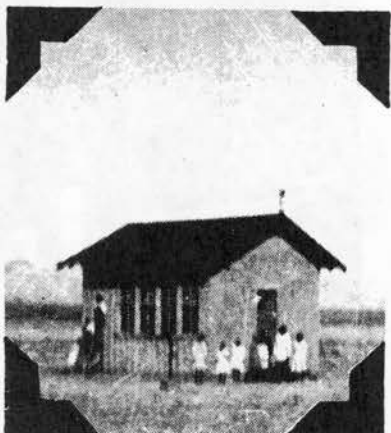
Peggy said, "No, Mama, it's just me. Grnk, Grnk." Peggy was good, but you couldn't fool Mother.

We had a beautiful bathroom in the house, but we also had water problems — either we'd run out of water and have to dig the well deeper, or the pump would break down. To solve that problem, Dad built two outhouses, one by the house and one down by the barn. One day, brother Fred, armed with his brand new BB gun, spotted a knot-hole in the barn privy. He couldn't resist the temptation. Problem? Dad was seated inside. Out came Dad, away went Fred, and that was the end of that BB gun.

My granddaughters wonder what we did with no television and no Nintendo. We had a radio powered by a trickle-charger (woe be to anybody who sat or was pushed on it.) We knew what important things were going on in the world.

After dinner and chores were finished, there was plenty of time for auntie-I-over, hide and seek, run-sheep-run or whatever other game we thought of. Before the Alpers and Englishes moved, we had potlucks about once a month. While the grown-ups visited, we played games. One time we were playing Flying Dutchman with Bill and Martin Alpers. They flew me so high I thought I was really going to hit the sky. That kind of a game was too rough for me. I'd rather curl up with a book.

We were good kids, but we weren't angels. We didn't have a lot of material things, but nobody else did either — this was the Depression and everybody was pretty much in the same boat. We had each other and we knew we were loved. What more could you ask?



Betty (Fleming), Polly (Hankins), Peggy (Nahhas), Fred, Jr., (deceased), Melville (Rusty) with Laddie; Old Moxsey place, torn down to build new Springer home; Ruins of the Ward place; right, Dorothy feeding young bull calf; Rusty admiring a new chick, Springer family photos.

Chalfant school early 1900s (later an anteroom and porch were added). Photo courtesy the late Don Marcellin.

HIGH SIERRA NELLIE

by Barbara Moore

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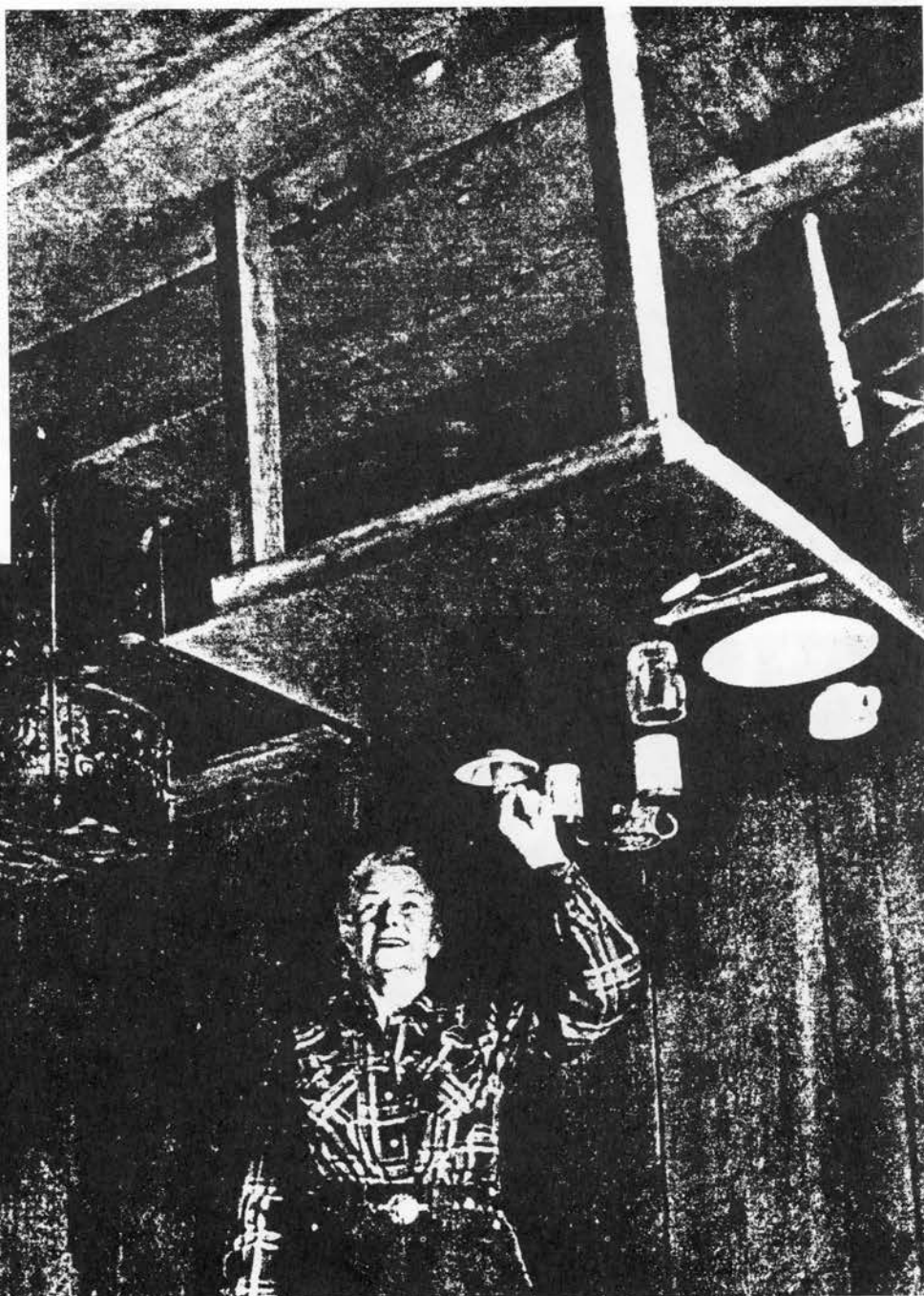
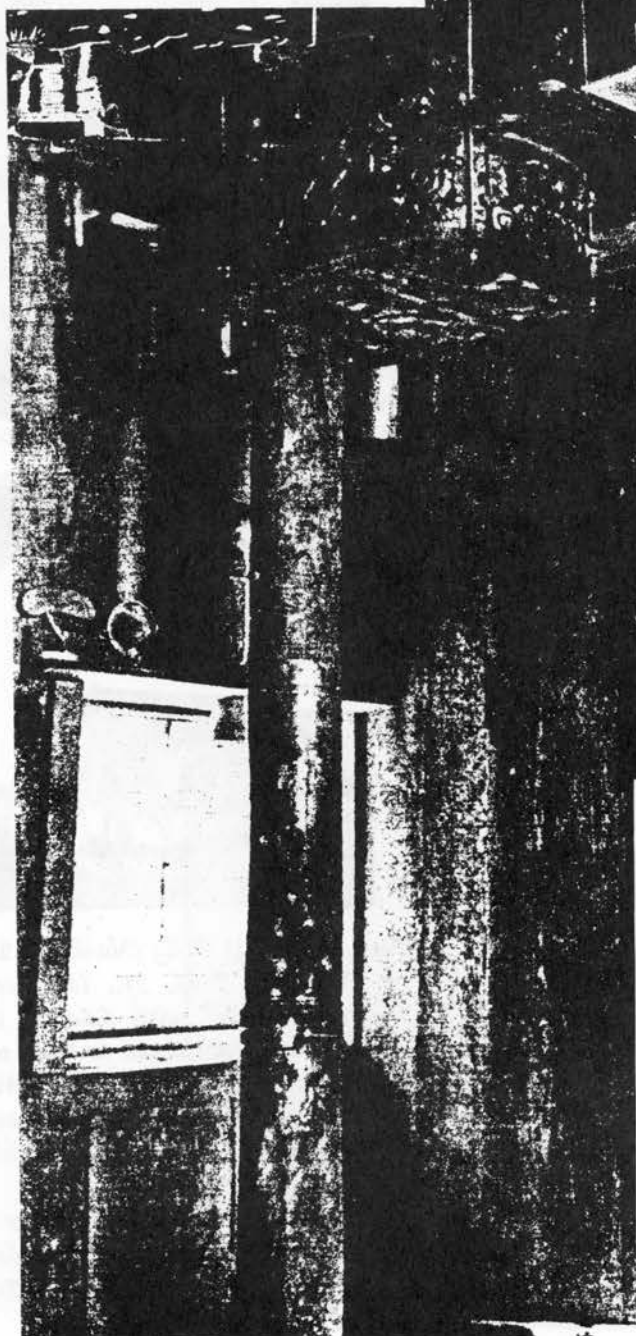
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As the tour bus travelled along the highway north of Lee Vining following the curving shoreline of Mono Lake, the guide directed the passengers' attention to several buildings almost totally obscured by vegetation. A profusion of wild flowers peeked out from under willows, aspens, poplars and wild roses. This, she said, was the site of the upside-down house, built many years ago by an eccentric Hollywood movie star. Everything — chairs, tables with dishes on them, stove — was fastened by glue or bolts to the floor which became in its upside-down position, the ceiling.

Photos and reproductions from the "Bristlecone View," "hi-desert spectator," sketch by Nellie Bly O'Bryan, and photos from Nellie Bly O'Bryan Collection, courtesy Juanita Kelsea, niece. Photos as noted by Ed LaPierre and Barbara Moore.

Tour guide in training, I sat in the back of the bus taking notes, finding the concept of a furnished house sitting on its roof intriguing. Could this eccentric lady possibly live in the house? Who was she? Why did she build it? Since none of these questions could be answered by the guide my imagination was piqued by this oddity. I was determined to find the answers and thus I was introduced to the fascinating, accomplished, remarkable, and yes, eccentric, many faceted Nellie Bly Baker O'Bryan.

Eccentric is defined in Webster's Dictionary as odd, as in conduct; unconventional. These adjectives, particularly the latter, certainly described Nellie as I began to unwind her life story, following the many twists and turns it took through many occupations in several locales. There is another adjective, perhaps even more apt, that fits her too — pioneer, defined as one who goes before, preparing the way for others. She was a woman who didn't have time for parlour tea parties and the typical roles expected of women in her day. Born before women's lib became a battle cry, she entered fields where women feared to tread, nor were they even welcomed, leaving a lasting legacy as she met and overcame the challenges she invited into her unusual lifestyle.

Nellie Bly Baker was born on an Oklahoma homestead in September 1893¹, the sixth child, second girl to Margaret and Jason Baker. Although the name Nellie Bly was prominent in one of Stephen Foster's lyrics, she was actually named Nellie Bly after a famous female journalist who was the first woman to circle the globe. Perhaps Margaret chose the name in the hope that a famous name would be an inspiration to her new daughter. She wasn't far off track because both Nellies were pioneers, accomplishing feats foreign to women of their day.

From the beginning Nellie Baker showed an adventuresome and fearless spirit. Everything in nature fascinated her. She had an uncanny ability to handle wild animals, birds, reptiles, and insects without getting bitten, stung, or sprayed. Many times she brought injured creatures home, releasing them to the wild after their injuries healed. She loved the outdoors and all it encompassed, whether it breathed or sprouted. In the hours after school or when farm chores were finished her older brothers taught her to ride, fish, and handle firearms. She became proficient in all three. In these carefree days on the farm a seed had been planted. Although it would be many years before the seed would germinate, the outdoor life and these sports that gave her so much pleasure in her youth prepared her for what

would become her unconventional lifestyle many years later.

After graduating from the twelfth grade, she was sent to a convent in Guthrie, Oklahoma, in the hope it would tame her wild spirit and change her from tomboy to genteel young lady. The convent didn't succeed in taming her wild spirit; however it did make her realize the value of an education, besides teaching her the gracious manners that many years later seemed incongruous in her surroundings, but certainly added to her appeal. After two years at the convent she entered A&M College at Broken Arrow, Oklahoma (later Oklahoma University) where she met her future husband John O'Bryan.

By this time the U.S. was on the brink of entering WWI. One account states that Nellie married John at 16. Even though the years don't add up for a marriage at that young an age (graduating from twelfth grade, two years in the convent, two years at A&M) she and John were married before he went overseas in 1914. Nellie probably was 20 or 21 years old, but not 16. When she learned he had named his mother beneficiary of his army insurance policy, true to her feisty nature, whether from anger of disappointment (maybe both), she had the marriage annulled without his knowledge². Another account states they were married shortly after his return from four years of service.

Whether Nellie married at the young age of 16 or not, according to her niece Juanita she married John both before and after the war. Nellie stated that he was her first and only love. Accounts also are contradictory about his state of health upon his return from service. One mentions he had no war related injuries. Another refers to his being gassed. The latter is probably correct since he had problems adjusting to the altitude and the rigors of mountain life when Nellie later made her home at Lundy. When he worked at the pumice plant in the Mono Basin, those who knew him considered marginally disabled. After collapsing from a bleeding ulcer, he entered an Army Hospital in Salt Lake City for treatment. He spent several years there, preceding Nellie in death.

After completing two years at A&M, Nellie enrolled in a business college where she learned shorthand and stenotyping. These skills enabled her to enter the business world in Tulsa as a secretary. Meanwhile her older sister Ollie May had gone to California, and in 1917 persuaded Nellie to join her. Nellie had no problem landing a job in Los Angeles as a secretary and for a short time

1) One published account gives the month of birth as "November, under the sign of Virgo — Child of the Earth." Her niece, Juanita Kelsea, says she was born in September. Dr. Robert Denton of Bishop, who later became her guardian substantiates the September date, easily remembered, he says, because both his mother and Nellie were born the same month, same year. Virgo is a September astrological sign.

2) Could this be the origin of "Dear John" letters that so many servicemen and others receive after lengthy separations?

filled her evenings with ballet classes. Labor shortages were acute during the war and when Nellie heard there was a shortage of motion picture operators she gave up her ballet classes for something she felt was useful to the war effort. Under the training of an experienced operator, she quickly learned the operation, a skilled job which had previously been closed to women. Very shortly she became the first licensed woman projectionist in the country, working in two of the largest theaters in Los Angeles.

Her nature was such that after mastering one job she looked for new challenges. Ollie May had become a secretary to Charlie Chaplin when he formed the Charlie Chaplin Film Company in 1918. Ollie May told Nellie the office needed a PBX operator, and recommended her for the job. She knew nothing about the operation of this equipment either but after spending only one afternoon learning how to operate the switchboard she was able to handle it on her own. Besides operating the PBX equipment she answered all Chaplin's fan mail and helped in the casting office.

Charlie Chaplin was known for his ability to recognize talent and appreciate beauty. Nellie had the statuesque, goddess quality movie goers expected in a movie queen. This, along with her sparkling blue eyes and flaxen hair, made her distinctive. Chaplin knew he could make her a star. After much persuasion, for she didn't covet a life of fame, nor in her wildest dreams had she ever envisioned herself an actress, she agreed to do the part of a Swedish masseuse in the first full-length motion picture made in Hollywood, "A Woman of Paris," produced in 1923 by United Artists which Chaplin co-founded. Critics showered praise on this unknown beauty, critical acclaim that eclipsed that of the star of the film, Edna Purviance.

As fan mail poured in, Nellie's life took an abrupt turn. Her career as a movie star was launched. Performing under the stage name of Nellie Bly, her appearances extended over 20 years during which she appeared in 48 pictures, including "The Kid" and "Sunnyside." She appeared in films with such famous stars as Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, and Clark Gable. In recognition of her beauty she was selected as the model for the fountain statue at the 4-Star Theater in Los Angeles.

As her movie career bloomed and finances became fairly secure she and Ollie May were able to buy a home in the Hollywood Hills. Although her salary of \$350 a week was considered generous in those days, it was quickly spent on exquisite clothes and other "needs" befitting a movie star. It couldn't stretch quite far enough for the extras Nellie thought the home needed — a swimming pool and guest house. In her youth in Oklahoma Nellie had enjoyed a daily swim in the river that meandered through the farm, an exercise she missed. Having four brothers and a younger sister who were drawn to the excitement of the city she needed room to house them.

After reading construction manuals she was deter-



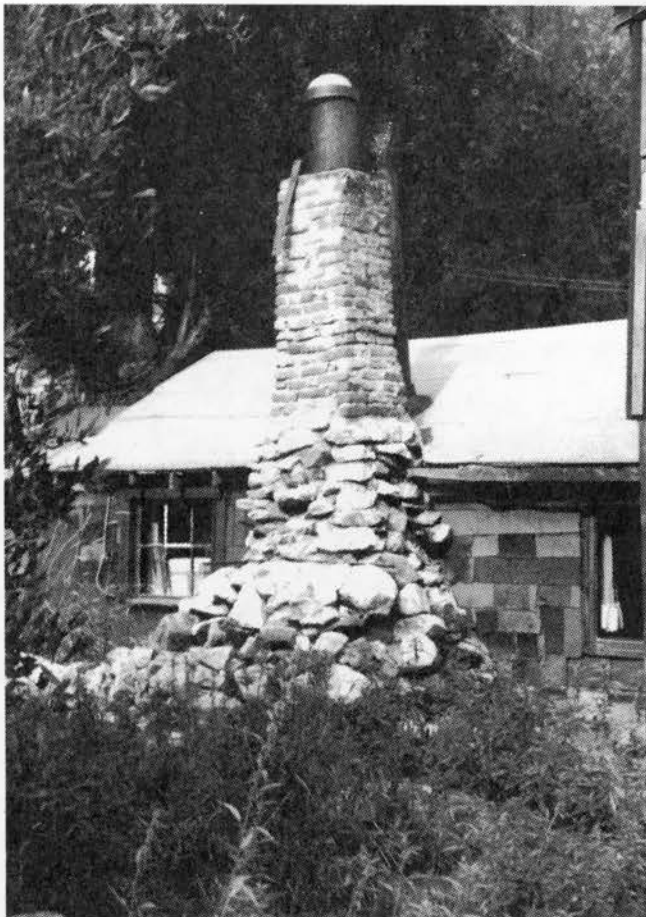
Nellie Bly Baker

mined she could build both the pool and guest house, thereby eliminating costly contractors. She dug a 12' x 24' hole, 4' deep for the pool, carried sacks of cement and sand up 20 steps, set in reinforcing rods, mixed the cement, hauled in lumber, and in her spare time completed both projects within a year. The morning after the pool was filled she jumped out of bed, full of enthusiasm for a morning swim. To her dismay the pool was empty! It took a lot of courage to peek over the hillside to see if the house below had withstood the flood. Fortunately it was undamaged. Nellie set about with more concrete and reinforcing rods to make the pool water-tight. As testimony to her craftsmanship both structures, pool and guest house, were usable more than 50 years later. Although just short of 30 years old, her accomplishments were far greater than most women (and men, too) could claim in a lifetime. So far, the many facets of her life included exceptional secretarial skills, the mastering of several different types of complex electrical equipment, and acting. Now she could add laborer, carpenter, and mason. She didn't realize it then, but all of the experiences gained by mastering these challenges plus those of her farm upbringing would be put to use years later.

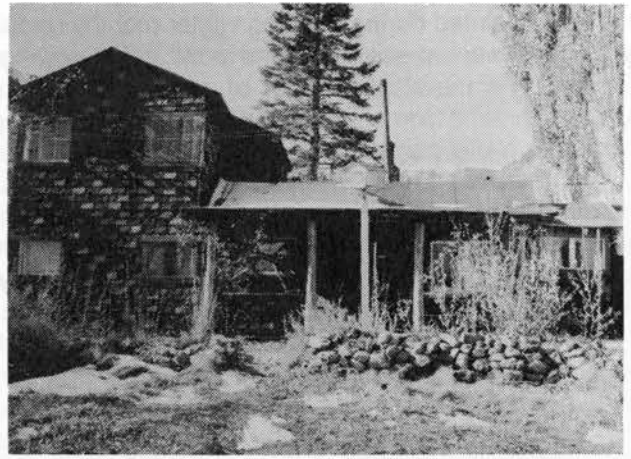
In the early '30s the seeds that had lain dormant since the carefree outdoor life of her youth began to sprout. While on location in the Mammoth area for the filming of "Thundering Herd" Nellie was introduced to the

majesty and power of the Sierra. She had ridden on the narrow gauge to Laws, then travelled by car through Bishop and on to the location, awe-struck by the beauty and solitude of the mountains. Snow blindness prevented her from appearing in the film, nevertheless the mountains beckoned. The following year, 1934, she returned to spend her vacation hunting and fishing in several Sierra canyons and realized this was the place she longed to be.

Although fame and fortune had come her way she never had been happy with the pretentious life of a movie star. Happiness was more important to her than stardom, and happiness meant returning to the type of life she had enjoyed in her childhood, a life of freedom, living within the bounds of nature's beauty and bounty. No matter how hard she tried she couldn't put the pull of the mountains out of her mind. The turning point came in 1938 when Jack Coogan Sr. (father of Jackie) wanted to form Nellie Bly Productions to star her. Instead, she escaped to Lundy Canyon which she had first discovered during a vacation a few years before. The power and beauty of Lundy Canyon, with the lake at the foot of massive granite walls surrounding it had become a magnet. The obsession she nurtured in her dreams to make Lundy her home finally became a reality. The time had come to answer the call of the mountains.



Nellie's stone fireplace outside her cabin, 1991. B. Moore photo



Nellie's cabin at Lundy, c. 1950. B. Moore photo

John remained in Los Angeles where he worked for Paramount Pictures, spending weekends and vacations with her at Lundy.

One account states she moved to Lundy in 1935. Another article gives the year as 1937. However court documents and Juanita agree she took up residence the summer of 1939. When she arrived at Lundy the only private land available was owned by Carl and Ellen Miller who established the Lundy Lake Resort several years before her arrival. Undaunted, Nellie formed a partnership with Joseph S. Fosser who held a land lease from Cal Nevada Power Company, predecessor to Southern Sierra Power Company which later was sold to Southern California Edison. It was on this leased land that she began to build her resort, which she appropriately named Happy Landing. Her name was added to the lease in December of that year. Fosser's lease with Cal Nevada was written for 10 years at \$10 per year, renewable for the next 10 years, after which the cost would increase to \$15 per year. The land lease included water rights of a maximum of 250 gallons per day.

Besides Miller's store, cabins, and campsites, a few buildings remained along the lake shore, broken down remnants from the early mining days. She used the wood from these relics as the nucleus for her cabin, and four other small cabins she built the following year on the leased land. She eventually constructed a small store and cafe. The front of the restaurant was built from the remains of Mattly's post office that had been located along the shore of Mono Lake. What she learned from building her pool and guest house in the Hollywood Hills was now put to use as, almost singlehanded, she developed Happy Landing. The buildings have withstood the rigors of climate and are still usable.

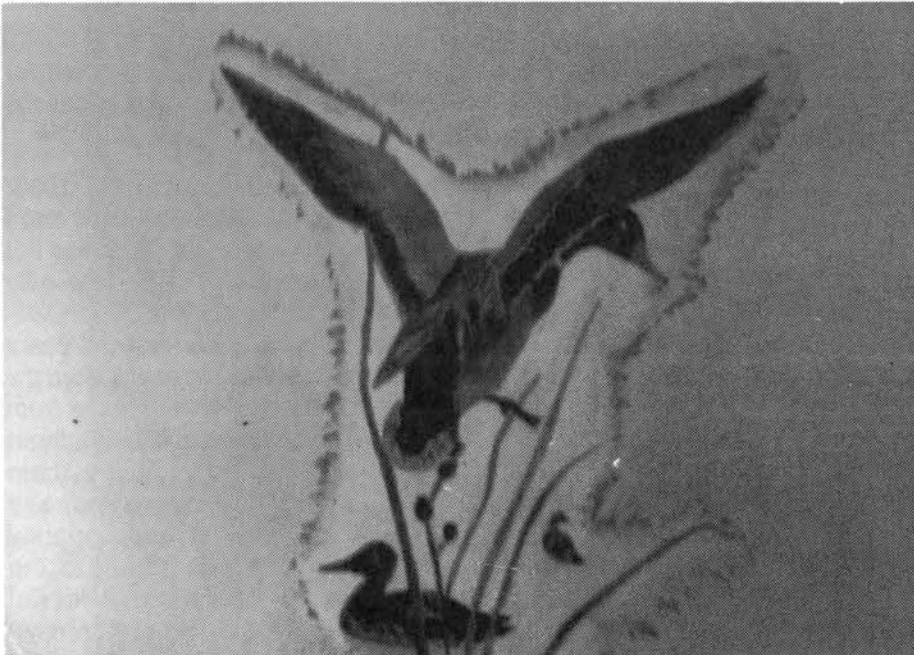
The present owners of the Lundy Lake Resort, Ralph and Bambi Mecey, refer to her cabin as the "Tiltin' Hilton." The foundation has settled and nothing is quite square. The door and window frames are askew, and the floor has a slight incline as one goes from living room to kitchen. However, the lovely murals on the walls

that Nellie painted during the long winter months remain, carefully preserved each time the walls got a new coat of paint. The murals are proof of another one of her talents. Perhaps some lucky person still owns a huge mural that Nellie painted on a sheet of plywood, depicting her beloved Lundy Canyon. This was used as a backdrop at a June Lake event held to promote tourism in Mono County. Nellie reluctantly sold it to a persuasive buyer. Sadly, no one seems to remember who the buyer was, nor does anyone know what happened to the mural. Her artistry extended to painting on huge boulders, seeing in their natural shapes inspiration for animals and an Indian chief. Although most of the rock paintings have been obliterated by weather, the Indian chief near the beaver ponds has survived. Today, visitors look at it

and wonder who did the painting. If they were told it was done almost 50 years ago by Nellie Bly, I'm sure they would say, "Nellie who?", having no idea of the achievements of this remarkable Lundy pioneer.

During the early days at Lundy still another facet of her life emerged. Electricians were too far away to be of much help so she studied electricians' manuals and called on her previous experience running complex electrical equipment. She passed the test and became a licensed electrician. She did her own wiring, at first using a wind driven generator for the power source, and later converting the generator to diesel.

During the first winter spent at Lundy it snowed for 17 days without let up. The snow depth measured 30 feet!



The two murals Nellie painted on the walls of her cabin at Happy Landing. "This was to be my home for many years," she wrote. "Here I would live, eat and sleep for many years. Across the north wall of the living room I painted a band of reindeer running through a pine grove and on the south wall a flock of ducks rose in flight from a small blue lake. A huge fireplace on the west side raised rock arms and seemed to hold the building upright. On a table near my bed magazines huddled together in conversation." Photos by Ed LaPierre



Finally on the 18th day the weather cleared, the sun came out, so she decided to go to Lee Vining, a distance of 11 miles, to replenish her supplies and pick up the mail. Her plan was to snowshoe the four miles to the highway, and hitchhike the remaining distance. She had very little experience using snowshoes so the going was tough and exhausting. When she reached the highway she found it blocked by 10 feet of snow, so somehow she trudged the entire distance into town. When she finished her shopping she was lucky to find the rural mailman digging out to try to cover his route. It was late afternoon by the time they got through the drifts and reached the Lundy road where Nellie started uphill alone.

The darkness of a moonless night was rapidly approaching and Nellie was rapidly tiring. Two and one-half miles up the road is a fenced grave, the only obvious remaining gravesite of the old Lundy cemetery. The cemetery was used until 1910 when the power company dammed Lundy Creek to form Lundy Lake. The flume that brought water to the Jordan hydro plant, destroyed by avalanche in 1911, was planned to go through the cemetery. The power company contacted relatives so the bodies could be disinterred and all but seven responded. Hidden by sagebrush are six graves; the seventh, with its iron fence, is a marker for all the others. When Nellie reached the gravesite she was cold,

tired, hungry, and ready to give up. As she looked at the cross, she realized the great struggle these pioneer people had gone through. This gave her the determination to continue the last mile and a half to home.



Remaining grave at the old Lundy cemetery. Marker carved in 1977 by Joan and Tyler K'Jar: "Here beneath this hallowed ground, There lays a body that makes no sound, Whether it man or woman be, Let it be known that we remember you." This is where Nellie collapsed the winter of 1939-40; thoughts of the pioneers' struggles gave her the strength to continue. Fall 1991 photo by B. Moore



Nellie snowed in. She is standing on top of her roof. Wind driven generator shown at left. Note the almost buried clothesline, c.1940.

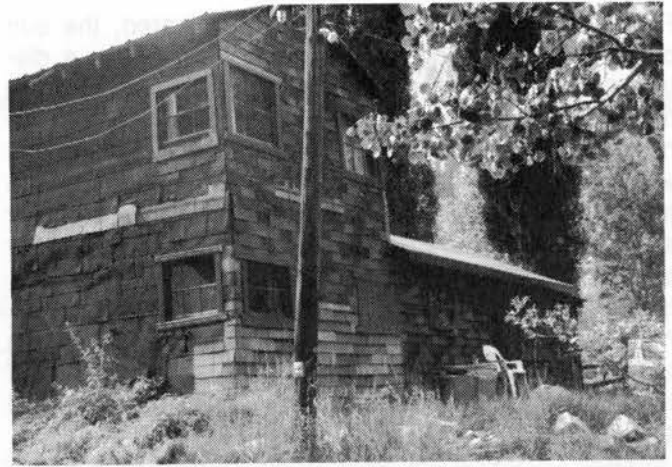
The night was pitch black when she reached her cabin. As she cuddled the warm bodies of her three pets, a mongrel dog, Siamese cat, and a chipmunk, her tears of relief became hysterics. Later, in recounting the experience, she said, "It was a horrible and terrifying experience and perhaps the closest call I ever had to death." That first winter brought the deepest snowfall of her 13 years at Lundy.

The whole length of the canyon is a high avalanche zone. The Lundy mines, active before the turn of the century, were often scenes of mass destruction and death from avalanches, so it was no wonder that the spring melt that year caused massive snowslides. One slide brought down a huge boulder that rolled by so close to her cabin she deemed it an act of God that it missed smashing the cabin and killing her. Surviving both the terrifying hike from town and now the huge boulder emphasized her belief; "These are my mountains."

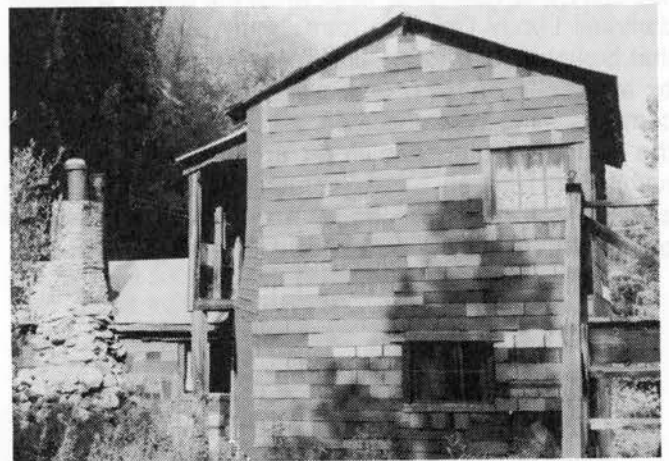
The following summer was a busy one. She built a two-story building, cafe and store on the first floor, with housing for employees on the second floor, added a second story bedroom to her cabin with an entrance from a porch and outside stairway so she wouldn't have to dig down through 30 feet of snow to find the front door, and as summer progressed to fall, planted flowers and hundreds of tulip and daffodil bulbs. She had six boats for hire which had to be cleaned daily; she baked pies to sell in the cafe, made breakfast for the sportsmen who found their way to her Happy Landing, and later in the day cooked hot dogs and hamburgers for hungry visitors. Many of the fishermen and hunters were unfamiliar with the country so she hired out as a guide. Soon she added another accomplishment to her lengthening list of achievements: the first woman in the state to hold a license as a fishing and hunting guide.

Most winters during her years at Lundy she had the isolated beauty and solitude of the canyon to herself, but one winter Taffy Williams, a miner, over-wintered in his cabin, and during another, Hillis Parrett, known locally as the "old timer" stayed. In later years she wrote amusing stories about both.

The 30 feet of snow that fell during her first winter may have been the deepest she experienced, but it wasn't the coldest. The add-on upstairs bedroom wasn't heated and the fireplace downstairs couldn't warm the bedroom when the temperature got to 20 below zero. One night when Nellie, the dog, cat, and chipmunk were shivering from the cold she remembered the mink coat stored away in a trunk. She had bought it wholesale for \$2000 through the movie studio and it probably was worth at least twice that. The full-length mink that reached to her ankles became a very expensive but toasty warm nightgown. The animals curled up in the fur, probably thinking they were in some kind of cozy den. Even the dog would have purred if he had been able.



Cabin showing two-story addition. Shingle siding added between the time of her sale to Carl and Ellen Miller and the present ownership by Ralph and Bambi Mecey.



Back of nellie's cabin. Note rock work of fireplace she built in the original one-story section. The porch on the left side of the building provided a second story entrance during the deep snows in winter. The stairway to it has fallen.



Michigan wheels from Mono Mills at entrance to Nellie's store and cafe. Her cabin is at right. Photos by B. Moore, fall 1991

Nellie wrote many lengthy articles about Lundy's colorful characters, one of which was **Taffy Williams**. Taffy was an old miner, a hanger-on from Lundy's better days. He was also known as a heavy drinker and spent more time drunk than sober. One summer day, Nellie saw his car weaving up the road and when it reached the resort she saw that he was very much under the influence. She scolded him for driving in that condition saying, "You shouldn't ever drive when drunk. Don't you know you could kill someone?" Taffy took her words to heart, parked the car and there it sat. Taffy never drove again, much preferring booze to the convenience of wheels.

Another character about whom she wrote was **The Old Timer**, Hillis Parrett who entertained her with tales of the good old days when Lundy's red light district was home to "mighty fine girls — every one a lady" such as String Bean Annie, Kissin' Jenny and Dirty Gertie.

"He told of some fishermen who camped in his front yard near the stream," Nellie wrote. "They saw the Old Timer had squaw tea hanging on a line drying and asked what it was. The Old Timer said that when it was brewed into a tea that among other things it would restore lost manhood. 'Would you believe, Girlie' (he called Nellie Girlie) 'the next morning both the tea and the fishermen were gone!'"

Another time he told about the college boys who camped near a tree that was a favorite of porcupines. The ground was littered with dried droppings that looked like brown jelly beans. He told the boys they were pine nuts and good to eat. After watching them try to chew the droppings he finally told them what they were. One of the boys had a roommate at college who was always eating his can-

dy. He took some home and spiked the candy jar with them and never had trouble with his candy again.

The Old Timer had come to Lundy to live with his uncle who had some rich mines in the canyon. The uncle died suddenly, leaving \$40,000 in cash buried in the yard. Although the uncle had shown the nephew where the money was buried the Old Timer insisted he had never found it. According to other old miners — maybe one of them was Taffy Williams — shortly after the uncle's death, the nephew had taken several trips, Alaska, Cuba, South America, and spent winters in Los Angeles and San Diego where he kept a hotel room in both places. Years later when he returned to Lundy he told fishermen and hunters about the money buried in the yard and many dug for it. They never found any money, but the Old Timer never had to dig a new hole for his privvy.

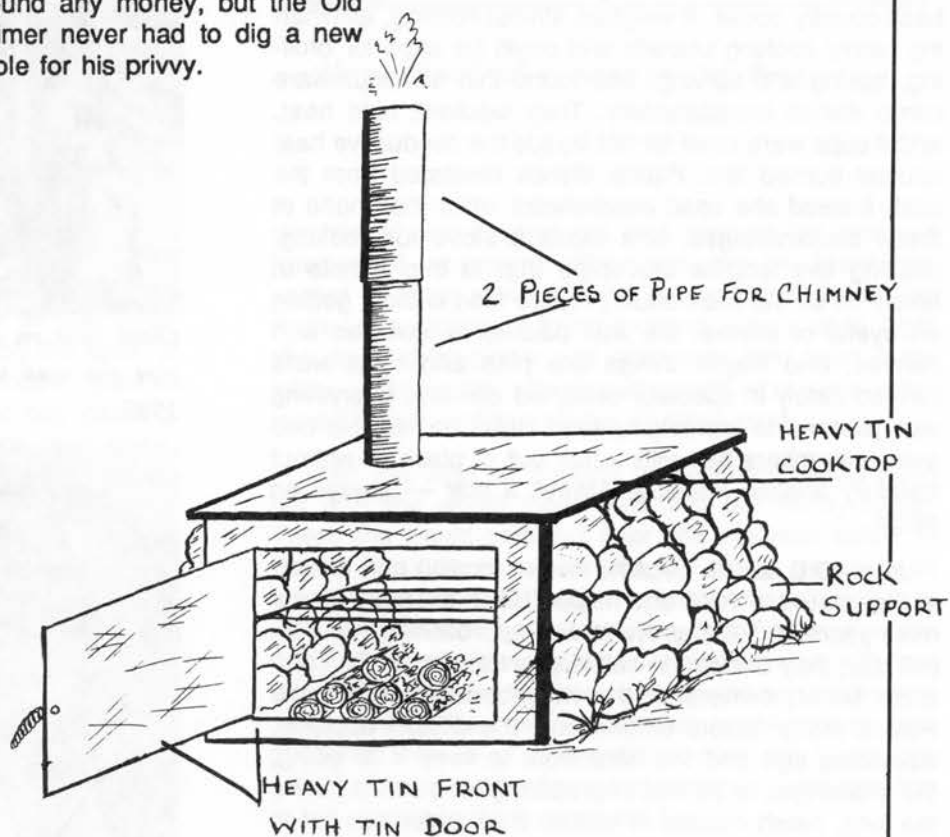
NELLIE'S FAMOUS MOUTH-WATERING BISCUITS (Skillet Baked)

2 cups prepared flour (Bisquick type)

1/2 cup powdered milk

1/2 cup water

Mix all ingredients together. Flour hands and knead for several minutes. Roll out to 1" thick. Cut in 2" rounds. Grease skillet. Brush tops with bacon drippings or butter. Cover and cook over medium heat 10 minutes each side. Serve with butter, jelly, jam or honey. (Note: I tried these and they were wonderful. A good substitute for bread or rolls at breakfast, lunch or dinner.)



**NELLIE'S CAMP STOVE DESIGN
FOR SMOKELESS COOKING**

Nellie's expertise as a guide, hostess, and camp cook brought many clients who returned year after year. Even during the gas rationing days of WWII, somehow the sportsmen got enough gas for their trips to Happy Landing. She became very efficient in running the pack trips, turning down offers of help saying it would only slow her down. "They're there to hunt and fish. I'm there to show them where, and I take care of the housekeeping." Rising with the sun, she made breakfast, loaded the rental stock, broke camp, and was on the trail by eight o'clock.

She developed menus, costing no more than \$1 to \$1.50 per day per person, that provided hearty food, so carefully planned that no one went hungry, no food was ever wasted, nor was any brought back. Her breakfasts consisted of hot cakes, bacon and eggs one day, followed by ham and eggs, hash browns, and toast the next day, then sausage, eggs and hot biscuits on the third day. Then the menus were repeated in order. Dinners were sumptuous affairs consumed around the warming campfire. She prepared split-pea soup with frankfurters, fried chicken, and Jello; steaks and hamburgers were accompanied by her famous pies and biscuits and instant mashed potatoes.

Through trial and error she discovered many camping tricks such as using malted milk tablets for quick energy instead of chocolate bars that melted into a mess. She felt aluminum foil was the greatest invention of all for back country cooks. It weighed almost nothing, eliminating heavy cooking utensils and could be used for broiling, baking and serving. She found thin aluminumware camp dishes unsatisfactory. They wouldn't hold heat, and if cups were used for hot liquids the conductive heat caused burned lips. Plastic dishes shattered from the cold. Instead she used enamelware which had none of these disadvantages. She made a stove for cooking, utilizing two lengths stovepipe that fit into a hole in heavy tin so the cook could prepare food without getting an eyeful of smoke. Ice was packed in, covered with canvas, and fragile things like pies and eggs were nestled safely in specially designed carriers. Everything was planned to perfection, even Nellie herself. No one ever remembers her with a hair out of place or without carefully applied makeup. Always a star — always on stage.

John (O.B. as he became known locally) quit his job at Paramount in 1946 and helped Nellie at Lundy for six more years. In 1952 as Nellie was approaching her 60th birthday, they decided to sell Happy Landing to Carl and Ellen Miller, owners of the neighboring Lundy Lake Resort. Many factors entered into the difficult decision: advancing age and the hard work to keep it all going, the challenges to be met in preparing for survival during the long, harsh months of winter. It all added up, not to mention the sometimes unpleasant problems that arose from two competing resorts side by side in a confined area. Reflecting on the many rewarding years at Lundy, she said when she arrived she had \$60, six boats, and a mink coat. Now she was leaving behind a two story

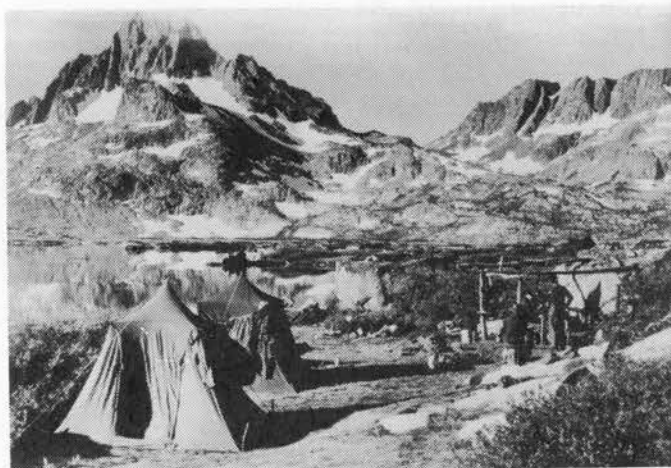
house, a cafe, store, four cabins and ten boats. Not bad for a farm girl from Oklahoma. But her productive life wasn't over. The sale merely enabled her to go to new challenges and adventures.



Nellie and a group of her favorite hunters and fishermen, c. 1940. Perhaps these are the men who gave her the gift of an expensive Hasselblad camera.



Chow time on one of Nellie's pack trips. Note the stove pipe she used to vent the smoke. Nellie, second right, c. 1940.



Thousand Island Lake campsite on one of the pack trips, c. 1940.

The O'Bryans' whereabouts for the next three years, 1952 to 1955, are questionable. Some reports state they lived in Bishop, others state they never left the Mono Basin. However Nellie signed a rental lease with Wally McPherson in May of 1955 for property along Highway 395 where she lived in a mobile home. Nearby she built her upside down house and a museum to house the many artifacts she discovered during her pack trips into the back country.

On one of the pack trips several years before she left Lundy she came across an old miner's cabin that had tumbled into a canyon from its perch on the hillside above. It landed intact, but upside down and as she peered in through the windows, she saw furnishings — stove, two chairs and a table — neatly arranged as though they had always been in this odd position.

Suddenly memories of childhood stories read by candle light in the log cabin in Oklahoma came back to her. In the style of the day, Margaret Baker had dressed Nellie and her two sisters in full skirts, puffed out by several heavily starched ruffled petticoats. The girls had prevailed upon their mother to buy only Faultless starch because each box contained a little booklet of stories and poems which were saved to be read for bedtime stories. Nellie's favorite story was the one about two children that went to sea and sailed to the land of upside down. The illustrations showed a village with houses standing on their roofs and trees with their roots high in the air. The roots were decorated with peppermint canes. She loved the story and heard it so many times she knew it by heart. At school she drew so many upside down pictures that her teacher scolded her, likely fearing something might be wrong. When Nellie saw the little cabin upside down in the canyon, memories of the land of upside down came rushing back, and in time another facet of her remarkable life took place when she finally was able to build a replica.

She purchased lumber for the cabin, hauled down the table, chairs, and stove from their site in the canyon. These she bolted to the floor which became the ceiling. To give the cabin a lived-in look, she added a bed with a ceramic cat peering out from under it, eyeing the mouse that peeked from a corner. A flower pot full of flowers was glued to the window sill. The table was set with dishes, silver, and glasses also glued in place. A kerosene lamp hung above it. She even added a spider that dangled from a web near the stove. Just outside the door was a broom, and tacked to the wall, a thermometer — all upside down, of course.

No cabin would be complete without a privy which she also built upside down. Near the cabin door stood a large aspen which Nellie called the calling card tree and visitors were requested to leave their cards in a basket that hung from one of the branches. Nellie built rustic little wooden bridges so visitors following the foot path to the cabin wouldn't have to jump the trickling stream that started at the spring on the hillside above and ended in a lovely pond she dug and stocked with trout. Damp-

ness along the edge of the stream nurtured hundreds of bulbs she planted, and those along with a variety of wild flowers provided a backdrop of vivid color throughout spring and summer into fall.

Nellie made the floral scene even livelier by setting large butterflies she had cut out of tin and painted gaudy colors in strategic places throughout the garden. The colorful scene brought traffic to a crawl as travelers along the highway slowed to get a better look. Many actually stopped to investigate and finding the upside down house, calling card tree and a donation box most likely left a very welcome contribution.

After she finished the upside down house, the next project she undertook was building the museum. Juanita remembers helping her dig the foundation trench, hauling hundreds of cinder blocks used in the construction and mortaring them in place. Her recollection of her aunt was that even before she finished one project another one was incubating.

Thousands of tourists found their way to Nellie's upside down house and museum, so many that it was considered a major tourist attraction in Mono County. Those who recall visiting the upside down house are almost unanimous in their description. Remembering her visit as a young girl of eight or nine, Heidi Hess Griffin said, "It was amazing, but weird, and it made you feel off balance. Even the table was set with table cloth, silver, and dishes."

Nellie was now approaching 70, living alone after O.B. was hospitalized in Salt Lake City. Although she continued to lead pack trips to the back country and manage her tourist attraction, she still found time for new interests. She was instrumental in forming the Mono County Chamber of Commerce and served as secretary for many years. She wrote a weekly column for the Bridgeport Chronicle Union newspaper, and published several articles about her Lundy life and the characters that livened up the scene. She moved to Bishop in 1968, but occasionally returned to the high country to lead pack trips for her favorite clients. She made her last trip at age 71, when she took a party of 10 people to 10,000 feet, walking over ten miles.

A story following the life of this remarkable woman wouldn't be complete without a few amusing stories about her. Typical of independent people, Nellie resented interference, particularly anything representing bureaucracy. One day a Board of Equalization auditor appeared at Lundy to do a surprise audit of the books of Happy Landing. Given several shoe boxes containing receipts but no ledgers or account books he left, shaking his head and without doing the audit.

On another occasion Nellie went to Bridgeport to renew her driver's license. The examiner happened to be Cal Brumbaugh who held the #1 badge of the California Highway Patrol. When she failed the written test, Cal told her she couldn't drive. Indignantly she retorted,

"Then you'll have to drive me back to Lundy." She got the license.

Juanita tells about the time in early winter when Nellie saw the game warden, Wes Johnson, coming up the road. Wes was a stickler for regulations and Nellie was sure he intended to check her freezer for any fish held out of season, of which she had many. She quickly threw them into her pot belly stove. Wes checked the freezer and finding nothing, left. When he got outside and smelled fish cooking, Nellie ended up with a citation, fine, and very charred fish.

Nellie studied books about animals, learning their habits, and wasn't afraid of even the most vicious or venomous. Her composure was put to a test when she came across a rattlesnake she felt should be dispatched. She grabbed the snake behind the head and before she could do anything it wound itself around her arm. O.B. came to her rescue, unwound it, and as Nellie let go he hit it with a shovel.

Most accomplished women, particularly those who lead unconventional life styles, find difficulty relating to other women whose lives revolve around children and homemaking since they have very little in common. Because of this Nellie had very few close women friends. When she moved to the Mono Basin from Lundy and became an active spokesperson for improving tourism in Mono County it was only natural that she and Venita McPherson would share the limelight. Venita was an energetic, powerful woman, owner of the Mono Inn, and the first woman supervisor in Mono County. Each woman respected and admired the accomplishments of the other, but actual friendship was held at a distance. Among the titters of the guests one can only imagine what these two thought when both appeared at a party at the Mono Inn wearing identical dresses.

Nellie spent 10 years living in a mobile home in Bishop where she continued writing. She wrote many short stories, some of which were published in local magazines, but never finished a book based on her experiences which she planned to title "These Are My Mountains," nor was she able to finish a story about Charlie Chaplin.

Two years before her death she suffered a stroke and entered the Lone Pine Convalescent Hospital where a bout with shingles that lodged in her head and extended to her right eye caused her a great deal of pain. She had good and bad days. On one of the bad days, a British television company arrived to do a prearranged video interview about her life. Thinking of the many interviews she had given in the past with no financial reward, she requested payment for the privilege of sharing her experiences for a commercial venture. When they refused her request for payment, she abruptly refused the interview and slammed the door.

On July 12, 1983, Mono County finally acknowledged her service in promoting tourism in the County and her

donation of memorabilia to the Mono County Museum and Historical Society by presenting her in absentia with a commemorative plaque of recognition and appreciation.

On October 12, 1984, at the age of 91, the many faceted Nellie died peacefully in Lone Pine. ♦



Upside down house over 30 years after she left the area. Vegetation engulfs the building. 1991 photo by B. Moore



Cement block building Nellie with some help from her niece Juanita Kelsea, built for a museum to house her many artifacts and memorabilia. The contents were donated to the Mono County Museum and Historical Society. 1991 photo by B. Moore

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Personal interview Juanita Kelsea, Ucaipa; Ralph and Bambi Mecey, Burbank; Linda LaPierre, Yerington, NV; Ellen Miller, Lake Havasu, AZ; Arlene Reveal, Bridgeport; Elma and Harry Blaver, Lee Vining; Lily Mathiew, Lee Vining; Dr. and Mrs. Robert Denton, Bishop; Karen Cockrane, living on site of upside down house; Heidi Hess Griffin, Lee Vining.



RESOLUTION NO. 83-134

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,
COUNTY OF MONO, IN RECOGNITION OF, AND APPRECIATION TO,
NELLIE BLY O'BRYAN, LUNDY LAKE PIONEER

TS

WHEREAS, Nellie Bly O'Bryan was born in a log cabin in Oklahoma in the year 1893; moved to Hollywood, California in her teens where she worked as Charlie Chaplin's secretary, starred in 48 of his films, and when on location in Mammoth Lakes where "Thundering Herd" was filmed, Nellie realized that these were "her" mountains and she said goodbye to the Hollywood 'tinsel' world and moved to Mono County in 1939; and

WHEREAS, Nellie accepted the challenge of remote and snowbound winters wherein she built the Lundy Lake store, motel cabins and lodge, then known as "Happy Landing", resided in her snowbound and isolated resort during the long winters and served as a fishing and hunting guide to the many resort visitors during the ensuing seventeen years; and

WHEREAS, while residing for twenty-nine years in Mono County, Nellie was very active in promoting the County's recreational benefits and organized a Chamber of Commerce, attended the Sport Shows in Los Angeles and San Francisco, encouraging everyone to visit and enjoy the outdoor activities available in Mono County -- "a gem in a setting rare"; and

WHEREAS, in 1952, Nellie and her husband moved to the shores of Mono Lake where she built the famous "Upside Down House" and a museum to house her collection of historical artifacts that she collected over the years; and

WHEREAS, Nellie has quietly retired to the community of Lone Pine under Mt. Whitney, a tribute to a Mountain Lady, and has generously offered to donate her collection of Mono County writings, memorabilia and artifacts to the Mono County Historical Society and the Mono County Museum.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors, County of Mono, hereby extends their gratitude on behalf of the County's Historical Society to Nellie Bly O'Bryan for her generous contribution to Mono County's history, and wishes her happiness in her retirement years in Inyo County.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 12th day of JULY, 1983 by the following vote of said Board of Supervisors:

AYES: Supervisors Jencks, Johnson, Lawrence, Leydecker, Reid.
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

ATTEST:

By Marjorie E. Peigne
Marjorie E. (Pat) Peigne
Clerk to the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM

NEIL B. VAN WINKLE,
County Counsel/Atty. Asst.

By John M. Gallagher
John M. Gallagher
Deputy County Counsel

Date: 7/12/83



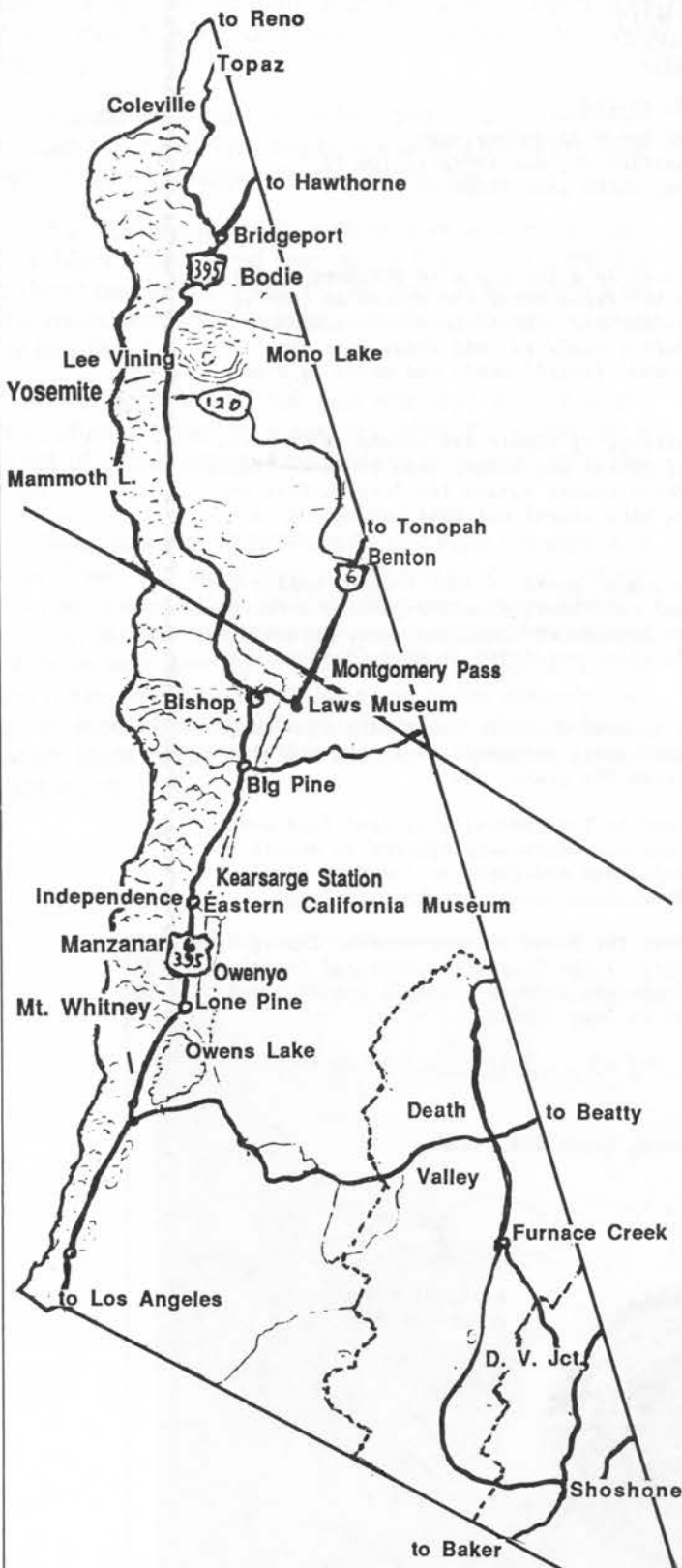
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PAUL F. JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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WILLIAM A. REID, DIST. #4
DISTRICT #4

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Andrea Lawrence
ANDREA LAWRENCE, DIST. #5

MONO COUNTY



INYO COUNTY

Editor's Corner



We are planning a new publication.

The October issue of THE ALBUM (Vol. V, No. 4) will mark the end of the fifth year we have been collecting the stories of your lives, your history, your memories, the record of how Inyo and Mono counties came to be what they are — not the dates, cold facts, and figures, but the personal recollections of the real people who lived our yesterdays and our past. You have shared all this with friends and visitors who care to understand and be a part of our communities, who travel here because they feel a bond with the country, and many who plan to live here along with us, when circumstances permit.

So we want to celebrate.

In the back pages you will find an ad for our new — well, something between a magazine and a book. It will be the same 8½ x 11 size as THE ALBUM, but will have a square back binding, and 160 pages of stories.

It will be called BEST OF THE ALBUM and will be reprints of articles a committee has chosen to represent this first five years. You can be a part of that committee if you overwhelm me with letters nominating your choices for BEST OF THE ALBUM before the end of August.

Since this would make such a nice gift, we're making every effort to get it out by mid-November. We are also planning to offer it for advance sales (ordered prior to November 1, 1992) for \$12.50. After that the price will be \$15.00. And by the way, we only plan to print 1,000.

We hope you like this idea. *

Seriously Enough...

This morning I fell to wondering what some of the women in this family would have said if they could have seen me washing down a handful of vitamins and miracle pills with my glass of reconstituted cran-raspberry juice.

Grandma believed in picking her medicines fresh from the garden, the forest, or the desert, unless she got them from the Indian ladies, but she sure wasn't going to let her family become some kind of chemical replacements for natural humans by taking in snake oil or Carter's Little Liver Pills. Grandpa even had a hard time convincing her that Nature's pure, harmless distillations of hops, grapes, or corn were acceptable in such emergencies as snake bite or holiday gatherings.

I remember Mama telling me about the time she stepped on a nail and Grandma healed it up with a poultice of warm pork fat, wrapped in boiled white sheets. I had a cough one winter that she cured with one of her mustard plasters — cured it almost down to the bone and I still didn't have enough skin left to sunburn by the time summer came. There was something she called cascara, but it was never applied to us kids — probably not poison enough. The only one of Grandma's cures we approved of was a nice, cool slap of mud on bee stings.

Mama was a believer in direct action. She cured us of even the impulse to report symptoms with her once and for all restorative, castor oil. "Put those long stockings on, Jane, or you'll catch cold," she'd say.

"Nah I won't. I'm plenty warm and I feel fine."

"Then hop on your bike and go over and change the water in the other field, for me," Dad would say.

"I can't. I don't feel good!" Out would come the castor oil. It didn't take much of that, you can bet, to keep us real healthy. Once a year, Mama felt compelled to give us a dose of the stuff anyway, but she did whip it to a froth with orange juice. Which tasted like castor oil flavored orange juice. We threatened everything from dying on the spot to returning the treatment along with the entire contents of our stomachs directly onto the kitchen floor. "Open your mouths," was her steady reply.

She finally took pity on her three little heathens, and found that cod liver oil could apparently do as much good, according to somebody — certainly not Dr. Spock who raised my girls! When that met with the same enthusiasm as castor oil, she graduated to mint-flavored cod liver oil. It was more palatable. In fact, if we squinched up our eyes when the big spoon came at us, it was as easy as swallowing a quart of worms.

by Jane Fisher

Mama was always upward bound, though, and we went through a whole progression of horehound candy (invented by someone who hated kids), squaw tea and chickweed tea, salt water to gargle and snuff (why we didn't drown in salt water 300 miles from the sea, I don't know), and overkill in cooked carrots.

There were a couple of pleasant remedies, one called Castoria and the other Ex-Lax. We never got a big enough spoonful of Castoria to suit our tastes and she kept the bottle hidden. Ex-Lax was banned from the family after the occurrence of a cousinly disaster a generation or so later when certain of Mama's grandchildren felt one cousin had fallen from grace at a family gathering, and encouraged her to believe that the package of chocolate flavored wafers was a candy bar. Since there were thirteen cousins involved, with twelve fingers pointing different directions, the only identifiable player was the victim.

We skipped a generation next, I being a strong believer in any help available: miracle medicines, shots, vitamins, or Dr. Spock — whatever it took to pass along responsibility. So Mama and her three Fisher granddaughters came into the herbs and natural medicines era together, leaving me gratefully out of it.

Dad was a major enthusiast of the idea, and he was of the persuasion that if one dosage worked well then two or more must work twice as well or at least twice as fast. This led to what we called his "compost," a robust mixture of chia seed, brewer's yeast, four kinds of powdered herbs said to perform six kinds of miraculous enhancements, cayenne, Golden Seal, burdock, chickweed, and vervain. As far as I can remember. The stuff was strong enough to exorcise demons and tame poltergeists. Of course, Dad was the one who read that a tea made from hops was good for toothache and earache, but after a few of his bottles of brew made with hops blew up in the cellar, Mama eradicated his earache medicine from the garden.

The great tonic, liniment, poultice, eye-ear-nose and throat wash, cold cure, and banisher of all ills, as far as our girls are concerned is Golden Seal. No matter what the ailment or injury, out comes the Golden Seal. Robert Himself used to hide from them if he had so much as a sneeze coming on because he declared they dosed him until he turned yellow and then gave him more Golden Seal to cure his jaundice.

My favorite medicine was juniper and I steadfastly continue with the treatment to this day. It is said to be an excellent gargle for the prevention of infectious diseases. A fine, clear liquid is made from the juice of the juniper berry, and combined with a splash of tonic, or some bitters and green olives, maybe a hint of Vermouth, you can't ask for a more palatable cure-all.

FISH TAILS

NO FISH, NO EAT
George L. Garrigues

As we neared our graduation from college, my roommate, Don, and I were ready to do something other than study books and listen to professors. After considerable discussion, we decided on a backpack trip over Bishop Pass into Dusy Basin. Fully aware that we were not in condition to go from sea level to 12,000 feet, we began a rigorous physical conditioning program of swimming several laps every day. It worked because when the day came, we were in excellent shape.

We camped at South Lake the night before to help acclimate ourselves to the altitude and were on the trail before sun up. We hit the top of the pass by mid-morning — two hours ahead of our schedule — and were in Dusy Basin by noon. We ate lunch and set up our camp before resting.

We explored the nearby country, looking down into the Kings Canyon Gorge and at the lakes in the basin. In late afternoon we set up our fishing rods and easily caught a nice mess of little golden trout. We cooked them for our dinner and sat back with a cup of coffee watching the sun sink low in the west.

Two other backpackers made their way down the trail and stopped at our camp to chat. They told us that they were college students from Cal at Berkeley. Don and I, both loyal Stanford men and very knowledgeable of the intense rivalry between the two campuses, perked up our ears and let it go at that.

They continued past us a hundred yards or so, set up their camp and began to fish. Don and I sat back and watched. They whipped the water with everything they had and didn't catch a single fish. As they passed our camp, they told us that they were on a two week trip and only had food for five days! They planned to catch fish for the rest of their meals and they hoped the fishing got better soon.

Don looked at me and I looked at him. Neither of us said a word. We picked up our rods and had five or six fish each in a few minutes. We handed them to the Cal students and told them they needed some fishing lessons.

Since that day, I have sometimes wondered how well they ate on the rest of their trip.



Best of the Album

To celebrate our fifth year of *THE ALBUM*, *Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono*, we are inviting you to participate in the selection of your favorite articles. They will be reproduced just as they are in the magazine, in a book bound, 160 page publication.

This is a chance to have some of the stories you may have missed in the three volumes that are already collectors' items. Because so many people have wanted this collection as a Christmas gift, we plan to have it ready by mid-November. "BEST OF THE ALBUM" makes an ideal gift for relatives and friends, visitors who enjoy Inyo-Mono, history buffs, teachers, students, or the waiting room of your favorite professional person.

This is also your opportunity to order copies in advance for a limited time at a special discount.

BY AUGUST 31 you may send in your choices. An informal note to *THE ALBUM*, P.O. Box 787, Bishop, CA 93515 will do.

BY SEPTEMBER 30 you may order "BEST OF THE ALBUM" for \$12.50. After that, we must charge \$15. These prices include tax and shipping.

(Mail prior to Sept. 30, 1992) Please send _____ copies of BEST OF THE ALBUM at \$12.50, including tax and postage, to:

(After Sept. 30, 1992) Please send _____ copies of BEST OF THE ALBUM at \$15, including tax and postage, to:

Please send _____ copies with gift card(s) to:

Chalfant Press, Inc., P.O. Box 787, Bishop, CA 93515

(from) _____

Enclosed is \$ _____

Letters to the Editor

SHARING MEMORIES

...I am another reader who has a delightful time reading each issue as soon as it arrives. You do a great job in organizing and producing an interesting and informative magazine.

How else would I have acquainted myself with the Sherwins, Wattersons, George Brown, Leroy Cline and on and on. You have a skilled staff of writers, several of whom I am acquainted with, ie: Garrigues and Kelsey... As you are aware I have been a collector of interesting data such as the complete file of "Seriously Enough" columns. I have now switched to THE ALBUM as a collectors' item.

I have included a group of old California and Owens Valley maps which can be added to your collection. In retrospect, you may find it interesting to see a map of Los Angeles prior to freeways; the Owens Valley with Hwy. 395 routed through Aberdeen, Keough's Hot Springs, Paradise Camp and Little Round Valley... no Mammoth ski facilities. The railroad from Keeler to Laws was apparently still operating (March 1937). Have fun with the maps... *Mel Stine, Reno, NV*

Mel Stine is a former resident of Bishop... should we say dislocated?... who presented me with a complete collection of my columns clipped from the Register and bound by the year. A very thoughtful person. We'll share some parts of the maps in the future... Jane

MORE FRIENDS OF INYO-MONO

I purchased a copy of THE ALBUM from the Big Rock Marina at June Lake this year during the opening weekend of fishing season. I commend you for its publication. The area and stories about Owens Valley have fascinated me since my first trip into the area in about 1956. My dad and uncle fished many of the areas around Bishop including backpacking into the high country back in the '40s... *Glenn Young, Loomis, CA*

A year races by so quickly! It's already been two weeks since our final ALBUM issue of the year arrived, with the reminder to renew! We treasure every issue! (Nothing else gets done here at home on the day THE ALBUM arrives in the mail, while we devour the stories from cover to cover). We are quite familiar with most of the sites (from Shoshone to Coleville) and are fortunately familiar with many of the families. It's almost like a revisit to the locations of earlier explorations, but with fresher, far more intimate and more thorough insights... We find many of the stories very well written — all are fascinating and most enjoyable. We fondly wish endless success for THE ALBUM!! *Lottie and Rudy Schwandt, Wellington, NV*

Keep up the good work! We look forward to each issue with much anticipation and are not disappointed. Our visits to the Bishop area are much more interesting after reading the stories in THE ALBUM. *Gordon L. Morgan, Long Beach, CA*

A LITTLE LEG PULLING

I really enjoy reading THE ALBUM and finding out all our area has to offer. However, in Volume V No. 1, page 27, I find the last paragraph rather confusing. I am neither a geologist or calendar-maker, but I think it would be rather newsworthy if Mammoth Mtn. had suddenly gained 3,947 ft. from its present elevation of 11,053 ft. — or if we had two Tuesdays in one week.

If Garrigues makes it up to the 15,000 ft. level of Mammoth Mtn., He will probably find every geologist in the whole world up there trying to figure out how the mountain grew that much. They'll probably need at least 376 Tuesdays that week to do it... *Doug Whitman, Big Pine, CA*

That will teach you not to tease our readers, George! Have you read any of George's fish stories, Mr. Whitman? He swears they are true... Jane

SOME OLD FRIENDS

Thank you for renewing our friendships... I've started with Vol. I and was especially surprised and happy to learn that as an employee of Union Oil Co. in Lone Pine, I delivered gasoline to your parents at "The Fort"... Also I remember your mother and Paul Givens of Bishop who lived on Academy Ave. when I came from the Isle of Man in November, 1915, at the age of 10... *Geoffrey and Hattie Watterson, Oceanside, CA*

Paul Givens was my mother's cousin, and there will be more to come on that subject when Lila Bauter finishes her photo essay on the Roberts branch of the family in Round Valley... Jane

I certainly enjoy THE ALBUM. I was born in Bishop and started to school in Manzanar, in fact went through 4th grade there.

My grandfather came to the Valley as a young man. He was Asa M. Cline. My grandmother, Louella "Lola" Scott Cline Walker, came to the Valley as a small child of about 4 years old. My mother, Eva M. Cline Hughes, was born in Whittier but raised in Owens Valley. My father, Lloyd "Boots" Hughes came into the Valley as a child. We moved to Nevada in 1930.

My three sisters were also born in Owens Valley — Ruth in Bishop, Mabel on the Len Summers ranch out of Laws, and Grace in Manzanar. Mama is still living. She celebrated her 90th birthday last July. She lives in Yerington. Mama lives alone and takes care of herself. Her brother Asa Virgil Cline passed away in Sacramento on March 16, 1992... *Eva L. Winder, Fallon, NV*

I have just finished reading Vol. V No. 2 and enjoyed it a great deal. I am a former resident of Bishop and subscriber to the Register. I am told that you are the mayor of Bishop presently. I believe that it was 1928 that my father C. H. Rhudy held that same title.

On page 55 of the above ALBUM issue under the heading "Memories to Share" you refer to a Mrs. Ruth Keleman, Bellingham, Washington. She states in the article that her daughter-in-law Laurie is the daughter of Sam Smith. I understand Dr. Sam Smith has passed away but when I was a member of the City of Bishop Sam and I were very, very close friends, Church, Scouts, etc., to say nothing of many school experiences. I would like very much to contact Ruth Keleman and am wondering if you might help with a more complete address? I would appreciate it... *Vance Rhudy, Riverside, CA*

We put Mr. Rhudy in touch with Mrs. Keleman and would be glad to do the same for any readers by forwarding your letter to the person you'd like to contact... Jane

STORIES FROM THE FAMILY TREASURY

My father, Peter E. Binder, spent some time in Beveridge around 1906 or 1907. It seems that mining claims had to be occupied a certain number of days during the year. So around New Year's people were hired to occupy the claims to satisfy the legal requirements. My father and his partner were sitting on one claim and further up the canyon a man and a woman were occupying another. They were not married, and for some strange reason this infuriated my father's partner. When he went down to Independence he filed a complaint charging them with "notorious cohabitation."

Since there was a complaint made there had to be a hearing. The judge heard the complaining witness and the couple involved. He then asked my father what he thought about the situation. "Well," my father said, "they were certainly cohabiting together. However, since only a few people in the mountains knew about it, there was no way it could be called 'notorious.'" The judge was pleased with this opinion and promptly dismissed the case.

My father worked at Cerro Gordo and helped build the tramway up from Keeler. He was a member of the survey crew that laid out the route of the aqueduct, and worked at the Haiwee dam site. He even drove a freight wagon a few times between Lone Pine and Mojave — and learned about mules and hard way.

Dad was well known in Owens Valley and had many friends, among them John Lubken and the Henry Dearborns. He and my mother (Georgina Gnad) were married June 20, 1911 at the old Independence Hotel and left the valley the same day. In 1912 he came to El Segundo and was elected mayor from 1922 - 1944. He was a judge a couple of years and then retired. He died ten years ago at the age of 98, mentally sharp to the end. I wished he could have read the article on Beveridge.

I have enclosed a copy of the newspaper clipping (Chalfant Press, no doubt) noting my parents' marriage and subsequent Not-so-quiet departure... *George E. Binder, El Segundo, CA*

Mr. Binder enclosed the following clipping from a 1911 newspaper:

"Married in Independence," reads the headline. "On Tuesday, June 20th, Miss Gena Gnad and Mr. Peter Binder were united in marriage by the Hon. Judge Dehy at the Independence Hotel. Miss Gnad was a very pleasing and popular young lady of Lone Pine. Mr. Binder is a young man well known and highly respected in the valley. The young couple thought they were going to get out of town quietly but the telephone had been at work ahead of them, and delegates of their friends were waiting at every station. Rice, old shoes, good wishing and lots of joshing were in evidence all along the line. The good will and God-speed of their many friends follow the happy couple to their new home, which will be in Corona where Mr. Binder has purchased some land. A. FRIEND"

THOSE NOTES WE LOVE

Thank you Jane Fisher and Co. for a fine ALBUM. Enjoyed your book too, Jane. Read it twice!... *Kel Heinrich, Earlimart, CA*

Your magazine is how I survive this time of year. Please keep up the great work... *Eugenia Bernacchi, Camarillo, CA*

AND A RECIPE FROM A WORLD TRAVELER

John Drake is a railroad buff who travels the world, reporting his adventures, sending mementos from Australia, Russia, Colorado and other such foreign places. He is an accomplished camper and apparently doesn't deny himself the sybaritic luxuries even under the most trying of circumstance, as witness his

CAMPFIRE DOBOS TORTE

If you can make pancakes on a campfire, you can make a dodos torte. Just be careful assembling during "yellow jacket" season.

Follow basic rule for sourdough pancakes. Supplement with more eggs, butter (flavor), sugar. Make enough batter for 16-20+ large-diameter crepes. Cool.

Make a filling of whipped cream and cocoa mix, enough to schmear each layer thickly, except top! Assemble and schmear outside with (preferably) bittersweet chocolate icing (instant fudge will do).

When cool and set, glaze with hot liquid caramel that "glazes." Decorate with maraschino cherries, or other fruits glaze.

Compare with recipes in, e.g., antique Rombauer Joy of Cooking.

The idea of "glazing" sounds horrific, actually it is the simplest. Just don't burn yourself. Making the crepes is touchy. Right pan, right fire. First two spoil, others wrinkle flipping. Be bold! The icing is supposed to hide faults, not just be sweet. Ragged edges, failures can be refried, sprinkled with cinnamon sugar, cocoa mix — feed the Camprobbers?

I would not recommend this for bear country. Yellow jackets are enough pain. Offerings must be made to them? Hang apple slices, or raw bacon from tree limbs around campsite. Watch your beer can! One, thankfully, drowned in mine. Swallowed it, woke next morning with worst hangover since I stopped drinking martinis.

Be bold! Work fast, especially with caramel. Beats toasting marshmallows??? ✚



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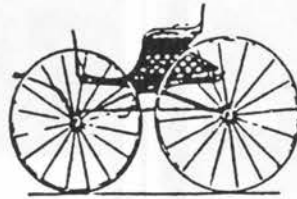
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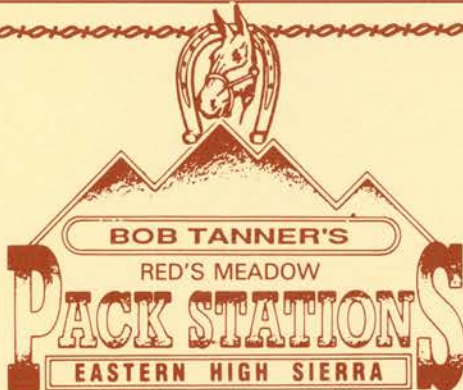
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