

# The Album

## *Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono*

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

Vol. V, No. 4



### INSIDE

Mary Austin  
Skinner  
Mammoth vignette  
Salt Tram  
Coleville Goens  
WILD horse drive  
Bishop Creek battle  
Sparkplug Clarksons



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

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**Cover Photo:** This photograph of a pioneer wife and the other photos and documents in "A Skinner Family Record" on page 2, were contributed by Patricia Boyer of Lone Pine, California, who writes. "Grandma Maggie Skinner - she had the most wonderful, soft lap! She died when I was very young, so I don't remember her, very much."

*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.

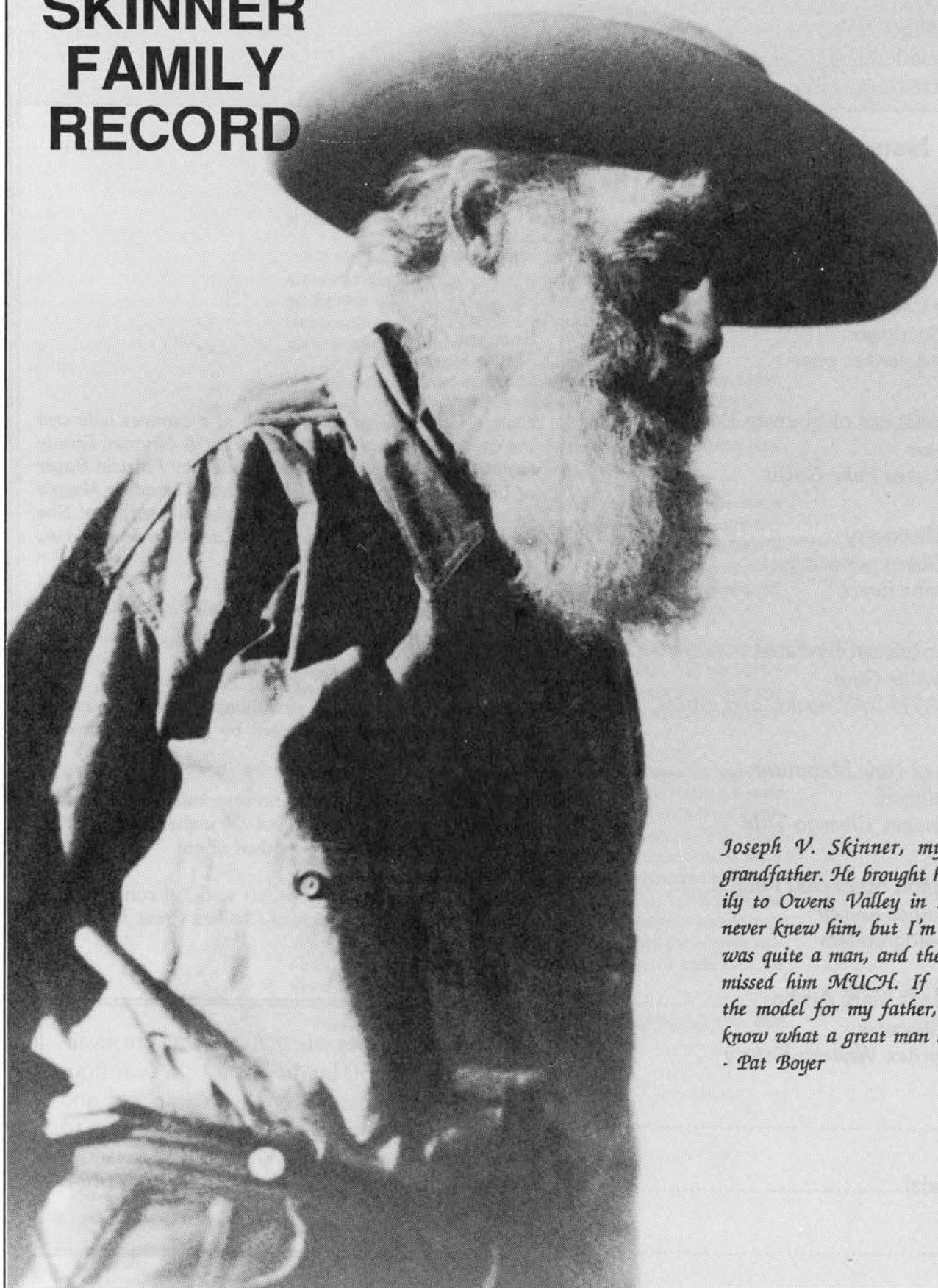
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# A SKINNER FAMILY RECORD



*Joseph V. Skinner, my great grandfather. He brought his family to Owens Valley in 1892. I never knew him, but I'm told he was quite a man, and the family missed him MUCH. If he was the model for my father, then I know what a great man he was.*  
- Pat Boyer



by Frances V. MacIver, daughter-in-law of Jessie Skinner MacIver. Her record, photos and captions courtesy of Patricia Skinner Boyer, Lone Pine.

Joseph V. Skinner, whom I shall refer to later as Grandfather Skinner, came West in 1878. The Skinners were early settlers of New York State, coming there from Holland. Joseph was the eldest of ten children born to the John Skinners. John Skinner, who was born in the Mohawk Valley, New York, moved to Iowa with his bride in 1838. Before leaving New York he had lived in the same town as Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader, but chose to move to Iowa to take up a homestead as he was not interested in joining the new religious movement. Their first child, Joseph, was born at Ft. Madison, Iowa in 1839, the first male white child to be born there. In 1840, Charles Skinner, who also came to Inyo County, was born.

As a young man Joe Skinner became interested in mining and in 1859 went to Colorado. When the Civil War broke out he enlisted in a Colorado regiment which fought the Indians. He had great tales to tell his children and grandchildren of his encounters with the Indians, two of his favorites being the Battles of Sand Creek and of Apache Canyon. At Sand Creek he saw an Indian brave behind a log, then felt something warm on the side of his head. An arrow had grazed along his temple, ear and scalp, leaving a scar on his scalp where the hair never grew back. Charles Skinner enlisted in an Iowa regiment.

Joe Skinner returned to Iowa when the war was over. There he met his future wife, Marguerite Jane Robinson, who was attending college at the time. She was born in Pennsylvania in 1844. She was named after her great-aunt Marguerite de Vini, who was said to be a most charming red headed French woman. All of her

other ancestors were of Scotch origin. At the age of sixteen she was married to Ashel Hall, who was killed in the Civil War. To them a son was born. Her family moved to Iowa in 1866. There she completed her college education and taught school. In 1867 she and Joe Skinner were married.

In 1876 they moved to Missouri where he engaged in the business of buying and selling cattle. Joe had developed asthma and the doctors told him he must go to some other climate if he hoped to recover. He wrote to a friend, Mary Huber, whose husband was superintendent of The Yellow Jack Mine at Virginia City. They sent word that he could get work there and to come. He travelled by train arriving in Reno in March 1878. He spent one winter in Virginia City as under-sheriff.

Joe Skinner then traveled to Bridgeport where the Barnes brothers, whom he had known previously, were located. They had a Way Station. Joe homesteaded a ranch in Big Meadows and started a fast freight. He hauled perishables from Carson to Bodie for \$3.50 a pound. He saved his profits and with them bought big teams and wagons in order to haul heavy freight.

In 1879 Joe sent for his family to come west. By this time there were five children. Jessie, the eldest was twelve, then Max, Fred, June and Bill, the youngest, aged two. Most of the trip was made by train taking about two weeks. The train was equipped with bunks where they could sleep and a stove to cook on. The mother took quantities of bologna, sausage, and french twist bread and bought food wherever available along the way. Jessie has told me that even to this day she can't bear the thought of bologna and french twist bread. They saw many large herds of wild buffalo, antelope and deer, the train having to stop several times to let them pass. The train which preceded them had been attacked by Indians. Because of this, great precautions were taken on this trip — the train travelling by night

without lights as a safety measure.

Joe Skinner met his family in Reno. They went to Carson on the Virginia-Truckee railroad, where they left the train and travelled in a covered wagon to Bridgeport. An overnight stop was made at Sweetwater where Tom Williams, his wife, and daughter had a Way Station. This was the same house which Tom Williams, of Bishop, bought later and where many Bishop people went yearly for a big overnight old-time dancing party. It recently burned.

The Skinners arrived in Bridgeport March 11, 1880, to find the valley covered with snow and the weather bitter cold. The ranch which he was homesteading is now known as the Hunnewell Ranch. The father made a living for the family by teaming from the saw mills to Bodie. The children went to school in Bridgeport for one year. Among their schoolmates was the late Jess Summers and his sister Mrs. Mary Kinney. Grandmother Skinner has told me how very, very homesick she was and how she longed for her friends and the green wooded hills of Missouri. When she could bear it no longer she would go out in the tall rabbit brush and have her cry out, then return with a smile to her family, because she knew that for the sake of Grampa Skinner's health they must remain in the West.

In 1881 they turned the homestead over to Hunnewell and went by team over Sonora Pass to Stanislaus County. Grampa Skinner and Jimmy Barnes had a very successful winter using their teams to plow the wheat fields. Jimmy Barnes wanted to go back to Bridgeport, so in February of 1882 they started back. They camped for some time on the White River waiting for the Green Horn Pass to be opened. Jessie remembers stopping at Coyote Holes where she saw barrels of water and grain which had been left by other travellers for their return trips.

The family arrived in Lone Pine May 10, 1882. Grandmother Skinner looked at the green valley and towering mountains and said, "This is

where we are going to stay." And they did.

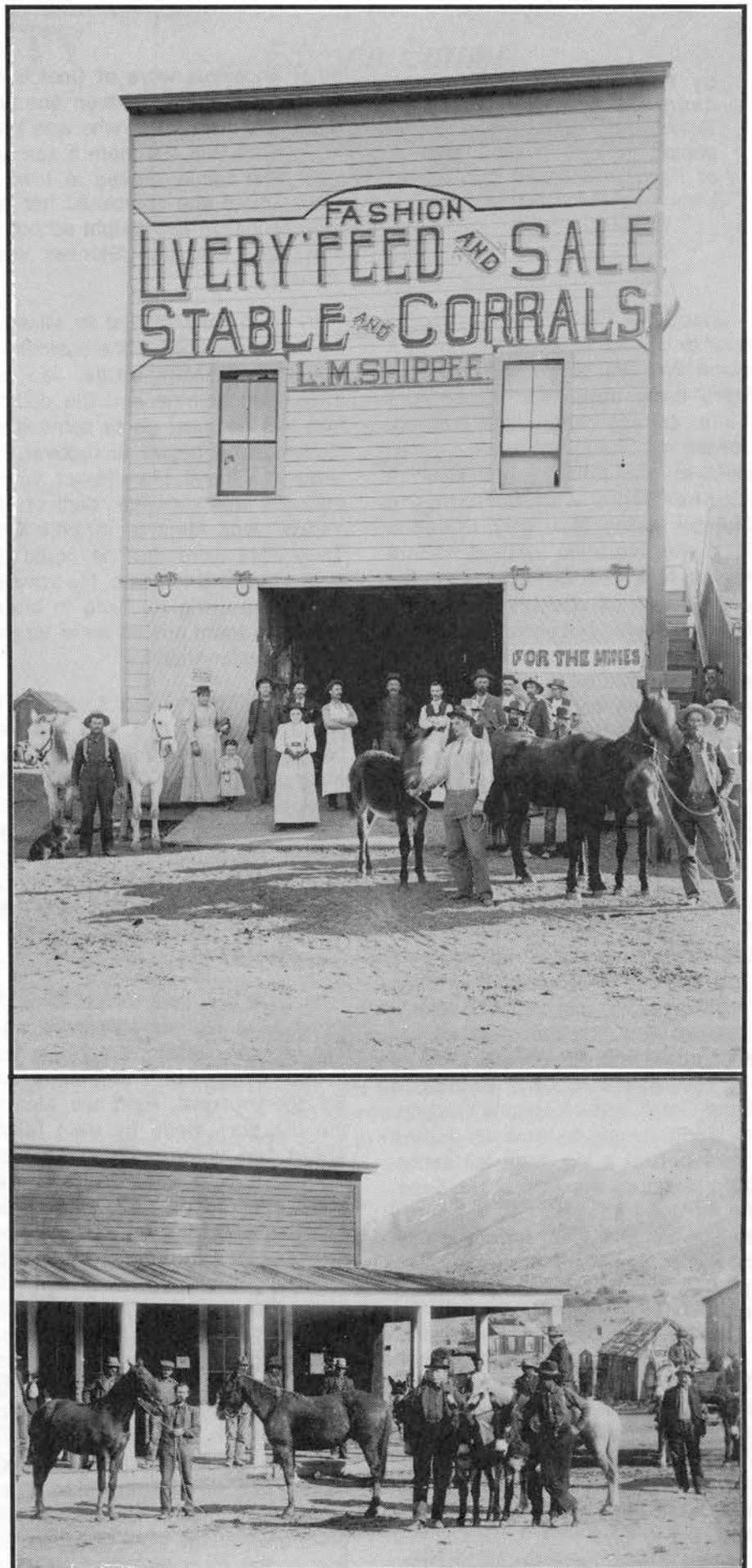
They rented the McCall Ranch, which is now owned by the City of Los Angeles. Here they lived for two years. It was at this ranch that their youngest child, Lloyd, was born in 1882. Of course, by this time the Indians and Mexicans would have fights. Several times when Jessie and Max were walking to school they would find a dead Indian or Mexican lying beside the path.

Two years later the family moved to the Castro house in Lone Pine. Grandfather Skinner hauled freight from Mojave to Bishop. On the return trip he would carry wheat and ore. At one time he and one of the Schobers burned and hauled charcoal to Owens Lake, where it was shipped across the lake on the Bessie Brady to the Swansea Smelter. The remains of these kilns can still be seen near Cartago. He also hauled some of the equipment to Saline Valley, a very difficult task.

In 1886 Charles Skinner, Joe's brother, came to Inyo County. He took up a homestead at Georges Creek. A short time later Grampa Skinner moved his family to Georges Creek where he too had taken up a homestead. They lived there a few years, during which time he became interested in the Stevens Canal Company, organized by Colonel Stevens. This canal was to irrigate land west of the river between Independence and Lone Pine. It was east of where the present highway runs. He worked hard on this project, putting everything they owned into it, against the better judgment of Grandma Skinner.

*Above: Joseph Skinner's Mojave freight stop*

*Below: The Darwin freight stop*





She was right, for the Canal Company went broke and so did they, losing everything but a fifty cent piece, a cow, some hay and one team. A neighboring family by the name of Simms had a fruit ranch. They offered Grandma Skinner the excess fruit which she could use. She dried quantities of fruit and vegetables. This helped tide them over until spring.

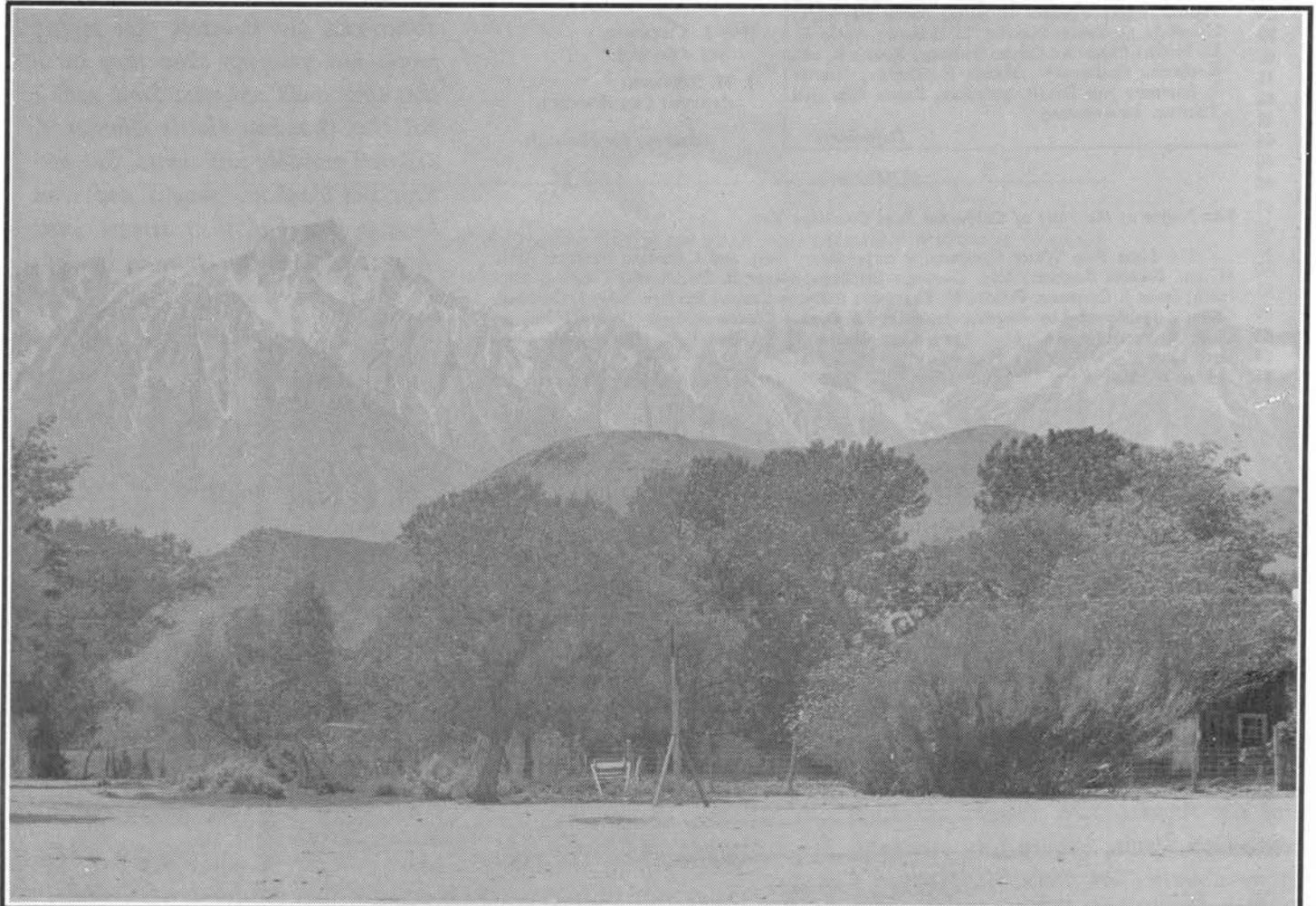
In the meantime, Jessie had married Finley MacIver. They had homesteaded a ranch on the east side of the river near the Reward Mine. The Skinners decided to move to the east side and take up land there. Finley MacIver was superintendent for the

Carson Company which built the East Side Canal to irrigate those ranches. Things went well for awhile. The soil was good. Soon the dry land had become lush fields of alfalfa and blooming orchards.

The East Side Canal Company brought in a colony of Quakers to settle around Owenyo, selling the canal to them. The Quakers of course, were good people, but coming from Pennsylvania had had no experience with irrigation, or reclaiming land from the desert. As a result many could not take it, or make a success of it. When the City of Los Angeles began buying land the Quakers were the first to sell — about 1905. Because the Skinner

and MacIver ranches were below the Quaker people's project, the problem of getting water through the canal became impossible. In 1908 the Skinners sold the ranch to the City of Los Angeles. They purchased the old Lubkin place in Lone Pine — a ten acre block where they lived with their sons Lloyd, Bill, and Bill's family. Later Bill and his wife Charlotte bought the place, remodeling it into a charming home, and selling to the City of Los Angeles about 1932. A piece of the property given to Max is still owned by his widow. Grandfather Skinner died at his home in Lone Pine in 1922. Grandmother Skinner moved to Eugene, Oregon, with Bill and his family. It was there that she passed away in 1933. Both are buried at Independence.

*When the family moved from the ranch at Reward, they bought about a block of land bounded by Washington Street, Brewery Street, and Mountain View (Lone Pine). This picture is the view from Brewery Street to the west, taken from the Bill Skinner section of the property. - Pat Boyer*



# IN THE SUPERIOR COURT

— OF THE —

## STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF INYO

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION within the State of California, and THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

THE LONE PINE WATER COMPANY, A CORPORATION; Benj. and Catherine Bonham; Wm. M. and Bernice Bonham; Mrs. Dominga Birchaga; Oscar B. Burkhardt; Cristobal Carrasco; Jesus J. Carrasco; Felicita M. Carrasco; Filiberto Castro; Rt. Rev. John J. Cantwell, Catholic Bishop of Los Angeles; Juan De La Cerda; County of Inyo, Geo. W. Naylor, Chas. A. Partridge, John H. Lubken, Chas. Brown, C. R. Ford, Supervisors; J. W. Cowser; Emma, Mabel, Magdalena, Manuel, and Stella Diaz; Elija Duarte; Elisa V. Fear; Robert W. Harry and Gladstone Harry; David Holland; Interstate Telegraph Company, F. O. Dolson, Vice-Pres., H. D. Weis, Asst. Secy.; Dolores C. Jobin; A. H. Johnson; O. C. Johnson; Mark B. Lacey; Lone Pine School District; Maurice L. Harbach, Bessie Shellenbarger, Dean L. Sears, Trustees; Jessie F. and J. K. McIver; Wm. E. and Aurelia McLean; Margaret E. and G. F. Marsh; Methodist Episcopal Church; A. W. Ramsey, John C. Morris, Albert Johnson, as Trustees of Mt. Whitney Lodge No. 97 of the Knights of Pythias; Elina C. Olivas; D. R. and Annie M. Oliver; Protestant Episcopal Bishop of San Joaquin; Candelario D. and Pauline Ruiz; Ygnacio C. Ruiz; Nellie Reynolds; Herminia G. Sainz; Harriet T. Skinner; Annie E. H. Smith; Carmelita Olivas Southey; Russel B. and Katherine Spainhower; Maude E. Stearns; Charles I. Sumner; Jess Sutliff, guardian, Estate Ella Bell Thomas, Incompetent,

Defendants.

No. 3636.

RAY L. CHESEBRO,  
City Attorney,

J. M. STEVENS,  
Assistant City Attorney,

Attorneys for Plaintiffs.

### SUMMONS.

The People of the State of California Send Greetings To:

The Lone Pine Water Company, a corporation; Benj. and Catherine Bonham; Wm. M. and Bernice Bonham; Mrs. Dominga Birchaga; Oscar B. Burkhardt; Cristobal Carrasco; Jesus J. Carrasco; Felicita M. Carrasco; Filiberto Castro; Rt. Rev. John J. Cantwell, Catholic Bishop of Los Angeles; Juan De La Cerda; County of Inyo, Geo. W. Naylor, Chas. A. Partridge, John H. Lubken, Chas. Brown, C. R. Ford, Supervisors; J. W. Cowser; Emma, Mabel, Magdalena, Manuel, and Stella Diaz; Elija Duarte; Elisa V. Fear; Robert W. Harry and Gladstone Harry; David Holland; Interstate Telegraph Company;

I thought this was very interesting. When I was a small child, we lived a block off Main Street, in the middle of the block. There was a stream flowing down the street on each end of the block, and another ran down the alley, directly behind our house. We did not have water rights, but it seems obvious that many of the people who had streams running past their property had had rights, which they had already lost by the time suit No. 3636 was executed... and this was the end of all the little streams that ran through town. I remember some of the discussions, but it seems that mostly people just gave up, since they knew that they could not win. How sad! I feel that Grandma Hattie (Harriet T. Skinner) probably just signed, but perhaps the Bonhams fought and won because they had their stream until they closed down the dairy in the '40s or '50s. - Pat Boyer



Los Angeles, Calif.,  
Feb. 24, 1936.

To the Owners of Water Rights in Lone Pine Creek:

The City of Los Angeles owns a large area of agricultural land in the watershed of Lone Pine Creek, with water rights appurtenant thereto.

It desires to change the use of such water from its agricultural land and turn the water into the aqueduct for domestic use in Los Angeles. We have, therefore, prepared papers asking the court to authorize such transfer in order that all other owners of water in Lone Pine Creek might be fully informed of the intention of the City.

A copy of the Complaint will be served upon each individual owner of a water right in Lone Pine Creek, and such individual owner may either answer the Complaint in court, or not, as he may desire.

When the case comes up in court, the City of Los Angeles will ask for a judgment determining the right to transfer the agricultural water it owns from the lands near Lone Pine on which the water has been used heretofore, for municipal uses in Los Angeles hereafter, and Los Angeles will not ask for any other judgment against any of the defendants. Los Angeles does not ask for any of the water owned by any of the defendants.

Los Angeles does not intend to ask the court for authority to change the place or nature of use of any of the water appurtenant to the lots or tracts of land in the town of Lone Pine owned by Los Angeles.

If any defendant desires more time than is allowed by the summons within which to investigate the matter, we will gladly stipulate that he may have such time, and we will explain the policy and purpose of the City to any one interested in the water rights of Lone Pine Creek.

RAY L. CHESEBRO, City Attorney of  
City of Los Angeles.

by - J. M. STEVENS, Assistant  
City Attorney of Los Angeles.

CD:ES

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Nov

1922

DAY	DESCRIPTION	CHARGES	CREDITS	BALANCE
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Jan 1	100# flour 650 2 catsup 70 2 vinegar 50	770		
2	8 bread 1.00	120		
5	3 Powder Sugar 45 1 Chili Powder 40 1st Vanilla 95	180		
7	2 1st Ext 1.00 Cheese 2.45	345		
	By Cash		20.00	
	1 1/2 Cans Spinach 2.20 1 Can Lt Beans 2.30	4.50		
	5 1/2 1/2 1 1/2 Soda 10 Macaroni 35	2.95		
	100# Sperry Flour 670 1 Lamp Chimney 30	7.00		
10	1 3/4 Macaroni 70	90		
12	3 Catsup 1.05 2 1/2 Lge 30 2 1/4 Chiles 3.00	4.35		
	6 Mustard 70	70		
19	100# pick 20 1st Sugar 95	9.75		
	1 Case Milk 5.75 20 1st Salt 70 1st Can Ex 1.00	7.45		
	1 Vanilla 5 1.00 5 1st Powder Sugar 7.50	16.50		
19	By Cash		25.00	
		54.80	45.00	
23	5 Raisins 75 6 Apples 1.50 Chili Powder 40	2.65		
	14 Milk 5.75 10 1st Beans 60 4 1/4 Coffee 5.60	11.95		
	1st Spuds 3.75 1 Case B. Berries 7.00	10.75		
	1 Case Peaches 5.50 Honey 10 2 1/2 1st Blot 2.00	15.80		
	Gloss 40	40		
28	100# Sperry Flour 7.00 1 3/4 Bacon 6.18	13.38		
	Western Oil 1.35 1/2 Case Eggs 9.75	11.10		
30	1 Case Corn Meal 5.75 1 1/2 Spuds 3.75	9.70		
		130.13	45.00	85.13
	Total	85.13		
	Paid in Full			
	Jan 31 1922			
	M. Skinner			

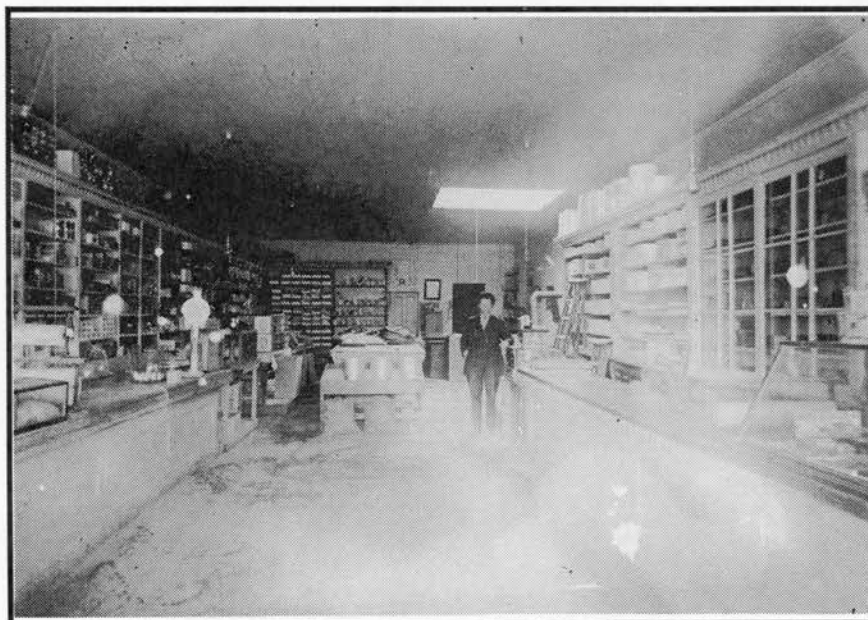
Opposite

Above left: Harriet, 8, and Fred Wilbert, 12 years old.

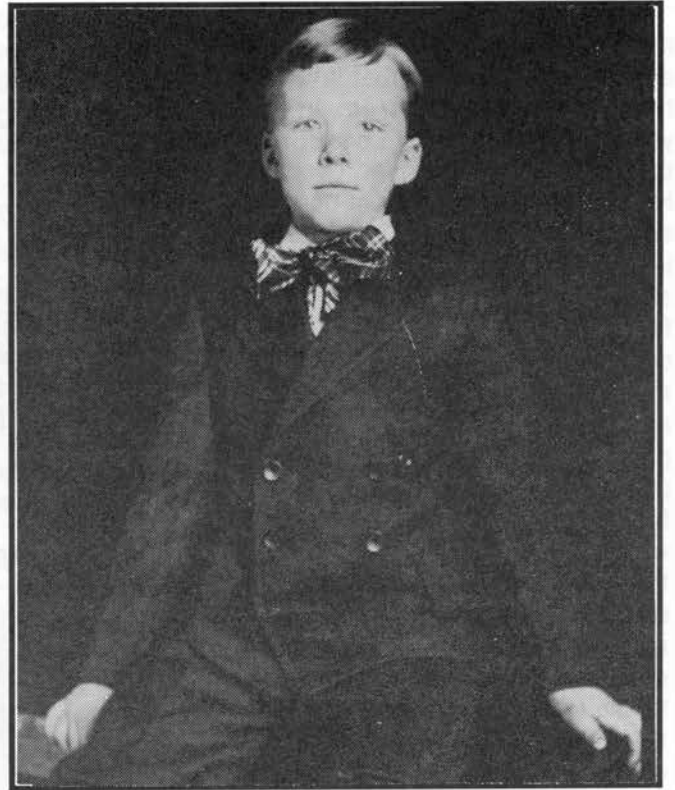
Below left: Harriet Wilbert Skinner of San Francisco, before she became a Harvey Girl. She told me that her father deserted the family and her mother supported them by taking in sewing for the prostitutes, who gave her the leftover fabric. Grandma said she was the best-dressed kid in San Francisco. Later, she was sent to live with some friends in another area, where her Mom believed the environment was better, and she attended a better school. As she matured, it became necessary for her to support herself and becoming a Harvey Girl was a very respectable way for a young girl to do so. She married Max Skinner; they met in Mojave when she was a Harvey Girl and he was hauling freight from Darwin and Owens Valley to Mojave.

Far right: William VanZandt Skinner (my Dad), born on Skinner Ranch at Reward, Owens Valley, in 1902 to Max and Harriet. (above) Don't know how old... looks about 8 or 9. They moved from the ranch when he was about 9, so this may have been taken after they moved to Lone Pine. (below) High School graduation picture... his was only the second class to graduate from Lone Pine, and Billy was the only one in his class. - Pat Boyer

This is the interior of the Skinner Store, and I believe this is Max. Grandpa Max still had the store when I was a little girl, and I loved going there to visit... the skylight was so fascinating to me, the hook-grabber that he used to grab cans from the top shelf... how I longed to get my hands on it. There were crackers and pickles in barrels, just like the stories I've read about country stores. This store was located where La Florista now stands... same building, remodeled.







Joe Skinner was a man of high moral character and a good husband and father. He was a great favorite of the women and children. In later years when he lived in Lone Pine all the youngsters called him "Grandad." He always raised plenty of pumpkins so all the kids could have jack-o-lanterns for Hallowe'en. His wife was an outstanding woman, raising a fine family and taking an active part in community activities. She was a good manager and even in hard times always managed to have something good to eat. She was famous for her pies. When she had nothing else for fillings she would make "sugar" pie, which I hear was something out of this world. Grandfather Skinner was a staunch Republican; his wife was just as staunch a Democrat, but they never let this hinder the harmony of their household. However, as a result of this division of political beliefs, some of the children grew up to be rabid Democrats, others rabid Republicans, and what arguments they would have!

Both the Skinners were great believers in education; at the time their children were going to school, they were fortunate in having an unusual and outstanding teacher — a man by the name of Mr. Janviere. He was a Yale graduate and a born teacher. Grandmother Skinner was an outstanding mathematician. She could help the children with their arithmetic, while Grandfather Skinner liked literature. Every night he would gather his flock about him and read the classics aloud. As a result of being exposed to the best prose and poetry from the time they were too young to even understand, the children grew up with a vast knowledge of literature. Uncle Bill can still remember and recite Shakespeare and other poets by the hour. As an example of his proficiency, although he is not a college graduate, he was invited to address a seminar at the University of Oregon on the subject of Shakespeare.

At one of these sessions which was being held immediately following luncheon on a warm day, Uncle Bill was sitting next to a very prim little nun. While someone was droning on sleep caught up with Uncle Bill. His

head began to nod, then sink lower and lower toward the nun's shoulder until it rested there. She sat perfectly still not moving a muscle. Aunt Charlotte sat paralyzed, finally giving a loud cough to awaken him. The nun's eyes twinkled and a quick smile crossed her lips.

Jessie refused to go to San Francisco to school, because she knew if she did she would have to take the examinations and teach school. She had a perfect horror of teaching. She

married Finley MacIver, a native of Scotland; and to them were born four children: John, Marguerite, Joe, and June. In 1909 Uncle Charlie Skinner moved to Bishop buying five acres of land north of Bishop and building a home there for Jessie and her four children, who moved to Bishop the same year. There she remained until the children were ready for college. She then moved to Reno for a few years, after which she returned to Bishop.

*Harriet (Mrs. Max) Skinner with Catherine and Billy. A third child, Mary, was born later. (Mary became the wife of Howard Hopkins, who owned Hopkins Hardware in Lone Pine and was an Inyo County Supervisor for 16 years — four terms — between 1956 and 1972)*





Max, the second child, had an opportunity to take the examination for West Point. He passed the tests and would have received the appointment, but had the misfortune of having caught a cold while riding from Lone Pine to Mojave by mule. The cold settled in his ear, causing an infection which disqualified him. He worked on the aqueduct. While at Mojave he met his future wife, Hattie Wilbert, who was a San Francisco girl. They made their home in Lone Pine. For many years Max owned a general merchandise store. After selling the store he became an insurance agent and later Justice of the Peace. He died in Lone Pine. His widow, three children, Catherine, Bill, and Mary, and their families still live in Lone Pine.

Fred, the third child, left Inyo at an early age, only returning for brief visits. He became a photographer and took many artistic pictures of the local scenery. He married a charming school teacher who survives him.

June and Bill were sent to San Francisco to school. June attended the California School of Fine Arts, while Bill went to high school and to Piatzoni's Art School. Tragedy struck the family for the first time after June had returned to Inyo to teach school. She was taken desperately ill and died shortly after.

While in San Francisco, Bill became acquainted, fell in love with and married a charming young woman, Charlotte Vollmer, who was also attending art school. She had been raised by two maiden aunts, a bachelor uncle and a Grandmother in a refined and cultured home. Bill brought his bride to his parents' ranch on the east side of the river. In spite of her city rearing she adjusted herself to her new life in the wide open spaces and loved it. She took an interest in the mining ventures which Bill and Lloyd had at the time, going with them on many of their trips. Whenever Charlotte and Bill had time they would continue their art work. They have painted many beautiful pictures of our valley, Charlotte having won several wards for hers. To them two sons were born, Louis and Lloyd.

In 1914 tragedy struck once more, this time in the form of an automobile accident. Charlotte, her two sons, Uncle Lloyd, and Dan Nicoll were returning from the Santa Rosa mine. On the steep grade the brakes gave way, the old Ford going out of control. The little boy Lloyd died of injuries and Uncle Lloyd was paralyzed from the waist down. His mind, however, remained as alert and energetic as ever until his death twelve years later. During this time Grandmother Skinner and Aunt Charlotte gave him the most wonderful care.

Uncle Bill and Aunt Charlotte now live at Morro Bay. Their charming house is a treasure place of art, beautiful pictures and sculpture works given them by their many artistic friends who visited them often while living in Lone Pine. Many of these artists would come to Inyo for the purpose of painting the scenery. Some of the well known artists who visited them and painted our country were William Wendt, Kilpatrick, Maynard Dixon, Dorothy Lang, the latter being a well known portrait photographer and the wife of Maynard Dixon at one time. Although Uncle Bill and Aunt Charlotte live far from Inyo, their front door is a reminder of old Inyo. As a hobby, Uncle Bill made a collection of branding irons. These brands he has burned into the wood of their door, making a most unusual and interesting piece of work.

Uncle Lloyd was a graduate of the University of Nevada, getting his degree in mining engineering. He was a wonderful story-teller, a lover of children and a natural teacher. In the evenings he would gather his nieces, nephews and neighboring children around him to help them with their studies. Those who were fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to attend such sessions recall them with fond memories.

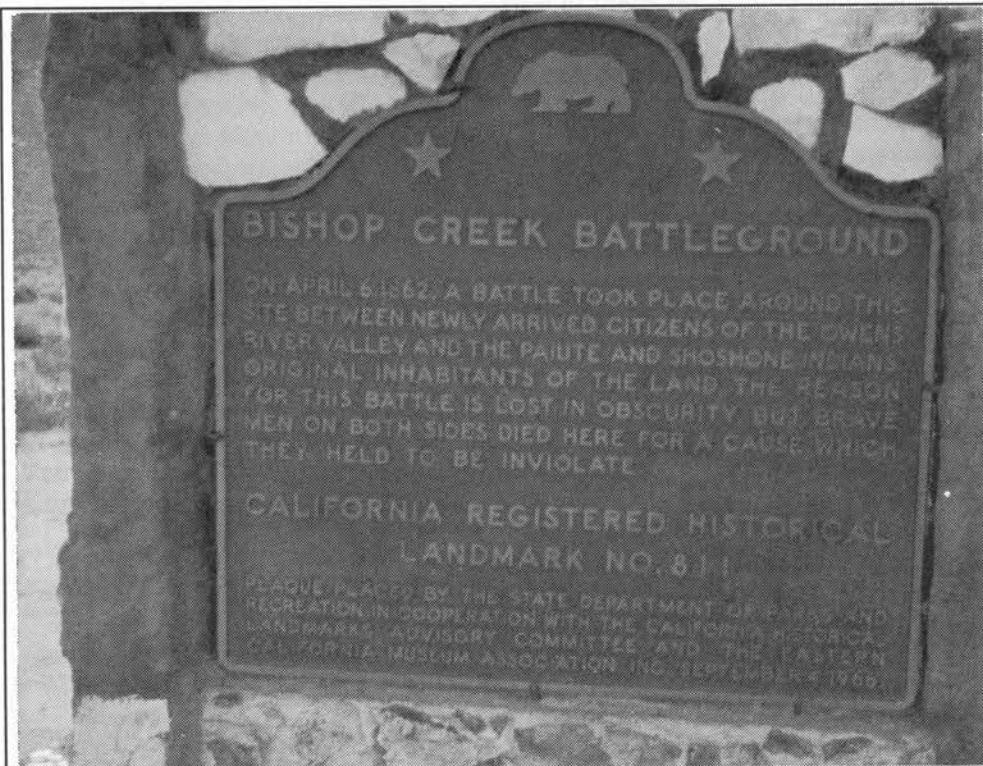
After the accident, although confined to a wheel chair, he continued to take an active part in the affairs of the community and county. Many, many people, rich and poor, came to him for advice which he always gave most generously. He conceived the idea of the Lone Pine-Porterville

road. It was he whose active thought sought an outlet through the establishment of the Lone Pine paper, The Mt. Whitney Observer, of which he was the editor for a considerable time. He was the architect for the Masonic Temple at Independence and the Winnedumah Lodge in Bishop. All who knew him loved and respected him. His memory is practically idolized in his family.

The descendants of this branch of the Skinner Family, most of whom still live in Inyo County today, cherish and respect the memory of their pioneer ancestors in Inyo County — Joseph and Marguerite Skinner. \*



*Historical market near black butte, four miles west of Bishop on Highway 168, California Registered Historical Landmark #811. Don Calkins photos.*



## THE BISHOP CREEK BATTLE

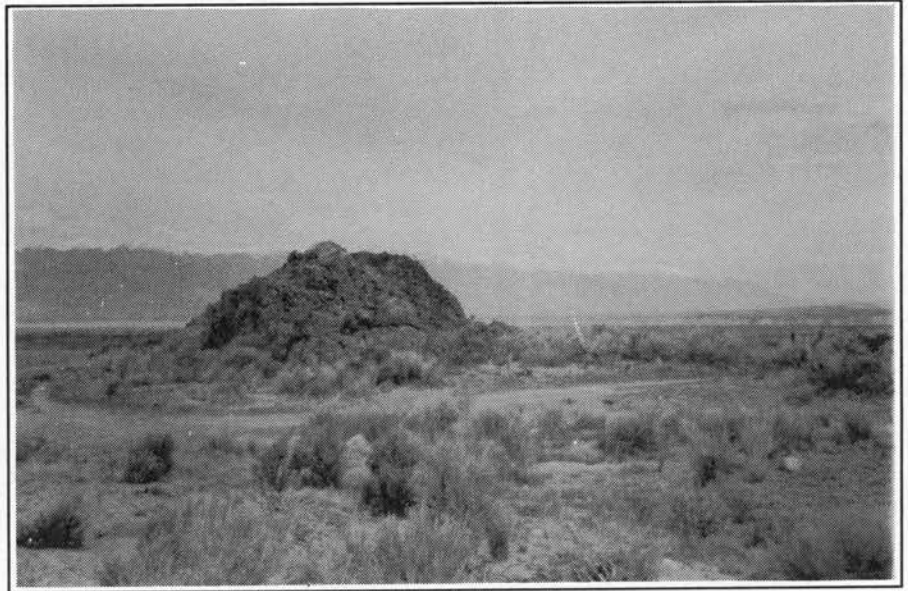
by George Garrigues



By the fall of 1861, a few white settlers had arrived and established homes at Little Pine (Independence), Bishop Creek, and Round Valley. Cattlemen from Visalia and the surrounding area were also driving their herds through the Owens Valley on their way to the mining camp of Aurora. Until that time the native Paiute Indians had viewed the white visitors with sullenness, but little hostility. As more whites came, the Indians realized they were being displaced and became determined to resist the intrusion.

That winter was a very hard winter, with rain and snow beginning in the valley on Christmas Eve and continuing daily for fifty-four days. Food was scarce and the whites subsisted primarily on beef from their herds, often without salt. The plight of the native Indians was worse. They reached the point where their only alternative for sustenance was to occasionally steal a white man's cow. Many were taken before an Indian was shot near Bishop, and in retaliation the Indians killed a white man.

The principal Indian camp in the valley was located on Bishop Creek



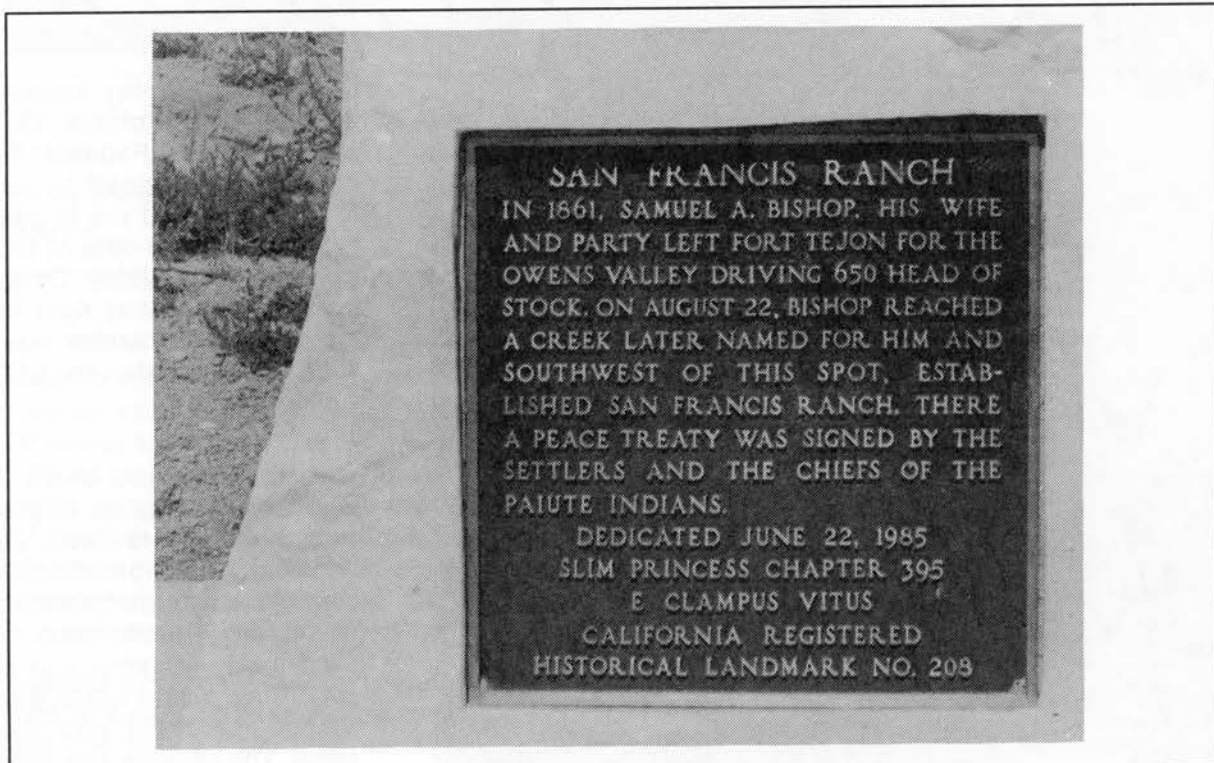
*Black butte, site of Indian village and anchor for the battle line.  
Photo by author.*

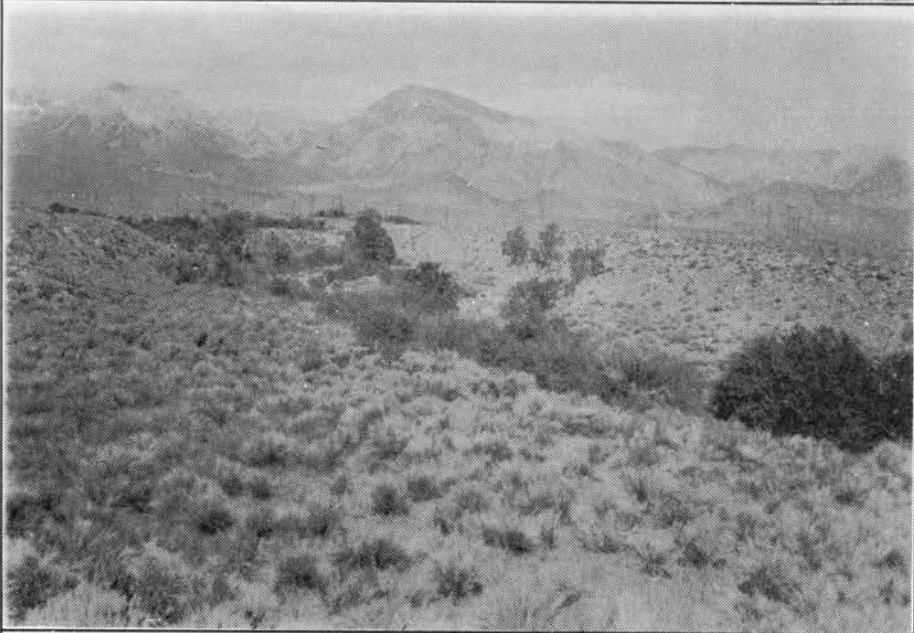
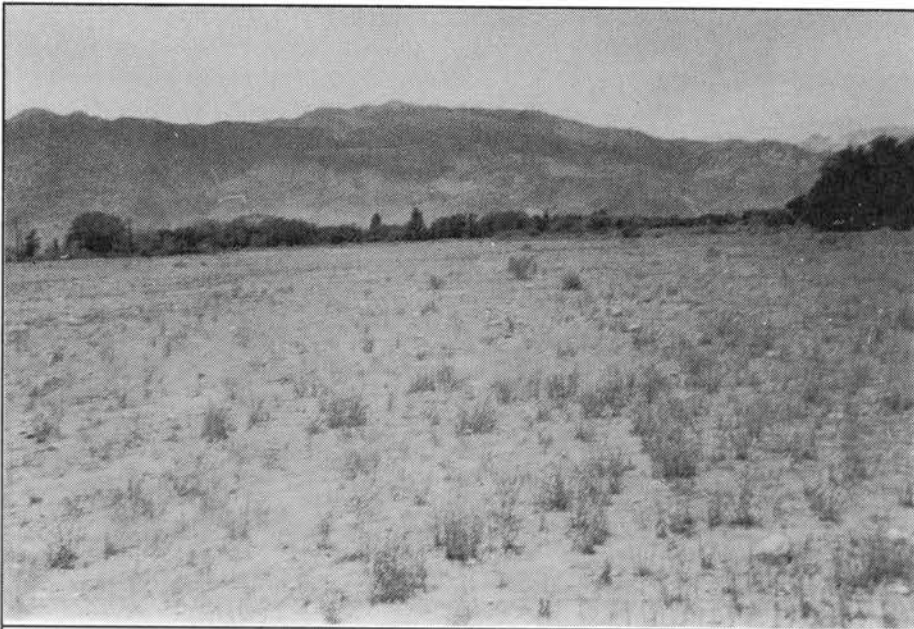
not far from Samuel Bishop's cabin. In the fall of 1861, most of the Indians in the valley and some from Nevada had gathered at the Bishop Creek site for a fandango. Their witch doctors had mixed war medicine and chanted songs, claiming they would prevent the white men's guns from firing. A rain storm got the guns of the whites wet so they fired some

test shots to try their reliability. This discouraged the Indians from an immediate assault and they moved away.

The white were alarmed and agreed to a pow-wow with the Indian leaders. A conference was held on January 31, 1862 at the San Francis Ranch. Chief George drew two lines

*San Francis Ranch marker, 3.2 miles west of Bishop at junction of Highway 168 and Red Hill Road.  
California Registered Historical Landmark #208. Photo by author.*





on the ground representing the two that had been killed and indicated that the score was even. A treaty was signed that day stating:

1. that past differences were settled peacefully,
2. that the Indians would not be molested in their pursuit to gain an honest living, and
3. that the Indians would not molest the property of the whites, or drive off their cattle, and both parties would live in peace.

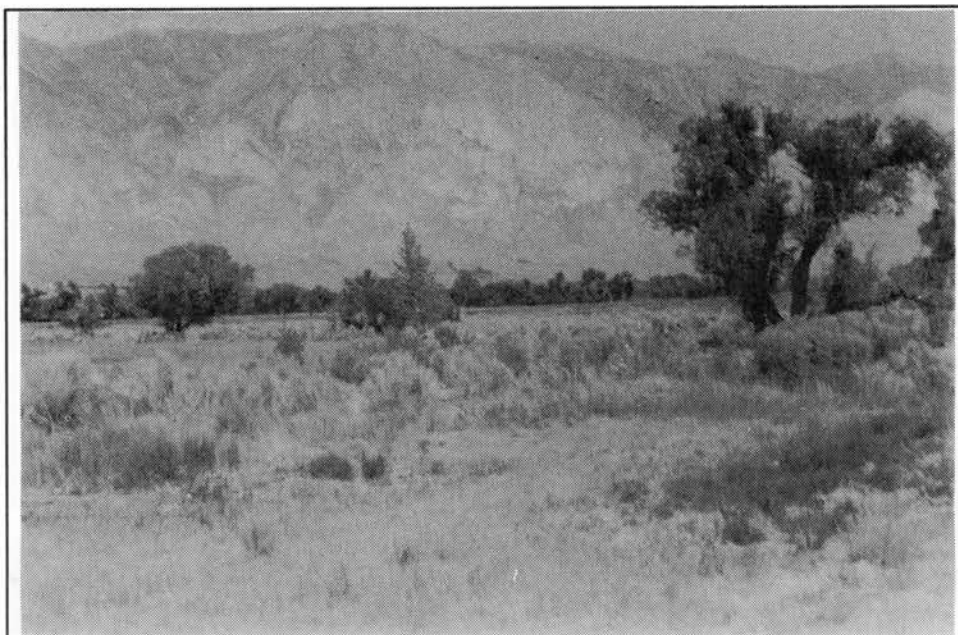
The treaty was signed by Chief Geroge, Chief Dick and Chief Little Dick for the Indians and by several prominent white settlers. Noticeably missing from the conference was Joaquin Jim, leader of the southern Mono tribe, who controlled the area as far south as Big Pine Creek. The peace lasted only a couple of months.

When the depredations resumed, several minor skirmishes ensued up and down the valley. The whites received only slight wounds from Indian arrows, but several Indians were killed during this period, with negro Charley Tyler killing four in one battle.

The Owens Valley Indians sought aid from their neighbors. The leader of the Nevada Paiutes, Numega, made a strong appeal to his people to stay home and live in peace with the white men. In spite of this, many did come to the valley. Others came from the Tulare and Kern bands in the west. Their number was established to be between 1,500 and 2,000 warriors.

Joaquin Jim, one of the leaders, was a man of great courage and determination. He never accepted white domination. The Indians received assistance from Aurora merchants Wingate and Cohn who supplied them with arms and ammunition. There was a rumor that also a Visalia merchant was doing the same. The situation was intensifying.





*Above:*

*Round Valley, Mayfield Canyon in center*

*Closeup of Mayfield Canyon from its mouth; site where second part of battle occurred and where Mayfield was killed. According to California Historical Landmarks, Mayfield Canyon is designated Historical Site #211. Local authorities state that no marker has been placed there. Photos by author.*

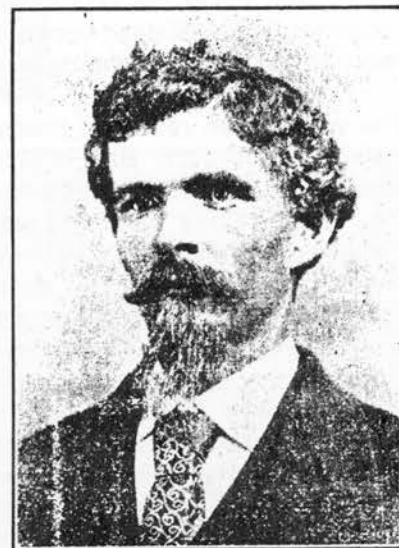
*Opposite, top to bottom:*

*General area of the San Francis Ranch*

*Portion of Bishop Creek near battle line. Kellogg led troops up the creek, Mayfield circled left to the south.*

*View of battle area from top of the black butte*

Al Thompson and a companion were sent to Aurora for help. They started back with a company of eighteen men under the command of retired army Captain John J. Kellogg. Nineteen year old Alney McGee was one of the volunteers. Citizens in southern Owens Valley met at Putnam's in Independence and elected "Colonel" Mayfield their captain. A group of about thirty men headed north and found the mutilated bodies of two white men who had been killed a few days previously.



*Alney L. McGee, Inyo Register photo, Feb. 12, 1914.*

Kellogg came down the east side of the valley the same day. He spotted the Mayfield group across the valley near the Butler Ranch north of Big Pine and thought they were hostiles. The mistake was discovered and the two commands joined forces. They camped and spent a sleepless night listening to the Indians howling in the nearby rocks. They moved north the next day and camped in a ravine two miles southwest of Bishop, killing an Indian scout on their way.

The Indians, numbering up to 1,500 warriors, had formed a line from a small black basalt butte on the western edge of the valley, across Bishop Creek and to a spring near the present Yaney Mine. They were defiant in their demonstrations, but

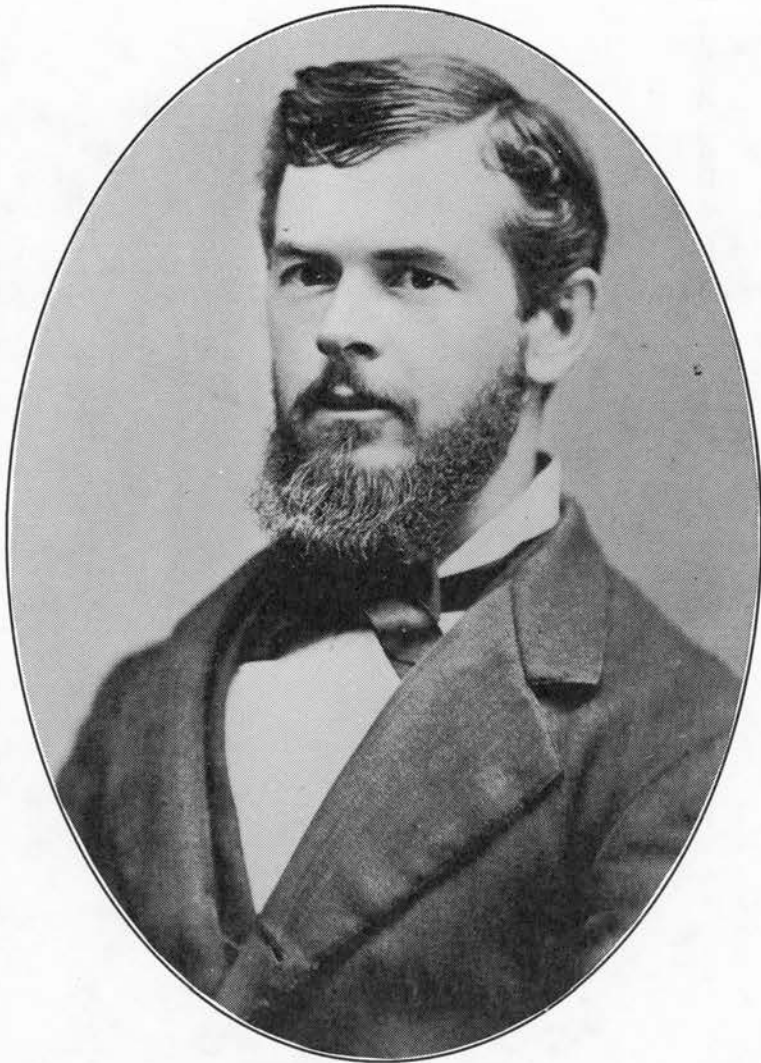
the whites paused long enough to eat lunch before going into action. Kellogg led his force upstream along the creek. Mayfield circled with his men to the south. They reached a dry wash, possibly an Indian irrigation canal, and left their pack animals there. Mayfield, Harrison Morrison and A. Van Fleet led the whites forward. The Indians opened fire and a bullet hit Morrison.

Kellogg noticed that the Indians were trying to move around them to either separate the two groups or to cut off their line of retreat. He called for a volunteer to warn Mayfield. Alney McGee made the ride safely although his horse fell dead from bullet wounds at the end of the dash.

The whites then retreated toward the cover of the ditch. Bart McGee carried Morrison with him on his horse. James "Cage" Pleasant was just ahead of them when a bullet hole appeared in his coat. He rose in his stirrups and fell from his horse, dead. The situation was so bad that they didn't stop for his body. A small group fought a delaying action against the Indians until the others could reach the protection of the ditch. They spotted an Indian wearing only some feathers in his hair approaching the pack train. Two other Indians were shot and their attire was similar to what many of the Indians wore. It was described as "the uniforms they wore was nawthin' much before, an' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind."

The whites reached the ditch without further casualties and maintained a defense battle from that entrenchment. "Stock" Robinson killed an Indian who was crawling through the ditch. Van Fleet noticed one hiding behind a pile of grass, rising up occasionally to shoot at the whites. Van Fleet aimed at the spot and fired, killing the Indian when he next rose to shoot.

The whites had spread some powder along the edge of the trench to have it handy. Someone struck a match to light his pipe and the match fell on the powder, burning one man severely in the explosion.



*Bart McGee, 1841 - 1919. Inyo County pioneer, participant in Bishop Creek battle. Photo courtesy McMurry's Bar.*

Darkness arrived and the Indian firing slowed. Sheriff N.F. Scott of Mono County, who was in the Mayfield group, raised his head above the ditch as he tried to light his pipe. An Indian bullet struck him in his temple and he died instantly.

The outmanned and outgunned whites waited until the moon had set late that night and then retreated to Big Pine without further Indian contact. They took Morrison with them, but he died soon after reaching Big Pine. The white loss was three men; the Indian estimated at eleven to fifteen.

Pleasant and Scott were buried in their clothes near the site of the battle. When the whites returned later, they discovered that the Indians had dug them up and removed their

clothing. They were re-buried wrapped in blankets and the Indians again dug them up and took the blankets also.

The army entered the scene now. Unknown to the local valley residents, assistance was on the way from both the north and the south. Warren Wasson, acting Indian Agent for the Territory of Nevada, learned of the difficulties in the Owens Valley. He contacted Governor Wye of Nevada who conferred with General Wright. Lieutenant Herman Noble of Fort Churchill, Nevada was selected to lead fifty men with Wasson to investigate.

At the same time, Lieut. Col. George S. Evans, with about forty troops of the California Cavalry, was headed north from Fort Tejon. He



met the citizen soldiers under Captain Mayfield near Big Pine on their retreat from the initial skirmish. They continued toward Bishop with forty of Mayfield's men joining them.

As they approached the battle site, Evans observed movement across the valley. Upon investigation, it was discovered to be Lt. Noble and his troops. They joined forces and proceeded to the former battleground. Finding no Indians there, they went on to Pine Creek and camped for the night. Scouts were sent out early the next morning and reported finding Indians in force about twelve miles ahead. Evans moved his troops with dispatch and reached the area where the Indians had been seen by mid-afternoon. When the troops approached, the Indians scattered, taking to the hills like partridges. Evans searched for two hours in a blinding hail storm and, finding nothing, returned to the valley to

camp for the night.

He advanced again the next morning and, when his scouts were fired upon by Indians in a small canyon on Wheeler Ridge, he prepared for battle. Because of the rough going, they dismounted at the mouth of the canyon and set out on foot. Lt. Noble and Capt. Mayfield were sent to the left, Col. Evans and Lt. French went to the right and forty men remained behind to guard the pack animals. The Indians numbered from 500 to 700, many with rifles.

As the soldiers advanced, the Indians climbed higher in the rocks, shooting and running. Evans' men were not equipped to climb the rocks and after two hours of futile activity, Evans called off the pursuit. They retired, recovering the body of Private Gillespie who had been killed at the beginning of the skirmish. Captain (Colonel) Mayfield was also wounded

in the battle. As he was being carried down the mountain, another bullet passed between the legs of the stretcher bearer, striking and killing Mayfield. He weighed over two hundred pounds and the troops were forced to leave his body behind. The canyon, located above Wells Meadows, was later named "Mayfield Canyon" in honor of "Col." Mayfield.

The site of the whites' previous night's camp was dotted with Indian campfires by the time they had retreated a mile or two. That night they camped at Bishop Creek.

Thus the Indians were successful in the first major skirmish of the Owens Valley Indian War. The whites withdrew to Independence and many went on to Visalia. Lt. Col. Evans returned to Fort Tejon, only to receive orders the following year to return and establish the fort at Independence. The war continued.

*In the ensuing years, Alney McGee, 1833 - 1916 (right), pioneer cattlemen, did not rest. He made several efforts to locate the graves of Arthur Pleasant and Sheriff N.F. Scott who were both killed in the Bishop Creek battle. The Inyo Register of November 12, 1908 reports his last attempt;*

*"McGee and J.S. Usher searched the area of the Johnson Ranch west of Mummy Lane unsuccessfully. They doubted that the remains would ever be found." Photo from Garrigues Collection.*







## Key to significant sites, Steward map

6. Site of first night's camp on trips over Paiute Pass and the Sierra from Bishop

11. Village site, black butte

12. Village site, sage brush

13. Dance place

14. Indian cemetery

15. Village site, water

16. Spring, birch water

17. Spring, buzzard

18. Spring, hot water

19. Spring, water

20. Village site, lake place

21. Lake

39. Keough's Warm Springs, hot water

A. Diversion dam on Bishop Creek

B. Ditch used by soldiers

C. Wheeler Ridge, site of second part of battle

The men who participated in the Bishop Creek Battle, as listed by the Inyo Register:

Captain "Colonel" Mayfield

Charles Anderson

Tex Berry

L.F. Crally

A. Graves

Curt Hanson

Thomas Hubbard

Alney McGee

Bart McGee

Dr. A.H. Mitchell

William Moore

Harrison Morrison

James Palmer

Thomas Passmore

R.E. Phelps

James "Cage" Pleasant

E.P. "Stock" Robinson

Sheriff S.F. Scott

Charley Tyler

Allen Van Fleet

Two unnamed Tejon Indians and others.

Morrison, Pleasant, and Scott were killed.

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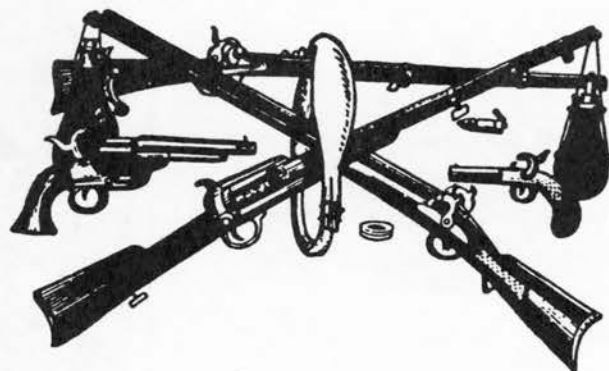
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# FIRST SKI TRACKS

out of Sherwin Bowl





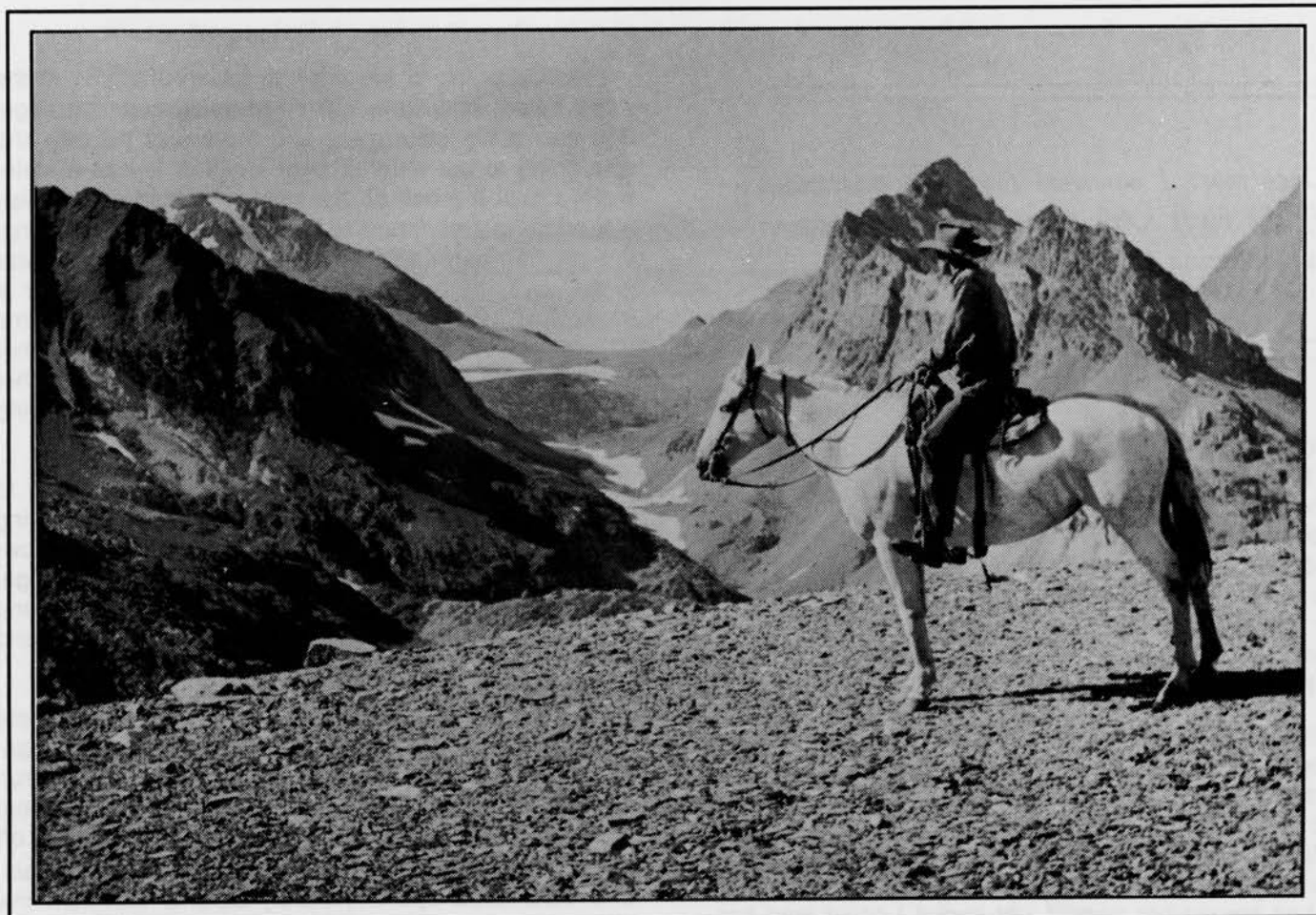
by Lou Roeser

In the early summer of 1961, we were pasturing some of our Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit horses at Heart Lake Meadow below Red Mountain, which we had leased from the Mammoth Consolidated Mine. The feed in the fenced meadow was lush and green, and the horses should have been in "horse heaven." In the early days of the tourist-packing industry, packers grazed their stock in all the little meadows around the Mammoth Lakes area and some of these meadows were still fenced in 1961.

As soon as these additional horses were needed for pack trips, I sent two packers the short distance up to the meadows to drive the stock back to the pack station. Some time passed before the packers reluctantly returned to the yard — without the band of horses and mules, reporting that they were gone from the meadows. Someone had left a gate down and the herd had found the opening and left. The packers had tracked them for a way but lost their tracks in the rocks and had no idea where they had gone. Why hadn't the horses returned to the haystack at the pack station as they were prone to do and where had they disappeared to?

It was mid-afternoon as I saddled up and headed to the pasture to pick up the tracks, which amazingly led up the dim old Red Mountain trail. Picking up the tracks above Heart Lake on the old trail, I followed them to the top of Red Mountain. Toward the eastern escarpment, overlooking the bowl that has become known as the Sherwin Bowl, I lost the tracks again in the evening dusk. Sherwin Bowl is a high, glaciated hanging valley on the front range to the south of Mammoth Lakes. It is filled with giant granite boulders and sparse timber. While there is some snow run-off early, there are no creeks or springs in the little valley.

It was now dusk and getting too dark to see any tracks very well. There was a solid cornice of snow on the rim and the slope into the basin looked much too steep and rocky for the horses to have made their way down into the hanging valley. I followed some faint tracks on an old deer migration trail and scouted the top of Red Mountain. In the remaining light, I rode to a craggy peak and a bluff on the western rim that overlooked the bowl.



*Opposite and above: Lou Roeser, but after reading his story, you may come to think of him as The Man From Snowy River - Editor*

Suddenly from the valley below, I heard the distinct tinkle of a stock bell. We always bell a mare when horses are turned out, because the other horses and mules will remain within the sound of her bell. I had belled a big strawberry roan mare named Coconina who was very popular with the mules. Peering through the last light, I finally spotted the horses and mules below me on a timbered ridge. They must have picked their way down a steep, rocky chute from the craggy peak.

It was too dark to do any anything further so I turned around and rode back off Red Mountain in the dark to the pack station. The mystery was solved as to where they had disappeared, but I didn't have a clue to how they could — or why they would — have slid down into that rocky, waterless basin.

The next morning, Gary, a young packer, and I saddled up early and rode back up onto Red Mountain. This time we chose another route and rode up the ridge from the meadows in Old Mammoth below the bowl. We carefully skirted around a rock glacier to ride up an old avalanche path (not the new one). After riding as far as we could, we tied our horses securely to some pine trees and hiked and scrambled the rest of the way on foot. We climbed up over the edge of the rim into the bowl and discovered the herd grazing quietly.

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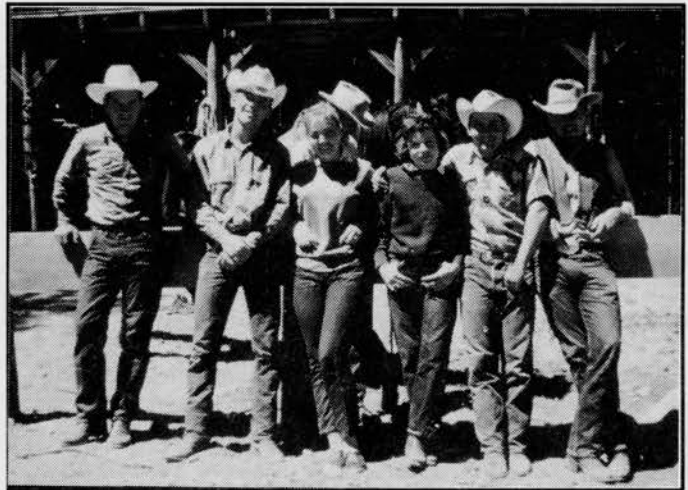
*"Once more I mounted Coconina and raced off the bluff with Gary running, whooping and hollering behind the bunch."*

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Coconina, the bell mare, lifted her head causing her bell to gong as she sensed our approach. We gazed up at the mountainside in amazement at where they must have traveled down into the little basin. Those animals must have been part mountain goat, clinging to the boulders like leeches. There was no water and we estimated they had been here for several days as their flanks were gaunted. Apparently they couldn't find a way back out of the hanging glacial valley.

Then I realized with a start that we really weren't prepared for this little horse drive. We hadn't brought any halters or grain bags with us so we couldn't catch and lead any horses out of the valley. I had thought we could just haze them down off the mountain. I managed to walk quietly up to Coconina, caught her, and slipped my belt around her neck. I just hoped I could lead her over the edge of the hanging valley while Gary, on foot behind the rest of the bunch, would herd them over the rim behind Coconina.



*The Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit crew in 1961. Left to right are Jerry Spicer, Gary Swanson, Ann Waltz, John Brown, and Red Altum. Gary Swanson, Lou's partner in this round up, is the nephew of Vada and Lester Cline (Laws, Sweetest Little Town, ALBUM IV, No. 3).*

I led Coconina to the rim but, taking one look at the slope below, she firmly balked at going over the edge. She was a big stout mare and there was no way she was going to put another hoof forward. It was a stale-mate. I took the belt off her neck and made an "Indian war bridle" out of it, putting it through her mouth. Swinging on her bareback and guiding her with the "war bridle" away from the edge, I turned and pointed her at the bluff. Then I raced her hard off the edge like Yakima Knute, an old time stunt actor. With a death grip on her scanty mane, I found myself looking down between her ears while she stayed on her feet skiing and sliding down the hillside.

I experienced a sense of elation — it was going to work! Swiveling my head to see how Gary was driving the rest of the bunch, I expected to see the herd following behind us. Instead, I watched them run to the edge, pause to look at the steep slope, slide to a stop and refuse to go over the edge. The leaders wheeled and spun around galloping away from the bluff.

Gary was frantically running and yelling, trying to cut them off. It dawned on me that we had to try this maneuver all over again. Coco and I survived that first run over the edge but I wasn't so sure that we could repeat it, or if I could even get her back up that cliff. I slid off her back and tried to lead her back up the slope again. She scrambled upward, barely able to summon the extra effort required to top the bluff.

We gathered the herd again, with Gary playing cutting horse on foot. Once more I mounted Coconina and



raced off the bluff with Gary running, whooping and hollering behind the bunch. We leaped over the edge with the herd behind only to have them screech to a thundering halt, wheel and gallop away again.

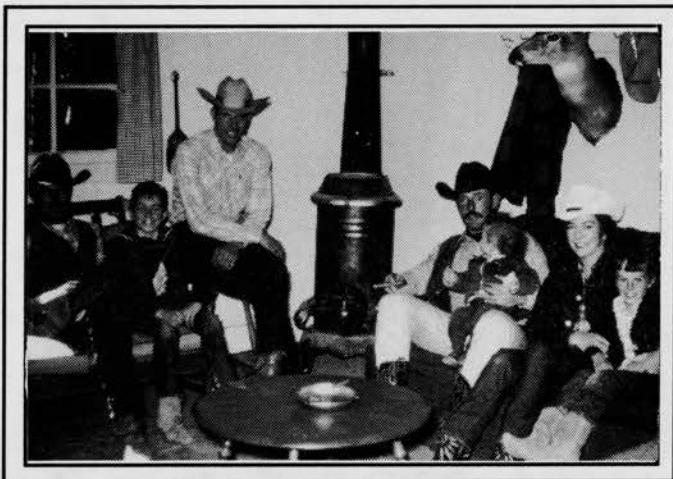
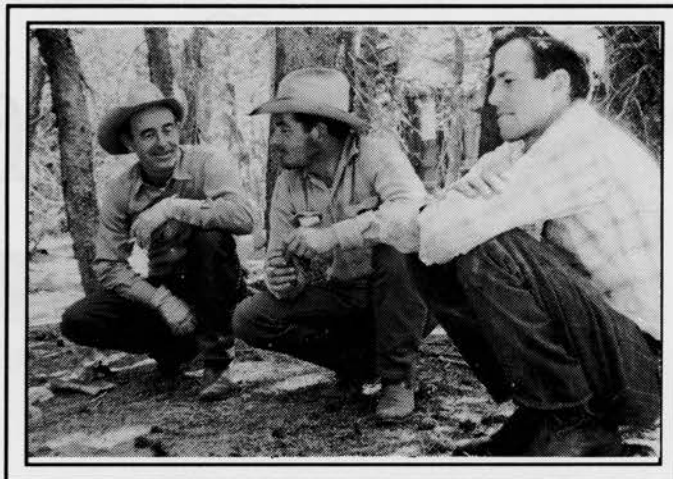
We went through this procedure a third time and Coconina was beginning to tire. The clouds that had been building up all morning erupted into wind, rain, and hail. What had begun yesterday as a simple task of bringing in horses had turned into an almost impossible problem. We couldn't leave them up there in that wild valley any longer without water, and they refused to make the plunge over the edge.

We regrouped again for one last try, resting Coconina for a few minutes. I was beginning to develop quite an aversion to that bluff. Coconina was developing an even stronger aversion to it and it was harder to convince her that she had to fly off like Pegasus one more time. I drummed her sides with my heels and once again we plunged over the edge. I looked over my shoulder, saw the herd anticipate the bluff and begin to spin to the rear.

Gary, who had been running after the herd giving his Apache war hoop, was also tiring and in his desperation had a moment of genius. Ripping the snaps open on his western shirt, in one quick movement he had his shirt off and over his head, flapping it like a Comanche on a wild buffalo drive stampede. It was just the right touch and enough to spook those old ponies over the bluff. They slid and scrambled down the slope, skiing off the edge, leaving ski tracks in the soft soil. It was an all out, dead run. I held my breath as Coconina, in the lead, flew off that mountainside. I was just hoping she wouldn't take a header.

We leveled out some and were able to slow our wild ride out of the Sherwin Bowl. Gary came along behind, sliding down the hillside, puffing and panting with exertion, his young face as red as his red hair. Reaching our tied and dancing horses, I retrieved my belt from Coconina's mouth while she spun after the still running bunch. Untying my excited saddled horse, I swung into the saddle and chased after the herd. Gary did a pony express mount on his horse and followed after us. I raced out in front of the bunch to slow and stop them while Gary caught up with us.

We managed to slow the herd, driving them off the foothills, into the meadows and over to the Old Mammoth Road. We then were able to catch our breath a bit. The ponies' sides were heaving and they were anxious for water as we rested them before riding over to Mammoth Creek. The rest of the drive was uneventful as we slowly rode up the Old Mammoth Road to the pack station. Gary and I looked back up at the mountainside we had just come down, amazed at the fact that both of us and the stock had actually made that wild ride safely and marveled at the first ski tracks we'd seen coming off the Sherwin Bowl. ●



*Above, left to right: Packers Max Fly, Jerry Spicer, and Lou Roeser, 1961*

*Below: Warming up by the old corner stove, Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit crew and children*

# Voyage of Discovery

*William Goens*



by Alice Beers

I was born in Sparks, Nevada, the day after Christmas 1931. During my childhood we lived in Reno and Sparks and in later years in Verdi. My childhood memories are mostly of Verdi. In 1942 when I was 11, my mother passed away and in 1946, a few short years later, my father also passed away. Subsequently, I lived with various brothers and sisters until I married Gaylen Beers in August 1950. Gaylen was in the United States Air Force and we lived wherever he was stationed for the next 20 years. In 1970 Gaylen retired and we came to Lake Tahoe to live.

I knew very little of my mother's family history, briefly that she had been born in Coleville and that her parents had owned the Meadowcliff Ranch. I knew nothing of my grandparents, except that my grandfather Alexander Goens was buried in the Coleville cemetery. My brothers David and Richard had always shown an interest in our family genealogy and from time to time had dabbled in some limited research. A couple of years ago, after having lived in nearby Tahoe and Carson Valley for the past 20 years I realized how pitifully little I knew of our ancestry, and decided to work more closely with my brother David to develop our family genealogy.

What follows is an account of my voyage of discovery through research of genealogy records, search of county records in Bridgeport, visits with old timers in Antelope Valley and a trip east to Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas.



I'll start with my grandmother Catherine Hendrick Goens Carney, familiarly known in Antelope Valley as Kate. She was born on a farm in Kansas in 1867. She married a young man from a nearby farm, William Goens, they had two children, a boy, William Jr. and a girl, Olive.

In the early 1890s both the father and the son passed away leaving young Kate widowed with her daughter Olive. William Goens uncle, Alexander was born in Illinois in 1844. He served in the civil war and after the end of the war he moved to Antelope Valley where he homesteaded the Meadowcliff Ranch. Upon hearing of his nephew's death he proposed to Kate. She accepted, even though he was 23 years her senior. He traveled to Kansas where they married in 1894. Together they returned to Antelope Valley.

The Meadowcliff homestead had two cabins, one to accommodate my grandfather Alexander, the other to accommodate his partner. Soon after Alex acquired his partner's cabin and the two cabins were pulled together to form a house. The house is still in use today, but has been moved down the road toward Walker.

My mother Susie was born on the ranch in 1895. They lived there happily; Olive and Susie attended Coleville School.

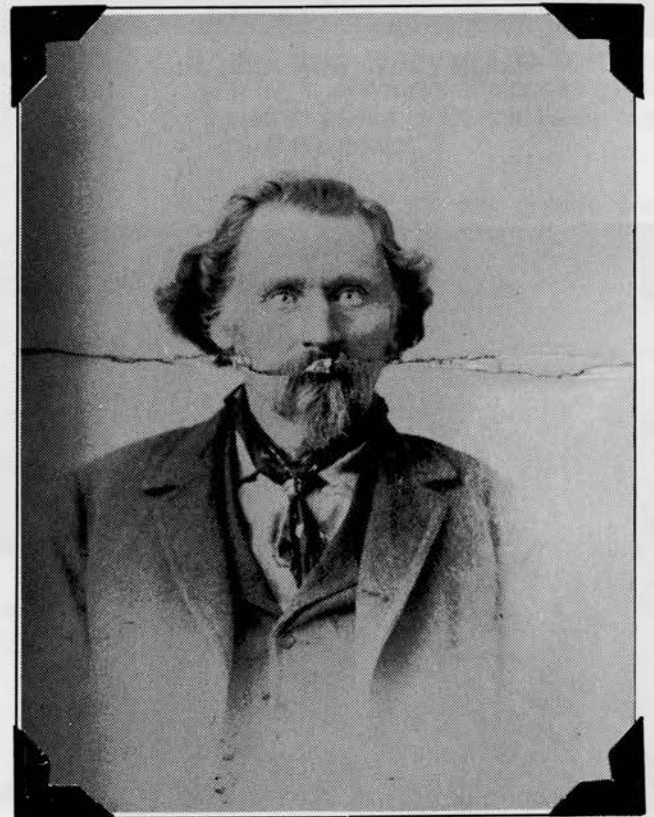
In September 1902 Alex passed away. His will left a cow, horse, heifer calf, and twenty five stands of bees to Kate, among other things. His will was witnessed by George Chichester on August 30, 1902. Kate continued to live on the ranch and in March 1903 she married Michael Carney.

In 1907 Michael and Kate Carney sold part of the ranch and some water rights to Virgil S. Connell. Michael and Kate continued to live in the house. What remained of the original ranch still produced enough berries, produce and other items for their daily needs.



*Kate Goens standing*

*Alexander Goens*



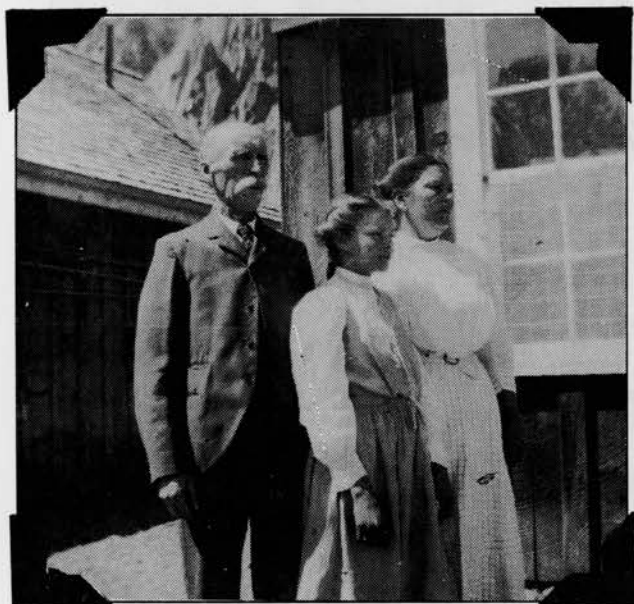
On December 29, 1910 Olive married John Donaldson. John was from Michigan and was a blacksmith by trade. He worked in the nearby mining towns of Aurora, Bodie, and Masonic. Often, in the summer when John was off working, Olive and children stayed at the ranch with Kate.



*Olive and John Donaldson*



*Michael Carney with Kate, Susie and children*



*Michael Carney with Kate and Susie*



*Susie Goens*



The families maintained a happy relationship which revolved around Kate and Meadowcliff. Eventually Olive had five children, one boy and four girls, Susie 12 children, eight boys and four girls.

In 1929 Michael Carney passed away. Kate sold what remained of the ranch and moved to Yerington to live with Olive. In the early 1930s Kate moved to Springdale, Arkansas. She lived there until her death in 1933.

Afterwards, Olive and family moved to Washington State and Susie and family continued to live in Verdi. The two families completely lost contact and as I grew up I had vague recollections of an Aunt Olive. As I mentioned before, Susie had passed away in 1942. Olive passed away in 1957.

During my efforts in researching our genealogy, I learned there was an upcoming 58 year reunion in 1991 of graduates from Yerington High. With the help of a niece who lives in Yerington we put the word out for any of the Donaldson family who might be attending to contact us. Fortunately, Katherine, Olive's third child heard the message and after 50 odd years the two families were reunited. Of Olive's family three girls survive. Of Susie's family two boys and three girls survive.

In June of this year a family reunion, appropriately, was held at the Meadowcliff Motel, site of the old Homestead in Coleville. Attending were the eight surviving grandchildren of Kate Goens Carney. It was an opportunity for many warm memories to be recalled and for a fond family relationship to be reestablished. The reunion was made possible by our genealogical research, my voyage of discovery. As a result, Antelope Valley has become a living part of my roots and today when I visit, or pass through, visions of the life of my grandmother and my mother transform the valley into a wonderful fantasy of what life was like there nearly 100 years ago. \*



*Above: The ranch at Coleville*

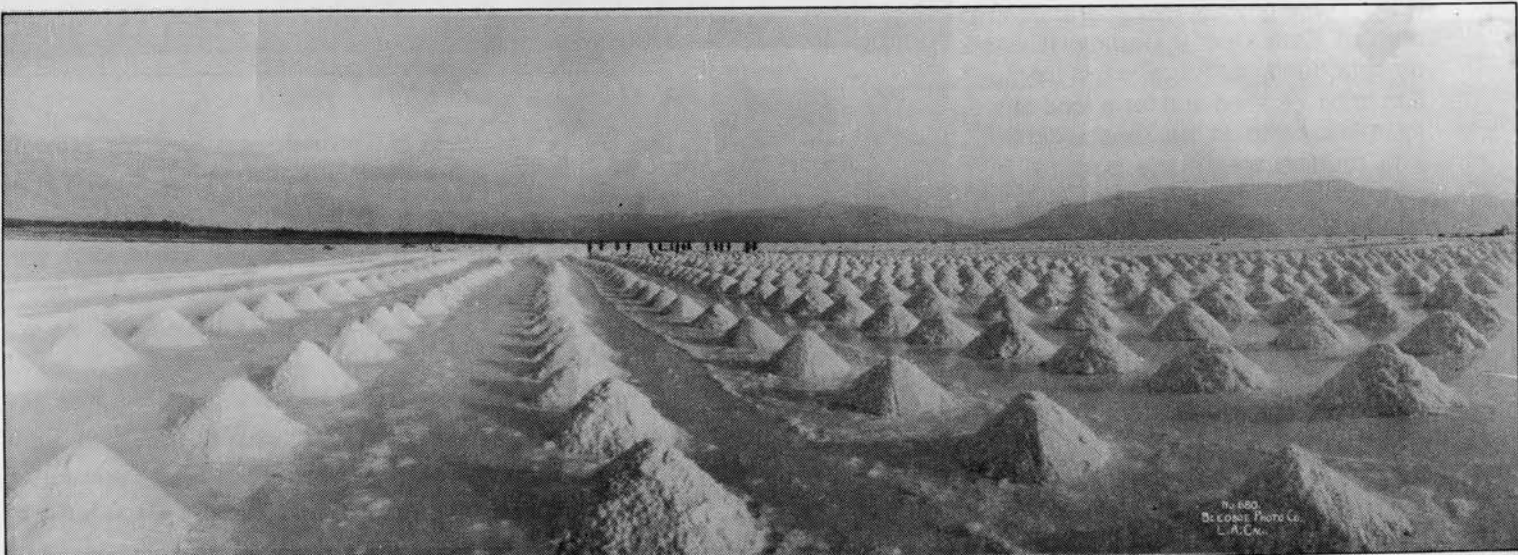
*Below: Coleville school, early 1900s; Olive Goens far right, center row; Susie Goens far right, seated in front of Olive*



# Ghost of a Skeleton Revisited

by Willma Willis Gore

*An old Bledsoe photograph of the piles of salt ready to be carried from Saline Valley to the mill at Tramway. This photo and the Bledsoe panorama courtesy of the late Ruth Willis (Mrs. Bev) Hunter.*







Returning to Owens Valley last fall after a long absence, I set about exploring old sites I'd known and photographed in years past. Among these adventures was retracing the Willis Dairy milk route from Lone Pine to Keeler and searching for evidence of remembered relics.

As a teenager in the late '30s, I was proud to drive the milk truck, a little '29 Model A pickup. In its bed were sturdy wood and wire cases, each holding a dozen glass quarts of raw milk. "Willis Dairy, Lone Pine, California" was embossed on each. (How I wish I'd saved one of these!) Spread over the cases to help keep the milk cool and the bottles dust-free, were pieces of wet gunny sack.

As the eldest, I was the driver and my sister Jan rode beside me. It was her job to "run the bottles," that is, carry a quart or more to designated doorsteps in Keeler and the little Natural Soda Products Company (NSP) town just beyond. Jan also picked up the empties.

Lying between us on the car seat was a looseleaf book with a page for each customer. These pages were headed by a name and mailing

address. A tight grid with a square for each delivery day made up the bulk of the page. The driver's job was to carefully mark with a figure or a zero the number of bottles delivered to the customer. From this book Mother (Elva Tate Willis) made out the bills each month.

A running feud between this two-girl delivery team centered on whether it was more work to do the driving and keep the records (the "brain-strain" responsibility, I claimed) or to run the white, cool bottles to the porches and bring back the "icky" dirty ones.

Among the sites we passed — totally boring to us then — was the Owens River, creeping languid and smelly between its willow-shaded, saltgrass banks. Then we came to the sand dunes. Their chief virtue was providing a glaring white interruption in the sagebrush-gray landscape. As we skirted the base of the Inyo Mountains, the brown timbers of the salt tram were silhouetted against the lavender and blue foothills, a landmark we knew then only as a tall, ugly skeleton of a building.

To my dismay on a recent trip, I

saw that almost nothing of this piece of Owens Valley history was left. It had been Tramway, California, about 12 miles from Lone Pine, and in the century's first decades, the center of a new industry: the mining of salt.

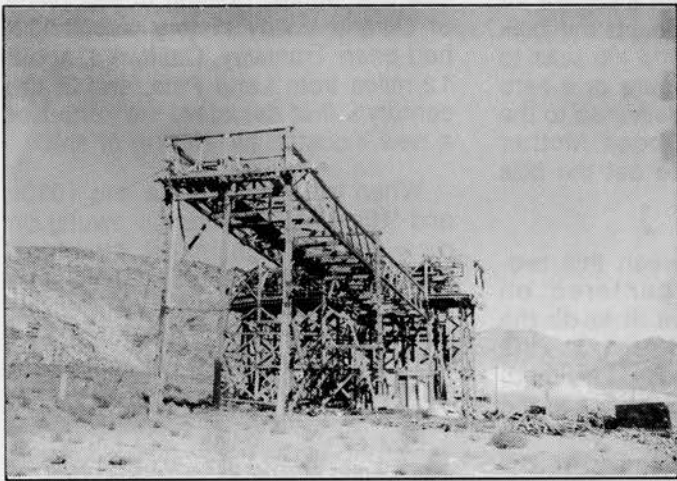
When we visited in the late 1930s and '40s giant buckets still swung on rusty cables high in the structure. The aerial system, built by the Saline Valley Salt Corporation, operated for only nine years from the time it was built in 1913 until 1929 when the tram was removed.

In the '40s, besides the tall structure of the terminal, a double row of cables could be seen, strung between wooden towers. As far as the eye could see up the face of the range, the towers, spaced at quarter-mile intervals, supported the woven wire rope. A few buckets still hung from it, left as they were when the motors stopped.

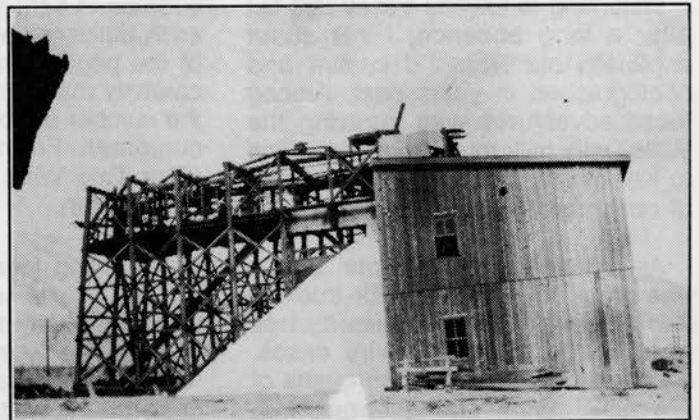
Tramway was the mill where the salt was graded and sacked but the product was mined in Saline Valley on the other side of the Inyo Mountains. The buckets traveled the 13 miles of aerial cable, the only means of bringing the salt out for train transport in Owens Valley.



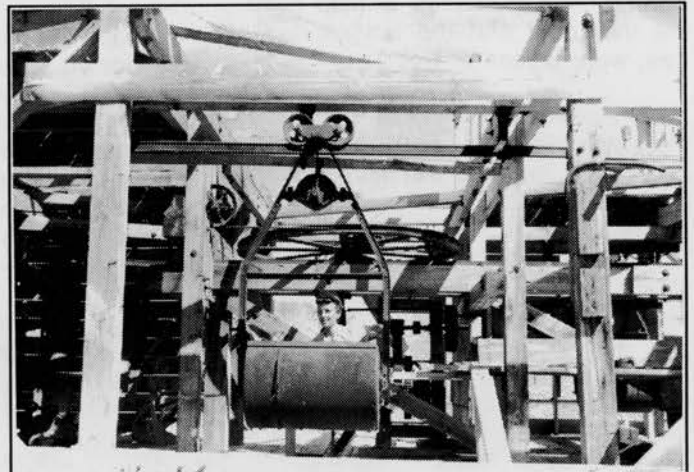
## Ghost of a Skeleton Revisited



*Beneath the long extension on the north end of the mill were the large bins, now dismantled, in which the screened salt was kept prior to shipment. 250 buckets rode daily to the mill, which could process 70 tons of salt a day. John A. Simpson photograph. Upper right, an earlier photo courtesy Howard McAfee.*



*The empty buckets left this platform to return along the cable to Saline Valley, thirteen miles across the Inyo Mountains. Willma Simpson (Gore) sits on a weathered seat inside the bucket, which occasionally carried workers as well as salt. John A. Simpson photograph.*







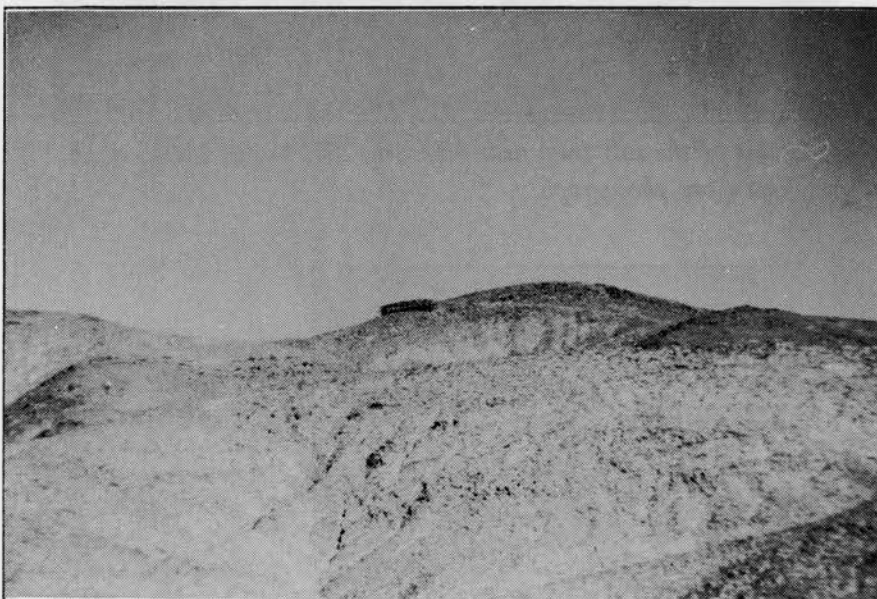
Sixteen square miles of the Saline Valley floor were covered to a depth of about 30 feet with salt of such purity that it could be used without processing. Long before the tram was built, placer claims were patented in Saline and the salt was being used by Owens Valley people. However, in order to get across the mountains then, the salt traveled a long route in double wagons drawn by eight and ten-horse teams. The haul was north through the upper Saline into Cow Horn Valley to Waucoba Pass in the Inyos, then down to the Valley in the vicinity of Big Pine. Some of the salt was ground in Bishop for table use and sold in the valley for preserving meat. Fifty pound sacks went into the Sierra for use on the summer cattle range.

In 1911, White Smith, a Bishop lawyer, organized and began selling stock in the Saline Valley Salt Corporation. By 1913 he had constructed the aerial tram. To recover the salt, the flat Saline Valley floor was flooded and, as the water evaporated, Mexican and Indian workers shoveled it into heaps resembling hay cocks. The temperatures ranged from 115 to 120 degrees on the blinding white surface. The salt, recovered at 1050 ft. elevation was loaded into the tram buckets to begin its journey across the 8700 ft. summit and down to the mill at Tramway, 3600 ft. elevation. Electricity generated at plants in Owens Valley supplied the power.

Workers at the mill graded and sacked the salt for shipment on cars of the Slim Princess, the oldtimers' name for the narrow gauge branch of the Southern Pacific that joined the broadgauge to Los Angeles at Owenyo.

An aerial tram is an expensive undertaking at the outset. Had its cargo been gold, it might have paid its promoters. That it did not pay was testified to in the '40s by Edward Shepherd of Independence who lost his \$5000 investment in the scheme. However, he reported a suspenseful ride across the mountains in a tram bucket during an inspection tour of what he hoped would become a thriving business.

In spite of the fine quality of the

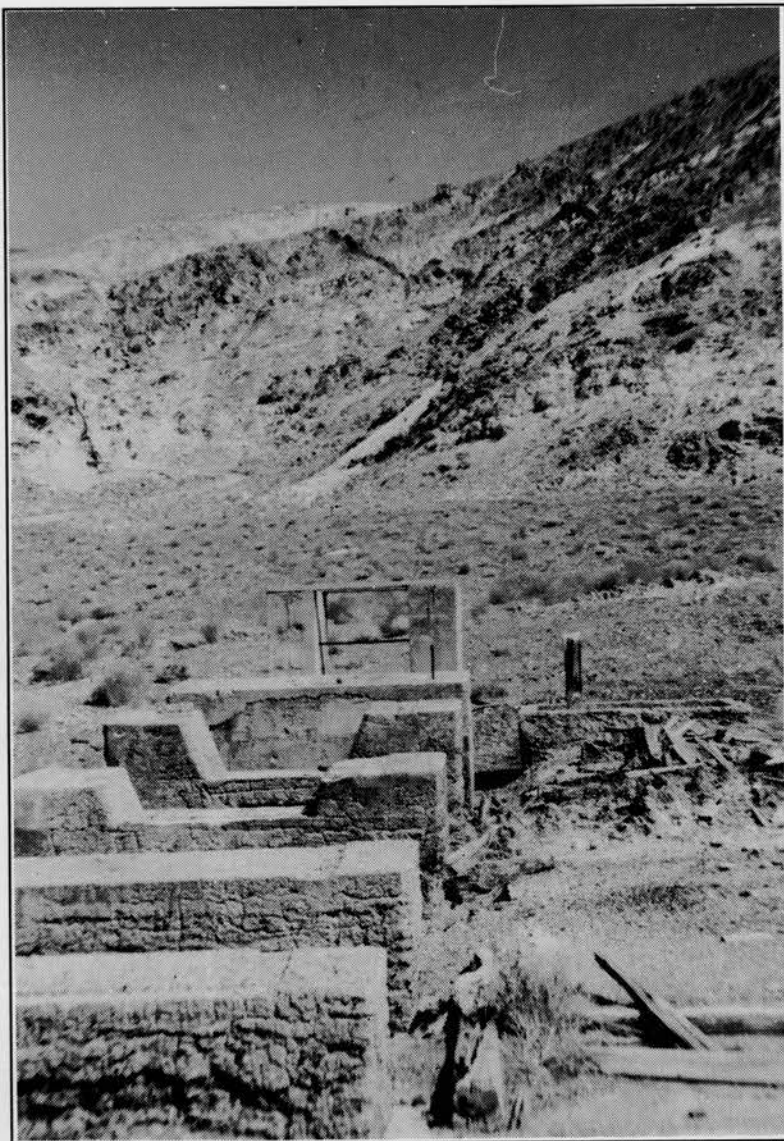


*Skeleton of tram support still stands on the hill above the tram terminal site, the "woolly caterpillar" mentioned at the end of the article. Willma Gore photograph.*

salt, the Saline Valley Salt Corporation ceased production the first year. Between 1913 and 1930 it operated under three different owners. About 30,000 tons of salt were shipped during these spasmodic operations, the largest shipments made in 1929 when the system was renovated. The total investment was about a million dollars.

Subsequently, the terminal was dismantled for scrap. Only a few blocks of cement and pieces of scrap metal remain of Tramway today. But high on a hill, east of the site, too remote for economic salvage, a long block of supports for the aerial tram still stands against the skyline, appearing like a woolly caterpillar, lost on its route across the Inyo Range.

This skeleton on the hill and a few photographs are treasured memories of my Willis Dairy days in Lone Pine. ❄



*Remains of the salt tram near Highway 126, Death Valley route.  
Willma Gore photograph*



*Carl and Hazel McAfee joyride the tramway. Photo courtesy Howard McAfee*





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

## BEGINNINGS OF NEW MAMMOTH

In 1937 Highway 203 was complete. It branched off of 395 near Casa Diablo and followed a totally new route north of the old road. It wound itself into the lakes basin in gradual curves, creating the new town of Mammoth Lakes.

Old Mammoth soon became a memory and where once stood the Wildasinn Hotel and Mammoth Camp cattle grazed, fenced in by the new owner of the meadow, Frank Arcularius.

Then in 1938 New Mammoth began to grow with the following businesses: the Standard Station, managed by George and Daisy Patton, an ice house, Lutz Store, the Post Office, Penny's Tavern, Reed's Mammoth Garage, the new Forest Service Ranger Station, and the home for Doug Robinson and Assistant Lester Parent.

Frank Penny was one of the first to move to New Mammoth and set up the town's new hostelry. It stood on the corner of Old Mammoth Road and 203 and was a two-story tavern with rental rooms and a huge lobby. The lobby was destined to become the town's meeting place for many years.

In the winters of '40 and '41, Lloyd Nicoll managed Penny's and a ski lift below Lookout on the lower portion of Mammoth Mountain. When he returned from service in the See Bees, Lloyd built and ran the Mammoth Lumber and Supply on the new highway above the Post Office. After World War II Frank and Norah sold the Tavern and retired in Bishop. The place changed hands several times and ended up with Dick and Wilma Agee who made some additions including a bar and larger dining room.

Lloyd Summers and his son Lee moved from their pack station at Lake Mary to a small cabin on the south side of 203. They installed the mail boxes from

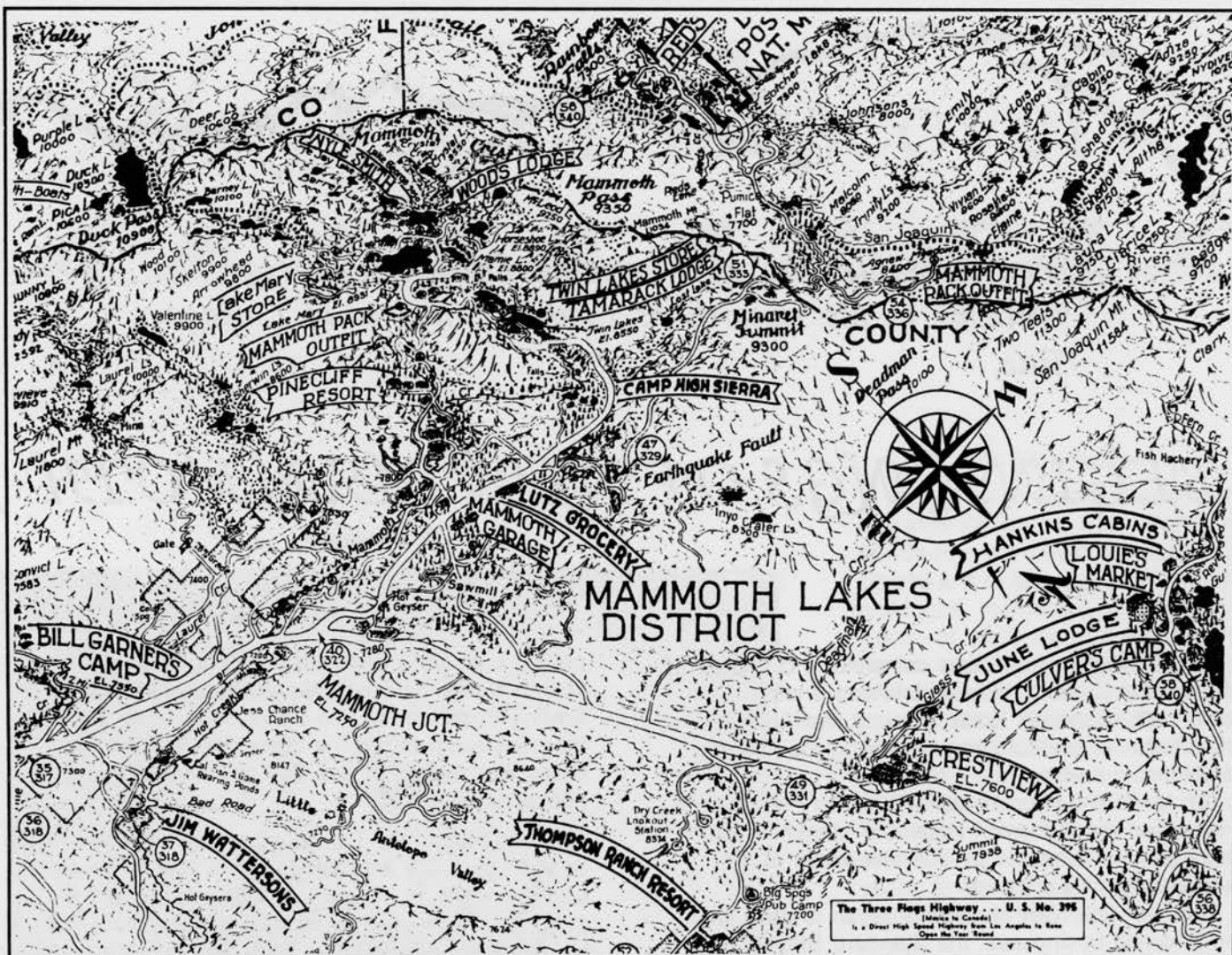
the old Lutz store and kept the Post Office open from May to November. Sybil Summers continued as the Smiling Postmistress and drove down each day from the pack camp to run the office. In 1948 the Post Office was moved across 203 and has had several homes since then.

In 1939 John and Laura Lutz made the same move as everyone else and set up a new and larger store on the north side of Highway 203 just above the Standard Station. It was the only general store in New Mammoth for a long time. They managed the store for many years.

In 1937 Jo and Jim Wallace built an ice house on Old Mammoth Road near the Mammoth Garage. Ice was cut and dragged up from Twin Lakes and sold there. The ice house was sold later to George and Daisy "Babe" Patton who managed the Standard Station. They converted it to a self sufficient plant; Stan Hosner took over, and the building eventually was a clubhouse.

In the spring of 1946, S.P. Keough and John Lutz, along with Lloyd Nicoll, built the K. and L. Ice Company on the north side of the highway. The service included lockers, fish packed by quick freezing and shipped, and deer storage was available. The place was demolished in 1965 and replaced by Inyo-Mono Bank, later Security Pacific Bank.

In 1941 Dick and Sybil Rogers built the Penguin Cafe on property acquired from the Summers. On September 4, 150 "first nighters" attended the grand opening. They had the first soda fountain in Mammoth and specialized in fine dinners. Dick was a chef by trade and Sybil tended the diners with help from local girls.



A small section of the 1941 version of Hayden's "Fisherman's Paradise" map that featured the Mammoth Lakes area. Copies of the whole map are available at the Mammoth Museum, originally Hayden's summer home on Mammoth Creek.

The Penguin Cafe often held Happy Hour after businesses closed and was a great place for meetings of groups such as the Mammoth Ski Club. In 1959 the Rogers' sold the cafe to Roy and Eunice Crandell and it became first The Barbecue Hut then just Crandalls. George and Vencie Colwells took over in 1964 and enlarged it, calling it The Village Inn. Then in 1969 it was rebuilt into the Village Center Mall. Pea Soup Anderson's took over after that, and today it's Ralph Laurin store.

The Haddaways, John and Barbara, moved to New Mammoth from Hollywood in 1947, took over one of the Arcularius cabins and opened up the Haddaway Manufacturing Company. They built a patented air pump and tuned vibrator. In 1956 the business moved to the end of Chateau Road.

In the spring of 1938 the Forest Service began construction of the new building at the junction of Highway 203 and Old Mammoth Road, just across from Reed's Garage and Penny's Tavern. The floor

had just been completed when ranger Doug Robinson walked by one day and asked, "How about breaking in the new floor with a dance next Saturday evening?"

Word spread and the floor was waxed, the tavern piano hauled over and lights strung about in the trees, powered by the trusty Kohler plant. The dancing began as the light of day waned. Different folks took over the piano, accompanied by guitar or banjo. Then Rose Boothe, wife of Forest Supervisor Roy Boothe, stretched and rosined her bow and began fiddling for the quadrilles. Roy Boothe and Bill Reed took turns calling as they danced. Square dances were the most popular, along with the schottische, two step, polka, and a waltz to end the evening.

Doug Robinson retired in 1941 as Forest Ranger for the Mammoth District. A party was given in his behalf at Nan and Max's Long Valley Resort that fall. The "Outsiders" were gone from the area and the winter people from the Forest Service personnel, relatives, and friends from Bishop all came to wish him well.



Seventy people came and shared in a potluck. Lloyd Summers presented a gift of a slide projector to Doug as he was an avid photographer. Mrs. Robinson brought his slides and the evening was filled with

sights from the desert to the mountains.

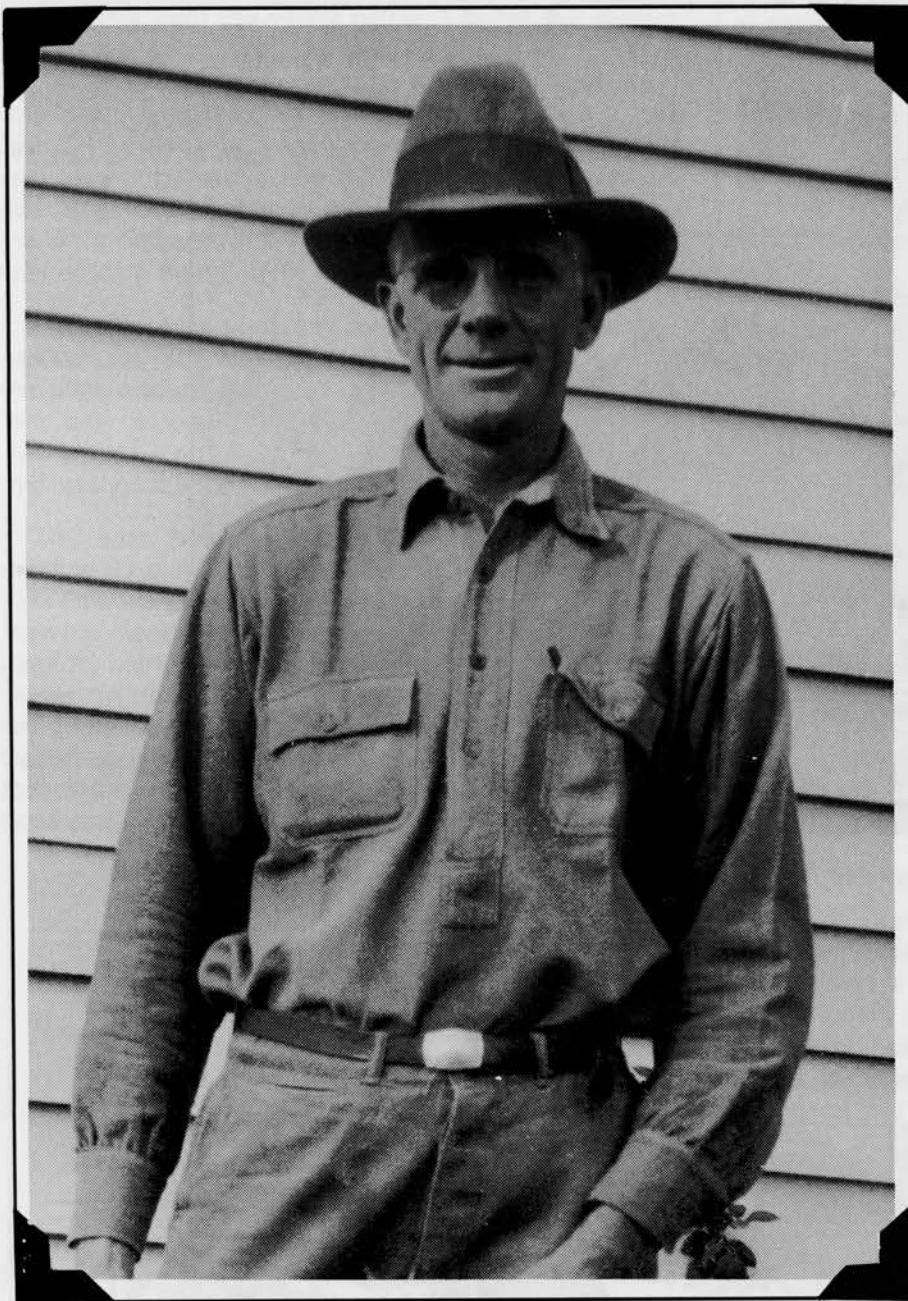
Little did the folks of New Mammoth realize that just around the corner, on the face of McGee Mountain, a new business was brewing in the form of White Gold.\*



*The Ice House, built by Sabert Keough and John Lutz. Note the new Post Office. Laura (Keough) Lutz Collection*

*Penney's Tavern, 1942. Frasher Collection, Pomona Public Library*





# THE CHAMPION SPARKPLUG MINE

by Bill and Louise Kelsey

*George W. Clarkson, who developed the hydro-electric power for the Champion Sparkplug Mine and managed the Jeffery Ranch. Clarkson Collection*

The small freight train on its narrow gauge track slowed a little at the Millner Ranch. Dr. Jeffery, baggage in hand, jumped from the train, still annoyed because he had not been able to talk the engineer into stopping, but he knew that hopping off the train was better than the long, hot trip from the station at Laws to the ranch in Chalfant Valley. He was a small, compact man, barely 5'8", full of energy and he had a clear goal in mind. It was 1920 when the doctor found himself at the foot of the White Mountain Range in eastern California.

Jeffery saw the White Mountains as deceptively rugged. The peak he faced was among the highest and driest in the United States. One of the range's treasures was the ancient Bristlecone Pine forest whose wind-twisted trees had lived longer than any on earth. But Dr. Jeffery was hunting a different prize.

Sillimanite was the ingredient that would make porcelains hard enough for dental repairs that could cut or grind... or crucibles that could be dropped four feet without breaking... or sparkplugs that could hold up to the heat of airplane fuels, and after World War I the government was fully behind the needs of the Air Corp.

Sillimanite (the same chemical composition as Cyanite and Andalusite—  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3\text{SiO}_2$ ) could be made synthetically but the manufacturing of it was very costly. The problem? No natural deposit of this material had ever been found in this country.

Jeffery held a doctorate in dental surgery but he had also spent some time in mining and mineralogy. He felt sure that there should be a deposit of sillimanite in nature. From his studies it seemed probable that the right conditions of high temperatures, infinite time and



enormous pressures — like those accompanying volcanic disturbances — might be found in the White Mountain area, well known for its volcanic history.

So Dr. Jeffery jumped from the train in time to meet the prospector who had helped him in his fruitless two-year search. The men, with sleeping rolls, some food and a little water, worked their way up a narrow canyon on the western slope of White Mountain. This was steep, inhospitable land and the two men had to clear enough rock to make room for a sleeping place. Restless and squirming about on the smaller rocks kept Jeffery awake most of the beautiful, moonlit night. As dawn slid into the canyon he was well aware of the unusual weight of the stones he had been tossing from under his sleeping roll all through the night. Sillimanite is very dense, which makes it very heavy!

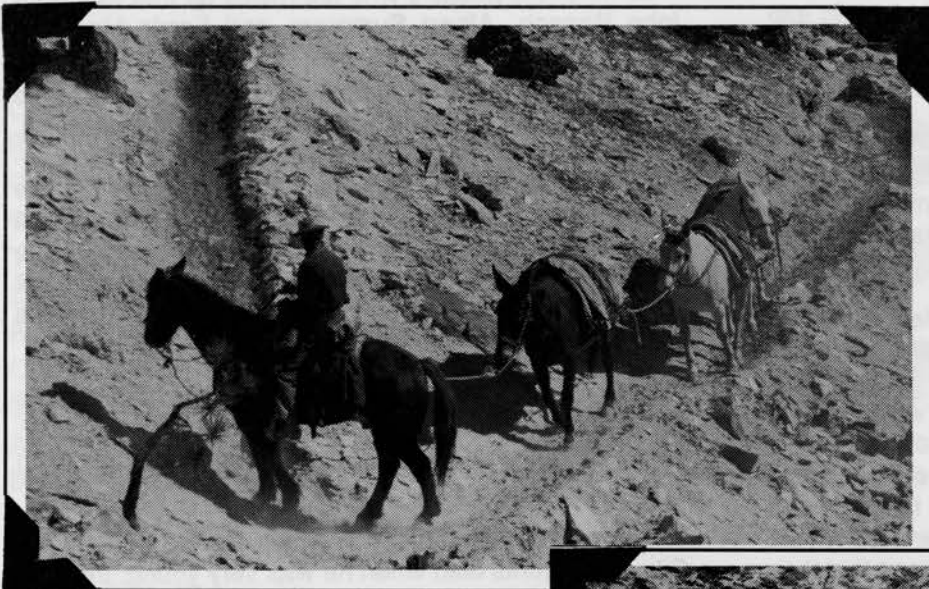
The rocks were debris and indicated a deposit higher up. Systematic and enthusiastic prospecting narrowed the search to a huge, light-colored cliff, hundreds of feet

high, with a perpendicular face inaccessible from below but approachable from above.

The prospector dangled from a rope to gather specimen which proved that the entire face of the cliff was pure sillimanite, a nearly inexhaustible deposit of millions of tons.

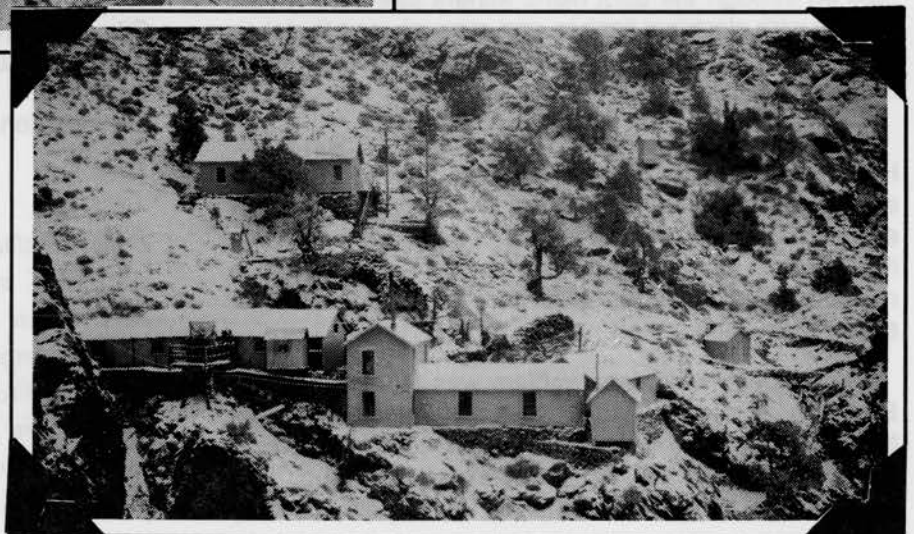
"Hey, Doc!" he yelled, "We've found it this time!"

The long search for sillimanite ended and the practical chapter of the story began. Dr. Jeffery bought the Millner ranch at the foot of White Mountain. The two canyons that drained onto the ranch were Millner Canyon, often shortened to "Water Canyon" and Jeffery Canyon, usually referred to as "Mine." Being a far-sighted and practical man, Jeffery's plan was to secure enough water for hydro-electric power to operate the mine. The ranch itself could provide meat and produce for the miners and any surplus would be sold to help defray the cost of developing the mine. Since the ranch sat near the entrance to Mine Canyon it became the base of operations for the mine.



*Spray Kinney going for wood, riding Chuf and leading Jerry, Charlie, and Eva. Kinney Collection*

*Upper camp in "Mine Canyon,"  
Champion Sparkplug Mine.  
Clarkson Collection*



Jeffery put Charles Douglas Woodhouse in charge of developing the mine site and its operation. The superintendent, a son-in-law of Dr. Jeffery, was a brilliant and educated person, well-experienced for the position. One of his first challenges was to design and build a mule trail from the ranch to the mine site.

Mine Canyon was too steep and too narrow for a road. The four and one-half mile trail on the canyon's north shoulder was exposed to high desert sun and howling winds. The upper portion of the trail had to ease into the gorge itself. Switchbacks laced stretches of trail together in a close series up the mountain. With over a 3,000 foot vertical drop it was just as well not to look down — the mules seldom did. And it was mules and packers that hauled everything needed for the camp and mine up that dry and dusty path.

The lower camp at about 7,500 feet, included the cook house, bunk houses, a wash house, a machine shop and a blacksmith shop. The cook house boasted a commercial size cooking range as well as a walk-in refrigerator — both hauled up that switchback trail.

As if to make up for the rugged climb, the view from the lower camp was classic western grandeur. The mountain fell away below the buildings and blended into the productive hay ranch at its feet. The vista crossed the bare and dry mesa, stretched over the fertile Owens Valley and ended at the Sierra skyline. 13,000 and 14,000 foot peaks of granite rose above the timberline as if to challenge the White Mountain's 14,246 ft. summit. This was the setting the Sparkplug miners called home, except when winter snows temporarily stopped their work.

The weather was as dramatic as the view. Both the Sierra and White mountains have an exciting record of summer storms. Sunrise might start blue and clear in every direction but by mid-morning thin, wispy clouds begin to veil the sky and within hours thunderheads pile up on top of each other. Lightning rips the clouds and sends its thunder rolling across the sky as these storms rage on through the dark night. Miners saw their rooms light up with electrical flashes and remembered that they lay on metal beds in metal buildings. At times like this they prayed a lot.

Len Leidy contracted to pack for the Sparkplug Mine. He had some of the biggest, stoutest mules in the eastern Sierra — and he needed them. In setting up the lower camp, Leidy and his men stripped the cook range to its skeleton and loaded it in sections. The walk-in refrigerator was disassembled and carried up as doors, sides, bolts, hinges and nails.

The biggest, weightiest problem was the compressor. Every possible unscrewable part was removed but the basic unit still weighed close to 600 pounds. This was a job for "Ole Maude," the stoutest in the string. She heaved a great sigh as she started up the path, carefully

putting one hoof down in front of the other. At the mine site a hoist lifted the load from her back as she gave another huge sigh, laid down, then dusted her weary back in the dirt.

Packing ore out of the canyon called for different gear. After brushing trail dust off his mules, Len and his crew threw a long blanket on each animal. Over this went the *aparéjo*. Necessity was the mother of this invention. Mule freighters all through the mountains used this practical piece of gear. The *aparéjo* was a big "envelope" that the packer stuffed with hay or swamp grass until it was about six inches thick and large enough to cover the mule for the heavy load it carried. The large pad was made of leather, and willow formed an interior frame. A leather strap acted as a cinch. A foot-wide britchen was fastened to the outfit, passing under the mule's tail to keep the load from shifting forward. Over the top the packer slung two broad leather straps that had large hooks on each end. The two 100-pound ore sacks were loaded between the hooks on each side, making a total load of 400 pounds for the pack animal. These were stout mules, but nothing compared to "Ole Maude" and her record.

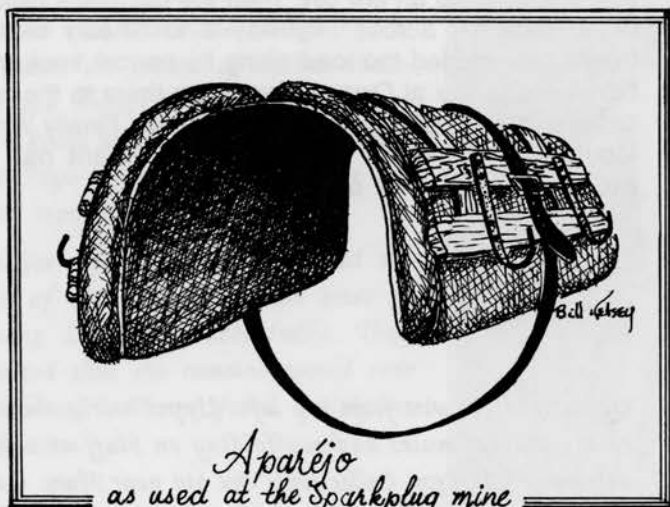
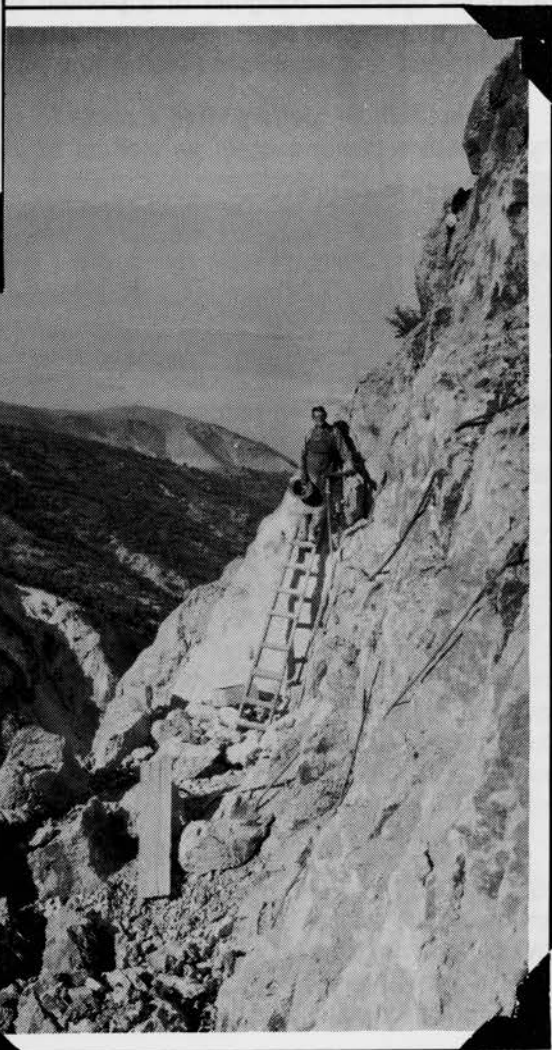
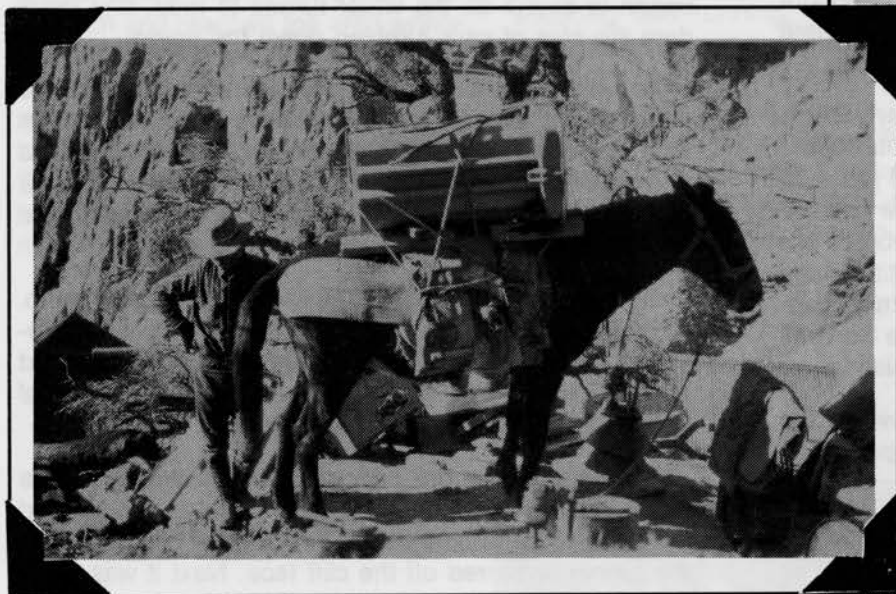
Some of the packers who led mules up that trail were John Bacocho, Albert Summers and Ferris Heedick, along with George Brown, a native American who had been born in 1898 in Round Valley, and Torres, who was an artist at placing willow sticks in the *aparéjos*. When Len Leidy retired, Wendel Gill took up the contract. The last of the packers to haul supplies up the mountain, harvest wood for the camp and carry ore to the valley were the father and son team of Spray and Ernie Kinney. Of these two well-known packers, Ernest is still putting his experiences of the mountains into his paintings.

Now Dr. Jeffery needed power for the mine and he also wanted a foreman to run the ranch. George W. Clarkson had the knowledge and experience for both jobs.

George Washington Clarkson was born in New York City. His parents died when he was very young, then life became a series of homes with his four sisters and with friends. The pattern of his moves was always in a western direction, eventually bringing him to Los Angeles.

*Opposite, clockwise from top left: Pack camp at bottom of mine trail, with mules loaded with lumber; Dr. Jeffrey (left) owner and developer of the mine, and George W. Clarkson, supervisor and manager of mine and ranch; Joe Myers on face of bluff, upper works (Clarkson Collection); Bill Kelsey sketch of aparejo used by packers in the Eastern Sierra; Len Leidy with mule carrying 600 lb. power transformer. (Kinney Collection)*





In Southern California a friend spun him a story of a beautiful valley that lay to the north. The spell was woven of blossoming fruit trees that fragranced the air, of hens cackling as they laid each egg, of roosters crowing — not knowing that they might be in Sunday's stew — and of cows mooing to be milked. A generous river wound the length of the land.

Owens Valley was all that he had imagined. When he moved to Bishop in 1911 he had grown to a tall (6'2") and muscular (190 lbs.) young man. He had prematurely white hair which set off his crisp blue eyes. One of his strong assets was a great sense of discipline tempered by a vocal sense of humor.

George found work with the Kelso Wheat Milling Company. Then he tried his hand at farming. He bought a ranch near Poleta on the east side of the Valley where the land was good and the view was spectacular.

In 1914 George went to work for the Southern Sierra Power Company in Inyo-Mono. His job was interrupted when World War I broke out and he left for France to serve in the signal corps. At the end of the war he returned to the Power Company where he worked his way to the position of assistant manager. A petite young telephone operator, daughter of a pioneer family, captured his eye and his heart. George and Louise Serventi were married and established their home in Bishop.

Late in 1928 Dr. Jeffery hired George to develop the hydro-electric power system as well as to expand and manage the ranch operation.

The couple's first son, George, was born and the family moved from Bishop to the ranch at the foot of White Mountain. Two and one-half years later their second son, Don, arrived and the family was complete.

With the hydro-electric in place, the power and telephone poles, wire, and hardware had to be packed up the mountain. Mules were trained to transport poles around the switchbacks on the steep trail. It took careful training and ingenious rigging to get two mules tied together, one after the other, with two poles on their backs, to maneuver the switchbacks without pushing one another off the trail.

As George developed the ranch, his natural talent for mathematics and an inborn inventive ability were put to good use. If something needed to be done or made or fixed, George could do, make or fix it. His interest in new mechanical devices led him to bring the first automatic hay loader and the first pick-up baler to the Valley.

One time additional water was needed for the ranch. George told Nels, who was a big, strong Swede, to jump in the Model "A" pick-up and help him on some work up Water Canyon. Nels had been in the desert long enough to know about flash floods. While they were working up-canyon Nels said, "George, we'd better get out of here.

Look how those purple clouds are turning black. We're in for a real down-pour and maybe a flash flood."

George had never been through a flash flood but just the words were enough to put him into action, especially coming from Swede who wasn't known for his exaggerations. They jumped into the Model "A" and headed out of the canyon. They went as far and as fast as the pick-up would carry them. The rain came down in torrents. Water spread in every downhill direction. They had only made it half-way up one side of the canyon when the force of the tide hit. Less than 100 feet from where they stood, water was tearing away the earth, leaving 20 and 30 foot cuts. The road at the bottom of the canyon was washed out and the storm still was not over. For 45 minutes it raged and poured. The ground under them began to shake as the water turned to mud, and boulders the size of cars rumbled down the gorge.

As quickly as it started the storm ended. When the mud dried it looked like a lava flow. Water had taken tons of ground with it and washed out several sections of the new and as yet unused flow line, which had to be replaced due to the damage. The road had washed out and the two men were left shaken but safe.

George supervised both the lower and upper camp. At the lower camp the ore was barred off the wall, broken up and shipped. At the upper camp power blasted tunnels into the cliff. Miners pushed ore cars of mineral out of the mountain for mules to carry to the Valley.

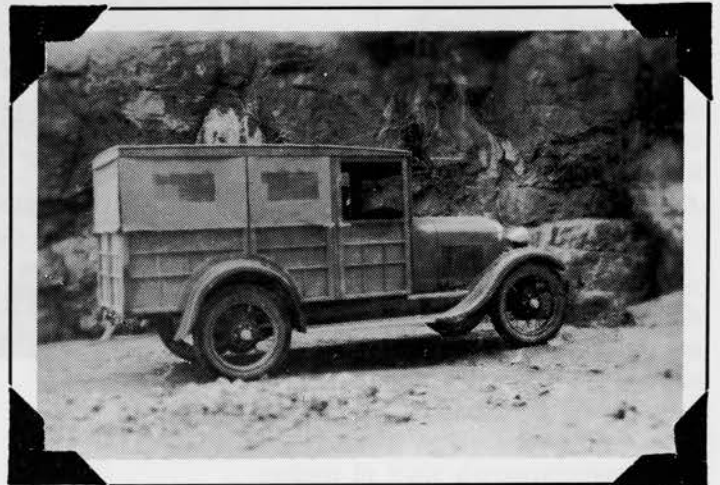
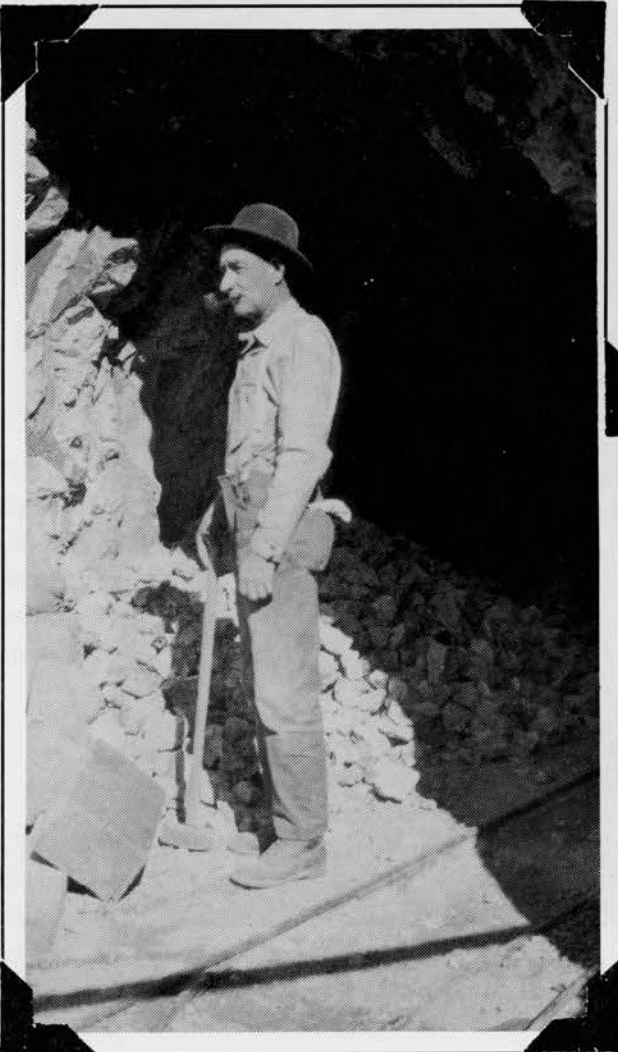
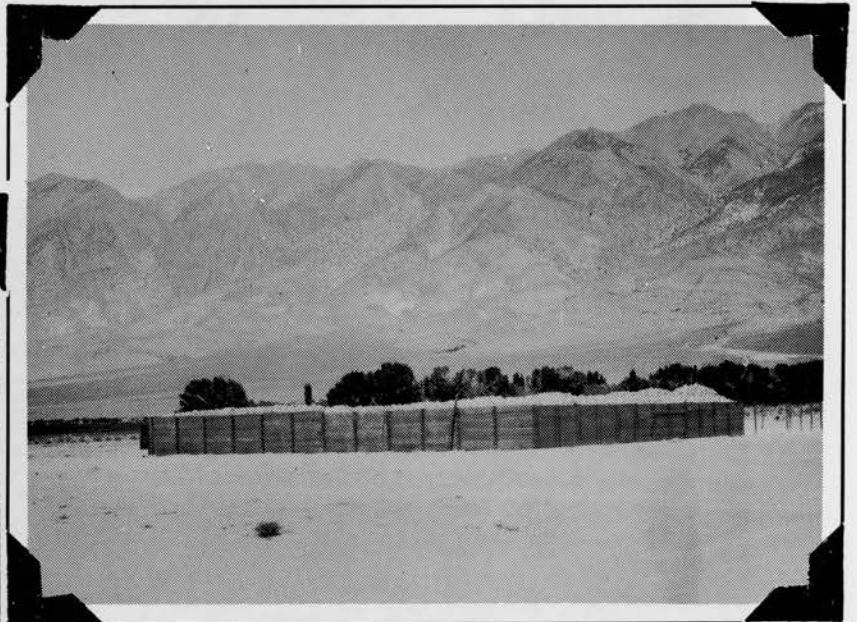
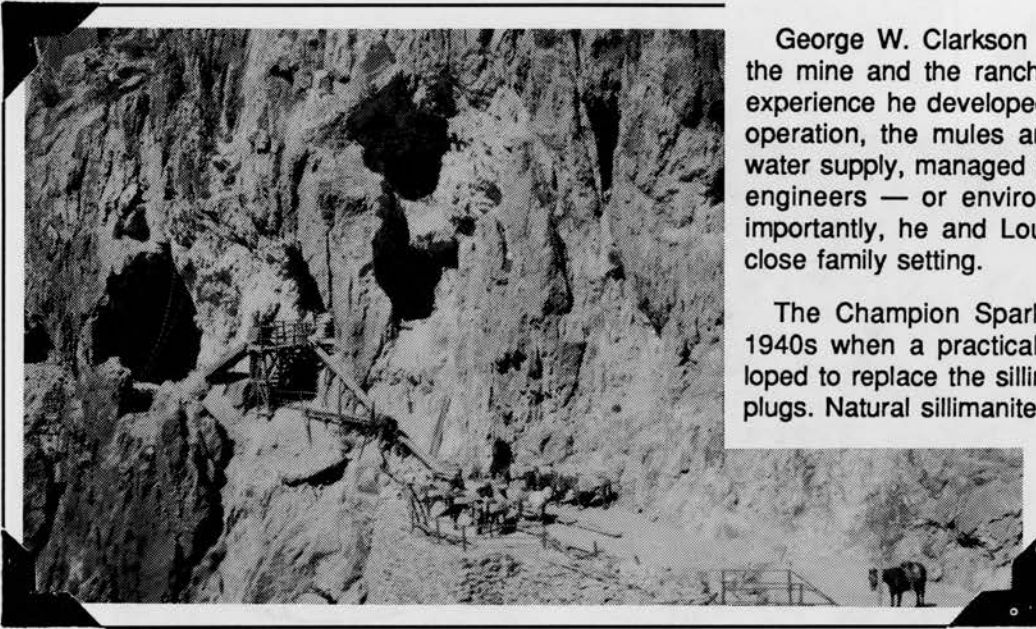
The remarkable ore had an unusual journey on its travel from White Mountain to Detroit, being hand sorted and loaded some nine times. First, it was blasted out of the tunnel or barred off the cliff face. Next it was hammered and broken up. The highest grade ore was separated. This was sacked into 100 pound bags. These were loaded, four to a mule, and bounced down the steep grade to the roadhead. At this point the ore was emptied into an ore bin. Then the big, black flatbed truck hauled it across Highway 6 to Shealy siding, freight cars carried the load along its narrow track to a broad gauge line at Owenyo, and from there to the processing and manufacturing plant in Detroit. Finally White Mountain's sillimanite became an important part of exceedingly hard, fine porcelain.

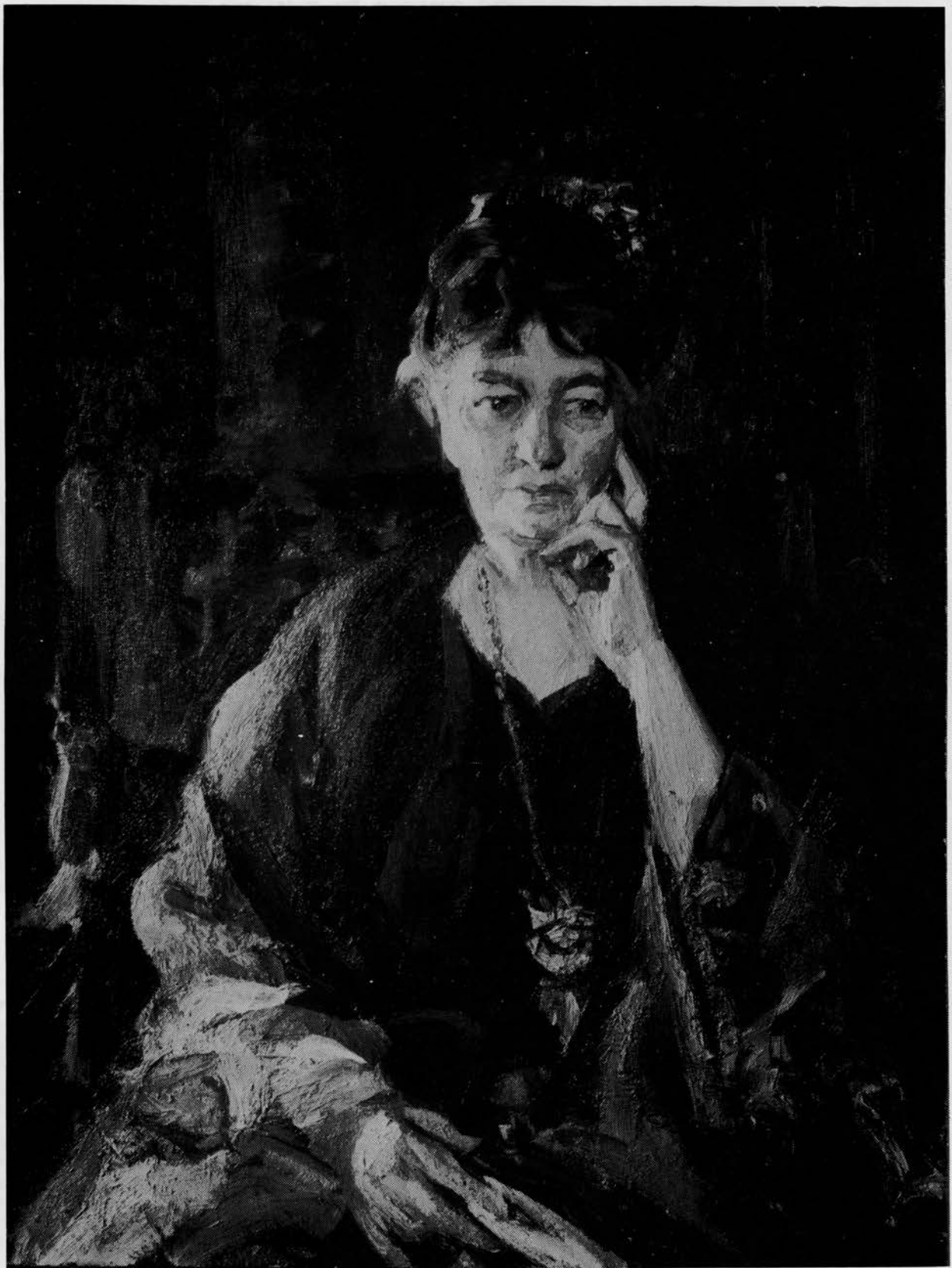
*Opposite, clockwise from top left: Upper works showing rock cribbing, mules and scaffolding on bluff at tunnel entrances (Clarkson Collection); Ore bin near Hwy. 6 and Shealy Siding (Kelsey Photo); The Model A, flash flood survivor; miner beside sillimanite ore at tunnel entrance of upper works (Clarkson collection)*



George W. Clarkson supervised the many facets of the mine and the ranch. With his natural abilities and experience he developed the power, oversaw the mine operation, the mules and the hauling, developed the water supply, managed the ranch, all with no additional engineers — or environmental impact reports. Most importantly, he and Louise raised two fine sons in a close family setting.

The Champion Sparkplug Mine closed in the late 1940s when a practical synthetic material was developed to replace the sillimanite porcelain used in spark-plugs. Natural sillimanite had finally met its match. \*



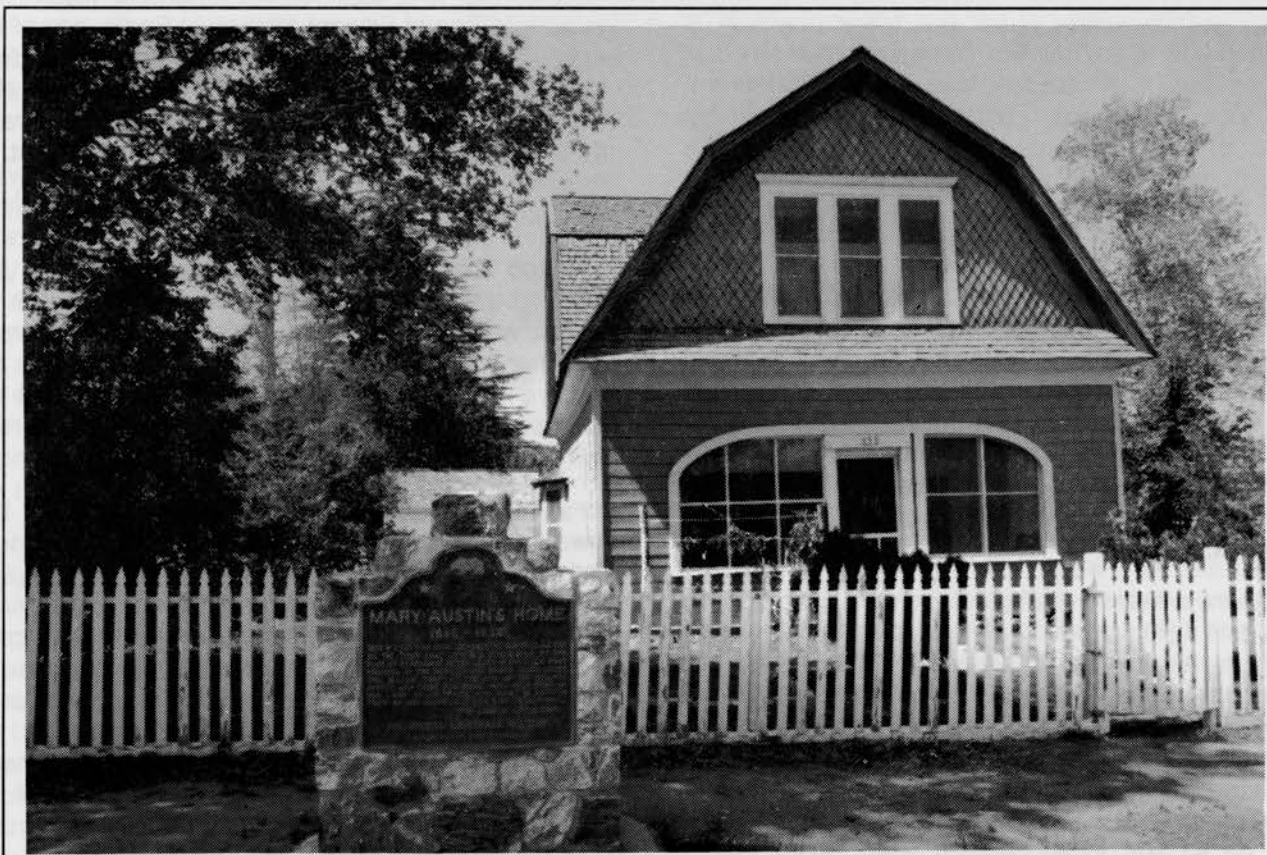




*Owens Valley's*

# *Mary Austin*

by Beverly Webster



*Mary Austin home on Market Street in Independence, California, Registered Landmark Number 229; photo by Bill Webster*

*Opposite: Portrait of Mary Austin by Louis Betts, 1929, by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California*

Mary Austin, whom many consider to be California's premier woman writer, found inspiration and direction for her finest writing in Owens Valley. In a brown two-story wooden house on Market Street in Independence Mary Austin wrote her first and most influential book, *The Land of Little Rain*. This collection of essays describing in intimate detail the desert, its creatures, its plants, its harsh environment, its people, would give this courageous and controversial woman instant fame.

The beautiful invitation that Mary offered in this book is inscribed on a plaque that marks the house on Market Street and informs the visitor that the Austin home is

California Registered Landmark Number 229. The invitation, though written almost a century ago, is at the same time nostalgic and beckoning.

*But if ever you come beyond the borders as far as the town that lies in a hill dimple at the foot of Kearsarge, never leave it until you have knocked at the door of the brown house under the willow-tree at the end of the village street, and there you shall have such news of the land, of its trails and what is astir in them, as one lover of it can give to another.*

Today the willow-tree is gone and the view of Kear-

sarge Peak is obscured by the houses and trees, but surely it is not difficult to picture a dedicated young woman writing in her sunny corner of the house — her “wick-i-up,” as she called it — or pacing the floor for hours seeking the precise word to convey her meaning.

Mary Austin followed *The Land of Little Rain* with over thirty books, more than two hundred articles, several plays, and many poems. As an author she ranks with Edith Wharton and Willa Cather, among America's most renowned women writers of her era. Mary, however, is not so well known as her two contemporaries since in the early years of this century Western writers found it difficult to get recognition. Further, her books were out of print for many years, and only recently have publishers had the wisdom to reprint her works, realizing their contribution to history and understanding of the West.

Although Mary Austin lived in Owens Valley only from 1892 until 1906, and much of that time she spent in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Carmel, here she gathered the material for her lifetime of writing. Here she gained her expertise as a botanist and naturalist, and from her friendships with Mexican and Paiute Indian families in Lone Pine and Independence she became knowledgeable in their cultures, powerful resources for her books and articles.

She spent a lifetime championing Indian and Mexican causes and fighting desperately to preserve their folk cultures. As her literary career became established, she lectured nationwide, speaking out on many issues that today are topics of utmost concern. A staunch feminist, believer in the rights of women as individuals, Mary often found her positions at odds with more traditional thinkers of her time, both men and women. She became expert on issues of the environment, Indian affairs, water rights, and land management, and at one point President Theodore Roosevelt sought Mary Austin's personal advice about forest lands and grazing.

Born September 9, 1868, in Carlinville, Illinois, of prominent citizens of that small town, Mary Hunter (Austin) grew up with strong Methodist beliefs and morals that would be continuing influences in her life. From her lawyer father Mary learned the magic of books, announcing to him when quite young that when she grew up she was going to be a writer. Her father, though, dying in her tenth year, would never know her fulfillment of this prophesy.

For the following ten years Mrs. Hunter struggled to raise her two sons and daughter on a small army pension, Mary maturing quickly as she shared responsibility to keep the family together. Overcoming the severe financial hardships however, she and her older brother managed to attend and graduate from Blackburn College in Carlinville.

After her graduation in 1888, Mary and her family left Illinois to homestead in California's lower San Joaquin Valley. The long train trip from Illinois to San Francisco was followed by an ocean voyage down the coast to Southern California, and the family spent another eight days traveling by covered wagon and horseback from Pasadena to their homestead, about twenty miles south of Bakersfield.

The Hunter land adjoined the extensive Tejon Ranch owned by General Edward Fitzgerald Beale, one of California's early settlers and entrepreneurs. The desert environment fascinated Mary, and she spent most of her time on the general's ranch learning about cattle ranching, sheepherding, and the unfamiliar environment. Her inquiring and fertile mind intrigued the general, who became her mentor in botany and geology.

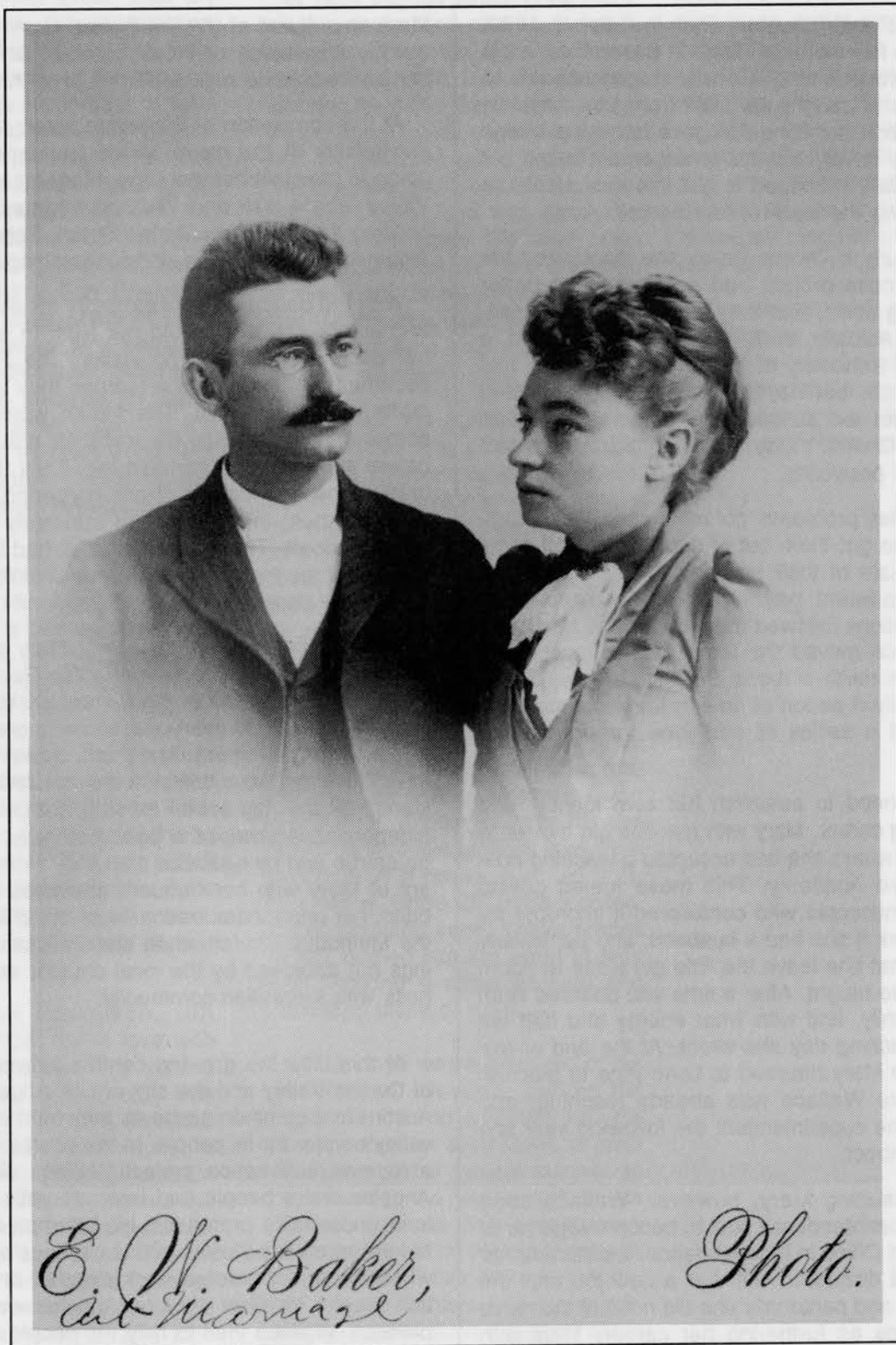
Taking little interest in homesteading, Mary soon accepted a teaching job nearby and boarded with a family with whom she became quite close. They encouraged her friendship with a quiet, serious young man, Stafford Wallace Austin, owner of a vineyard near Bakersfield, and in 1891 Mary and Wallace were married.

Farming turned out not be Wallace Austin's forte, however, and he moved to San Francisco to work with his brother designing an irrigation project for the distant Owens Valley. When Mary joined him she lost no time in taking advantage of the opportunities of the metropolitan area to pursue her writing career. She crossed the Bay with the intention of meeting the librarian of the Oakland Public Library, Ina Coolbrith, first poet laureate of California. Through this contrived but profitable connection Mary contacted the publisher of *The Overland Monthly* in San Francisco, who started publishing her articles. Throughout Mary's career she continued to value Ina Coolbrith's support and friendship.

The Austin's stay in San Francisco lasted but a short time as Wallace had to go to Owens Valley to do the necessary field work on the project. The three-day journey started on the overland train to Reno followed by transfers to the Virginia and Truckee Railroad and to the narrow gauge Carson and Colorado Railroad for the final leg down the length of the Owens Valley to Lone Pine.

With income from the project not covering living expenses, Mary enterprisingly made arrangements to earn their keep at the local boardinghouse by cooking. Although housekeeping never was her strong point, cooking and baking she enjoyed, and she did them well. The miner boarders taught her about their work, completely unexplored territory for her, and from her new Mexican friends in the community she was acquiring a fund of information that established a lifetime interest.





*Wedding portrait of Mary and Wallace Austin, 1891, the year before they came to Owens Valley; by permission of The Huntington library, San Marino, California*

For the birth of their daughter Ruth in October, 1892, Mary traveled to her mother's home in Bakersfield, a trip initiated by an arduous thirty-six-hour stagecoach ride to Mojave where she caught the train from Los Angeles. On the stagecoach her condition gave her the privilege of riding with the driver, and this arrangement suited her so well she usually managed to get this seat on future trips, often driving the team of four herself.

Upon her return to Owens Valley she discovered her husband's business project had not fared any better than his farming effort, and they were in serious financial difficulties. Actually, Wallace was well educated, a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and qualified to teach, but he disliked teaching and continued to try, not too successfully, to create irrigation projects for the Owens Valley, always anticipating a profitable business possibility.

Not one to let problems go unsolved, Mary engineered a plan to get them out of debt, paying off some bills from the sale of their property in Bakersfield and arranging installment payments for the remainder. Unsettled conditions followed them during the next three years as Wallace moved the family about, teaching in George's Creek north of Lone Pine for awhile, homesteading for a short period of time in the Alabama Hills, and working at a series of odd jobs throughout the valley.

Feeling the need to establish her own identity and pursue a writing career, Mary with her little girl moved to Bishop in 1895 where she had accepted a teaching position at the Inyo Academy. This move fueled gossip among the townspeople who considered it improper for a woman to work if she had a husband, and particularly unacceptable that she leave the little girl alone at home all day while she taught. After a time she boarded Ruth with a local family, and with what energy she had left after a long teaching day she wrote. At the end of two years in Bishop Mary returned to Lone Pine to teach in the school where Wallace was already teaching, and when he became superintendent the following year she finished his contract.

Without consulting Mary, however, Wallace soon gave up the superintendency post to become registrar of the Desert Land Office in Independence. It disturbed her that he had not discussed with her a new job until the deal was done, and personally she did not see the move to Independence as furthering her career. Thus with Ruth she abruptly moved to Los Angeles and obtained a teaching position at Normal School for the year (1899).

The move to Los Angeles enabled Mary to sharpen the skills she had tested in the Bay Area when she had established a friendship with Ina Coolbrith. The key person in linking her with the Los Angeles literary and art world would be Charles Lummis, writer of Indian-

Mexican cultures of the Southwest. Lummis shared with her his knowledge of these cultures, which along with her own would be reflected in much of her later writing.

At the completion of the school year, resigned to the inevitability of the move to Independence if she was going to maintain her marriage, Mary returned to Owens Valley where she and Wallace began designing and building the house on Market Street. Settled down, she resumed serious writing and researching.

With the desert as her laboratory for observing plants and animal life, she would put Ruth in a knapsack on her back and go for long walks. The Paiute families became her friends as she learned their language, their crafts, and their ways. The Indian women's ability to combine their domestic life and their artistic life, uniting nature and culture, fascinated her. They taught her their craft of basket making, from gathering the reeds to weaving them into sturdy but intricately designed finished products. The art of meditation had long interested Mary, and the Indian medicine man's skills in this arena particularly intrigued her.

In the house on Market Street Mary completed her great masterpiece, *The Land of Little Rain*. Published in 1903, it became a hit in the literary world, and Wallace praised the book to everyone, showing great pride in his wife's accomplishment. Mary felt, however, she could have done better and that it did not reach the literary standards she had set for herself. Nor did the people of Independence accept the book positively, believing it to be untrue and fanciful. But then they were not too tolerant of Mary with her frequent absences from her husband, her unorthodox treatment of her child, her rift with the Methodist Church when she advocated Bible readings not approved by the local church, and her friendliness with the Indian community.

At this time the growing conflict between the people of Owens Valley and the city of Los Angeles united the Austins in a common cause as they tried to preserve the valley's water for its people. In the course of his work on a federal reclamation project Wallace discovered Los Angeles water people had been secretly buying valley land under false pretenses. He attempted to expose a federal agent's collusion with Los Angeles city officials when the agent ordered work stopped on the reclamation project to allow the Los Angeles water project to proceed. Wallace tried to rally the people and to arouse Washington, going so far as to write a letter to President Theodore Roosevelt. With him Mary encouraged the people to fight to retain their water rights and wrote an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that brought the matter to a head by directing attention to the federal people involved in the scheme and to the subversive tactics of the Los Angeles officials. Their efforts to keep the water for Owens Valley, however, did not succeed,



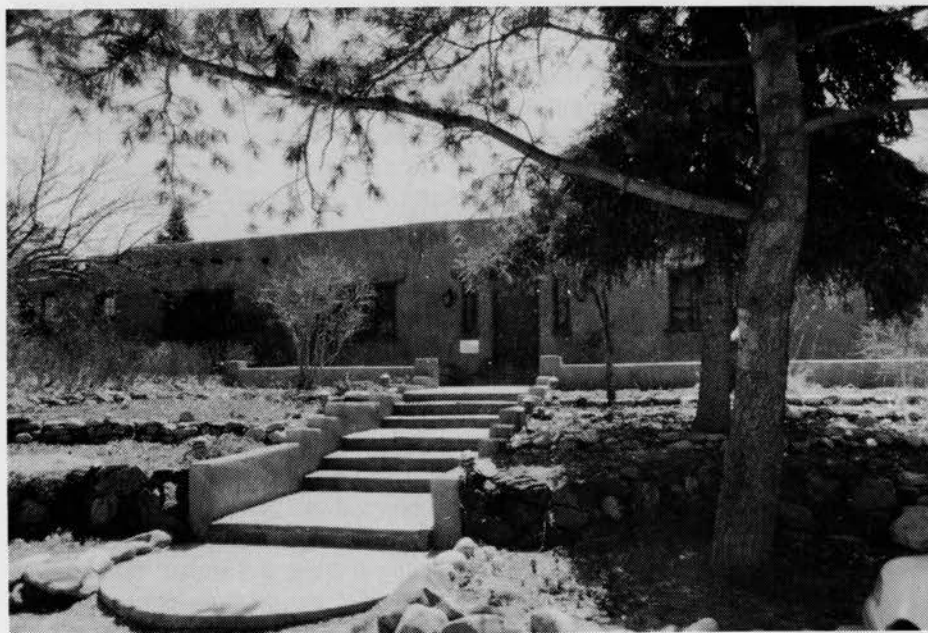
and Mary was totally disheartened at the prospects of what would become of her beloved land.

With her valley ecologically disintegrating and her marriage in not much better shape, Mary left for San Francisco and on to Carmel to do research for a book on mission life. On this visit to San Francisco and Carmel she met more literary stars that included the handsome, tragic poet George Sterling, novelist Jack London, legendary John Muir, and short-story writer and journalist Jimmy Hopper.

Returning to Independence with renewed energy and inspiration, she soon finished *The Basket Woman*, a collection of Indian tales for children published in 1904, and

the following year published *Isidro*, her novel about mission life.

Ruth, though a beautiful child, was failing to develop normally. She did not speak, cried excessively, and threw frequent tantrums. Finally, in 1905, after a year of observation in Santa Clara, Ruth was formally admitted to a sanitarium. Mary agreed with doctors that the child would be happier in controlled conditions where she was accepted as she was, and further, she knew she could not provide proper care herself. Although Mary was never to see her daughter again and referred to her whereabouts as "We have lost her," this decisive act concerning Ruth created an emotional scar that remained with her forever.



*Casa Querida, Mary Austin's home in Santa Fe, now a private art gallery*

*Kearsarge Peak from west end of Market Street in Independence; photos by Bill Webster*



After the devastating decision on her daughter, Mary concentrated on finishing *The Flock*, a book about shepherding and based on what she had observed at the Tejon Ranch and from shepherders she knew in the Eastern Sierra. Reliving more pleasant times lifted her spirits, and the book was published in 1906.

That same year the aqueduct to Los Angeles was moving ahead rapidly and the need for the Desert Land Office ceased, leaving Wallace once again seeking work. Mary writes in her autobiography that at that time her inner voice told her to leave the valley and never return. Too, she was suffering from heart trouble and felt a move to lower elevation would be beneficial. Thus the Austins left Independence, Mary going to Carmel and Wallace to Death Valley. Although they lived apart for many years, they were not formally divorced until 1914.

Although Mary never returned to the Owens Valley, her feelings for it were lasting, and as she wrote about her desert, her mountains, the Indians, the Mexicans, and the miners she expressed these feelings again and again.

On the move to Carmel a stop in San Francisco left a lasting memory. Comfortably settled in the elegant Palace Hotel, Mary's mystic sense told her of impending disaster, and she decided to spend the night with friends rather than in the hotel. Early the following morning, April 18, 1906, the great earthquake hit, severely damaging the Palace.

An exciting two years were to follow in Carmel. Liberated from her previous responsibilities, she finally concentrated all of her energy on writing. From a wealthy developer who was giving land to artists and writers who would settle in that secluded seashore community she acquired a piece of property. The Carmel artists' colony included her friends from San Francisco, Jack London, George Sterling, and Jimmy Hopper, and knowing that her professional accomplishments were respected by this group, she found their company a continual source of intellectual energy and self-renewal.

Although she did not build on her land immediately, Mary had her wick-i-up, meaning "shelter" in the Paiute language. Here on a simple platform in an oak tree, accessible by ladder, she wrote and often entertained friends.

Not long after settling in Carmel she learned that a nagging illness was terminal, giving her an urgency to travel to places she had always intended to visit. Thus the years 1908 and 1909 found her in Europe. She traveled directly to the Vatican to investigate a special method of prayer, and whether her mental powers of prayer overcame the disease, her illness miraculously disappeared and she survived another quarter century.

Especially rewarding experiences awaited her in Lon-

don where she stayed with friends from Carmel, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hoover. Here she added many of England's major literary figures to her growing circle of friends, including H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and William Yeats.

In London, far removed from her precious desert land, she saw her book *Lost Borders* published in 1909, a compilation of tales of desert people she had gathered from Indians over the years. It was written in the style of *The Land of Little Rain*, and readers especially appreciated that she had returned to her original stories of the desert. This book differed from the first, though, in that it focused on people of the desert rather than the flora and fauna.

Proximity to New York publishers Mary believed crucial to further her career, and upon her return to the United States in 1910 she took up residence in Manhattan. Finding earnings from writing inadequate to support the standard of living to which she aspired, she turned to lecturing as a principal means of livelihood, an endeavor that over the next dozen years would take her countrywide, allowing for annual visits to California and time in the renewing community of Carmel.

Though New York continued to irritate her as she fought constantly the provincial Eastern literary establishment and its inability to accept the West as a topic worthy of literature, the period was extremely fruitful, her work continuing to reflect her life in the Eastern Sierra. Her 1917 novel, *The Flood*, written in New York, was set in the Owens Valley, and *The Land of Journey's End*, written in the style of *The Land of Little Rain* and based on the desert, was published in 1924. *The Arrow Maker*, a play produced on Broadway, brought its New York audience a tale revolving around the Indian culture with which she was so familiar. Lecture tours continued and were broadened to include speeches on the women's suffrage movement and during World War I on behalf of relief efforts.

The weekly gatherings of writers, artists, and often radical politicians at the elegant New York home of wealthy socialite Mabel Dodge further increased the number of friends, including such superstars of the literary world as Lincoln Steffens, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, Fannie Hurst, and Hendrik William Van Loon. Always an individual and not hesitant to do the unpredictable, Mary often wore Western dress and Indian jewelry to the fashionable soirees, delighting in the stir she caused.

In 1918 devastating news of Ruth's death closed an old, unhappy chapter in her life. The old feelings of pain, guilt, and helplessness of not having a perfect child filled her with grief as she traveled to California to make final arrangements.

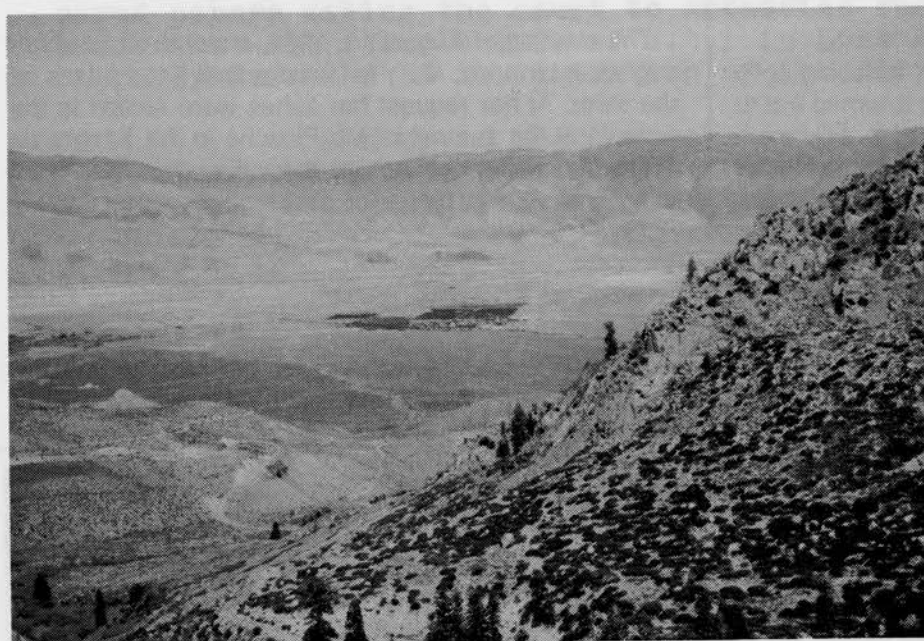


Returning to the East by way of Santa Fe, New Mexico, to do research on Indian archeology, she became enchanted with the city's old world charm, and the combination of desert and mountains reminded her of the Owens Valley, renewing her spirits. In Santa Fe she immersed herself in work at the School of American Research, still one of the country's richest sources for Indian research. She also threw herself into community activities, lecturing, and organizing a theater group. Although she did not make New Mexico her permanent home until 1924, she spent considerable periods of time in Santa Fe and Taos, actively participating in the artists and writers groups and working on community projects.

Again she built a house, one that she designed her-

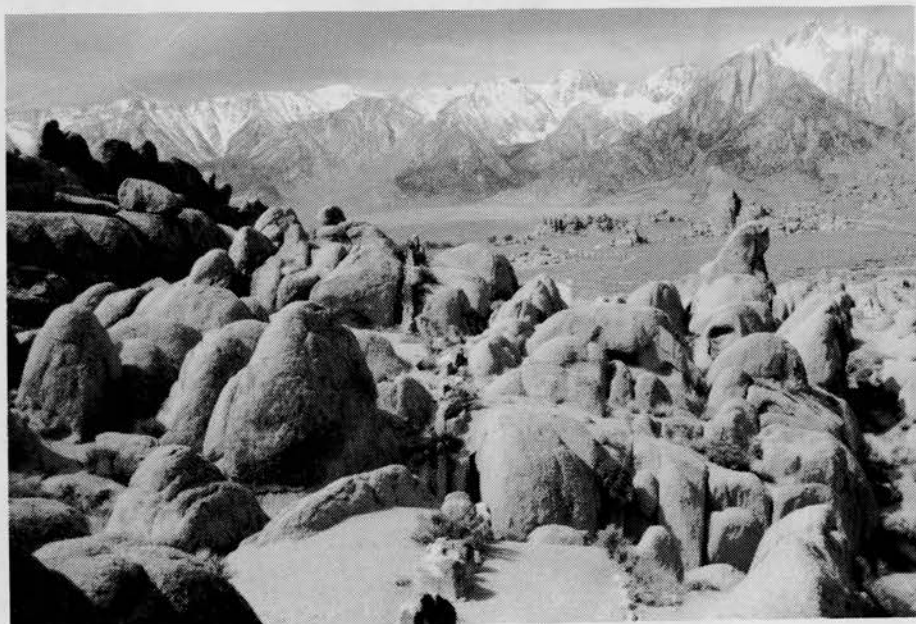
self in typical Santa Fe style in a section of the city home to many other writers and artists. Casa Querida, or Beloved House, at 439 Camino del Monte Sol, now a private art gallery, soon became a hub for artists and writers, and here Willa Cather wrote her final chapter of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

Young Ansel Adams and his wife stayed at Mary's home when he collaborated with her on *Taos Pueblo*, a collection of photographs and essays published in 1930 about the Indian village near Taos. In a later book published in 1950 after Mary's death the famous photographer furnished photographs of the Owens Valley area to illustrate a special edition of *The Land of Little Rain*.



*View of Independence and the Owens Valley from Onion Valley Road ascending toward Kearsarge Pass, where Mary and Wallace often camped*

*Alabama Hills, described by Mary as "rounded, blunt, burned, squeezed out of chaos, chrome and vermillion painted, aspiring to the snow line;" photos by Bill Webster*



Mary's contributions in Santa Fe were many, among which was the founding of the Indian Arts Fund in 1925, organized to preserve native culture of the Indians and now part of the School of American Research. Her outspoken ways continued as she thwarted the local Chamber of Commerce's scheme to allow a group of Texas women to set up a summer cultural center in Santa Fe in 1926. The Old Santa Fe Association, organized to preserve Old Santa Fe and guide future growth to retain distinct characteristics of the city, owed its origination in 1926 to Mary Austin. In 1927 she appeared before a DAR committee to protest its donation of a statue to the city, Madonna of the Trail, to mark the Santa Fe Trail arguing that the monument did not represent Santa Fe's real pioneers who she contended were Spanish and who had not been consulted in the decision. Saving the Indian and Mexican cultures of the Southwest continued to be important outlets for her energy during her years in Santa Fe.

Mary Austin's last major work was her autobiography *Earth Horizon* published in 1932. Writing it turned out to be difficult and painful as she relived her life. Her meticulous detail, however, has earned this book the honor of being considered a first-class social history. Unlike

most autobiographies, she wrote this one mostly in the third person as if she was writing about another Mary, and in it she described the two people inside her — the "I-Mary," her outer, confident, public, writing self, the I-can-do-anything Mary, and the "Mary-by-herself," the inner, vulnerable, dependent self.

Throughout her busy, productive, and rewarding life in Santa Fe Mary unfortunately was plagued with a series of illnesses that frequently required her to travel great distances to seek medical assistance, always managing to fit in lectures and visits to old friends on these excursions. A heart attack during a trip East to introduce her autobiography, however, signaled the beginning of seriously failing health. Trying with all her strength to continue her disciplined writing schedule and public commitments back in Santa Fe, she had to admit to herself that she definitely was not well.

The evening of August 13, 1934, a month short of her sixty-sixth birthday, Mary suffered a final heart attack as she slept. At her request her ashes were sealed in the rocks near the summit of Mt. Picacho in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains overlooking the valley of Santa Fe, a fitting final resting place for someone who saw beauty

*James Hopper with Mary Austin in 1906, in her Carmel treehouse, her studio she referred to as her "wick-i-up" (shelter); reproduction by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California*





and movement in a "land of little rain" and recorded the desert for posterity.

As suggested by Professor T.M. Pearce of the University of New Mexico in his introduction to the 1974 reprint of *The Land of Little Rain*, Mary Austin's adult life fit into the three groupings of the human race she depicted in her 1910 novel *Outland*. During her time in California she was a "Woodlander," a creative spirit living close to nature. In her New York period she belonged to the "Far People," people in cities supported by industry and factories. And for her years in Santa Fe she was part of the "House Folk" or "People of Ploughed Field," settlers on farms and in small communities.

Although she may have belonged to all three groups, her writing clearly reflected her time as a Woodlander, when she had studied the land and people of the desert to build her stories and essays. She coined the term "Amerindian," probably based on her appreciation of Indian names that were straightforward and self-explanatory, and she incorporated in her writing the Indian's ability to use words sparingly to convey the meaning.

Mary Austin's poetic prose brought the desert to life and made its people believable. Although a Midwest

native and citizen of the world, she could be said to be truly a daughter of Owens Valley. Here the desert became part of her inner self that through her writing she shared with others, and beginning with *The Land of Little Rain* her beautiful writing has become an enduring part of Western literature and history.

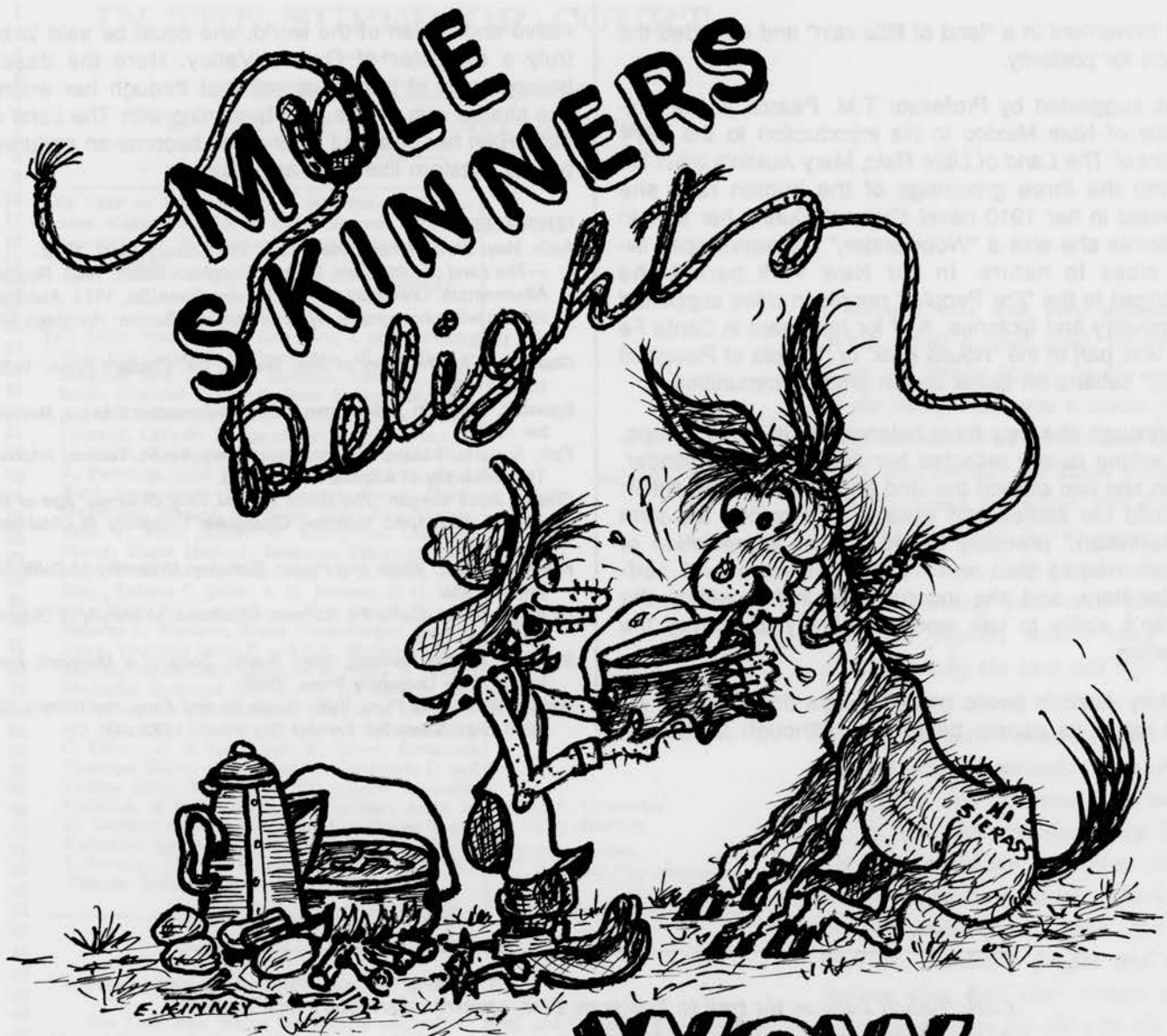
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*Little Pothole Lake on the trail to Kearsarge Pass, country where Mary and Wallace Austin often camped; photo by Bill Webster*





Illustrated by the inimitable Ernie Kinney, whose mule portraits have done much toward putting Bishop's Mule Days in the halls of fame.

# WOW

I first learned of McAfee's Mule Skidders Delight about the time I was a senior in high school, and later when friends and I would camp out on fishing and hunting trips, I cooked up a batch many times and it became very popular with all the guys -- so popular that one friend cooks it for holiday meals. Not wanting this to get lost over the years, I thought a good place to have it recorded would be THE ALBUM. My friends and I are all getting to be about the same age as Mt. Tom and what better place to cook it than Bishop, the Mule Capitol.

-Howard McAfee

About 1/4 lb. of thick sliced bacon (local smoked best flavor)

2 or 3 onions

2 cans whole kernel corn

2 cans solid pack tomatoes

Use a deep cast iron skillet or small Dutch oven if you have same. Dice bacon and fry partially to get good amount of grease. Remove bacon and place diced onions in pan. Fry only partially. (If too much grease left, skim some out). Return bacon to pan and add corn and tomatoes. Stir. Place on low heat and simmer two or three hours, stirring often and add Season All or salt and pepper. Sound too simple to be true? -- Try it -- too good to be so simple.



# *The Chinese Ranch Cooks Version of the American Beef Stew*



Chinese Stew (Chiny Stew as it was called by my mother, Hazel Farrington McAfee) was apparently the Chinese ranch cook's version of our beef stew. My brother Wayne and I were raised on it, as Mom cooked it frequently and then taught Florence, my wife of 52 years, how to make it. Flo has added some things they didn't have in those days -- canned mushrooms, bean sprouts, soy sauce, Chinese noodles, etc. Rather than have this fine dish disappear (we have no children of our own) I thought I would give it to you for THE ALBUM.

My cousin, Vada Sproul Cline, also knows how to make it, as her mom (Mabel Farrington Sproul) handed it down to her. Learn to make it as instructed by Florence and I'm sure you will enjoy for years to come.-- Howard McAfee

2-1/2 lbs boneless pork, fat trimmed off, cut in strips 2 to 3 inches long

1 clove garlic, minced

2 red potatoes, cut in strips like French fries

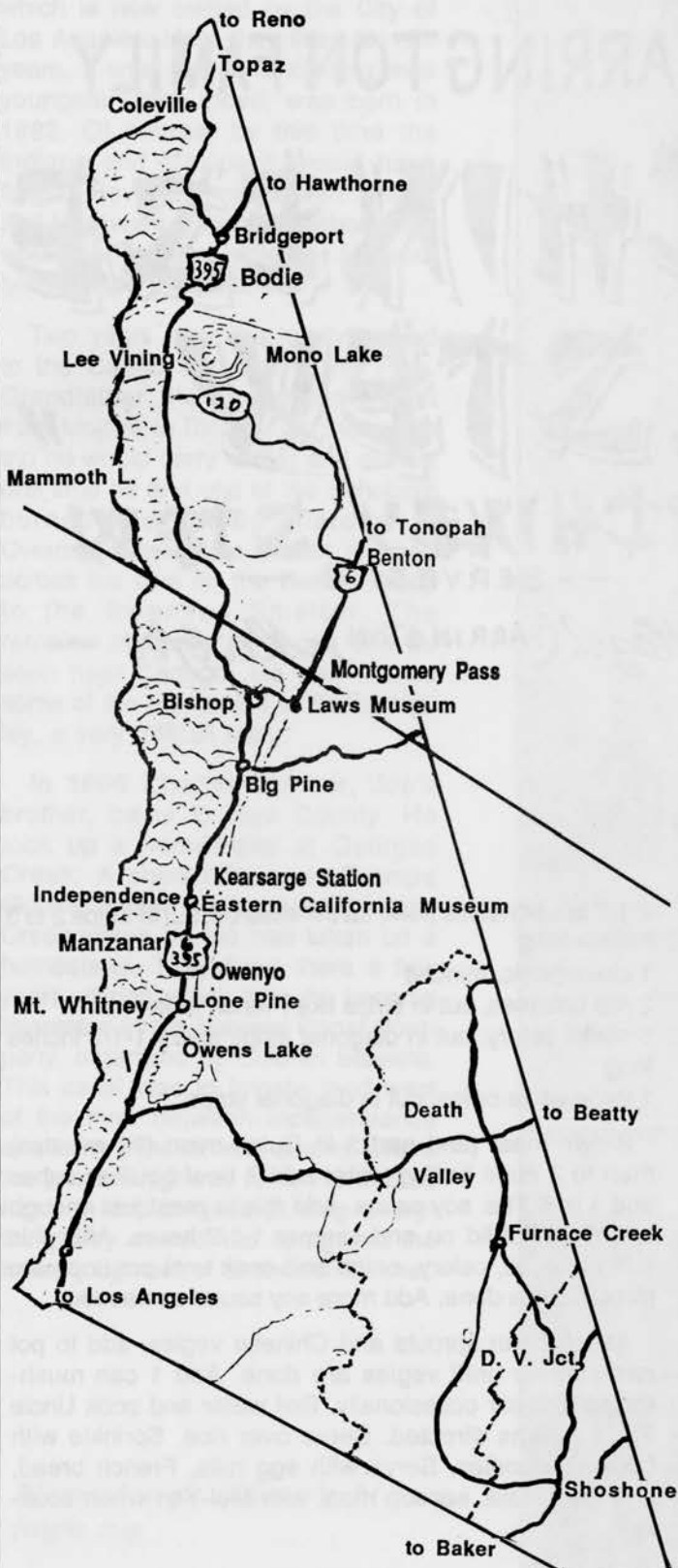
5 stalks celery, cut in diagonal strips about 1-1/2 inches long

1 large white onion, cut in diagonal strips

Brown meat (and garlic) in Dutch oven (20 minutes) then to 2 cups boiling water add 2 beef bouillon cubes and 4 to 6 Tbs. soy sauce. Add this to meat just enough to cover. Put lid on and simmer 1-1/2 hours. After this add potatoes, celery, onion and cook until potatoes are three-fourths done. Add more soy sauce as needed.

Wash bean sprouts and Chinese veggies, add to pot and simmer until veggies are done. Add 1 can mushrooms and stir occasionally. Boil water and cook Uncle Ben's rice as directed. Serve over rice. Sprinkle with Chinese noodles. Serve with egg rolls, French bread, and tea. (Note: season meat with Mei-Yen when cooking).

# MONO COUNTY



# INYO COUNTY

## Editor's Corner



In this final issue of 1992, we introduce you to Willma Willis Gore, a native of Owens Valley, who recalls a bit of her past on page 28. Willma was born on the Shannon Ranch, the cattle ranch her father, Roy Willis, inherited from his grandparents -- and we will have more on that in a future number. Nothing can be identified of the ranch now, but it was between Bishop and Big Pine, south of Keough's and north of the old Warren Hot Springs, on the west side of the present highway.

When Willma was three years old, the ranch was sold to the City of Los Angeles, and the family moved to the Giroux apple ranch west of Big Pine, where Mr. Willis worked as manager. The Willises later bought the dairy business south of Lone Pine, where Willma attended school until she went to UCLA in 1940. In 1943, she married John Simpson; they returned to UCLA in 1945 after his discharge from the army. Willma graduated from UCLA in 1947 with a BA stressing English, geology, and geography.

Two of the three Simpson sons live in California, one in Washington. Willma married Charles Gore in 1968 and added five stepchildren to her family. The Gores moved to the San Joaquin Valley in 1973 and ranched for a couple of years in Porterville on the property of a girlhood friend from Big Pine, Velma (Mrs. Wayne) Zimmerman. Charles Gore died just over a year ago. The first of Willma's current series of children's books, EARTH DAY, is dedicated to his memory.

Willma has published articles and photos in many magazines and newspapers. The first EARTH DAY, for Enslow Publishers, New Jersey, is her 16th published children's book, and includes one of her photos of June Lake. She is a member of the California and National Federation of Press Women, California Writers Club, Valley Writers Network, and WIN/WIN.



# Letters to the Editor

## OLD FRIENDSHIPS RENEWED

I noticed the January copy of THE ALBUM while visiting my parent's home in Bishop over this weekend. Then, when gassing up in Independence, I purchased Vol. V, No. 2. What a pleasure! The best part of all was the letter from Marian Wahlquist Brooks of Hemet. Our family camped in the Whitney Portal from 1947-1957, often right across the stream from that cabin. **Jim Hemminghaus, Banning, CA**

I recently returned from a trip to see my ailing sister in Mopean, Canada -- Barbara Holden -- who showed me copies of your "Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono." Due to the fact that my parents helped some in being pioneers in and around Bishop, I wish to enroll in a two-year subscription...My life has been filled with tales of happenings at Intake Two where they lived in a cabin which no longer exists. I wish I knew who to contact about buying a photo of the structure. I have family photos but no picture of the building. Their duties were control of the water flow (year around) and patrol of the phone lines after severe snow storms -- even the bark of a coyote could and did cause avalanches. Skiis were used and one large ski pole which was used as a brake to slow down your descent between the legs.

My dad even had the misfortune of severing his thumb with an axe and after my mom tied it back on and wrapped it, he made the trip to Bishop by walking and a team of horses from one of the power plants down below. A "saw bones" sewed it on and he had a stiff thumb thereafter. Tough people.

Incidentally, I have a memento from my home of years long gone. My mother had an Indian friend that gave her an Indian basket which was made from material along Bishop Creek. Measurements: 19" long by about 9" high. I really treasure it. I steam it regularly to preserve the reeds. **Dick Negus, Pollock Pines, CA**

**Does anyone know of photos of this family cabin? Mr. Negus addressed this one to "Your Honor." He must have found out my other hat was Mayor. And then there's this next one addressed to "Editor Jane Fisher or Head Beancounter!" I love 'em!**

I refuse to cut up my ALBUM for the sake of a coupon. Please accept this as a reasonable facsimile. We would like one "Best of The Album"...Also since we are sending money please extend our sub. to THE ALBUM another year. We hope for continued success in your work. My wife and I enjoy it so. **K.I. Heinrich, Earlimart, CA**

I just couldn't consider cutting my ALBUM so am ordering two "Best of The Album" books and adding a couple notes for you. The mention of cascara and orange fizzed castor oil sure brought back memories for me. I missed the joys of Castoria and chocolate Ex-lax. By then my folks were into "naturals," a large helping of sauerkraut or a double dose of stewed prunes. Sad to say orange juice still isn't on my most desired list.

Now that Mel Stine of Reno has so neatly put your columns together, how about another book from you. You already have a great title, "Seriously Enough." All of us ALBUMites would know exactly who wrote it. **Harriett M. Douglas, Huntington Beach, CA**  
**Oh-oh. There wasn't even time and room for the column in this issue. But I m still thinking funny...most of the time.**

We always buy your magazine at the gas station on the south end of Lone Pine...We have a cabin in Mammoth and I love reading about the story of the counties; it makes the drive so interesting. Thanks for your great magazine...only wish we'd discovered it sooner. **Sandy Skahen, Newport Beach, CA**

What a pleasant surprise to receive the two ALBUMS...(The Shaws) certainly are an interesting family. I have some of those stock certificates (ALBUM III, Nos. 3 and 4). I framed one. Frank Millner told Bob (my husband) how John Kewley shot the cook in Bodie for spitting in the pancake batter. Frank was little; he heard the shot and ran in the kitchen and saw the body on the floor. I m sure there are a lot more tales...We someday hope to get back to Bishop. I've never learned to like this city. I sure miss the news like they used to have, such as the Lone Pine, Keeler, etc., telling about personal things. **Sally Millner, Playa del Rey, CA**

My name is Shirley Watterson Willson and I have just become acquainted with an uncle that I didn't know was still alive. He is Geoffrey Watterson, my father's brother, and until recently lived all of his life in Lone Pine. His family came to Bishop in 1914 from the Isle of Man. He has loaned me a couple of your magazines...which have articles about our family. I would like to become a subscriber to the magazine. **Shirley Willson, Arcadia, CA**

**Mrs. Willson has also ordered a subscription for her brother Rollin Quayle Watterson of Northridge, CA. Recognize these old family names from the Watterson series? This is one of the highest rewards of producing THE ALBUM -- the discovery of ties and relatives (including some of my own) we didn't know existed.**

As subscribers to THE ALBUM, we wish to congratulate you on this fascinating magazine! We look forward to receiving each new copy, and cherish the ones we already have. They proudly sit side by side in one of our bookcases along with all the other books we have collected of Inyo and Mono counties for the last 38 years. Thank you. **Harry and Alice Conway, Torrance, CA**

**And we certainly thank you in return, as well as wish all of you many delightful returns to the Eastern Sierra.**

**OUCH!!**

**Excerpt from letter to Mr. Funk: ...I commend you for publishing "The Album"-one day, after 50 years, it will become a good historical source. It only needs historically discriminating editor...I have issues Vol V No. 1 & 2. Please arrange other available issues of the past sent to my address. Victor R. Plukas, Bank Historian, Security Pacific National Bank/Retired/**

*Well, that certainly brings us back down to earth. Now if I can decide which of our pioneer families against whom I should discriminate...on the other hand, when we decided to publish THE ALBUM, we made a deliberate decision*

*that most stories should be first hand memoirs, true history as it was lived, rather than cold historical fact.*

*And we are concerned about this:*

I feel compelled to write to you about a recent article concerning the town of Beveridge which appeared in your magazine.

It is not that I am displeased with the fact that an article on this town appeared in the magazine, nor am I upset with the fact that Mr. Budlong left out the most important historical facts of one of the most notable gold producing regions in this area. What concerns me is that the location was disclosed with very little camouflage.

Some facts were not mentioned possibly due to lack of research. References include "The State Mineralogist Report 1938," "Gold Districts of California, Divisions of Mines, Bulletin 193, 1970," "Mineral Resources of Inyo Wilderness Study Area," and an assortment of local papers. Many other resources are available through the Eastern California Museum.

The article does not mention that Bob Wolf helicoptered into Beveridge and pilfered most of the valuables from what was a most pristine camp (see "Treasure" magazine 1/77 Vol. 8 #1.) There is no mention that it is illegal to remove artifacts from public land, instead an itemized list appears with what remains of a town which was deemed important enough to have its own post office.

It was appalling to read explicit directions. There are other people who pondered penning such an article and thought better of it. They realized the publicity would mean the end for the town. Since the seventies Beveridge has experienced a steady degradation, even the piano has been taken (pictures of which can be seen at the museum).

Beveridge is one of my favorite places and I feel fortunate to have been able to see it. There is a heaviness in my heart because I know that some day the segment of society that wants to shoot, destroy and loot our history into oblivion, will reach even the remoteness of Beveridge. In the future please use discretion on areas as sensitive as this. In closing I would like to leave you with an excerpt of a letter written to Russ Leadabrand from Roger Mitchel (appears in "Four Wheeler" magazine 12/76). "...The place has changed a lot in recent years as word of mouth publicity has caused more and more people to go there. It seems everyone takes one or more souvenirs... I am not at all anxious to publicize Beveridge... It could mean the kiss of death to the precious little that remains."

I know there are others who feel as I do. I only hope they will write. **Matt Jones, Yorba Linda, CA**



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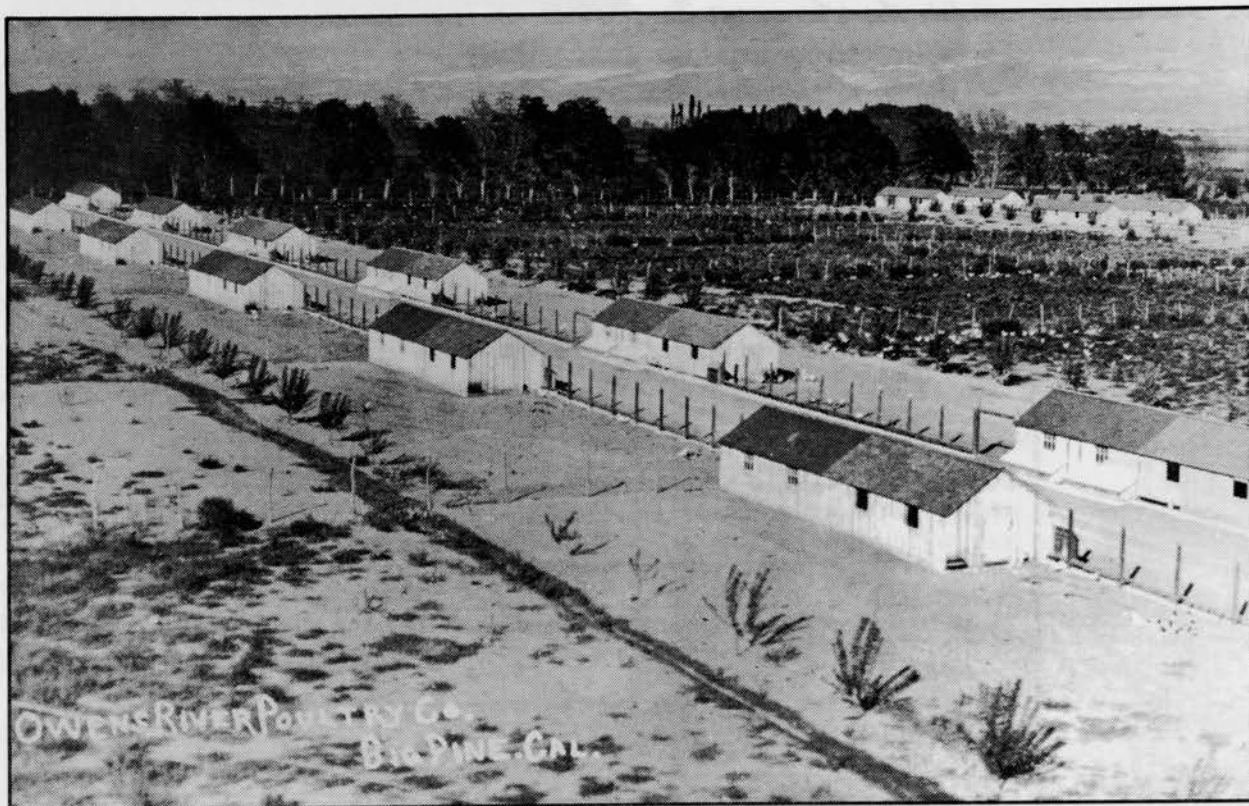
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# Old West History



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