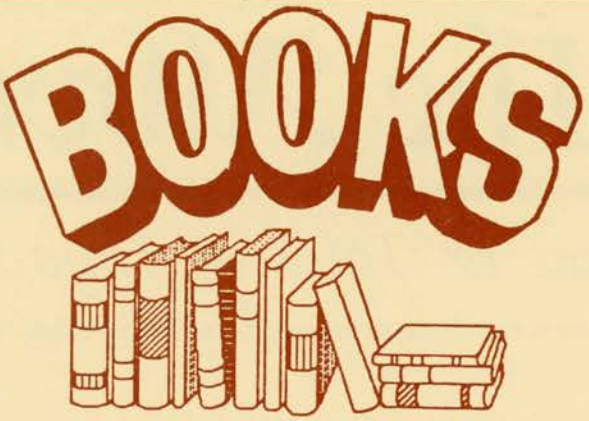
The Album

Times & Tales of Inyo-Mono

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

Vol. V, No. 2

INSIDE



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The bar in the Valley View Hotel - corner of North Main and Church. The young man standing in front of the bar was "Dutch" John Albers - a local blacksmith, whose family was supposed to be the Albers Flour people. I think the calendar is 1913. Note the fancy lights. Cheeseman Collection.

THE ALBUM, Times and Tales of Inyo-Mono

APRIL, 1992
Volume V, Number 2
Published quarterly by Chalfant Press, Inc.

In This Issue

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Cover photo: *John Conway, a son of Ireland, came to the Eastern Sierra in 1878 just as the Bodie strike was reaching its peak. His family became and continues to be integral part of Inyo-Mono history. See page 2, "Here Come the Conways," by Louise Kelsey. Photos courtesy Gladys Conway Millner.*

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

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

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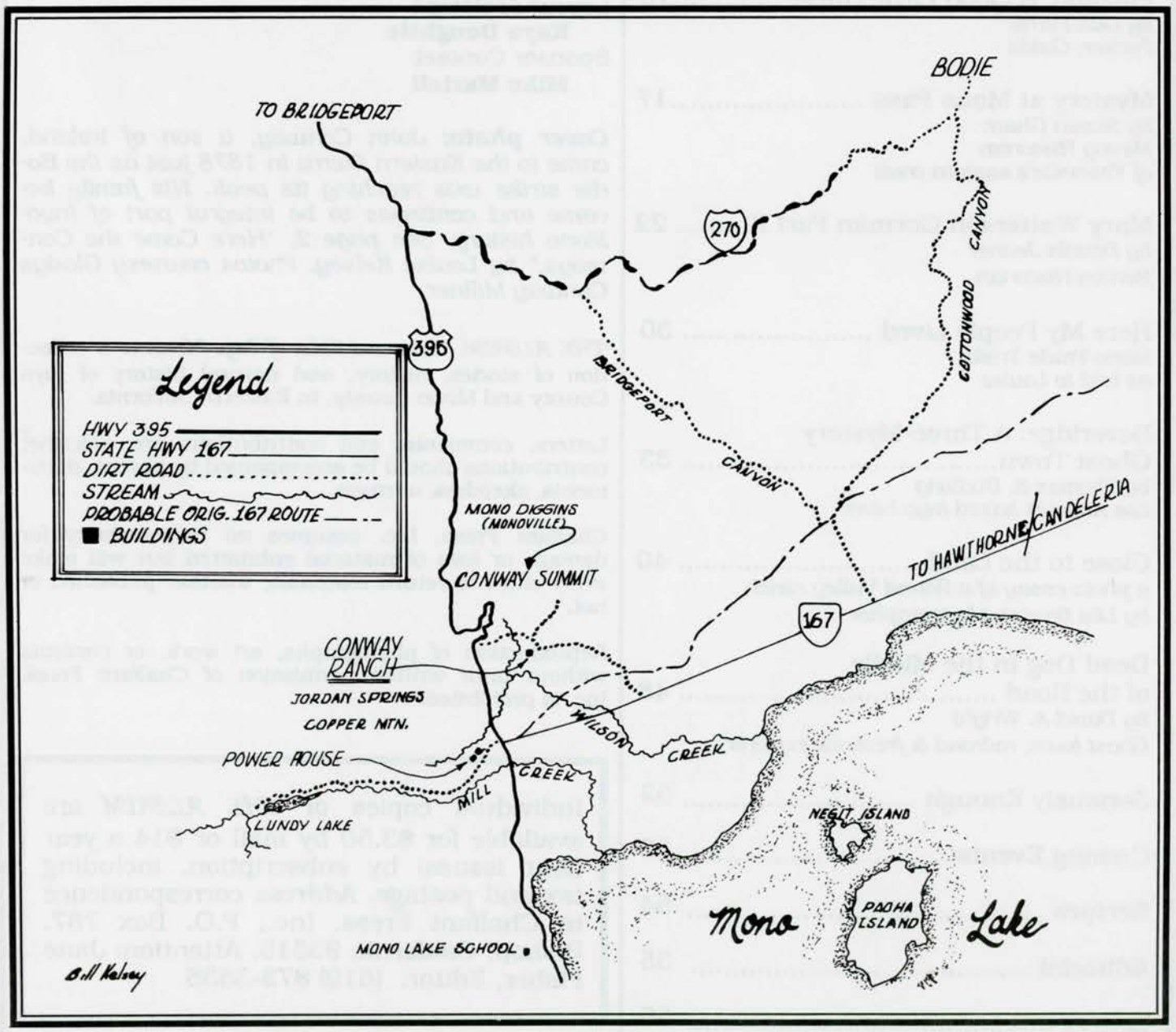
HERE COME THE CONWAYS

by Louise Kelsey

photos from Conway Family collection and by Louise Kelsey as noted



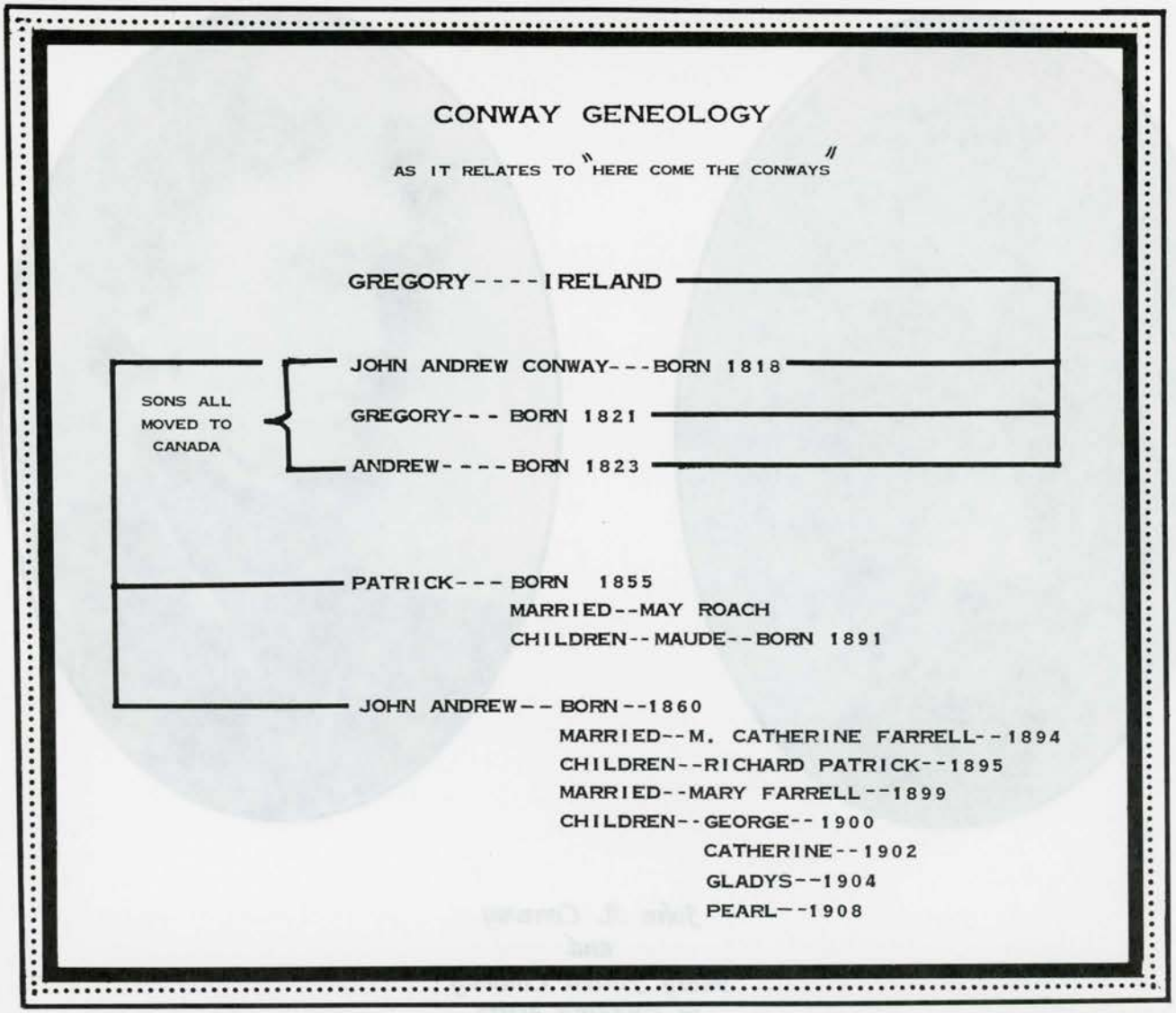
John A. Conway
and
Mary Farrell Conway
in wedding attire

Gregory Conway warmed to the spring of County Derry. Northern Ireland was enchanting in its April greenery, just as it was threatening when winter winds swept down from the Atlantic or across the Irish Sea.

Gregory chaffed under the burden of taxes and resented political pressures of government but he found a sense of protection from looking at the Houstad Coat-of-Arms crest and he found strength in his church and its clergy. He was a man of Ireland, and a contented one, with his wife and their children.

Not so with his first-born John, who came into the world in 1818, to be followed by two brothers, Gregory and Andrew. John grew up with the background of an Irish farm dotted with sheep. He loved the sight of young spring lambs bouncing about the meadows, as if dancing to the silent music of an Irish jig... but he rebelled. Unlike his father, his young ears listened to the wondrous tales of the New World. "Canada" had an almost mystic charm to its name. He did not have all the things that hold a man to his home... land, a wife, children. He rebelled against the economic and political pressures and responded to a siren-song from across the turbulent ocean.

John arrived in East Hawkesbury, Ontario, Canada in 1843. A farmer, he became a man of some substance, owning 310 acres of land. He married and fathered two sons, Patrick, born in 1855 and John Andrew, born in 1860. These boys inherited their father's longing for new lands as well as their grandfather's devotion to a place of their own.



To Bodie

At the age of 18, John Conway and his brother Patrick who was 23, left for the gold fields of California. They came to the Eastern Sierra Nevada in 1878, just as the Bodie strike was reaching its peak.

After almost 20 slow years, the Bodie gold camp suddenly burst into a full-blown boom town. At 8,375 feet in the high desert above Mono Basin, Bodie's weather went from extreme summer heat to the -30 degrees deep freeze of winter. One thing was constant. It seemed the wind always moved.

With 20 mines in operation the population in 1878 rose to about 5,000, producing a daily average bullion of $20,000. Miners slept in tents or dugouts burrowed into the hills. There was no gas, no hospital, no church, no theater, and only well or tanked water to drink. But there were 30 saloons with drinking, dancing and fighting.

The town was filled with miners but only about half of them were able to find work. Being enterprising and hard working Irishmen, John and Paddy quickly filled the need for freighters. They drove twenty-mule teams in and out of Bodie in all kinds of weather, sometimes sleeping under their wagons when storms did not permit them to go on. The two muleskinners were frugal men, working long hours and saving their money.

In time Paddy bought a ranch in Sweetwater, Nevada, while John returned to Canada to buy a farm. 1894 saw the marriage of John Andrew Conway to Catherine Farrell. Their son, Richard Patrick, was born in 1895. Catherine died in the childbirth of their second son.

John sold his farm and returned to Bodie. A single parent in a mining town did not seem to be the easiest way to raise a son, so young Richie stayed in Canada with his maternal grandparents, Richard and Charlotte Farrell.

Several years later John returned to Canada to visit his son and rediscovered the industrious Mary Farrell, sister of his first wife, Catherine. Mary had spent her young years teaching both French and English to all grades in Canadian schools. The two were married in 1899. Mary's wedding dress was a handsome gown fashioned of brown satin. Out of respect for her sister's memory Mary would not wear white. The newlyweds left Canada and returned to Bodie with little Richie.

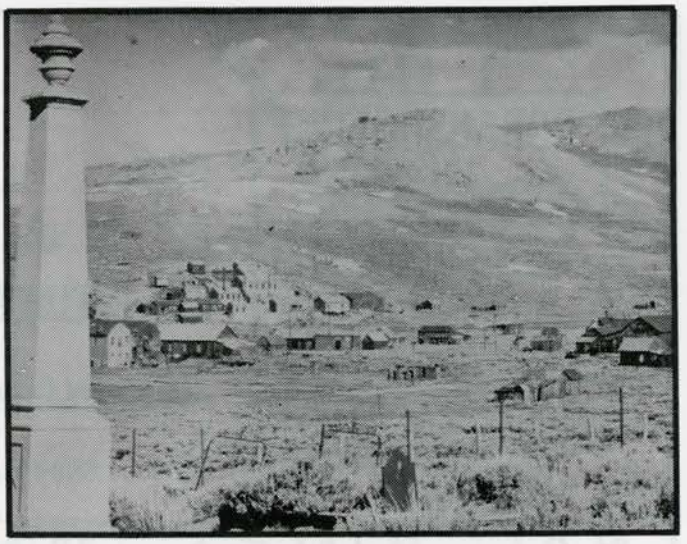
Bodie had changed. In 1899 the demand for wood for heat in the houses and fuel for mills had a devastating effect on the forest around Mono Lake. White men were killed for cutting them. The Kuzedika Indians depended upon the pinenuts for their winter food. More than that, the pinion trees were sacred to them.

The fortunes of Bodie rose and fell and again rose and fell rapidly. When production slowed, miners were replaced by lower paid Chinese. With nothing to do, many miners idled away time and frustration by drinking. Chinese became the target of their anger and more than once mine owners removed the Chinese workers to the islands in Mono Lake until union settlements could be made and the miners calmed.

The first child of John and Mary's marriage was George, born in 1900. The boy lived one year, dying in 1901, a victim of the scarlet fever epidemic. George was buried in the Bodie cemetery with so many who fell to the fever. Catherine was the second child of this union. "Katie" was born in 1902 at a time when her father was saving his earnings to realize a wonderful dream.

As a blacksmith and a wagon-maker John did very well. For a man who worked with his hands, he had clear and graceful penmanship. The entries in his ledger proved his discipline of thrift. All dealings were in cash and the transactions were recorded with great care.

"Shoe horse - $3.00 a head
Repair doubletree - 75¢
Set 3 rivets - 50¢
Sharpen 3 picks - 37½ ¢"

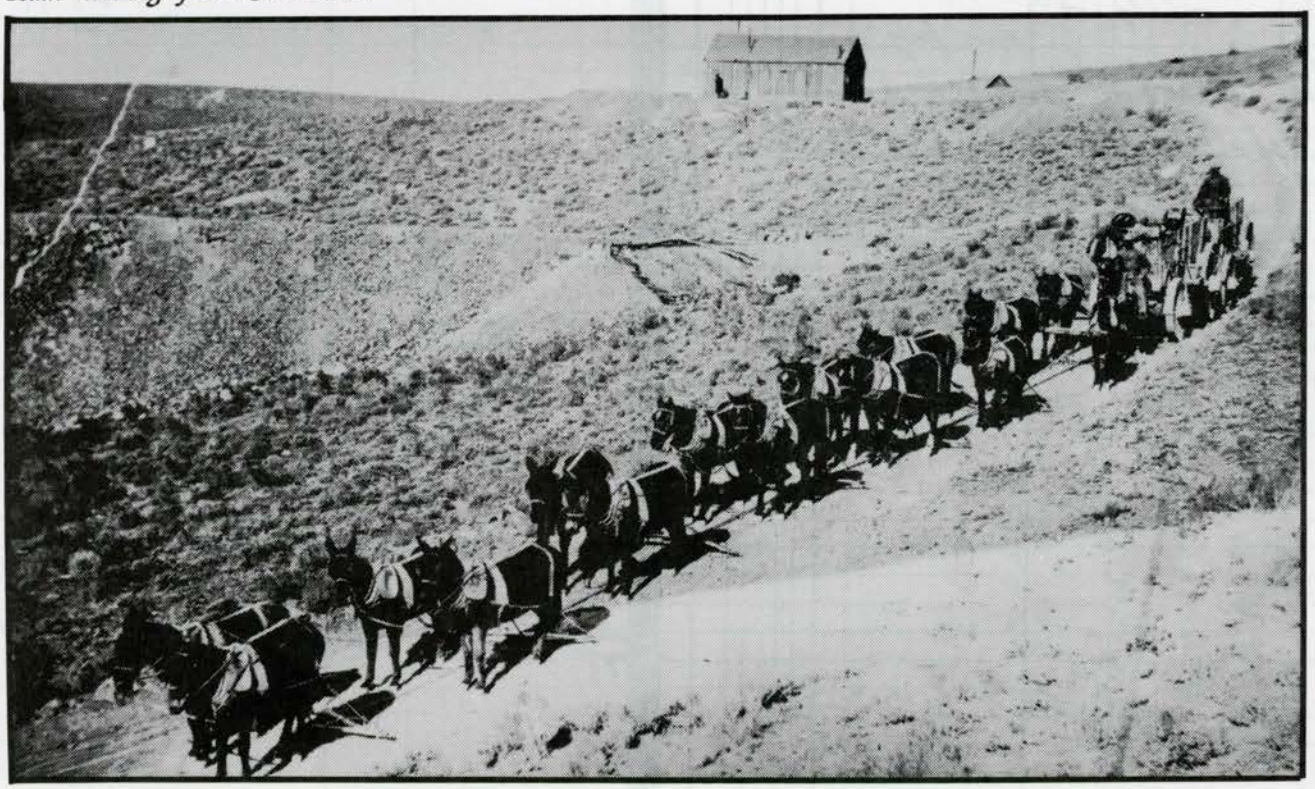


Bodie cemetery, Louise Kelsey photo

In addition to blacksmithing, John added to the money he needed by hauling freight. His loads went from Bodie to Candelaria, Hawthorne, Lundy, Mono Mills and points north or east through California and Nevada. He knew the meaning of "Drop a link comin' over Lucky Boy." The grade from the pass was a long, steep haul and coming down with a full load meant rough-locking the wagon to slow the speed.

John Conway, basically a farmer, saw a better future for his family through growing crops in the fertile Mono Basin than in working for the mining community. He had saved his money, found his ranch, and in 1903 he moved Mary and the children out of Bodie.

Team hauling from Candelaria



Bodie, Cal., ... 190

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Hardwood Lumber, Springs, Axles, and All Kinds of Carriage Material

Shop on Mill Street, adjoining Boone's Corral.

177

Sherwin Bro

1900

July 20 Mr 1 horse shoe 2.00 Aug 8 1 horse shoe 2.50 5.50
Oct 29 " shoeing 1 horse 2.50
Nov 1 " welding rod 2.00
Rec. pay
April 22 " shoeing 1 horse 2.50
July 23 " Repairing bolt for disk 1.00
Aug 1 " Repairing bolt for disk harrow 1.00
" 24 " Case hardening stirrup for dump cart 1.00
" 30 " Setting 2 tapes in wheels 2.50
1 Box 1.00
Rec. pay. 5.50

57

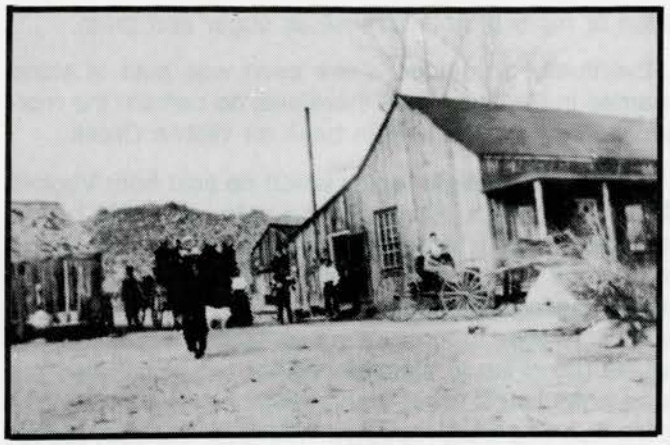
Ed. Parr

Aug 17 To 2 hand turned shoes 2.00
Rec. Pay

Bodie Fire Dep.

Aug 17 To sharpening 4 picks .75
" 20 " repairing one water pipe 3.50
" sharpening 2 picks .25
" 4 " " 1 " .10
" work on pipe 1.50
" sharpening 1 pick & pipe .50
" fixing joint on pipe .50
" making cover for hydrant 3.00
" To work on pipe 11.15
Rec. pay
D. McDonald

Aug 17 To shoeing 1 horse 2.50
Rec. Pay



The Ranch

John A. Conway bought James H. Sturgeon's ranch in Mono Basin for the sum of $3,000 gold coin of the United States of America, on the 12th day of December in the year one thousand nine hundred and three.

The Bill of Sale was for land known as the Sturgeon Ranch, Mono County, including farm machinery, wagons, sleighs, household furniture, horses, cattle, hogs and 50 chickens (more or less), most laying.

John moved his family to the ranch in the spring of 1904. It was their home... their land... for 80 years. Mono Basin was fed by waters from the Sierra Nevada, whose mountains rose sharply to the west. This was one of the country's most spectacular ranges and boasted the highest peak in the continental United States. The water from its snows poured down into the high desert at its base, and on into the strange and ancient Mono Lake. The high mineral content of the lake was hostile to fish, but brine shrimp provided a feast for migratory birds while brine flies and their larva were a food source to the Kuzedika Indians who had lived on its borders for centuries.

The meadows and flat lands were developed as a hay ranch while John also cultivated a family farm. Like most ranches in the Basin, they were suppliers of food for the mines of the area... Bodie, Mono Diggings, Lun-

One (1) Spring Wagon Four (4) ploughs Four (4) Bly Wagons One (1) Buckboard Two (2) Buckeye Machines One (1) Mc Cormick Machine One (1) Harrow. One (1) Petaluma Hay Press One (1) Derrick & two (2) derrick forks + ropes Three thousand (3000) feet of new lumber One (1) wheelbarrow Two (2) grindstones Eight (8) chairs Two (2) Rocking chairs One Bed room set complete Four (4) Bed Steads One (1) writing desk Seven (7) top Matresses. Five (5) spring Matresses One (1) Home Comfort Range Seventy (70) tons of hay (more or less) Three (3) Sleighs Twenty seven (27) horses Seventy one (71) head of Cattle Fifteen (15) sets of Harnesses Thirteen (13) hogs One two horse & one (1) one horse rake Three (3) Bull Rakes Four (4) Cross cut Saws. Three (3) hand saws all Blacksmith tools Bellows anvils Forks shovels Grubhoes Picks & all other belongings to the ranch all fixtures + furniture not herein enumerated Fifty (50) chickens (more or less) groceries + C. all lying & being on the land known as the Stungeon Ranch Mono Co Cala

dy and Jordan. For his family, John added milk cows, chickens, a vegetable garden and fruit trees. They had nearly everything for a self-sustaining life.

In 1901, before moving from Bodie, John had loaned money to the Bodie Drug Store. With the town's decline, that business was forced to close so John claimed part of the store's furnishings in lieu of the money owed him. An elegantly upholstered couch, pitchers and bowls painted with lovely roses and several pretty oil lamps graced the Conway ranch house, thanks to the drug-store's failure.

On the ranch was a comfortable bunk house, a long dairy barn, an airy hay barn, corrals, a tight, dark cellar for storing vegetables in the winter and a granary to hold a ton or more of flour as well as sugar and grain.

Eventually an outdoor bake oven was built of stone quarried in Benton. Since there was no cement the mortar was clay from a stream bank on Wilson Creek.

John trained freight teams which he sold from Virginia City to Tehachapi. His ace-in-the-hole was a big bay, a valuable horse which he used to train new or young horses and mules. The bay would push or pull a novice in the dragline method of team hauling. The ranch had a breaking wagon to further the new team's education, the brakes being set to simulate a load as John called out voice commands. Most of the ranch animals responded to his call. The loud, repeated "YAHSEE Yahsee, yasee" would roll across the meadows as stock headed for the barn.

Outdoor bake oven

"Breaking wagon"

Richie Conway followed in his father's tradition with a slight variation. He trained his sheep dogs in Paiute, the local Indian language. This made it easy for him to keep his animals separated from those of the Basque sheepherders who leased the land for graze after the hay crops had been harvested. Richie loved to swap stories, laugh, sing or dance with anyone whose path he crossed, and the path was often with the Indians or the herders. Even his jargon was his own mixture of English - French - Paiute - Basque. And he never met a stranger.

One of the first telephones linking the Mono Basin with Bodie was installed for John at the Conway Ranch. In 1904 a hurry up call was made to Dr. Ware in Bodie. Mary was ready for the birth of their third child. It became obvious that the good doctor was not going to get to the home in time so Gladys Conway was helped into the world by Mother DeChambeau, a neighbor and a midwife with much needed talents.

Pearl Conway, the final child of John and Mary, was born in 1908. Again, Mother DeChambeau was at hand to welcome the new daughter, a charming but mischievous child who was a bit of an Irish imp.

Like all the family, Mary was busy from before sun-up until after dusk. There were family, ranch hands and visiting friends to feed. She made most of the clothes the children wore. Her treadle sewing machine fairly flew through dresses and riding skirts, pinafores and wrappers, coats and black sateen bloomers for riding astride.

Rising before the family, Mary started baking bread in the large five-loaf pans that were one of the most useful utensils in her busy kitchen.

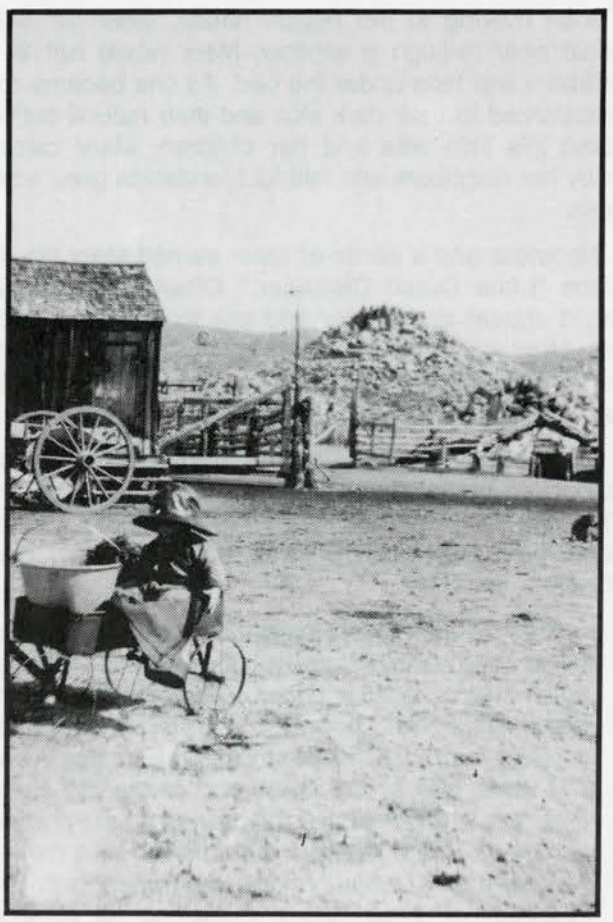
Even when Mary sat down her hands were busy. Trims and edgings were crocheted, sweaters, mufflers and mitts were knitted and always, there was more to do. The family was hard-working, but with it all there was happiness and laughter along with singing and dancing that made for a productive and well-balanced life at the turn of the century.

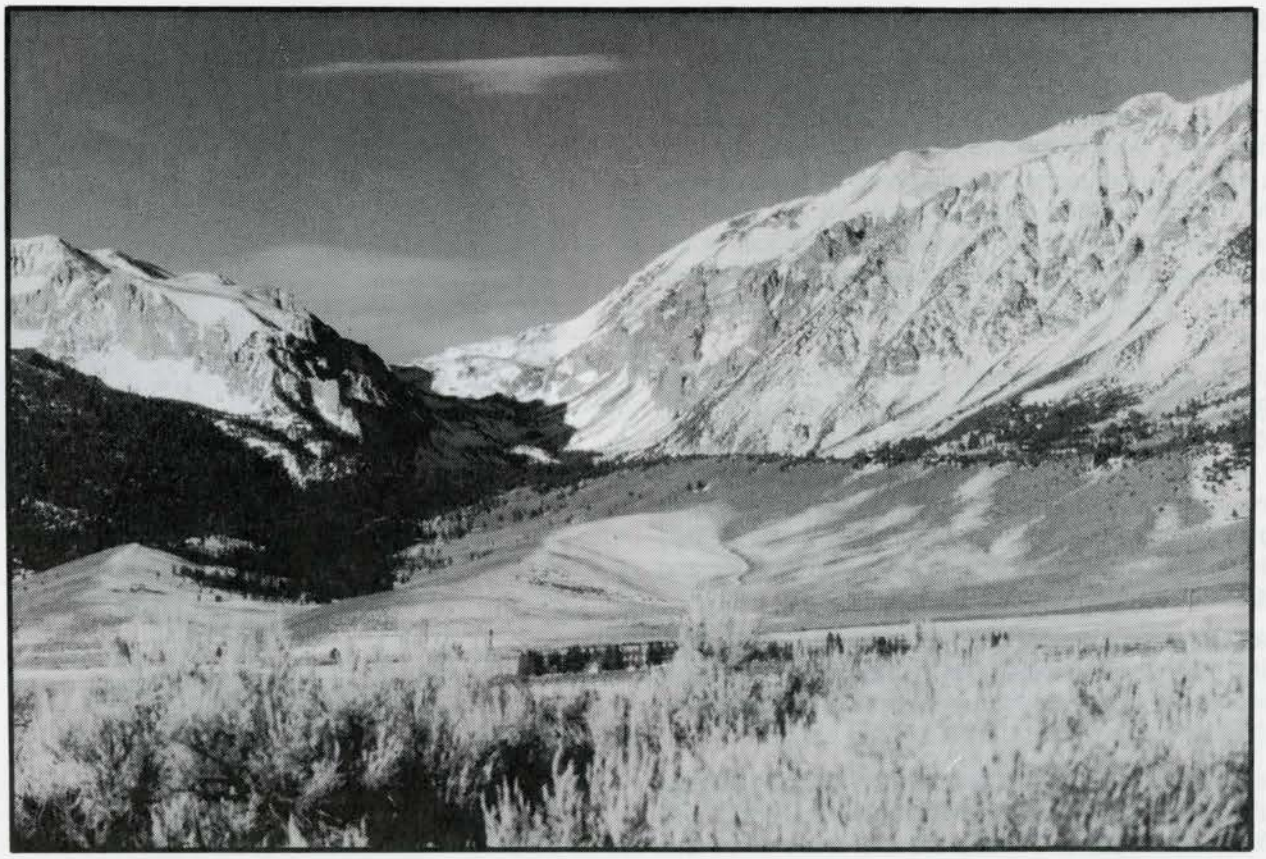
Mary had one problem that took her some time to overcome. She was frightened of Indians. There was a Paiute Indian camp which had been near the creek long before the early settlers came.

The Kuzedika Paiutes of Mono Basin, before the arrival of the pioneers, had all the necessities of life around them. Pinenuts from the pinions, dried rabbit, deer and kusavi — the larvae from the Mono Lake brine fly, were their winter food. Spring and summer ripened the grass gains, roots of lilies and wild onion, and berries. Scraped and tightly rolled rabbit skins provided them with protection from winter cold. Warm springs and mineral waters of Mono Basin healed and soothed their bodies. For variety they crossed the Sierra and dropped into Yosemite Valley to trade obsidian, rabbit skins and salt with the Miwok for acorns, shell beads and bear skins. Their main route was up Bloody Canyon, over Mono Pass and down the more gentle western slope of the Sierra.

Katie and Richie Conway

Pearl Conway





Bloody Canyon, Louise Kelsey photo

After moving to the Ranch house, when an Indian would peer through a window, Mary would run to the bedroom and hide under the bed. As she became more accustomed to their dark skin and their natural curiosity about this little wife and her children, Mary came to enjoy her neighbors and faithful friendships grew among them.

Neatness and a sense of order earned Mary the nickname "Little Dutch Cleanser." Often, when Indians would appear at the door and ask for "hogadi," or two-bits, Mary would put them to work scrubbing or cleaning for their twenty-five cents. This lady had a natural talent for managing money.

In 1908 the Mono County Board of Supervisors authorized the publication of "Mono County, California - The Land of Promise for the Man of Industry," an economic profile of this growing area. In it the J.A. Conway Ranch is noted as:

> *"One of the largest properties in the vicinity of Mono Lake, comprising over a thousand acres, of which over one-half is under cultivation. Hay, grain, wheat, barley and potatoes are the principal products of the ranch, while stock is bred extensively. The ranch lies at the lower end of the old Mono Diggings, and rich placer indications on the property have recently engaged the attention of a mining company who have bonded the ranch with the intention of immediately exploiting its mineral wealth."*

While this mineral exploitation was never pursued, the publicaition painted a glowing picture of John's holdings and the surrounding ranches near Mono Lake.

When the hay crop was cut a portion was stored in the barn for winter feed. The balance was bundled into 350 pound bales and hauled to buyers. John Dondero drove the team and wagon with its huge and heavy load, often to Bodie. After the hay was harvested, Basque herders arrived with their sheep to graze the stubble. Now the outdoor oven was kept busy baking hard-crusted sheepherder bread with insides that stayed soft and moist. The sheepmen paid the ranch $100 once a year for the use of its land.

As the Conway girls grew, "Old" John Dondero stayed on at the ranch. John had bought his annual new pair of bib overalls. That same year Katie and Gladys had learned to crochet mile-a-minute lace. The girls sneaked the work-pants and attached their lace to every seam!

"Well, girls, that's too bad," John told them, "because the overalls don't fit and I'll have to take them back to Tioga Lodge." While this was not quite true, it got the lace off in a hurry and the lassies didn't play that prank again.

Katie, Gladys and Pearl were farmer girls. Summers on the ranch meant long hours of work, often seven days a week. As a teenager, Richie hauled hay through Poverty Flats and up the Lee Vining Canyon grade to the construction camp at the top of Tioga Pass. As he

braked the wagon down the narrow road Richie often saw the beauty of a Mono Lake sunset. The ancient sea had a mystery that was only magnified by the eerie shapes of the tufa towers. These mineral formations caught the sun's last light and turned them to a rosy red while the nearby Mono Craters took on a violet hue.

The girls were often in the fields until dark, driving derrick rig and team while the men loaded hay. Indian Jim stacked the hay that was to stay at the ranch through the winter. He knew just how to place it so the winter wind would not blow snow into it and ruin the feed.

And there were chores to be done. John's daughters were taught to milk at an early age. Gladys had a calf to raise but when it came to milking Old Betsy, a long box was put down for her, with a large bucket at one end. The box had been a crate to bring two five-gallon containers of gas to the ranch — no gas stations then — and the bucket had held lard which was the 1909 equivalent of shortening.

In addition there were chickens to feed, eggs to gather, coffee beans to grind, and the unending appetite of the wood stove to be filled.

After a good breakfast, the main meal of the day was at noon. At the end of a long day, evening meal was often left-overs.

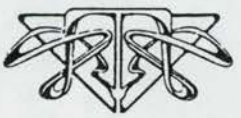
But it wasn't all work. While the Conway kids never learned to ride a bicycle because there really was no place to ride one, there was always a horse to ride or a buggy to drive. Old Rummie was usually tied to the front porch rail, often with Katie on his back, whether she was going somewhere or just sitting around. Gladys was the one more skilled at driving a buggy or a wagon.

One day their friend, Elizabeth Summers (Huarte) came to the house. Gladys hitched up a small wagon and the three headed for Wilson Creek where sheepherders often camped, tossing away their pretty wine bottles which the adventurers wanted to collect. All went well until Gladys slipped on the clayish side of the bank and slid into the water. The creek was high from spring run-off, and Gladys would have drowned if it had not been for the quick action of Elizabeth who pulled her out. Creeks and Conways have a strange attraction for one another. Two generations later the girls' great-nephew, Dan, nearly drowned in Mill Creek at his third birthday party.

While there was not a great deal of money for just spending, there was a large amount of happiness in the family. Katie and Gladys learned at an early age to take care of what they had. And what they had was one doll, one doll bed and one doll buggy. On a day when the older sisters were out of the house, little Pearl, left to play by herself, broke the buggy to bits and pieces. It may have been an accident, or it may have been a little childish mischief. Either way, Gladys really "hit the bottom of the bag" when she saw the wreck. And no amount of tears could make her forget the loss.

MONO COUNTY CALIFORNIA

THE LAND OF PROMISE FOR THE MAN OF INDUSTRY



Compiled and Published by
F. W. McINTOSH
By Authority of the Board of Supervisors
of Mono County

NOVEMBER
1908

IN CONCLUSION

Just a word in summing up:

Mono County's mines are the richest in the United States. Her past history has proved this, and her future will add strength to the statement.

Mono County's soil is capable of producing anything that can be grown in the temperate zone.

Mono County offers opportunities in water power development that cannot be surpassed.

Mono County wants men who can do things.

If you are a man of large capital, Mono County can offer you investments that are gilt-edged.

If you are a man of small capital it will go farther and do more in Mono County than in any other section.

If you are a man of industry, Mono County needs you, and your energy will be well repaid.

If you are a homeseeker, Mono County stretches out a welcoming hand and offers you every inducement to share in her general prosperity.

If you are an idler, with vicious habits, Mono County does not want you.

An economic profile of Mono County, 1908

Saturdays were days when Gladys hitched her cart and horse and headed up to Mono Diggings. Lula Briggs Lorendo taught piano, and Gladys' natural Irish love of music was nutured under the elegant Mrs. Lorendo's instruction.

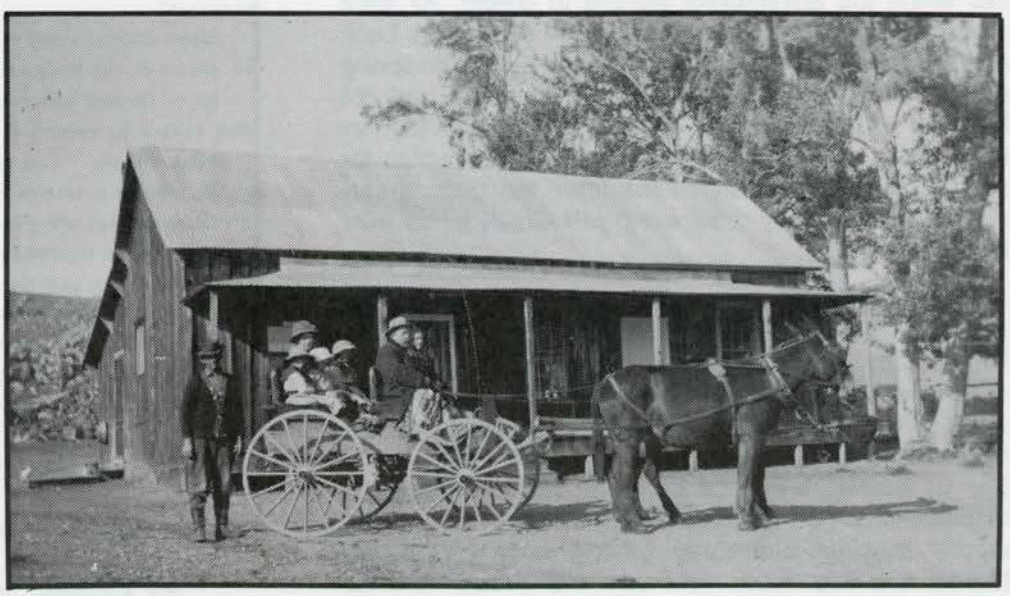
On Sunday water was heated on the wood stove for the weekly bath in a round, galvanized tub placed in the middle of the warm kitchen. After their bath Mary placed her children in a row on the beautiful upholstered couch in the living room for their catechism lessons. There was no Catholic church in Bodie or in the Basin. Mary insisted that the lessons be memorized.

The family loved — and expected — visitors. On Sunday Mary instructed the girls, "Set the table for all it will hold. Before the day is over it will be full," and it was. There would be singing and music and dancing.

On days when the family went visiting John hitched up the buggy and as they came within sight of a house an excited cry would ring out, "Moma, Moma, put on the coffee! Here come the Conways!" No matter what the morning's destination was, John stopped at every ranch house along the way. ✣

Part II of the Conway story, coming in July, tells of the years of work, crisis, and fun at the Mono Lake Ranch, and the move to Bishop for the girls' high school years.

The Conway girls on their front porch



Ready for a Conway family outing

PAISANO

A Good Little Horse

by Dan Farris

photos courtesy
Dan Farris and
Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit

He was a smallish horse, weighing maybe a thousand pounds, with no outstanding features other than the flaxen mane and tail and white socks setting off his sorrel color.

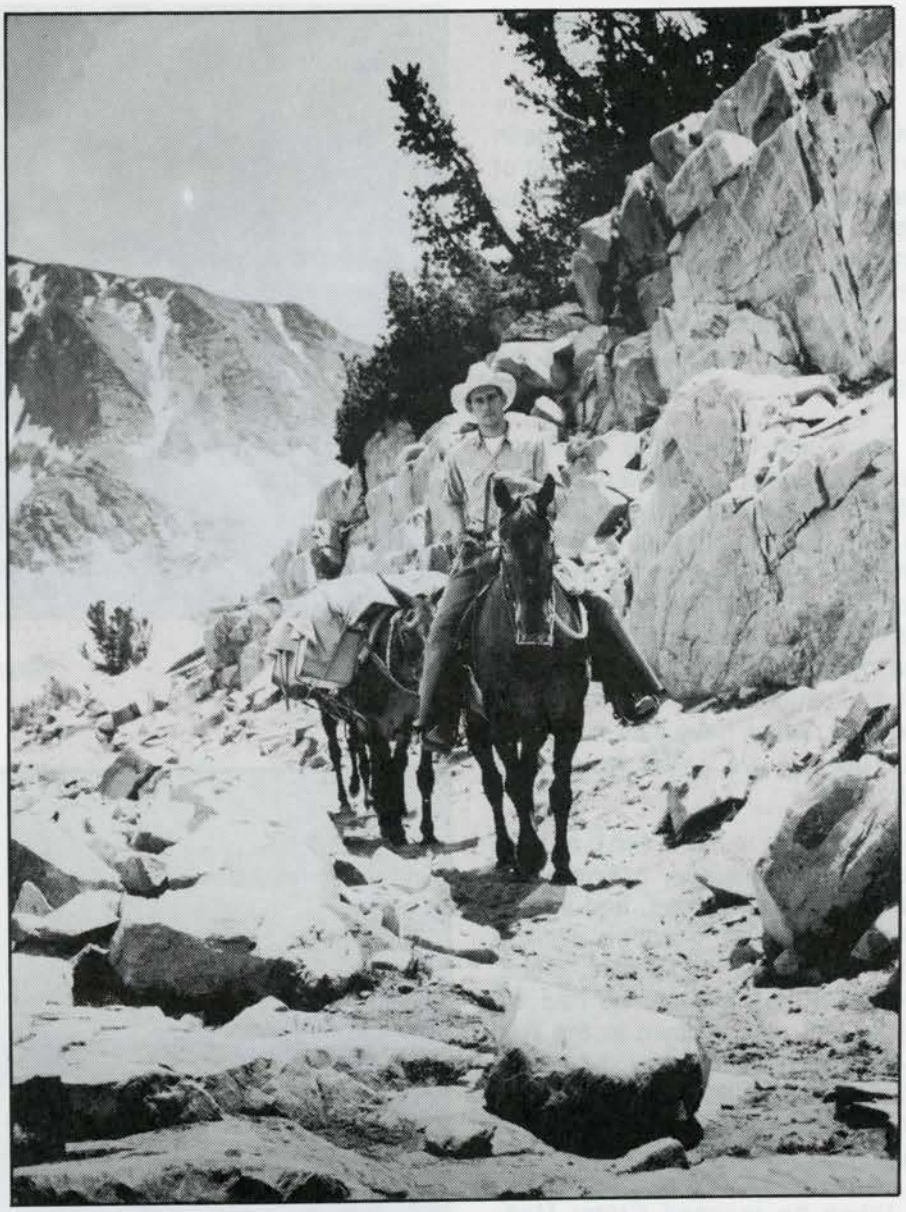
His attributes, at least for the packing and stable business, were many: honest, trustworthy, surefooted; a babysitter that could handle the youngest riders or greenest tenderfoot. In a string you didn't have to look back to see if he was splitting a tree on you and he would, when necessary, carry a pack like a mule.

A hunter could tie a fresh killed buck across the saddle and that good little horse would pack it right to camp for him.

I first met Paisano in June of '64. I had quit cowboying and gone to work in an aircraft plant in Lancaster. I was trying to adapt to the urban life and regimented hours — and going out of my mind — so one early June weekend I drove to Mammoth and there I met Lou Roeser.

Lou, Red Altum and Butch Wilmon were trying to open Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit in the middle of a June snowstorm. It was one of those late season storms where the snowflakes came down like goose feathers and put a chill in the air that made that pot of coffee on the stove smell real inviting.

We talked over a cup or two of that good coffee. I gave Lou a verbal resume and he asked when I could start work.



Kelsey Studio photo

My answer was "Yesterday." I drove back to Lancaster, went back to work long enough to quit, packed up, and came north.

The summer went well, with some memorable trips including one that came all the way south and exited over Paiute Pass. But that trip is a story in itself.

If you're a horseman you learn the livestock, all their habits and peculiarities quickly. Animals, like people, have their own characters and you learn to understand them and even appreciate them, though at times they can frustrate the heck out of you.

For instance, you never stood on the right of Red's number two mule, Dorothy, when someone was cinching her up, 'cause more than likely you would lose a little hide if you forgot. John, Red's swing mule, had learned to move as far down the hitch rack as his lead rope would allow when Red started saddling Dorothy. Or George, who would take your kneecap off with a cowkick just for fun and was also a heck of a dentist — just ask Lou how he lost a tooth.

Anyway, you soon learn these things, and you learn about the honest ones like Paisano.

Now it was fall and the season was rapidly drawing to a close.

Deer season was open and we were busy moving hunting camps in and out of the backcountry. Most of the summer help, college age students returning to school, had left and Lou, Butch, Red, and I were the only packers left. We were making some long days trying to cover the country and taking care of all the parties.

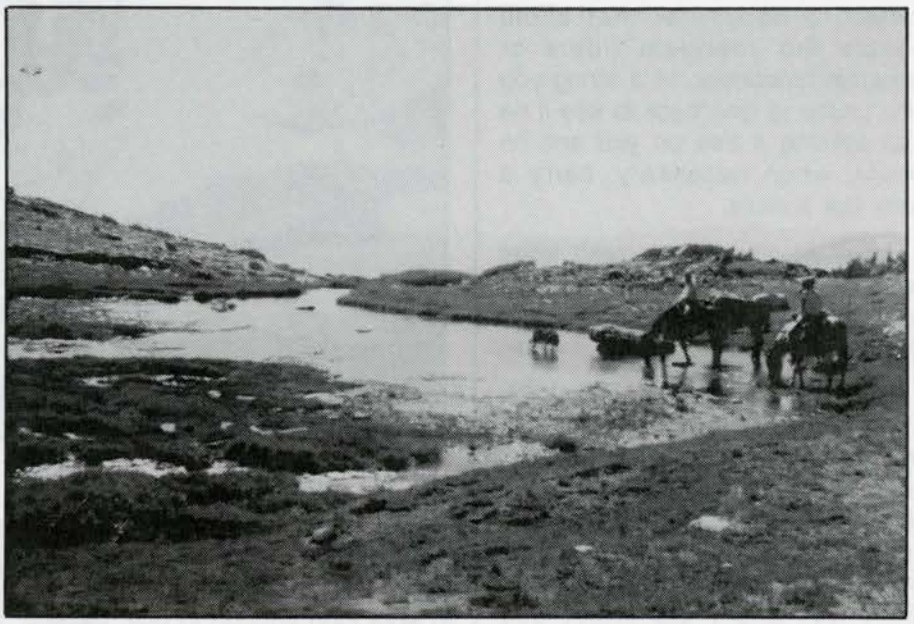
Butch and I had gone into Deer Creek to pick up a couple of parties; mine was a small party and closer in than Butch's. He was picking up one of our old-time parties that had been hunting in Deer Creek since before Lou and Mary had bought the pack outfit from Lee Summers. At that time we used to let these old-time parties have their horses to ride out unguided while we packed up camp.

I had come in about two p.m. with my party, unpacked, grained and turned my stock loose, and was in the kitchen having coffee when a member of the long-timers, Gene, walked in. He told me he had left camp and ridden down to the Red Cones to hunt his way out of the backcountry as he was the only one in his party who hadn't tagged a deer.

When he reached Crater Meadow, his horse Paisano had started acting strangely, trying to lay down and roll and sweating heavily. He had pulled the saddle and bridle off, left him in the meadow, and hiked the rest of the way out.

From what Gene told me, I figured the horse had a bad case of colic. I saddled up, got a syringe and needles and atropine out of the vet box, shoved my rifle in the scabbard and rode out to see what could be done for the horse. I told Mary, who was cooking dinner on her famous stove (you read about it in the Album), to send the first packer into camp to help me get the horse out of the backcountry and down to Doc Hurd's if necessary.

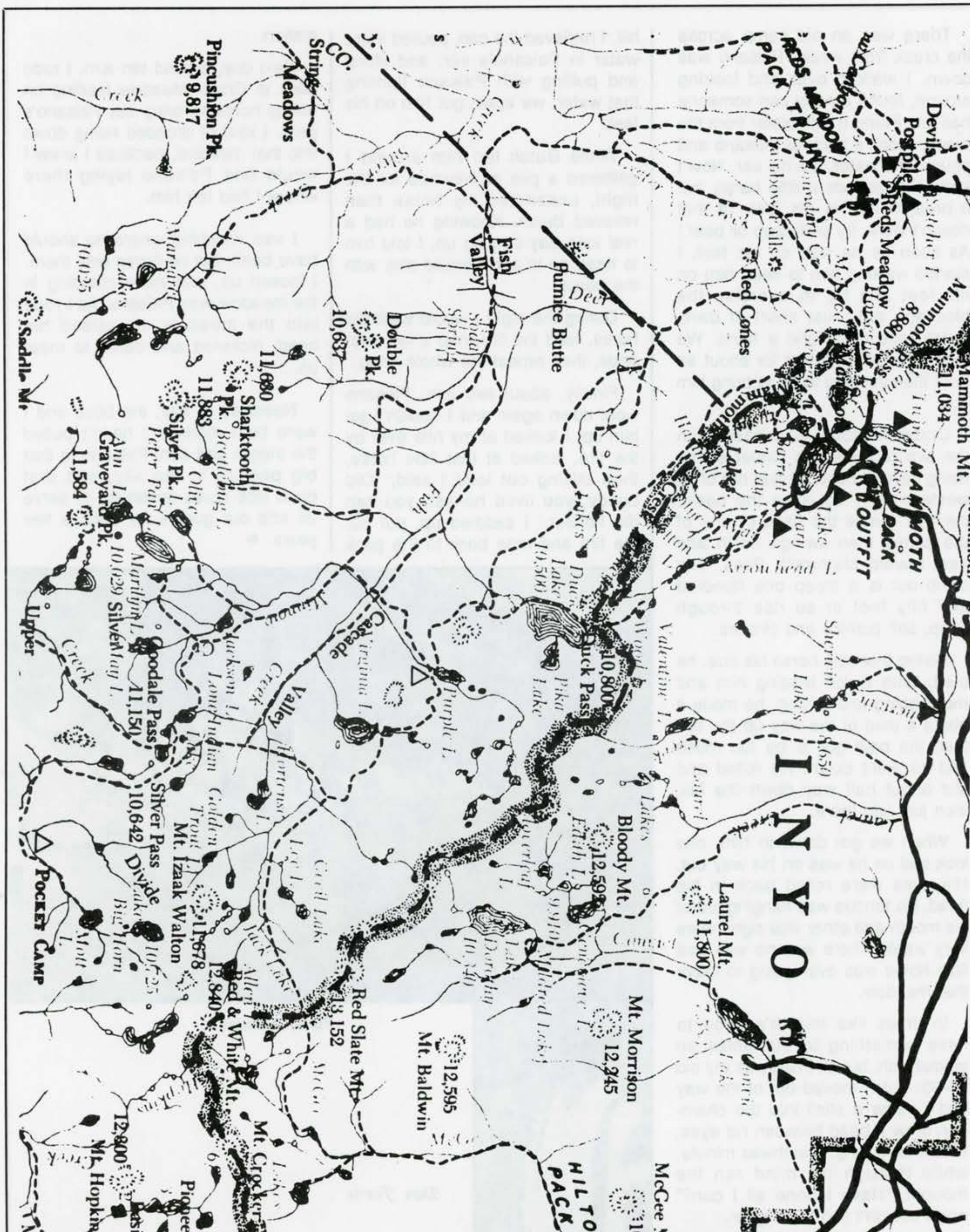
Deer Season



Deer lakes

It's about a long hour's ride into Crater Meadow from the pack station, but I cut that in half by trotting a lot of the way. When I got there Paisano was one sick little horse. He was down, his eyes were kind of rolled back in his head and he wasn't even reacting to pain by rolling the way a colicky horse will do. When I rode up he just kind of lifted his head then fell back.

I injected the atropine into his jugular while he was still down. Then tried to get him on his feet. Pulling and tugging on his halter, even trying a little pain stimulus wouldn't get him up; then I remembered a trick my grandfather had taught me.


INYO
REDS MEADOW PACK TRAIN
MAMMOTH PACK OUTFIT
HILTON L PACK STA
POCKET CAMP
Devils Postpile
Reds Meadow
Red Cones
Mammoth Pass
Mammoth Mt. 11,034
Arrowhead L.
Laurel Mt. 11,800
Pumice Butte
Double Pk. 10,637
Fish Valley
Cascade Valley
Duck Pass 10,800
Purple L.
Virginia L.
Bloody Mt. 12,598
Mt. Morrison 12,245
Mt. Baldwin 12,595
McGee Mtn.
Red Slate Mt. 13,152
Mt. Izaak Walton 11,678
Silver Pass 10,642
Silver Divide
Red & White Mt.
Mt. Crocker
Mt. Hopkins 12,800
Pioneer Basin
Mono
Goodale Pass 11,150
Graveyard Pk. 11,584
Silver Pk.
Sharktooth Pk. 11,883
Pincushion Pk. 9,817
String Meadows
Margaret Lakes
Saddle Mt.
Upper Mono Creek
Deer Creek

There was an old camp across the creek from where Paisano was down. I walked over and looking around, found a rusty can someone had left. Filling it with water from the creek, I took it back to Paisano and poured the water into his ear. Now I know that sounds a little harsh, but it brought him to his feet. (If that doesn't work, try soda pop or beer.) As soon as he was on his feet, I started walking him to keep him on his feet and try to exercise the blockage out. Just short of dark, Butch rode in to lend a hand. We took turns walking him for about an hour then decided to try to bring him out.

Crater Meadow is a basin with the two red volcanic cinder cones rising several hundred feet out of its western side. To leave the basin, the trail climbs the flank of one of the cones then swings north and east toward Mammoth Pass. The climb out is a steep one hundred and fifty foot or so rise through deep, soft pumice and cinders.

Giving that little horse his due, he tried. With Butch leading him and me pushing and driving, he made it about a third of the way up the hill, then the pain got to be too much and he went down. He rolled and slid about half way down the hill, then just laid there.

When we got down to him, one look told us he was on his way out. His eyes were rolled back in his head, his tongue was hanging out of his mouth and other vital signs were very weak. There was no way that little horse was ever going to leave that meadow.

In times like this, it's good to have something to euthanize an animal with, but all I had was my old 30-30. Butch moved out of the way and I threw a shell into the chamber, drew a bead between his eyes, held it for a long, breathless minute, while through my mind ran the thought, "Have I done all I can?" and I couldn't pull the trigger.

Working together Butch and I rolled Paisano to the bottom of the hill. I retrieved the can, poured more water in Paisano's ear, and lifting and pulling with Paisano fighting that water, we again got him on his feet.

While Butch led him around I gathered a pile of firewood for the night, unsaddled my horse then relieved Butch. Knowing he had a real long day coming up, I told him to head on in and I would stay with the horse.

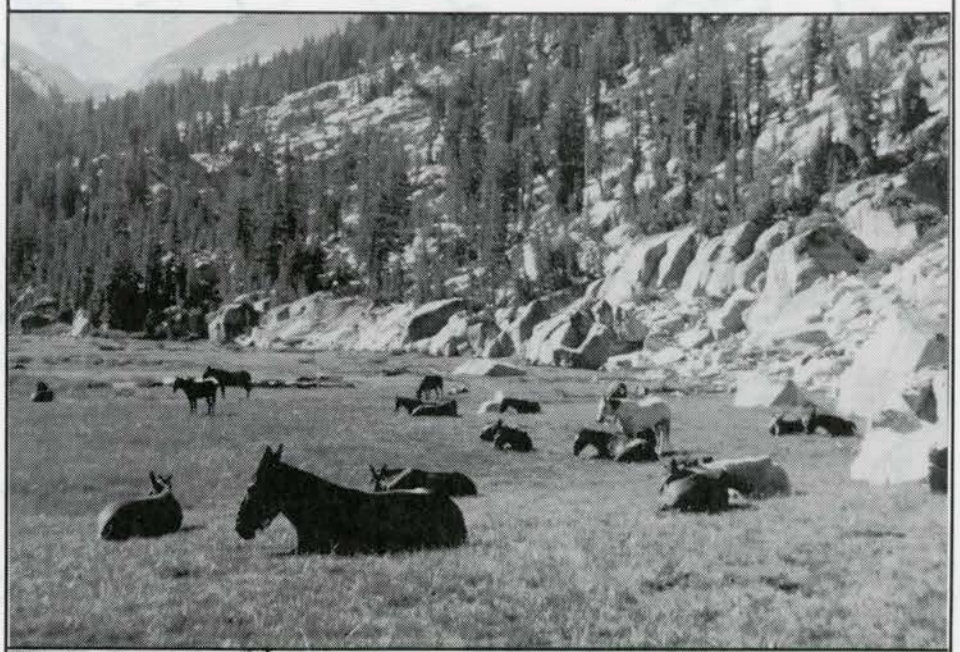
During the night I would walk the horse, feed the fire, nap a few seconds, then repeat the whole thing.

Finally, about two a.m. Paisano went down again and I couldn't get him up. I looked at my rifle over by the fire, looked at that little horse, then talking out loud I said, "Old buddy, you lived honest, you can die honest." I saddled up, put out the fire and rode back to the pack station.

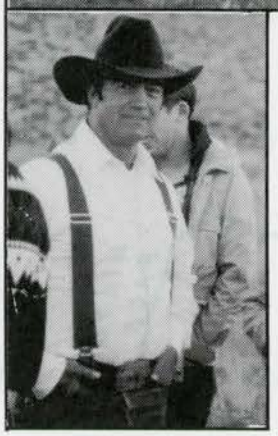
Next day, around ten a.m. I rode back to Crater Meadow leading an empty horse to bring out Paisano's gear. I kind of dreaded riding down into that meadow, because I knew I would find Paisano laying there where I had left him.

I was watching where he should have been, but no horse was there. I looked up, and there standing in the meadow was Paisano. As I rode into the meadow, he raised his head, nickered and came to meet us.

Needless to say, the boss and I were both thankful I hadn't pulled the trigger and sent Paisano to that big pasture in the sky, and that good little horse continued to serve us and our guests for quite a few years. ❄



Horse Heaven



Dan Farris

MYSTERY AT MONO PASS

(Reprinted with permission from the
Fall 1988 issue of the Yosemite Association newsletter)

by Susan Guhm

Gold. Gold is what they were after. It attracted them from across the continent in the mid-1800s. In the 1870s it drew them through Mono Pass to Eastern California's gold and silver strikes. Gold in one form or another, be it the metal or sheep or timber, also called to the man known only as JB. He carved his initials in a still-green log when he stopped over 100 years ago at Mono Pass near what is now the eastern border of Yosemite National Park.

JB may have been Jesse Bundy, John Bagby, John Berry, or J. Bohn. All were miners who worked the lodes at Mono Pass. There were others who were not miners, like Jerome Bardanare ("JB") LaBraque who herded sheep around Mono Basin and almost certainly came up to the meadows of Mono Pass through Bloody Canyon.

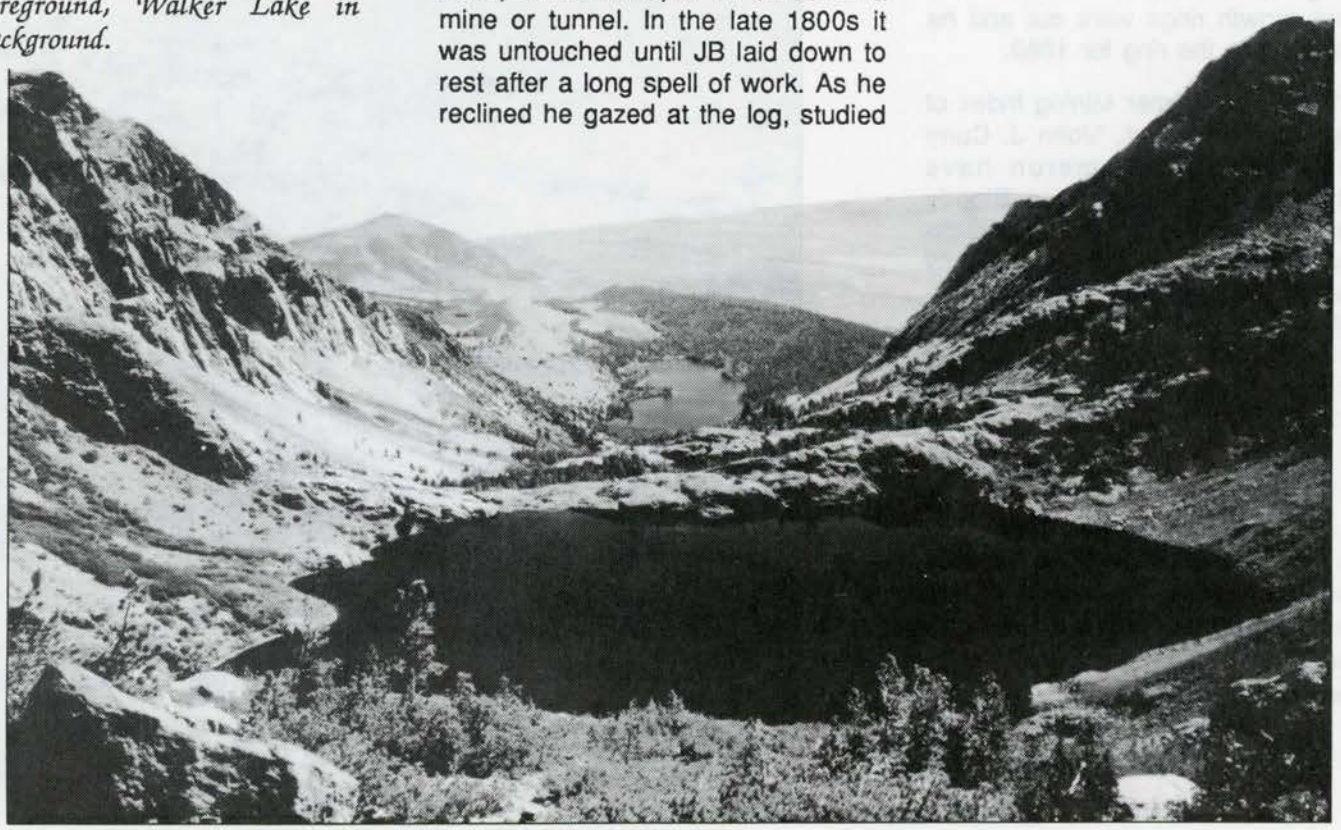
Looking east inside Bloody Canyon, Lower Sardine Lake in foreground, Walker Lake in background.

After an easy day hike into Mono Pass from the Tioga Road, my husband and I discovered the initials when we sat down to rest next to a felled tree. The tree's bark had long ago peeled off and rotted away. A large branch from a nearby tree had grown over the log, almost completely hiding the initials. At an altitude of 10,600 feet, this protective branch had taken many years to grow. The log had been carved while still green - the fibers cut by the knife had dried irregularly giving the wood edges a ragged appearance.

We wondered who JB might have been and about other events that had occurred in this historic pass. We began a search, which continues, through record books and newspapers. What follows is a sampling of what we found.

No one knows what JB's log was intended to be. He might have planned to use it for one of the cabin walls, for firewood, or for timber in a mine or tunnel. In the late 1800s it was untouched until JB laid down to rest after a long spell of work. As he reclined he gazed at the log, studied its bark and eventually started to carve. He lightly outlined a frame for his initials first - 2 inches square - and then cut through several thin growth rings. In this country with a short growing season the average tree has 30 rings per inch. He was slicing through wood laid on in dry years and wet years. He was slicing through the tree's record of growth, going back into history with each cut of his knife. The knife sliced cleanly down to the ring added in 1882.

1882. Because the Mono Pass mines were being worked seriously, warm quarters where a crew of men could dry off after a day of work breaking rock in a dripping tunnel or warm themselves in front of a fireplace or portable stove were needed. Solid walls were essential to block out that infernal wind. For three years, miners had worked here,



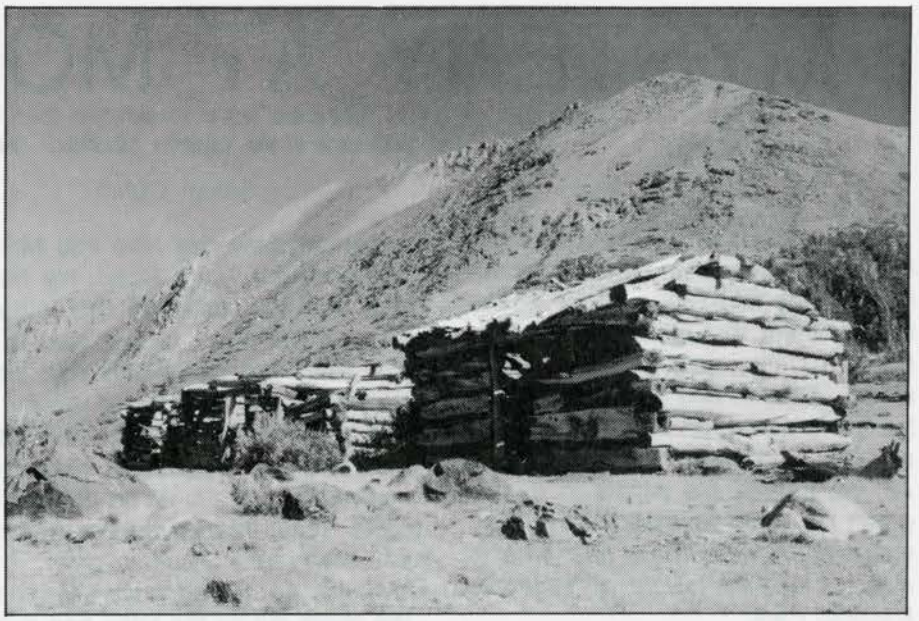
some living in tents, others bedded down on the ground in scrubby shelters enduring the regular blasting gusts of wind. By 1882 cabins were built and predictions were made of a Mono Pass town with thousands of inhabitants (a common forecast for any of the illusive rich strikes).

During the same year, in the meadows west of the cabins, a conflict erupted between a sheepman and a cattleman. It could have been Tim Carlon or one of many other cattlemen that Robert Leonard Bright met up with occasionally, but when they met they feuded. Bright was a few hours ahead of his herd of sheep and located a good place for a camp. As he was about to settle in to prepare the evening meal, the cattleman opened fire. Bright dropped to the ground immediately and did the thing considered best in those days - he fired back furiously. This open grazing land was guarded jealously by the first to arrive. Latecomers were frequently shot at and scared off, but Bright was not easily intimidated. He lived to tell the story.

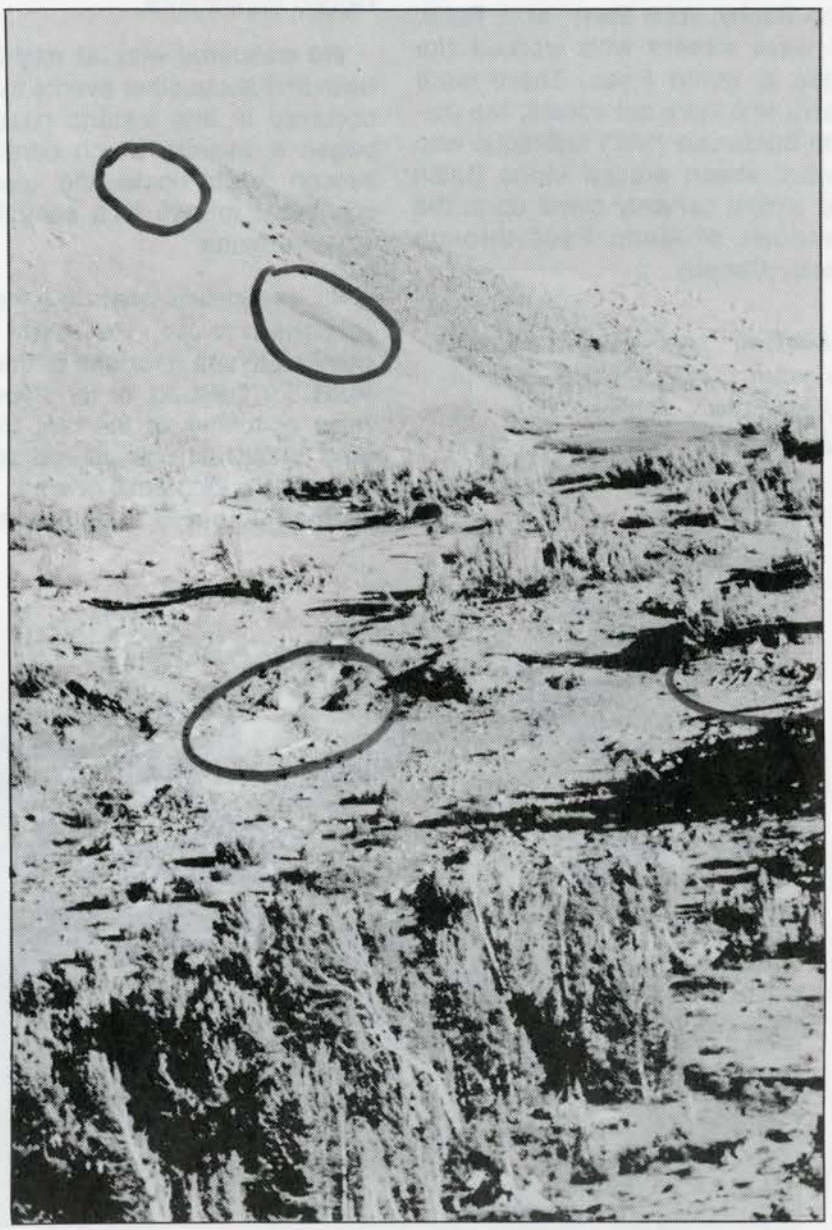
JB carefully eyed his outline to be sure of the perfection of the rectangle. Again he drew the knife lightly along one side, then another. Two more growth rings were cut and he was back to the ring for 1880.

1880. The Homer Mining Index of September 7 stated, "John J. Curry and Robert A. Cameron have returned from their trip to Bloody Canyon where they went two weeks ago to work on a large ledge they had discovered. They started a tunnel on the vein, which they ran in several feet. The claim was first located, though not recorded, as the 'Enchantment.'"

On the slopes of Mount Lewis, on the south side of Mono Pass, the miners dug in search of riches. No records have been found confirming that anyone made money from these mines.



Golden Crown cabins, Mount Lewis in background



Bloody Canyon was the popular name then for the rugged canyon which opens below what we now call Mono Pass - one of the many areas attracting the wandering miners who would swarm to any place declared rich in gold or silver. Robert A. Cameron was one who wandered far and wide staking claims in several mining districts. He was colorful enough to have a town named after him.

John J. Curry was more newspaperman than miner. Like most mine owners, he held a somewhat regular job to finance the mine he worked. Newspapers of the day were established and folded as quickly as their owners could travel. Curry moved around with the presses. The famous newspaperman, Lying Jim Townsend, arrived in Lundy in June 1880 to find John Curry and Joe Baker in "shirt sleeves preparing the first number of their paper (the Homer Mining Index) to be issued the following Saturday." Both Baker and Curry were formerly with the Bodie Standard. Later, Curry would begin the Bodie Evening Miner in partnership with a former circus clown.

If one stands near the cabins at Mono Pass today and looks southeast just upslope, a tunnel opening can be seen with a large pile of tailings in front. This was formerly the Enchantment, re-named the Picton and finally sold as the Bulwark. It was here that Cameron, Curry and later owners sweated, picked, shoveled, blasted, heaved rock, and moved timbers.

JB next peeled off the bark inside the rectangle and carefully sliced out the wood below. Again, he cut around the rectangle, incising one more ring.

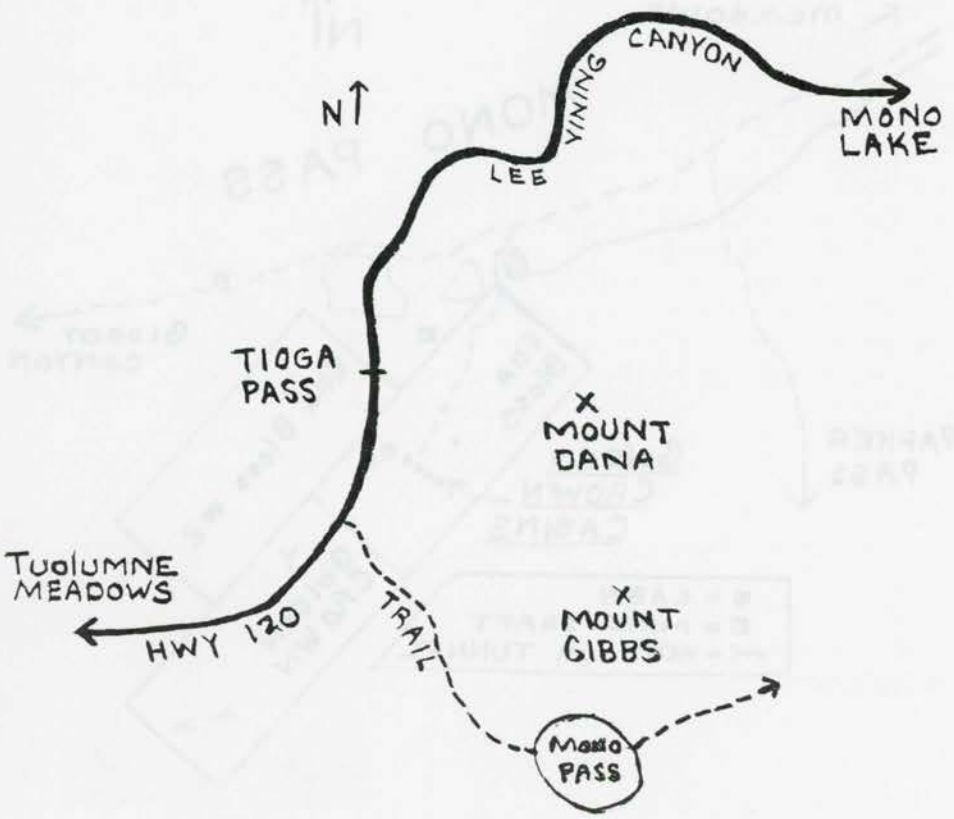
1879 was a banner year for Mono Pass mining. On June 26 Charley Humphreys, Orlando Fuller and Stephen Crane staked a claim called the Golden Crown. It was the first officially filed claim in Mono Pass. The next day Brady, Bohn and Geseke staked the Ella Bloss claim, the claim upon which the cabins were later built. Thousands of prospectors traveled by foot, mule and horse through Mono Pass eastward to the rapidly growing town of Bodie. A few prospectors stopped at the Pass and staked claims wherever there was room. Most of the locators barely scratched the ground, mainly wanting to make a claim, brag about its riches and sell it quickly. Just a handful of claims were worked for more than eight years by men hired to do annual assessment work required in order for the owners to keep title to the claim. The Golden Crown, the Ella Bloss 1 and 2, the Bulwark and the Bunker Hill each eventually had shafts at least 50 feet in depth.

JB continued to carve and peel back the layers this tree had slowly laid on with ease in gentle years and with difficulty in years of dry, cold winds. He peeled away the years of wandering miners going through Mono Pass to the gold fields of eastern California - Aurora, Bodie, Mono Diggings, Mammoth, Benton. Ten more layers were cut away, ten years farther back into history.

1869 was the year a young adventurer became eager to wander wild country. His friend, a weathered mountaineer and shepherd, advised him to explore Bloody Canyon. "I have never seen it myself," he warned, "for I never was so unfortunate as to pass that way. But I have heard many a strange story about it, and I warrant you will at least find it wild enough." And with that the young John Muir "made haste to see it."

As he entered the Pass where he could finally see the "huge rocks...in all their wild, mysterious impressiveness," a group of "gray hairy beings came into sight." They lumbered toward Muir, "with a kind of boneless wallowing motion like bears." But these erect walking creatures were not bears - they were fur-wearing Mono Indians from the shores of Mono Lake, heading for Yosemite Valley along the millenia-old Mono Trail. This was Muir's first encounter with the Mono Indians and his reaction was one of disgust. They begged for whiskey and tobacco, and the "dirt on their faces was fairly stratified." Fortunately, Muir would later meet up with other Monos bearing a "good countenance," thus saving him from considering this first group of Monos the standard.

Near one of the Pass's ponds Muir



bedded down for the night and experienced the incredible stillness of a windless evening in Mono Pass. Then, as now, a moonlit evening can have an eerie effect in this high place. The wind picked up after sunset and blasted through the canyon, calming awhile only to roar again with a fury. "The night was full of strange sounds, and I gladly welcomed the morning," Muir wrote.

Again JB trimmed out the wood inside the deepening rectangle. He put more weight into the knife and cut through nine rings to the ring of 1860.

1860 was a notable year for Bloody Canyon, for it was the year when one of its lakes acquired a name through a bizarre accident.

Several men with a string of mules laden with goods came out of Tuolumne County bent on making their fortune in the silver strikes around Aurora. While attempting a shortcut across the Sierra, they became lost in the deep chasm of the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne River. In that abyss they lost several mules to the steep slopes and the springtime river before they were found and led out by Judge Micajah M. McGeehee, Justice of the Peace in Big Oak Flat, and Captain Allen S. Crocker of Crocker's Station.

McGeehee, an experienced wanderer of this country, led the prospectors on to the summit of Mono Pass where he left them to find their way down Bloody Canyon. As they descended the trail through the canyon, one mule laden with barrels of whiskey lost its footing and crashed downslope, dragging with him another mule carrying a case of sardine cans. Both mules and their precious cargo disappeared into the depths of the lake described in the Homer Mining Index of January 5, 1884 as "round as a dollar." The lake was most likely the one known today as Lower Sardine Lake, which is surrounded by precipitous cliffs. It is likely that in the lake's deep waters, sardine cans and whiskey bottles still lie scattered among the skeletons of two mules.

JB continued to lazily carve away at his deepending frame, cutting through one more ring.

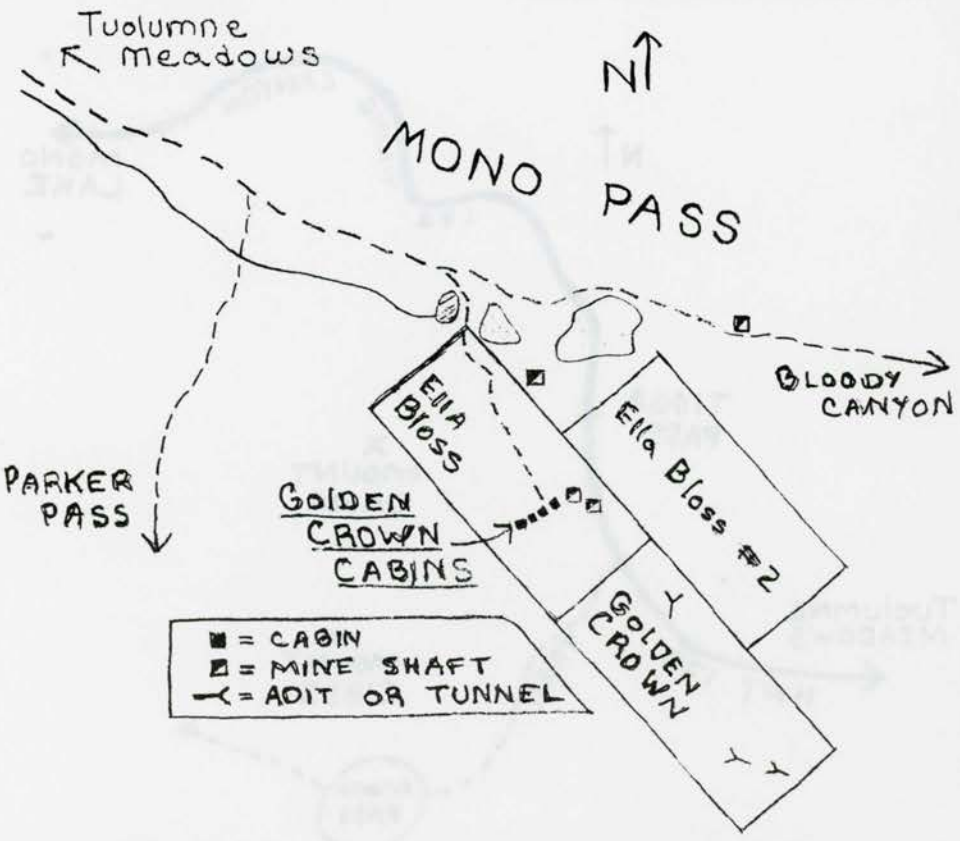
1859. October has always been a tricky month for travel in the Sierra. In a sudden October snowstorm that swept in from the west, one man died and another, several miles away, just barely escaped death's icy fingers. W.S. Body, the namesake of the ghost town of Bodie, California, and E.S. Taylor were returning to their mining claim roughly 30 miles northeast of Mono Pass when the storm struck. Body weakened and could go no further. Taylor survived and found his partner's remains the next spring.

While Body and Taylor struggled through the snowy hills north of Mono Lake, William Wright headed west forcing his way through the deep snows of Mono Pass and the Dana and Tuolumne Meadows. Wright survived his ordeal and, three years later, became famous under the pen name of Dan DeQuille writing for the Territorial Enterprise. He later became co-worker and friend of Samuel Clemens whose pen name was Mark Twain.

JB's knife slowly peeled away more layers. He drew the knife through the four lines in the frame. Three years were sliced.

1856. Micajah M. McGeehee traveled through Mono Pass with the exploring/prospecting expedition of John Watts. Few Europeans had passed before, and there were no cabins, no mines, no sheep or cattle. But McGeehee was no stranger to the Sierra. He had traveled across it farther north in 1848 with 33 other adventurers in Colonel Fremont's fourth expedition to California. Also in the Watts expedition was L.A. Brown, a civil engineer and surveyor who, in 1860, worked with Joshua Clayton in surveying and mapping out the town of Aurora. Watts traveled west through Mono Pass to the Great Valley beyond and later headed back east through Walker Pass.

JB added the finishing touches to this frame, then smoothed the interior of his primitive palette. He carefully drew the knife around forming a J, then a B - the two letters representing a name at least two people would ponder for many days some 100 years later. He cut through four more rings.



1852. The first documented white man passed through this historic and mythic land. Lieutenant Tredwell Moore entered the area in pursuit of Chief Tenaya of the Yosemite Miwok in an attempt to capture the chief and "subdue" the local Indians. The chase took Moore through the Pass and into Mono Basin. A search north and south of the Pass did not reveal his prey, but an important discovery of gold-bearing ore was made. Upon Moore's return to Mariposa the ore samples were exhibited. Among the most interested miners were Dick and Leroy Vining who later prospected and settled Lee Vining Canyon.

Before Moore there may have been others, fur trappers perhaps, but no one knows for sure. But for years previous there were only the Mono, the Paiute and the Miwok making the trip over Mono Pass.

JB's breath has long been still. He cannot tell us what he thought that day at Mono Pass when he rested beneath this tree. The log with JB's initials has lain beneath the snows of over 100 winters now. During that time the miners' numbers dwindled until the last working miner at Mono Pass gave up in the late 1890s. Sheepherders continued illegally entering the Park's meadows into the early 1900s. Now it is park visitors who travel through Mono Pass, each year in greater numbers. Despite a ban on woodburning above 9,600 feet, wood is still chopped and fires still burn at 10,600 foot Mono Pass. The miners' aged wood is slowly disappearing. Someday, JB's log may be consumed in the flames of someone's evening fire.

Other evidence of the miners' work is also vanishing. In another 100 years, the Bulwark, Bunker Hill and other mines on the slopes will be filled in and the tailings covered by rockslides. On the flats below, geological change is much slower and the mine scars will remain for many human generations.

The Mono Pass cabins stand empty. They continue to disintegrate with the weight of each winter's snow, the force of the wind, the heat of the sun, and the wear of tourist curiosity. Their dark windows stare out to the northwest into the summer sunset. As the sun's last rays escape over the horizon's edge the cabins are illuminated in the brilliant glow. The mountain behind turns red as the cabins turn hues of brown and gold - the colors of treasures, adventures and JB's dreams.

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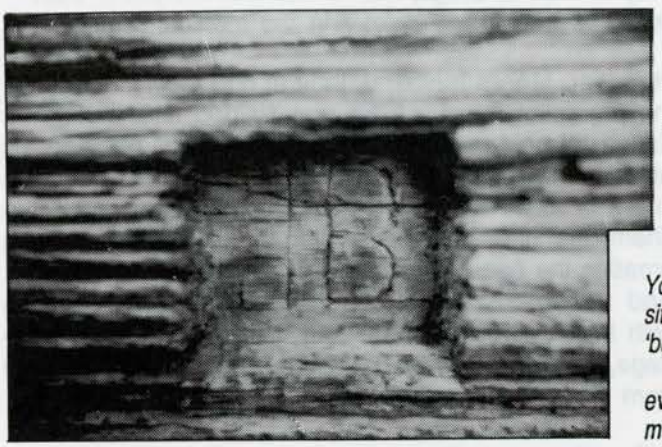


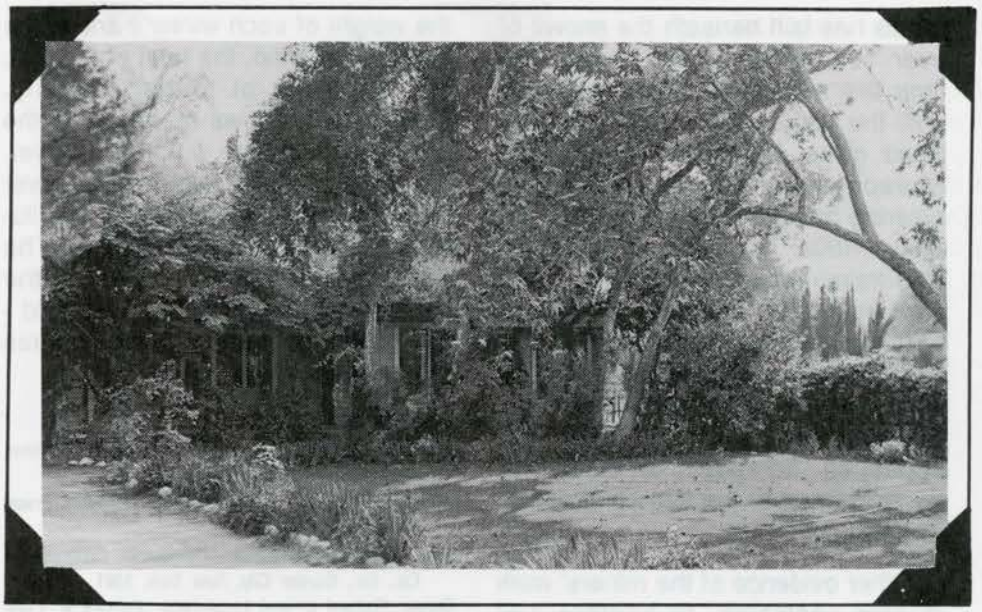
Ten years ago I purchased a copy of Douglass Hubbard's "Ghost Mines of Yosemite." The next day my husband and I set out to locate some of the sites photographed in the book. That single day was enough to give us the 'bug' for mine and cabin-hunting.

Each summer since then we have devoted a little time to searching for evidence of cabins, mines, and related activity. My husband and I study maps, speculate on where we may find the caibns and mines, search by hiking out every square inch of a mountain (no easy task), scanning with binoculars, and, when we find something, plot it on a map, sketch it in detail, and photograph it.

When we are not out in the field, and when I am not working, I look through the records in museums, libraries and county recorder's offices wherever I find them, looking for any information I can piece together about the men and their mines. I am also searching for descendants of these miners in case they have letters, a diary, documents, or photos of their mining ancestors.

My husband is a science teacher at an elementary school in Fresno and I am a grower of outdoor plants for retail nurseries. My goal for all of this information is to publish a book about the rugged men who worked the mines at over 10,000 feet.

—Susan Guhm



Los Angeles home of Mary and Tom Gotham. The house belonged to her mother, Eliza Watterson. Mary's sister Elsie inherited it and lived there in later years, willing it to Mary on her death.

MARY WATTERSON GORMAN 1889-1990

photos courtesy Lowell Kunze, nephew

by Demila Jenner

This second installment of Mary Gorman's 101-year saga covers the years 1916-1930. (See THE ALBUM, Vol. V, No. 1 for the first part of her story.) Now we find her uprooted from the comparative serenity of the Bishop home she'd lived in for all her 27 years, married to a restless English-born physician she hardly knew, thrust into sudden mothering of his teenage daughter, and soon to be swept into a peripheral involvement with the global conflict that would go down in history as World War I, which would take her a continent away from her Valley and those she held most dear.

Perhaps due in part to her hardy Manx heritage, part to her nurturing Owens Valley upbringing, Mary not only coped with these unfamiliar circumstances, but blossomed into a writer (see sidebar), honing the skills she had discovered in herself when famed author Mary Austin lived with the Watterson family in Bishop while working on her opus, *"The Flock."*

Mary's first home as Mrs. Tom Gotham was at Lake Elsinore in Riverside county, whose mineralized waters gave it status as a resort town. She soon established rapport with Dr. Gotham's daughter, whose "beautiful hair" Mary commented on 77 years later when this author interviewed her in Bishop. Mary's only other comment about her stepdaughter was that "she grew up and married and died soon thereafter. She had a bad heart and pneumonia took her." However, her nephew Lowell Kunze confirms that bride Mary and the young Gotham girl developed a close relationship. Perhaps the pain of her early death influenced Mary's bias against biological motherhood: "No, I didn't have children by either of my husbands. I didn't want children. I knew I wasn't a parent by nature."

Neither was Mary communicative about Dr. Gotham, except to say he was "very erratic and I persuaded him to give up medical practice. I was afraid he would harm a patient." What Mary didn't divulge was that Tom Gotham, like some other medical professionals with easy access to drugs, was a victim of morphine dependency which led to his leaving the medical profession.

However, Mary's husband, though no longer the practicing physician for which he was trained, still was in no danger of going on the dole. He simply fell back on his other training; having come from a family of potters he knew all about the designing of china and also about the chemical mix of material, and soon was earning a living creating the beautiful vases which became his specialty. And now began Mary's vagabondage, so at variance with the secure family life she had known before marriage, as Tom pursued his pottery career "all the way from Elsinore to Portland."

Too, the war in Europe was widening. When, on May 15, 1915, a German submarine sank the British ocean liner *Lusitania,* killing 1,195 passengers including 128 Americans, U.S. involvement on the side of the Allies was a foregone conclusion. At the end of 1916, Germany announced unrestricted submarine warfare; on April 6, 1917 Pres. Wilson declared war on Germany.

Now surfaced still another benefit from Tom Gotham's early pottery training that could not have been foreseen by any seer back then: The U.S. Government, learning of his expertise in chemical mixes, enlisted Dr. Gotham's services for its explosives experimentation

involving high-impact ceramics for use in the war effort. In 1917, Tom and Mary found themselves living in Trenton, N.J., where the Trenton Potteries had been operating since 1793, producing some of the finest ware in the world. In 1889 (just incidentally, the year of Mary's birth in Bishop) one Walter Scott Lenox founded in Trenton the chinaware firm which was still operating when Mary and Tom arrived there, still turning out the quality products for which Lenox ware is world famous.

Whatever the nature of Tom's experimentation for the Government, the project was aborted by news of the Armistice Nov. 11, 1918. By 1920 the Gothams were back on the West Coast, where Tom again earned their living making pottery and Mary resumed her writing — and her wandering.

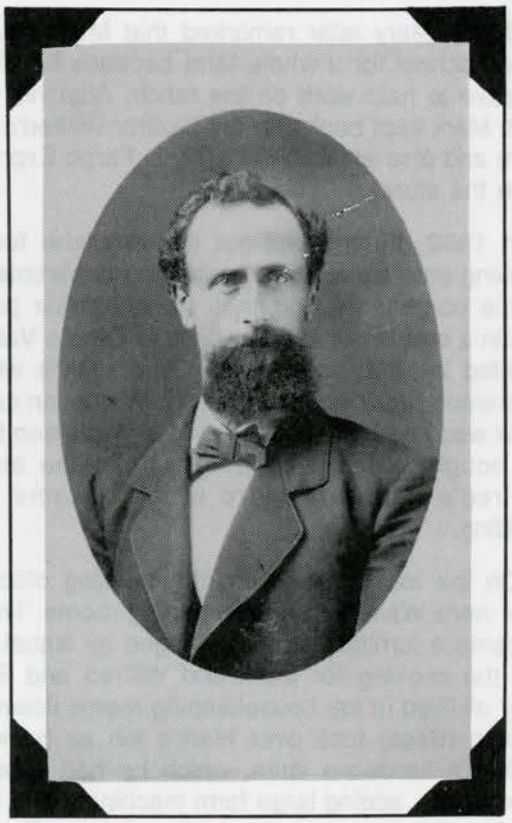
About 1925 Tom was hired as head chemist by the Pacific Porcelain Corporation in the Bay Area town of Millbrae. By 1930 they were living in Burlingame on the bay, a town settled by refugees from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, where Tom worked for a company that made porcelain fixtures. He was also debating whether he should accept a job offer that would take him to South America.

Throughout the later years of her marriage to Tom Gotham, Mary found more and more excuses for returning to Owens Valley. Her mother, Eliza Quayle Watterson, still lived in Bishop; Eliza's two sons, Wilfred and Mark, were prominent Bishop businessmen. Though Mary's creativeness turned toward writing, her siblings largely took up business careers. Wilfred, Mary's oldest brother, 20 years her senior, had started out working for Sterling and Leece's Hardware Store, then borrowed $1,000 from his Uncle Thomas Quayle, Eliza's brother, and bought out Sterling, thus becoming partners with tinsmith Leece. The store was afterwards known as Leece and Watterson and was a landmark in Bishop for many years.

In 1894, tragically, Uncle Thomas died of yellow fever in Panama, en route to Bolivia; he left to his sister Eliza his entire estate, including a house in Aspen, Colorado. With funds from this inheritance, Eliza sent her eldest daughter, Isabel, to the University of Nevada in Reno for a year. Isabel had always been a responsible youngster, helping greatly in the rearing of Mary, the baby of the family, while Eliza conducted her turkey business at the Bishop ranch.

When Isabel was 24 and Mary 14, their parents journeyed to the Isle of Man for what would be a last visit to their ancestral homes (see p. 42, THE ALBUM Vol V, No. 1 for photos of Knock-Aloe Beg and Glenmaye) leaving Isabel in charge of the ranch with foreman William Joughin. For an entire summer, Isabel did the cooking for all the hired men, her only help a Native American lady who washed dishes and did the laundry.

Eliza also used some of the money from the estate of brother Thomas to finance a half-year at the university



Thomas Quayle died at sea en route to Bolivia in 1894 or 1897; accounts differ.

Eliza Quayle Watterson, c. 1869

for Mark. Mary later remarked that Mark never got to attend school for a whole term because he always had to leave to help work on the ranch. After his University stint, Mark kept books for his brother Wilfred's hardware store and also established a Wells Fargo Express agency in the store.

In 1902, though without the requisite funds for a banking enterprise, Mark traded on his parents' standing in the community and their considerable property to obtain a charter for the first bank in Owens Valley. Incorporated in 1902 as the Inyo County Bank with Wilfred Watterson president and Mark Q. Watterson cashier, the bank was generally known as "the Watterson Bank." Eliza bought a large building across the street from Wilfred's hardware store which became the bank building.

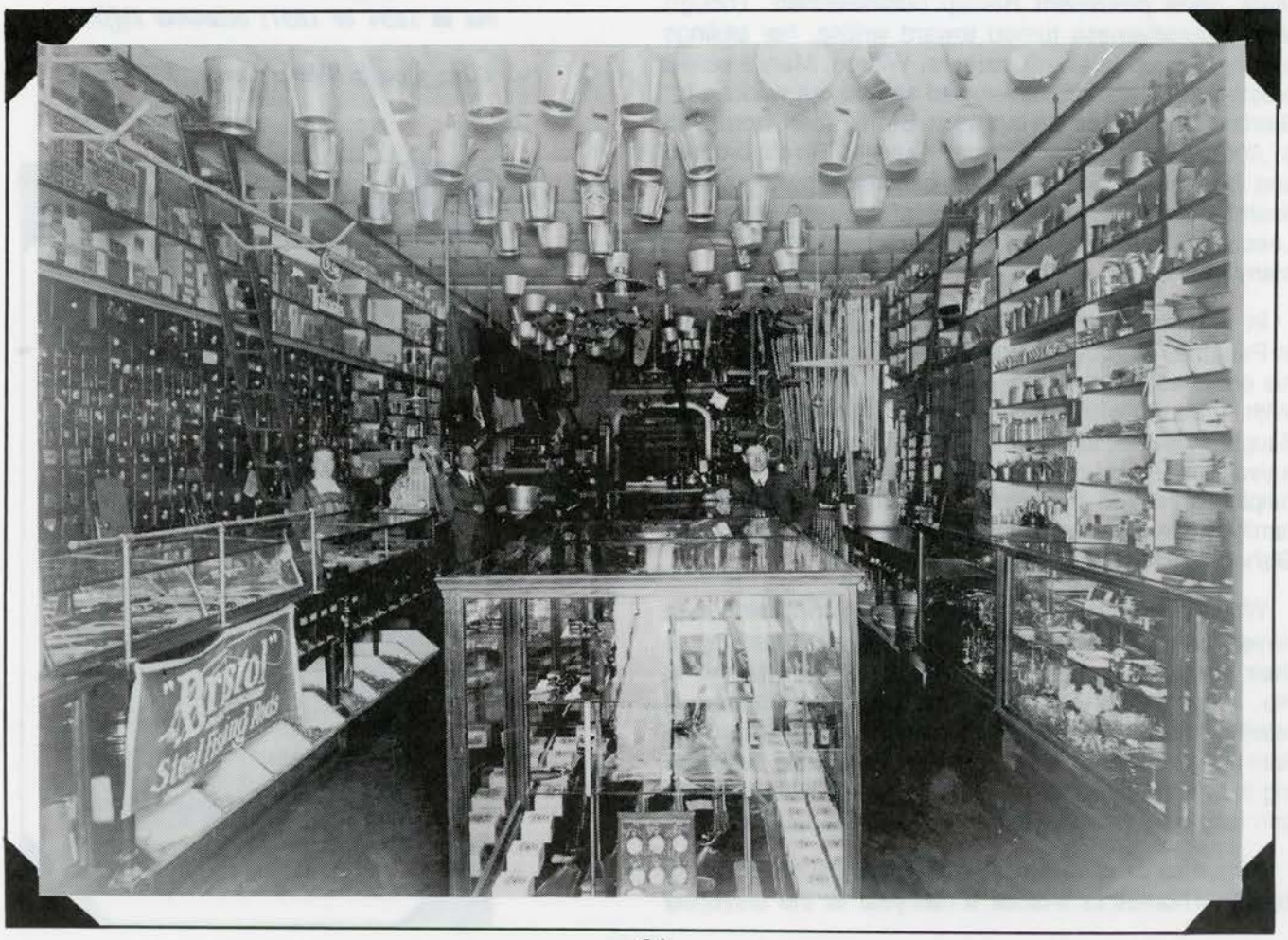
On the lower floor were the banking offices; at the rear were Watterson housekeeping rooms. The upstairs became a furniture store, managed by Isabel, who also did the cooking for Mark and Wilfred and Bess while they all lived in the housekeeping rooms downstairs. Elizabeth (Bess) took over Mark's job as bookkeeper at Wilfred's hardware store, which he had expanded tremendously, adding large farm machinery and bringing in new equipment that helped to modernize Owens Valley farming.

In 1904, Isabel quit the furniture store and worked in Independence as county clerk, living in the hotel there. She later worked in Los Angeles until Eliza broke her arm; at once Isabel returned to the ranch to care for her mother. Both Mary and Elsie were at this time in school.

Isabel got back to Bishop in time to fall in love with Curt Kunze, who, in partnership with the Glassock brothers, Harry and Carl, was publishing a weekly newspaper, *The Owens Valley Herald.* The Watterson bankers had loaned Kunze and Glassock money to buy the presses, but Isabel actually met Curt through Col. and Mrs. Stovall, who owned mines outside Bishop. The Colonel was a promoter at heart; his Kunze connection came about through Stovalls' love of publicity, and Curt gave him lots of it — both in his newspaper and later in his periodical, *The Inyo Magazine.*

In 1907, before coming to Bishop, Curt Kunze and Carl Glassock wrote and published a magazine they named *The Death Valley Chuckwalla* in a mining town called Greenwater. Moving to Bishop in 1908, the year before Isabel married him, Curt launched *The Inyo Magazine,* a well-edited twice-monthly publication dedicated "to the development of an inter-mountain empire." In addition to stories about Stovall's Black Canyon Gold Mining Company, *The Inyo Magazine* in its July, 1908 issue ran a boxed editorial entitled "When the Panic

The Watterson's hardware store



Raged," about the financial panic of November, 1907 when "all banks throughout the country were dodging depositors..."

But not the fledgling Inyo County Bank! While several great banking institutions nationwide were closing their doors, the Watterson institution "remained untouched by the financial storm:" it paid every demand, in gold if desired, cashed every check, honored drafts, etc., etc. Editor Kunze noted also the national praise heaped on Wilfred and Mark Watterson: "In appreciation of their strong and unembarrassed business methods, *Business and Finance* of New York printed lengthy and frank praise. 'Good for Inyo!' was this editor's remark."

Mary, as well as her whole family, must have hugged those words of praise to their hearts in 1927, when the decades-long machinations in Inyo County of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power brought about the downfall of the Watterson banking ventures. Many and varied are the versions of what caused the Wattersons' banks to fail, but this is certain: *water* was at the bottom of it all. As Mary's marriage was breaking up, so was the cohesion of her family disintegrating; her Uncle George was on the opposite side of the water fight from Mary's banking brothers. Indeed, the entire community was split asunder, as has been well documented in billions of words that have been written and will continue to be written far into the future about the Water Wars of Inyo County.

Mary's frequent trips to Owens Valley during the 1920s peak-violence of Inyo's water battles inevitably engulfed her in the turmoil. Reporter John Shannon, some 60 years after the event, gave a graphic description of a facet of the fight that was crucial to the Watterson family:

In November of 1924, realizing that dynamiting and lynching would only call down a blood-mad blacklash, cooler heads in the irrigation district came up with a single and effective plan. Led by Mark Watterson, the Valley's banker, plus all the major Bishop farmers, between 60 and 100 men seized the aqueduct in the Alabama Hills north of Lone Pine and opened a set of emergency spillgates to dump the entire flow down a hillside, across the road and back into the river bed. They announced they would hold the gates open until L.A. decided to settle on fair terms. To back their ultimatum, they set up barbed wire at the base of the hill and commandeered searchlights to guard the road. ("WATER WARS: HOW THE WET WAS WON", by John Shannon. L.A. WEEKLY Dec. 21-27, 1984).

The Evil Architect of the Los Angeles-Owens River aqueduct, William Mulholland, at this juncture sent two squad cars of L.A. cops into the Valley but "they backed off and fled when they saw what they were facing." Now Shannon describes what followed:

Over the next four days the hillside around the new waterfall became the biggest carnival Owens Valley had ever seen, as more and more people flocked to the site to join the cheerful Last Stand. The Valley women organized a food service, stoves and tents were set up, and Tom Mix, who was filming a Western in the hills, wandered over to congratulate the stubborn farmers and lend them his film orchestra for the festivities. By the fourth day more than 1,500 people had gathered at the camp and even some of the L.A. employees were invited to the barbecue. A large sign on the deserted main street of Bishop said: "If I am not on the job, you will find me at the aqueduct." (L.A. WEEKLY Dec. 21-27, 1984, p. 26).

Meanwhile, Mary's brother Wilfred initiated negotiations with the L.A. Clearing House, Southern California's central banking organ. He won a promise from the bankers that they would bring "stong influence" to bear on the Inyo situation "to see that justice is done," and Wilfred telegraphed the jubilant victory message to Owens Valley. Shannon wrote: "The aqueduct commandos accepted this assurance and closed the gates to a rousing chorus of 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' at one last victory party on the hillside..."

But too soon the cheering stopped. Within two weeks, the L.A. Water Department rejected the bankers' agreement and instead, sent Pinkerton gunmen into the Valley. Frustrated and desperate, Mark Watterson sent out an SOS to famous Owens Valley writer Mary Austin, with whom Mary and Elsie had continued to correspond through the years. Austin replied from her residence in New York City:

Dec. 12, 1924

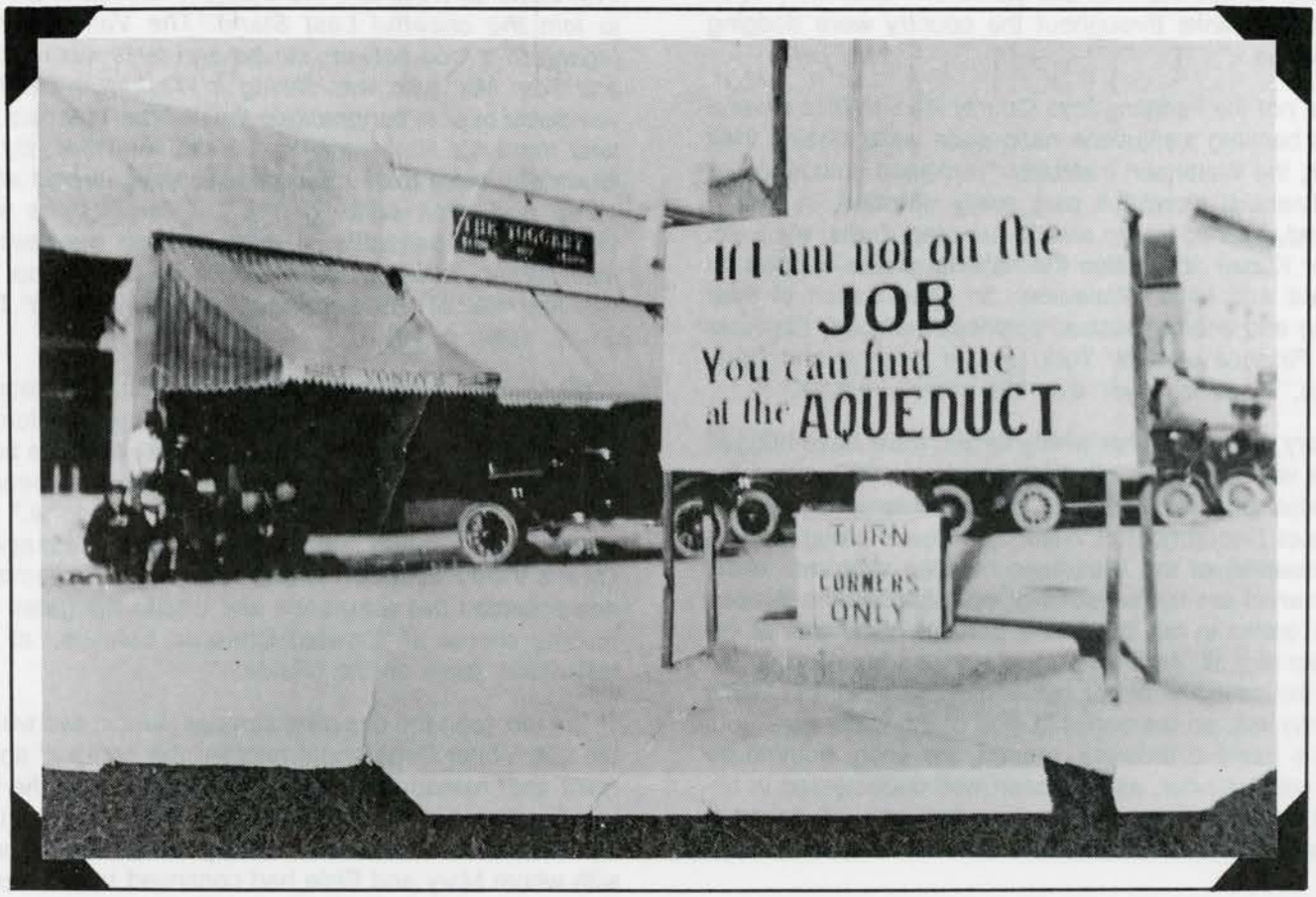
Mark Q. Watterson, Esq.
Bishop, Inyo County, Ca.

Dear Friend:

I have been out of town for a week and did not discover the news items about the Aqueduct for several days after it happened. Naturally, I at once communicated with the New York newspapers, and asked them to give you a hearing, and offered to supply any data which they required. But by that time the notice that Los Angeles had agreed to arbitrate appeared and I was afraid to go any further with it. I am only writing now to let you know that at any time when you need publicity in the New York papers, you can reach me at the above address.

I remember all my friends in Inyo with the utmost kindness and sympathy, and I hope you will not fail to make use of me in any way in whch I can be of service.

Sincerely,
(Signed) Mary Austin



Bishop, 1924

In 1926, matriarch Eliza Quayle Watterson died, and Mary came home to grieve with the rest of the family. Perhaps, however, Eliza chose wisely the time of her going, for in the spring of 1927 dynamiting of the aqueduct began anew and by year's end, ruin had descended on the Watterson fortunes. Again, John Shannon:

The Watterson brothers had been the Valley's leading citizens and spokesmen for years, heading the irrigation district, organizing and financing the less violent end of the resistance, and never once letting their banks foreclose on a mortgage or sue for a debt: but some of their unorthodox maneuvers had gone a trifle further than the law had allowed.

And the tragic aftermath: "Harry Glassock, the firery *Owens Valley Herald* editor who had rumbled about the aqueduct running red, sank into despair as the assignees pared his newspaper and carted off the presses. He committed suicide..."

In March of 1928 Mary's brothers were sentenced to San Quentin. With her parents both dead, her brothers in prison, her sisters Bess and Isabel busy with their families, Elsie immersed in a single life of her own choosing. Mary solitarily returned to Burlingame, her last "home" with Tom Gotham. Early in 1930, she packed up, left Gotham with his plans for South Smerica, and headed east again. For six weeks that summer, Mary holed up in Carson City, Nevada, sweating out the first divorce in her family.

The only writing Mary seems to have done during what must have been an introspective time for her, was a short story entitled "An Open Winter." Laid in the harsh December mountains of mining country, it concerned a young woman to whom Mary never gave a name, who was agonizing over whether to leave her husband who was away at the mines all day: "I never knew days could be so long." The other protagonist was a woman whose husband had left her: "Amy brushed back her hair. It had grown dull since Jack Laurence went away. He had called it shimmering gold. 'Long *nights* are hard, too,' she said."

A Theft In Water

PART II.

A little later we shall take a long, scrutinizing look at Mr. J. B. Lippincott, chief engineer for the Reclamation Service in California, upon whose recommendation in 1904 the lands in Long Valley, Mono county, were withdrawn from public entry for reservoir purposes. If we were to name the various actors in this story after the fashion of a melodrama we should have to call Mr. Lippincott the villain, the character with a dark mien, a dark mustache, dark bristling eyebrows, and a hissing, snarling manner of speech. Of course Mr. Lippincott has none of these earmarks of the stage villain. He is a pleasant-spoken man, a man of rather handsome appearance, a man who in personality and *tout ensemble* appears better fitted out to take the part of the hero. He is, too, a sensitive man and we have a natural aversion to the personal analysis which we shall have to make in order that the reader may fully
threads which run through the entire woo
tion Service scandal. Mr. Lippincott wa
authority in this service, coming under
Mr. F. H. Newell, who in turn was only a
partment of the Interior, but in the curren
there always appears to be one factor
middle of the stream, about whom gat

The
Inyo Magazine

Published twice a month at Bishop, Inyo Co., Cal.

C. E. Kunze - - Managing Editor
C. B. Glasscock - - Associate Editor
H. A. Glasscock - Business Manager

Application made at the Postoffice at Bishop, California, for admission to the mails as second-class matter.

Subscription Price $2 a year. Single copies 10 cents.
Advertising rates furnished on application.
Address all applications to THE INYO MAGAZINE, Bishop, Cal.

VOL. I SEPT. 15, 1908 No. 6

Below: Los Angeles Times

Above, above right, and below: from Inyo Magazine

Black Canyon in Bonanza Ore

Bonanza ore has been found in the Black Canyon mine. This is significant. It is more than cause for rejoicing among the stockholders, and it means far more than a mere discovery of high grade rock in a shallow shaft. Everybody who knows anything about this property is aware of a conviction that here lies buried a great treasure of gold and the variance in the opinions of men has simply been as to how best to get at this gold and how best to get it out from the mountain in which it lies embeded.

After the obligatory six weeks in Nevada, Mary was a Watterson once more. But not for long: Waiting in the wings was Valentine Francis Gorman, scion of an old-time Inyo family. A one-time Registrar of the Land Office at Independence, Gorman, a Republican of principle, quit that job when a Democratic regime gained political power. He wound up working in Watterson's Independence bank, and was thus at hand when Mary needed a new husband. She married him in November, 1930, a few months after getting her divorce. Mary's own assessment of the romance:

"I was home off and on during the breakup of my marriage to the doctor, and Val Gorman was teller in the bank. Gorman was from an old family and my sister Elsie was very friendly with Val. But she wasn't the marrying kind; she died at 85, still unmarried. So when I got divorced, I married Val and we lived on Oak Creek where his folks bought and built after they sold the ranch..."

NEXT: Mary's 40-year marriage to Val Gorman; her 13 solitary years on Oak Creek after his death. Then her last move — back to her beginning, where she at last achieved her final resting place: in Bishop, "the greatest country in the world." ❄

Right: Mary Watterson (Gorman), far right, and roommates at Mills College

MARY WATTERSON GOTHAM, AUTHOR

In all the manuscripts she left behind, Mary observed the cardinal rule, *write about what you know*. If she didn't know, she researched exhaustively, as is apparent in the witty story fragment about fine china presented below. Very different from her Owens Valley work, this story was written in Burlingame, Calif. while Mary was married to Dr. Tom Gotham. He had learned "throwing" pottery at his mother's knee, so to speak: Mrs. Gotham for many years earned her living as a decorator of some of England's finest china.

Tom Gotham was born and raised near the Five Towns that formed the hub of England's potting industry, centered by the Etruria pottery works of that most famous of English potters, Josiah Wedgwood. Back in 1762 Wedgwood gave a service of his Staffordshire dinnerware to Queen Charlotte Sophia, consort to England's King George III. The Queen appreciated; Wedgwood renamed his Staffordshire dinner service "The Queensware" and Wedgwood was then appointed "Potter to the Queen." Later, that honor was enlarged when he was also appointed "Potter to the King." Could one fantasize that perhaps George III was sipping tea from a Queensware mug during that tea party of Boston, Dec. 16, 1773?

Her husband's pottery tales fired Mary's imagination and she wrote several pieces on the subject, including a story titled "The China Chats," in which she gave the power of speech to some outstanding specimen of fine china from all over the world. Thus, a Derby jug dating back to 1811 ("whose lines indicated he'd been made from a Chelsea mold") makes conversation with a Minton vase, with commentary by some Staffordshire Queensware.

This conversational device gave Mary a handle with which to sneak in some privately-held beliefs. By thus humanizing her chinaware characters, the author caused a Sevres teapot to spout off to the Derby jug about the differing treatment of potting artists by France and England.

"In France, where I come from," Sevres informed Derby, "the government, like that of Copenhagen and Dresden, helps support its potteries. With this support, Sevres manufacturers are freed from the necessity for profit-making and the exquisite work done by its early potters has not been equalled since. It is all the more indicative of the art of your English craftsmen, therefore, that they can create such beautiful ware as yourself (here the Derby jug attempted a mental curtsy) while working under the lash of profit-making..."

The China Chats

a short story

by Mary Watterson Gotham

"Well, *that's* over with!" announced the Derby jug from his point of vantage on the top shelf of the corner cabinet as he watched the silken legs receded down the steps. "These parties are so tiresome. None of us really enjoy them except the Coalport cups and I certainly do not envy them their ordeal in the kitchen during the wash-up process."

The Syracuse pitcher and the Japanese crackle bowl exchanged glances. The Derby jug was always bringing up things like that, feeling superior because no one but his mistress was allowed to handle him. He dated 1811 and his lines indicated he had been made from a Chelsea mold crafted in the years before the Chelsea Porcelain Works were sold and moved to Derby in 1769.

"Not that I would hesitate to be put to the washing-up test," continued the Derby jug, looking around and through the Haviland chocolate pot. "*Our* constitutions are not brittle nor does our durability detract from our beauty."

The cream-colored Staffordshire Queensware tinkled appreciatively. They knew the Derby jug always included them in his "durability" remarks. The Syracuse pitcher whispered to the Japanese crackle bowl:

"Believe me," (being American, it was hard for the Syracuse pitcher not to use slang), "none of them have anything on those Coalport cups when it comes to durability *and* beauty. If I had their lines and color and as little tendency to chip, I'd mingle with the best."

The Japanese crackle bowl maintained a discreet silence. He could hold his own with art pottery; the cracks in his glaze *was* art, though certain English china near him on the shelf, being sticklers for that sort of thing, regarded his distinguished "craze" as an "accident of the kilns," rather than good potting. Nor would the Crown-Derby coffee cups, resplendent in their glorious deep blues and henna reds, acknowledge the Japanese origin of their decoration, though the crackle bowl cackled to himself as he traced the Imari in their pattern which the English potters had copied two hundred years before. In fact, there were few pieces in the cupboard that did not reveal to the knowledgeable Japanese crackle bowl that their decorations had been created by either his own countrymen or by Chinese artisans.

"And to think" he murmured bitterly, "they accuse *us* of being imitators!"

The Spode teapot came to life as the Coalport cups, not chipped but feeling chipper after their bath, settled themselves on the shelf. "Come, now, let us have a tell," Spode said cheerily. "Were the Coalport bathers in good form today?"

"Agreeably so," answered the nearest cup in the conservative Coalport manner. "But to be filled with tea the way the Americans make it is trying enough. They are improving, however; not only are they making it better, but are actually learning to *drink* it."

"A sobering thought," said the Derby jug with a significant wink at the punch-glass stand. ✻

HERE MY PEOPLE LIVED

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

The Mono Trade Trail

My Paiute friends did not walk the Mono trade trail with me but they helped me understand it.

"In the old days, before highways and cars, my people waited for the short days of late summer, just before the snows cover the high mountains, to travel to the vallys in the West. Pinenuts had been gathered, obsidian had been chosen and the young athletes and old gamblers had practised their skills."

THE WALKERS Winona Roach Collection

To walk the trade trail was more than just exchanging goods. It was a celebration at the end of summer, and the renewal of friendships would make memories to help winter pass more quickly.

The crisp autumn days still cling to some of summer warmth in Rock Creek's lake-filled valley. The sun is full on the cirque of Mounts Mill, Abbot, Dade, Julius Caesar, Bear Creek Spire, Halfhanky and Morgan . . . all 13,000' plus giants. Halfhanky does not show on the topo map but it is distinctive enough to earn a name. It looks like a bandana folded diagonally and dropped next to Bear Creek Spire.

Guide books to the John Muir Trail will give adequate trail descriptions and profiles but you must walk the ancient Indian trade route yourself to smell the pine, wild onion and meadow grass or see the forest, granite and flower vistas and listen to the water cascades and the breezes through the quaking aspen.

The switchback up the rocky rubble of the south shoulder of Mt. Starr is exposed and hot enough to make lunch in the sunny 50° of Mono Pass a delight. Leftover snowbanks in autumn are evidence that the trail is a high one.

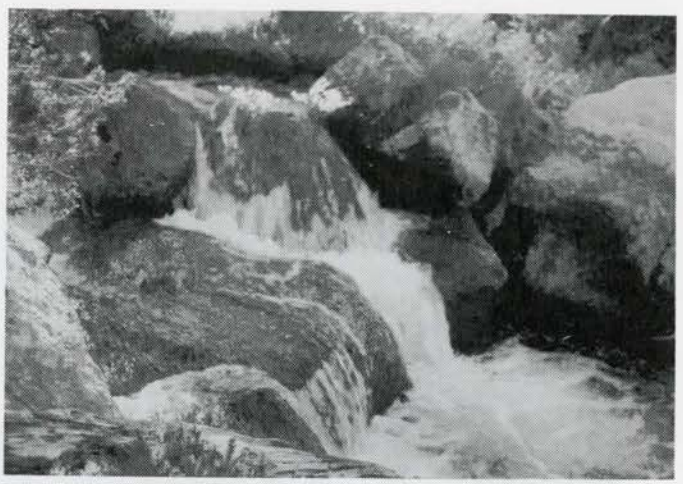
Summit Lake, lying in the beige-white moonscape of Mono Pass is shallow and fishless, a sump with no inlet or outlet, filling its belly with snowmelt.

On the horizon the pointed peaks of Red and White Mountain rise above Pioneer Basin. Down from the Pass, skirt Trail Lake and get barefooted to ford Golden Creek.

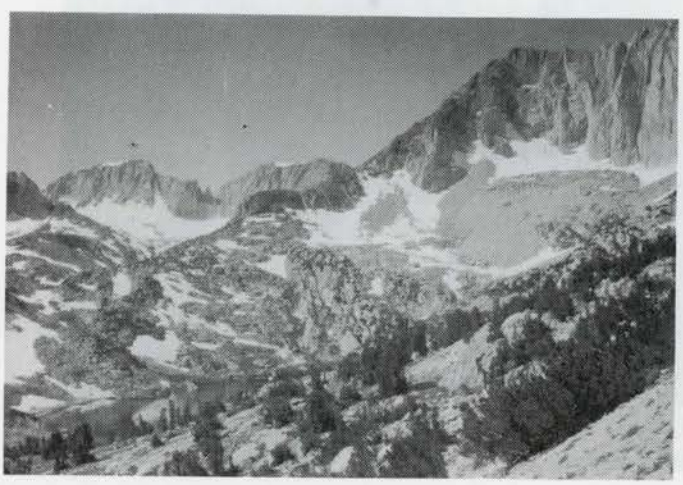
At last the trail flows into Mono Creek and the western slope of the Sierra. The valley opens beyond Mono Rock as it passes the lateral to Third Recess. Again a ford of Laurel Creek above Second Recess. Laurel Creek runs high most years. Above the path, willows and brush make it nearly impossible to get to the stream's edge. Below, the stream cascades too wildly for any sensible thought of fording. So it is great care and thoughtful footing that keeps a walker from a slide down a cold chute.

Exhaustion is the only thing that brings sleep in the eerie beauty of moonlight flooding the blown-out side of Volcano Knob. If clouds scud across the sky to block the stars and veil the moon after midnight it will become a morning to get up and break camp early. Better to slog along in the rain than to breakfast and break camp in the wet.

Now Mono Creek cascades through granite potholes which invite a swim, while grinding rocks identify the "kitchens" of acorn and seed gatherers. The trail has passed from the stern stuff of the Eastern Sierra to the lush growth of the western side of the range. At Quail Meadow the grasses are heavy with mature seed and the groundsel, buttercup and honeysuckle remind the traveler that it has been a beautiful summer.



GOLDEN CREEK



STARR, ABBOT, AND DADE

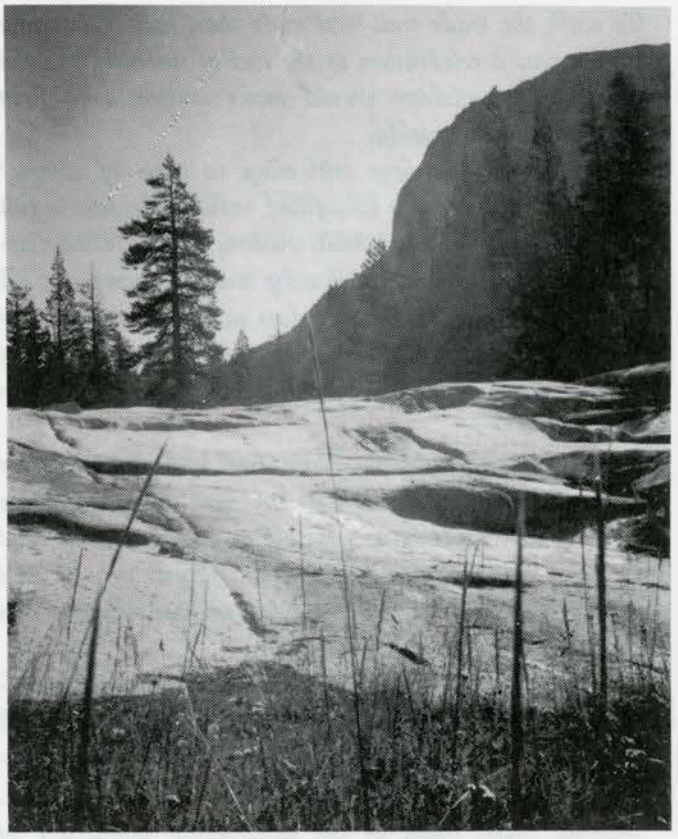
MONO PASS photo by Louise

There is no way to resist the spell of the meadow, the granite and the peaks. Sun and shodow interplay through the trees. An offering of ripe wild strawberries and a handful of currants is a wilderness breakfast for any trail-walker.

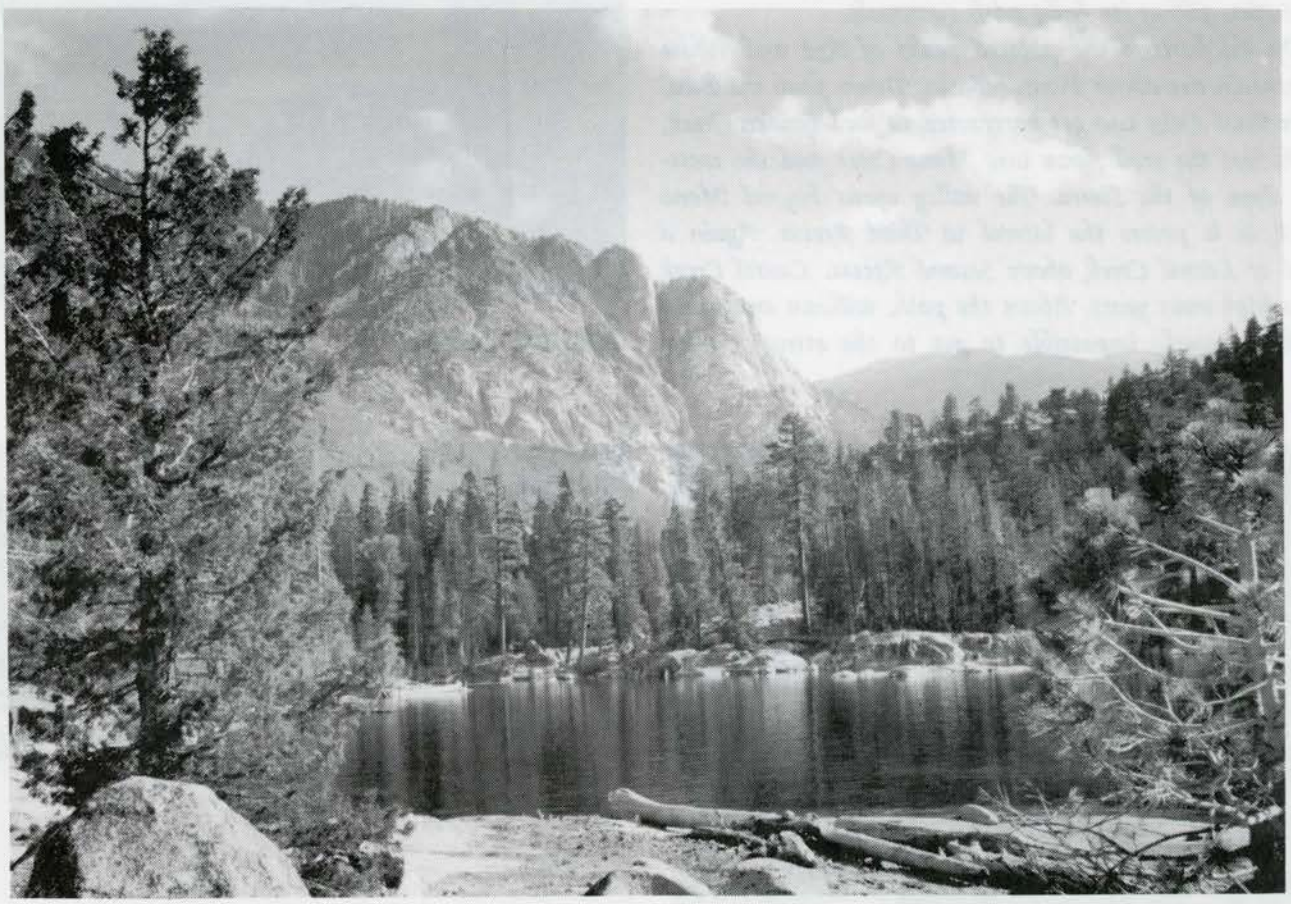
A tiny bay at the east end of what is now Lake Thomas Edison will in no way prepare the viewer for the vast body of water just beyond. Then on to the meadows and hot springs of Mono.

"Here," my friend went on, "people traded obsidian for shell, pinenuts for acorns, and games of skill were played in the meadows. At night, when the cooking fires embered, stick games drew waters and the old ones told our young ones their legends and their history."

I wish I could have been there. ✻

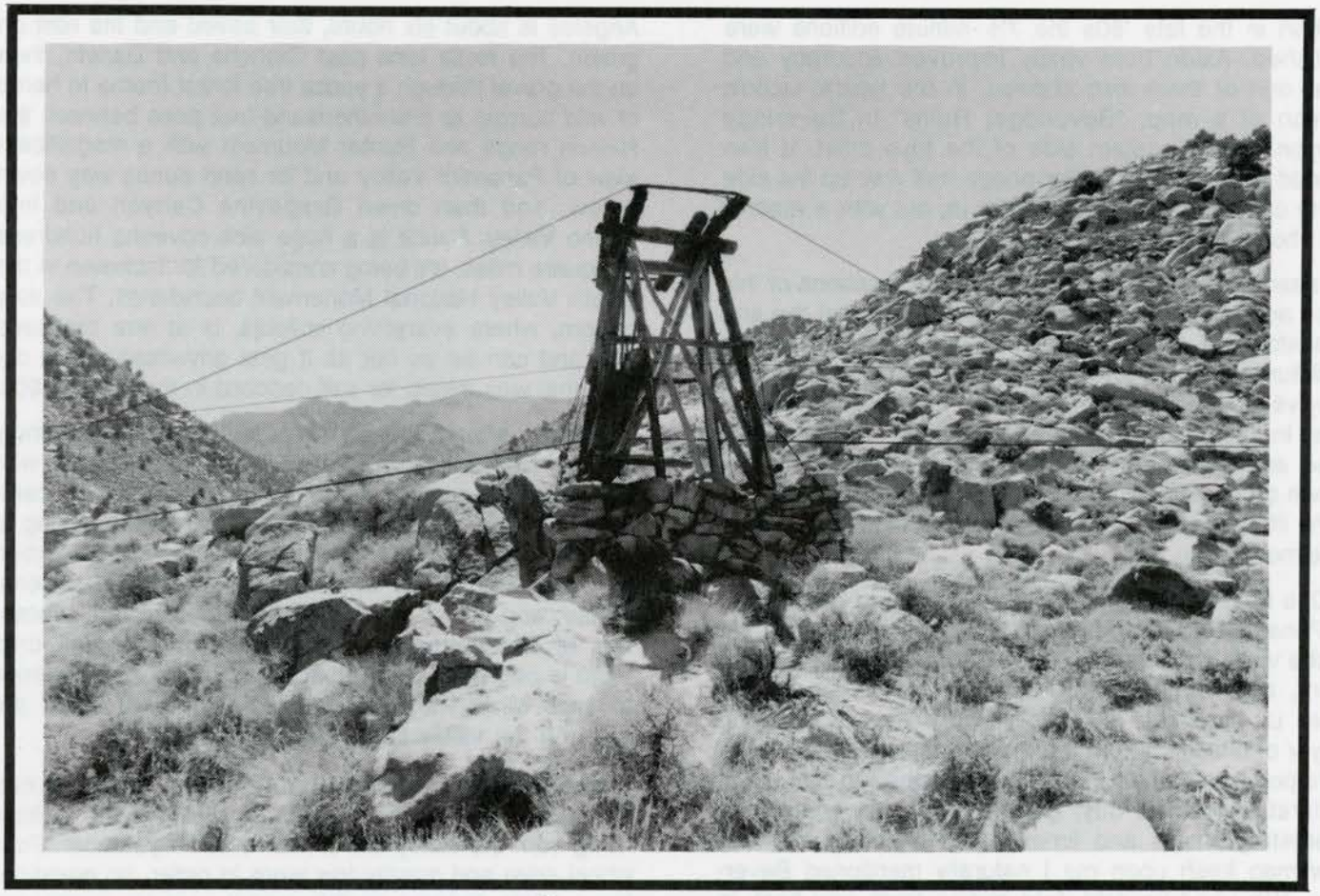


GRANITE WEST SLOPE



INLET, LAKE THOMAS EDISON

photos by Louise



Tram tower above Beveridge. The tram started at the mine 800 feet above Beveridge and ended at the bottom of Beveridge Canyon. Most of the timbers in this tower are of native pinon from higher elevations.

BEVERIDGE

A THREE-MYSTERY GHOST TOWN

by Thomas S. Budlong

Well over a hundred years ago the Inyos experienced a mining boom. At the south end of the range, opposite Owens Lake, the Cerro Gordo silver mine quickly grew to the largest operation in the area. North from Cerro Gordo were hundreds of smaller mines, prospects, and small mills dotting the canyons and ridges, but none could come close to Cerro Gordo's size. Written history for these independent operations is non-existent — rumor is that it went up in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake fire. With neither roads nor records most sites have been forgotten. But rumor also told that the next largest "town," if it could be called that, was Beveridge, named after John Beveridge, one of the early mining promoters. Several years ago I became aware of Beveridge, and determined to search it out.

For a long time the only topo maps for the Inyos were the small, difficult 15-minute variety. Once I tried to use the New York Butte quadrangle to get to New York Butte on a day hike. But it was too far for one day and I kept getting lost since I couldn't see that the map and the terrain were related. I didn't give those maps much respect. They were no help in finding Beveridge.

Then in the late '80s the 7½ -minute editions were published. Aside from vastly improved accuracy and detail one of them also showed, in the typical laconic fashion of a map, "Beveridge, Ruins" in Beveridge Canyon on the eastern side of the Inyo crest. It also showed a tramway from Beveridge half way up the side of the canyon. It was all quite far in, but with a road or trail shown part way.

I searched books and other maps for mentions of this place and found only one, a tantalizing aside at the end of a story on other activities in the Inyos. Of course undisturbed ghost towns simply don't exist anymore. They've all been discovered, looted for artifacts, washed away in flash floods, or rotted to oblivion. But here was hope and dream like winning the lottery. If it wasn't shown on maps until this recent topo, if it wasn't popular in the literature, if it had no trail or road to it, then it must be almost virgin.

One fall I visited Ballarat, the well known ghost town in Panamint Valley. About all that's left are a few old adobe walls scratched up from the hardscrabble around there, and one habitable building. Some fellow had taken up caretaker residence, kind of a self-appointed mayor of himself. When the mood fit he would sit on the front porch to see who went by. I stopped to talk about Ballarat, Panamint City, gold rushes, and other such interesting places and times. With the intrigue of the new map fresh upon me I naturally mentioned Beveridge. "Oh yes," he said, "old mining town way back in the Inyos. Some fellows from the Navy Center went in there a couple years ago in a helicopter and took out the piano."

It was a well-calculated remark. What, lost Beveridge was big enough to have — A PIANO? Of course that did it; I had to find Beveridge. I rearranged my schedule. My next stop on that trip was Cerro Gordo. Then, instead of returning to Los Angeles, I drove down the eastern side to Saline Valley, then north. Where Beveridge Canyon dumps into Saline I found a twisted 4WD road going into the mountains. I followed it until I got so scared I had to turn around. At least I had the place located. This was the beginning of winter so I knew I would have to wait until spring for any kind of comfort if I wanted to explore further. The Inyos can get terribly inhospitable at the extremes of the seasons.

Over the winter I looked at the topo map more closely. The road I had followed for a while was shown as a trail that stopped a mile short of and a thousand feet higher than Beveridge. I ordered the aerial photograph of the map. It wasn't detailed enough to show the "road." It revealed vegetation at the bottom of Beveridge Canyon and several springs a little up from the townsite apparently strong enough to create the growth. And all winter I couldn't get that off-hand remark about THE PIANO out of my mind.

Next May I arranged a trip, leaving Los Angeles on a Friday night to spend Saturday and Sunday searching out Beveridge. The drive to Saline Valley from Los Angeles is about six hours, four paved and the rest on gravel. The route runs past Olancha and Darwin, then on the gravel through a yucca tree forest (home to herds of wild burros) to a six-thousand-foot pass between the Nelson range and Hunter Mountain with a magnificent view of Panamint Valley and its sand dunes way down below, and then down Grapevine Canyon and into Saline Valley. Saline is a huge sink covering hundreds of square miles. It's being considered for inclusion in the Death Valley National Monument boundaries. The very bottom, where everything collects, is at one thousand feet and can be as hot as it gets anywhere. It's a dry lake that was mined for salt deposits in the early 1900s.

Springs around the dry lake, and at other seemingly random places in Saline Valley, provide oases thick with low trees and grasses adapted to the high salt concentration in the ground. The springs would be interesting to explore later. The BLM has fenced some as protection from the wild burros who live in the lower elevations. These, and their high-altitude cousins, are feral ancestors of abandoned prospectors' burros. You run onto them in odd places and hear them talking long-distance to each other with their crazy hee-haws. I spent the night on the valley floor listening to them.

Early the next morning I attacked the road that had stopped me six months before. It switches up a slope rising from the valley like a Manhattan skyscraper. Four wheel drive and granny low were in order, no question. From a little distance up this road it seems you can see the entire valley below. As it ascends the view gets even more astonishing. It compelled me to stop and gape at the emptiness, thinking it will surely be a long time before Los Angeles gets here.

After switching up the face of the foothills the road finally turns inward, grinding over ridges and through gullies and clinging to precarious slopes. My hat is off to the guy who made it, and to whoever thought it up in the first place. (I would have kicked him out for proposing such a track.)

The vehicle road ends at the silent Snowflake talc mine at about 3200 feet. A closer squint at the topo map revealed a small mark denoting the transition from 4WD road to foot trail. This was the start of the trail to Beveridge.

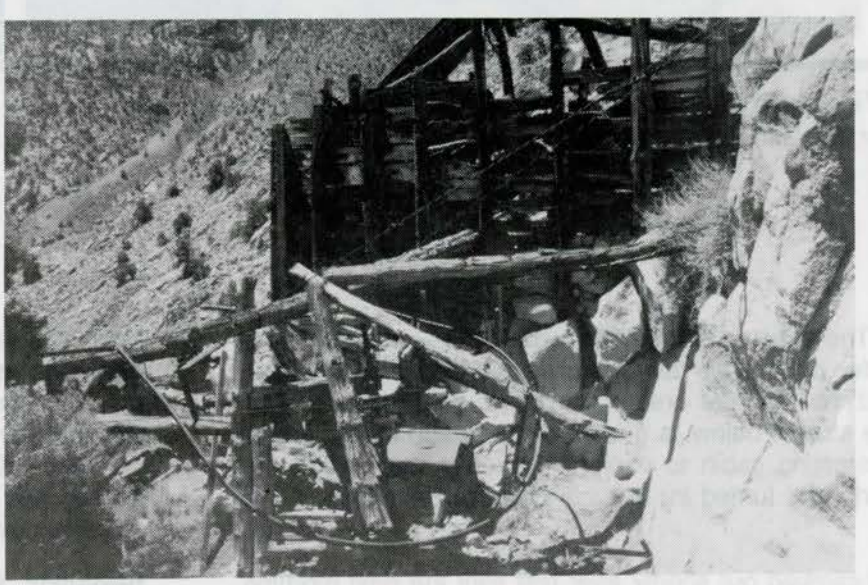
p.35 top: Water came from a spring up-canyon, carried by a ten-inch wire-wrapped wooden pipe. Center: "Modern" house in bottom of canyon. Made partly of sawn lumber, with rotted canvas walls, it is probably only 70 years old. The perennial stream supports growth that has almost consumed it. Bottom: Ore loading facility and tram turn around at mine above Beveridge; loop in foreground is collapsed rail.

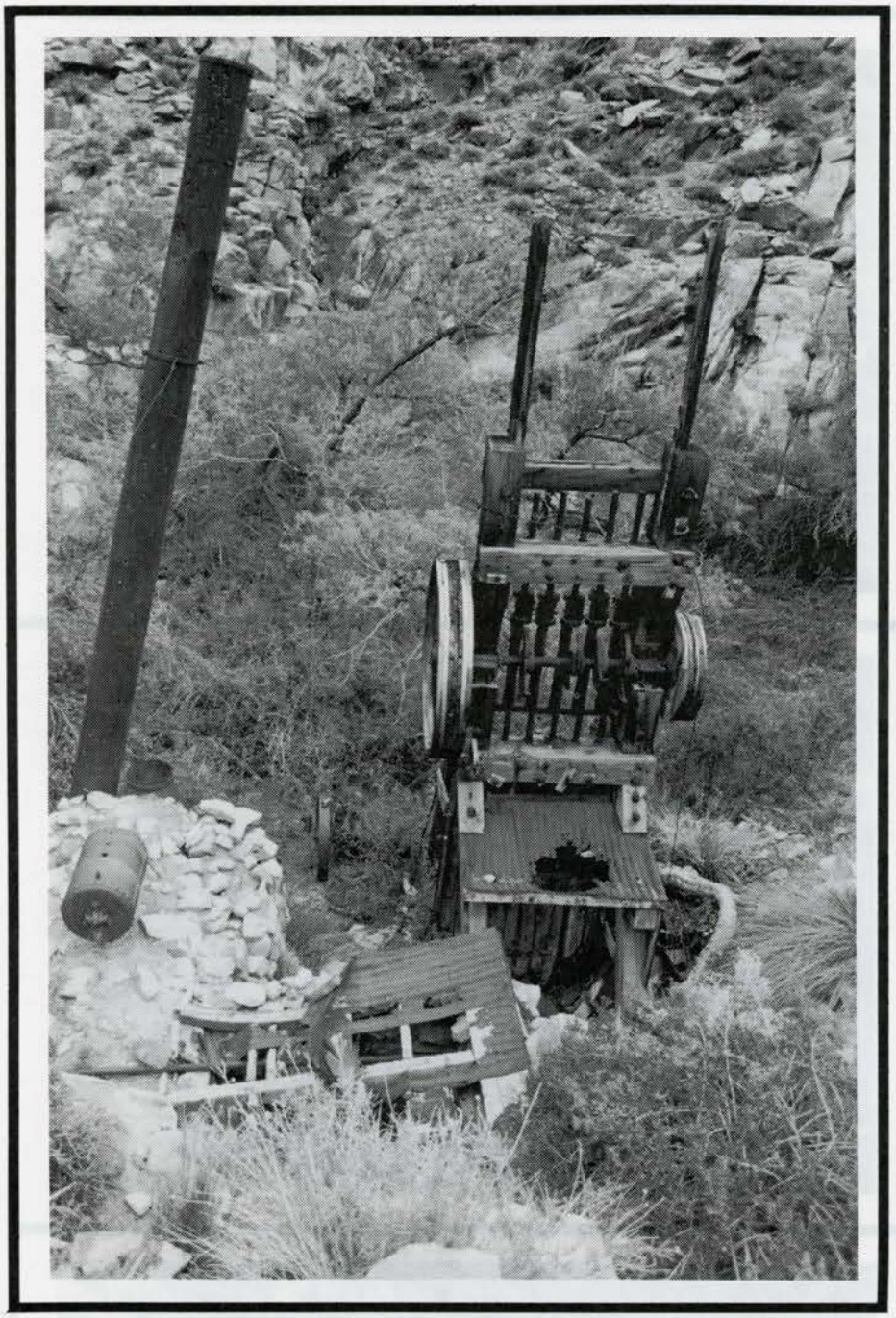
So I loaded my pack and started up the foot trail. It's a no-nonsense trail. It makes no apologies for getting to the top in as short a distance as possible. Mining trails are not built to government specs. They were paid for by the job, not the mile, and the job was to move only enough rocks out of the way so you didn't stumble a lot, and never mind the grade. There is evidence explosives were used here and there to bust up some of the larger rocks, and, in one place, to get through a persistent limestone ledge. But the trail is never built up to make a walkway. It was a minimal construction effort and probably hasn't seen maintenance in a hundred years. Credit its continued existence to the dry climate as much as the choice of grade location.

The foot trail roughly follows the north side of Beveridge Canyon, giving nice views of the wiggling canyon bottom. I was part way up when military fighter jets started playing on the floor of Saline Valley, making screaming, booming noises. Once they sounded closer and I realized a jet was flying inside Beveridge Canyon, nimbly banking left then right then left to follow the turns. I looked down on it a thousand feet below me for the several few seconds it was in view.

The trail marked on the map, as far as it goes, accurately matches the actual trail. On schedule I rounded a prominent corner at the 6600-foot level and only later found that the trail doesn't stop there, as the map advertises. A few old prospects marked the spot, about a thousand feet higher than the Beveridge townsite and over a mile east.

Believing the trail had played out I aimed at Beveridge, now visible, and started scrambling across and down over the rocks. I expected to make a sloping lateral traverse, but a huge, impassable, near-vertical debris gouge soon blocked my way. So it was straight down the sixty-degree boulder slope, aiming directly for the bottom of Beveridge Canyon. About half way down I saw below me a comparative freeway — a wide, flat, well-constructed path several hundred feet above the canyon bot-





Five-stamp mill. The rock pile covers a boiler which fed a steam engine to power the mill.

The evening in the cabin was idyllic — mountain solitude, perfect air temperature (mid-May at 5600 feet), just the slightest breeze, no bugs, gentle sounds from the stream below, a garden of trees and roses, and an interesting cabin to explore. I fixed a meal, read until dark, and turned in. But this was not Beveridge.

I climbed out shortly after first light the next morning. Back at the top where the trail "ended," I found my mistake. The real trail to Beveridge took a slight jog up; I had gone straight and had left the trail right where the map said it should end. The map makers couldn't talk to the long gone miners who knew the trail to learn that it continues. By relying on the map instead of common sense I had missed the jog and ended up doing the rock stumble down to what turned out to be the suburbs of Beveridge. It was too late on Sunday to do anything about it so I resolved to return.

tom, disappearing around a point of rock. At the visible end was a tailings slope. It turned out to be a mine, and the "freeway" was a rail bed to roll ore cars from the mine to a chute. An orphaned ore car in perfect working condition sat on the rails. The chute led to some processing machinery at the bottom of the canyon. This whole trailless 1200 foot descent, requiring careful scrambling, took a little over two hours.

At the bottom was a cozy little miner's cabin, framed with 2x4s and roofed and partly sided with corrugated tin. The front and back walls under the roof peak had apparently once been covered with tent material, long since rotted to shreds. It was well stocked, containing a lumpy bed, a chair, a bench, and assortment of debris. Next to a mining notice tacked on the wall was a greeting for visitors: "You're welcome to the cabin. Please leave it neat." I accepted the offer and the obligation.

The bottom of Beveridge canyon here has a flowing stream. I estimated the flow rate to be about 20 gpm — respectable for a lot of streams in wetter locations. But it's choked with growth, mostly California Rose bushes and willow trees, and a scattering of a few other species. The roses are a particularly vigorous variety, with long, stringy stems, dense with sharp thorns. The intense growth makes it almost impossible to walk up and down the bottom of the canyon. In fact it's even hard to find a place to fill a water jug; the water-loving plants hide the stream. Even when I did manage to fill up the water was full of tiny bits of organic debris, too small to filter out through my bandana. I concluded it was extra nourishment, and have suffered no ill effects.

Two weeks later I was back, this time spending a night at Snowflake mine. Driving up the 4WD road from the valley floor in the dark was as good as the scariest Hollywood movies. The bouncing headlights turned rocks and shadows into lurching monsters and when the road skirted precipices the only visible world was empty space. Snowflake mine was a welcome end and gave me a lonely but comfortable night's lodging. I started walking early Friday morning and, knowing the route this time, was into Beveridge in six and a half hours.

Now here's Beveridge's Mystery Number One: I haven't figured out why the trail is built the way it is; there must be a good reason, since the miners did not build trails for exercise. The problem is that it goes up to 6600 feet and then wanders into the hills, staying betwen 6600 and 7000 feet for a mile or so until it's directly above Beveridge. Finally it follows an endless series of switchbacks down a side canyon to get to the old town, which is at 5600 feet. Now why didn't the trail builder stop climbing at 5600 feet and do his lateral at that level? It would have saved quite a bit of trail construction and certainly a lot of effort for the traveler. The only thing I can think is that before Beveridge was there, the trail went to those diggings I saw at 6600 feet (there may be more I missed), and was simply extended to Beveridge when the time came. It stayed at the high elevation to avoid debris gouges like the one that stopped my lateral traverse. As to the traveler's extra effort involved getting to Beveridge? Well, I'll bet everyone was on a horse or a mule back then, so why worry; something else was doing all the work.

The tramway shown on the map is in the same side canyon as the final switchbacked descent to Beveridge. The cabling starts at a mine shaft some distance up the mountain, makes one long swoop down to a series of supports to get over a little ridge, and then makes a final, smaller span to its terminus in the bottom of the canyon. Four cables are still hanging, tight as the day they were strung, with another on the ground. Some are half-inch, some are full one-inch cable. The two termini and the support structures on the ridge are mostly of native timber — rough pinons dragged from higher elevations and carved to shape. Several ore cars still cling to the cable at the lower terminus. The mine shaft, still whole, penetrates the mountain for a distance. I explored until I found timbers supporting the ceiling. I realized these were hundred-year old timbers, maybe rotting, supporting a roof that wouldn't support itself, and decided that someone else could search out the end. What I did see followed the twists and turns of a quartz vein, with the rails for the ore cars still in place.

The tramway turnarounds are the same basic design still used on modern ski-lifts, except more primitive, of course. The turnaround at the mine end was built onto a supporting structure immediately below the level of the shaft. Ore was dumped from the end of the rails into a large wooden bin, and from there into the ore buckets traveling on the tramway. The weight of the loaded buckets going downhill must have provided the motive power for the whole thing. At the other end was a similar turnaround where the ore was presumably dumped out.

And here now is Beveridge Mystery Number Two. Where did all the tailings go? One would expect to see a huge pile at the lower terminus. But there is none. Did flash floods carry them away? No, there is a lot of mining machinery still in the canyon bottom that would have gone too. Was the ore so rich that there was very little debris? No, if it was so rich they would not have needed the tram. I don't have any answers.

The "town" of Beveridge itself now consists of several buildings strung along the canyon bottom. They are difficult to visit because of the same rose and willow thickets I found infesting the suburbs two weeks before. Exploration demands long pants. The living cabins (I found three), are rotting and falling apart, overgrown with trees and weeds. One now has water flowing under it! I think the miners had the undergrowth cleared out and built that cabin high and dry. In the hundred-plus years since they left, the growth and debris build-up has raised the creek to floor level. Remains of a few stone houses are some distance up from the thicket on the rocky sides of the canyon. They are now low, fallen-down walls, with no signs of their roofs.

Artifacts are all over the place. Among the interesting items:

- Big heavy iron machinery, with names like "American Hoist and Derrick Company, Racine Wisconsin," and "Acme Mining Equipment Company, Erie Penna." proudly cast into their sides in huge letters. I could sense the muscle of eastern industry pouring out smoke and noise to supply the west's booming mines and mills.

- Bed frames with springs, the old outer-spring mattress type that sag in the middle, set out on the only flat spot, rusting.

- The most precarious outhouse ever, propped over a thirty-foot deep crack. It was supported on one side by the steep canyon wall and on the other by a long pole. A springy plank suspended over nothing made a path to the door.

- In the weeds, sitting there all by itself, the bench to another outhouse. The hole was perfectly intact and the floor was in good shape. There were no walls, roof, or other structure. Did you ever stop to examine an outhouse hole? It's not round; it bulges a little in front. And the edges are not cut straight; they have a thoughtful bevel to them. Somewhere someone had enough demand for manufactured outhouse holes to put serious thought into the design and then build a machine to cut the hole exactly that shape. Hooray for free enterprise, demand and supply.

- In the bottom of the canyon, large wooden processing tanks with stirring paddles in them. All the tanks are deteriorating.

- A centrifugal pump, say two feet in diameter, being swallowed by a willow. A hundred years ago it was set

down at the foot of the tree. The willow's been growing around it since, and the pump is now half buried. Another hundred years and it will have disappeared entirely — the ultimate tree spike.

• Strung up and down the course of the canyon for a mile at least, a wooden pipe, about 10 inches in diameter. It's made of long, curved, precisely-milled strips, fitted together to make a cylinder and then wrapped with wire, about one wrap per inch. Some of the sections had fallen apart, but none had rotted. I guess it was redwood, which has a reputation for durability. The wood would swell when wet and compress the joints, making a water-tight seal. With the wire wrap for strength, the pipe would be leakproof and could withstand high pressure.

• A five-stamp mill, powered by a steam engine, complete with a boiler built into the nearby rock wall.

• And a great assortment of iron things. There were iron pipes, iron bars, iron valves, iron cable, iron screws, iron nuts, iron pumps, iron stove parts, iron springs, iron everything. The iron age climaxed in Beveridge.

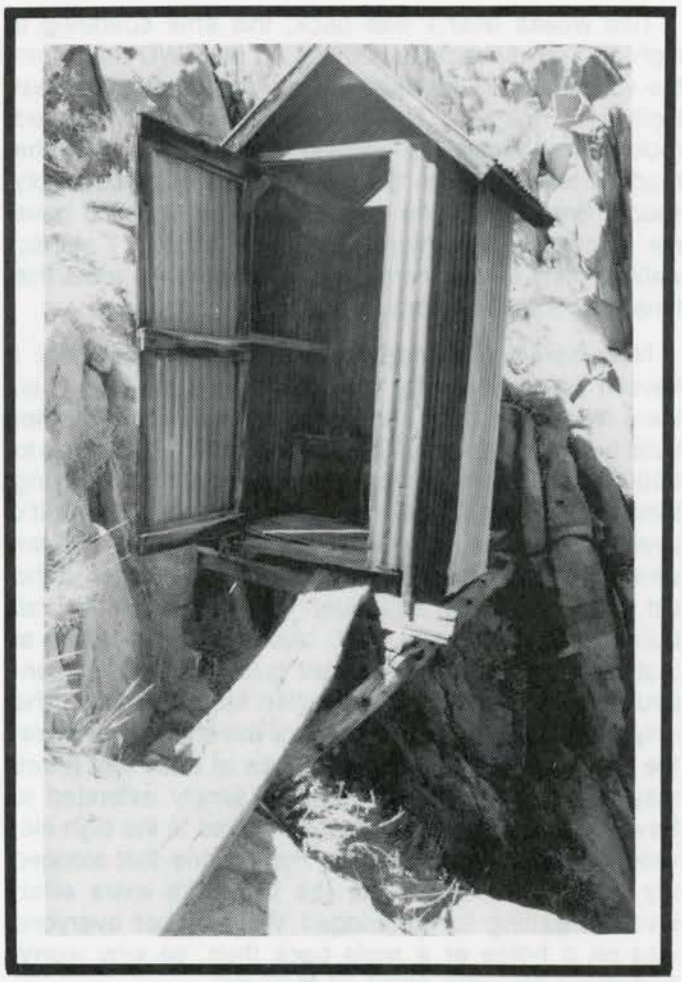
Now here's Beveridge Mystery Number Three. The five-stamp mill was *upstream* from the tramway terminus, with no tailings pile nearby. Did they haul the raw ore uphill to the mill, and then haul the processed rock off somewhere? That doesn't sound very likely. You figure that one out.

Upstream from the main part of town the canyon splits. In the left fork is a very nicely built and largely intact (except for the roof) stone house made from native granite rocks and boulders. A large fireplace with a massive one-piece granite mantle is built into one side. Perhaps this was the mine owner's residence.

The supply route for Beveridge was a trail west of town that went over the Inyo crest. It starts outside Lone Pine and crosses the crest at 9500-foot Forgotten Pass. It is longer and has more elevation gain and loss than the eastern route I took from Saline Valley. The remoteness of Saline Valley dictated this more difficult trail. Considering the driving time today, the trail from Lone Pine may still be the quickest.

Having explored Beveridge I scurried out early in the morning to have time to investigate the cold and hot springs in Saline Valley. One cold spring is an oasis of rushes and large willows, a magic spot in the midst of the heat with birds singing in the trees and frogs jumping in the grass. What wonders a little water will do since not 200 feet away is the driest, hottest, meanest, most inhospitable, foul-tasting desert imaginable. To add the final touch to this charmed place, the spring water tasted excellent.

Equally interesting are the hot springs. A rutted, dry, billow-dust track leads to three of them. The first has been turned into another oasis populated by nudists. Walking around sans everything seems like a perfectly reasonable thing to do in that little park surrounded by hostile desert. The next spring, located on a little hillock,



The Beveridge outhouse is suspended by a pole over a break in the rocks. Entry is across a springy plank.

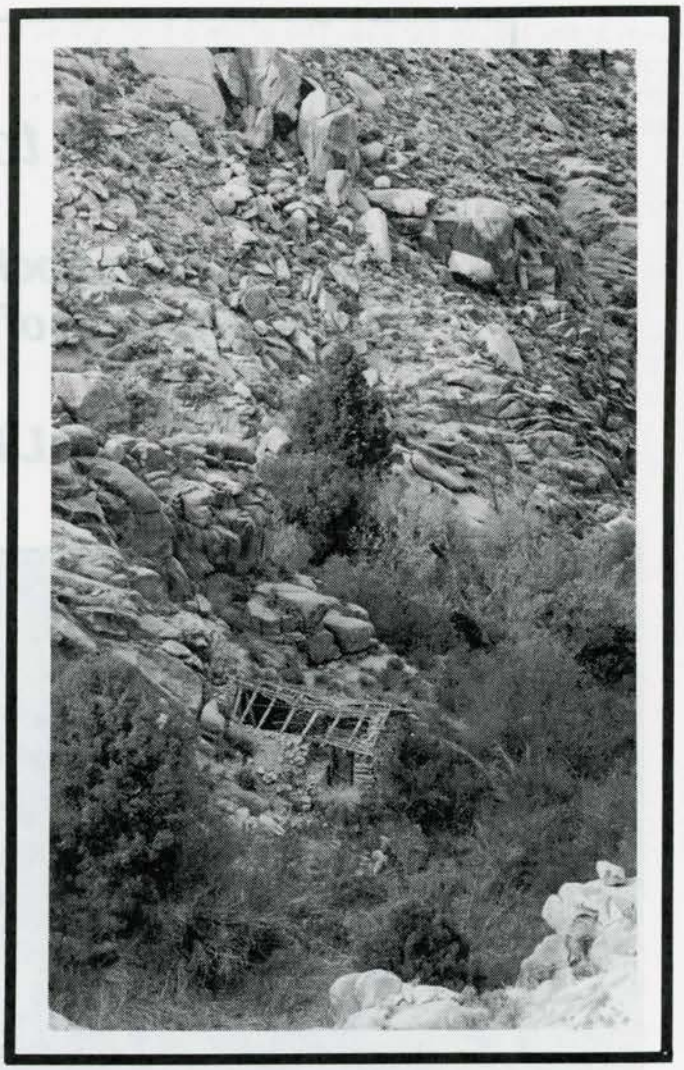
had been improved by The Wizard, according to an inscription in the concrete. The hot flow was piped into several nicely constructed concrete and rock tubs about twelve feet in diameter. The overflow watered a patch of grass and a palm tree. Someone had erected a tarp over one of the baths to provide shade from the intense sun, but there was no one around. After a few moments of contemplation I stripped down and started a soak in this magnificent exotic discovery. What pleasure it was — the hot desert, the deliciously relaxing warm water, the ready-made shade — all set up and waiting for me.

In about fifteen minutes the owners of the tarp showed up and joined me in the pool. They were a couple from Redondo Beach who had been coming to Saline Valley and these hot pools for twenty years and knew all about them. The pools belong to nobody in particular, improved and kept in shape by unorganized volunteer community effort and the good will of whoever happens to drop by. In the spirit of sharing that is abundant in that place the Redondo couple would have thought it strange if I had not taken advantage of their shade from the tarp. They knew quite a bit about the surrounding territory, where all the Indian relics were, old timers who had lived the area, the recent history of flash floods, 4WD roads from there into Death Valley

and to old mine ruins, and all sorts of other interesting things.

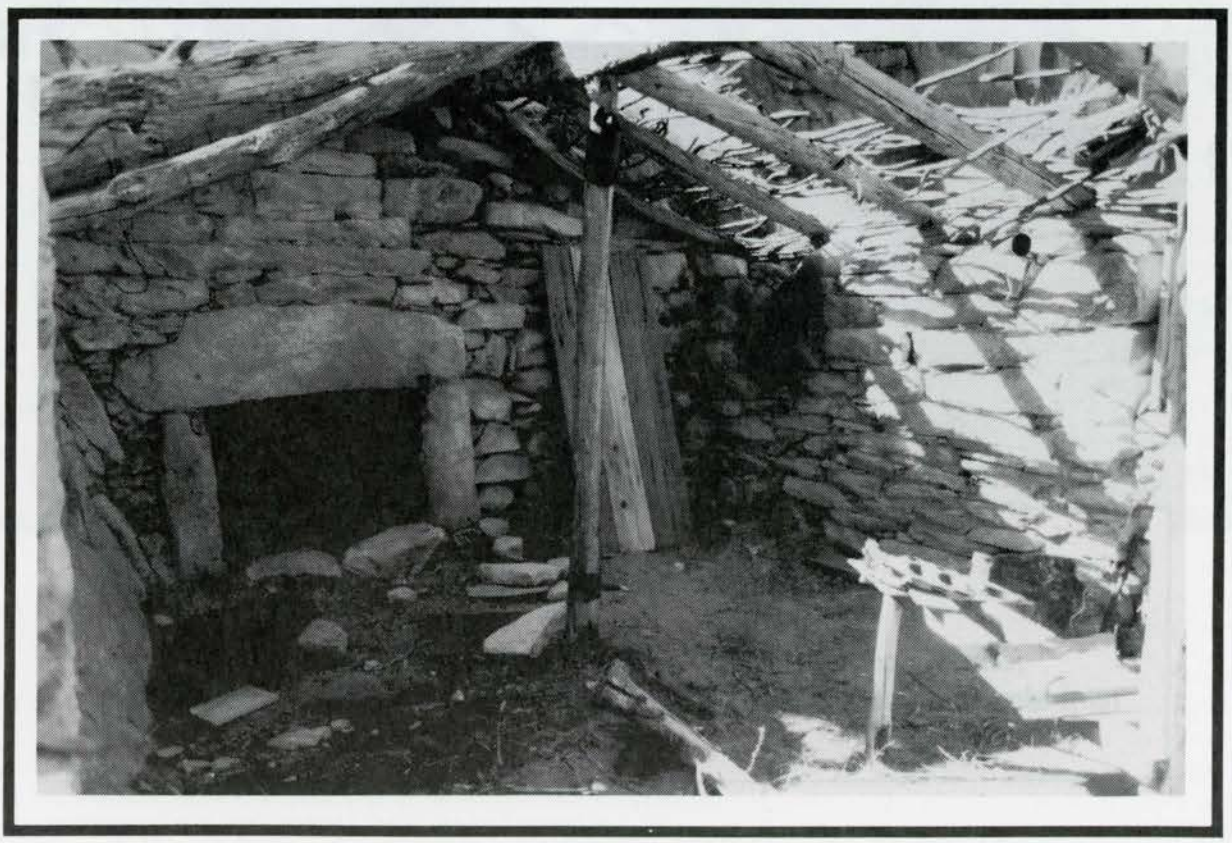
As I was about to leave I mentioned the intriguing Beveridge piano. The fellow from Redondo said he had heard the same story about pianos and helicopters. He'd heard it continually in fact, from the time he started coming there twenty years before. We concluded that it was one of those comfortable yarns that tells so easily and sounds so dramatic that it has a birth and eternal life all its own despite lack of first-hand, second-hand or any-hand evidence. Judging from the layout of Beveridge itself, and Mr. Redondo's experience, the piano story is just that. a story. But it was enough to get me into the place. ✲

Records of life around the lesser mines in the Inyos are scarce. Knowledge of the era is therefore left to personal exploration followed by speculation. Perhaps some readers do have photographs or written records of this fascinating part of Eastern Sierra history. If so, THE ALBUM would welcome hearing from you.



Right: Original rock house nestled in bottom of canyon. Most roof supports are in place.

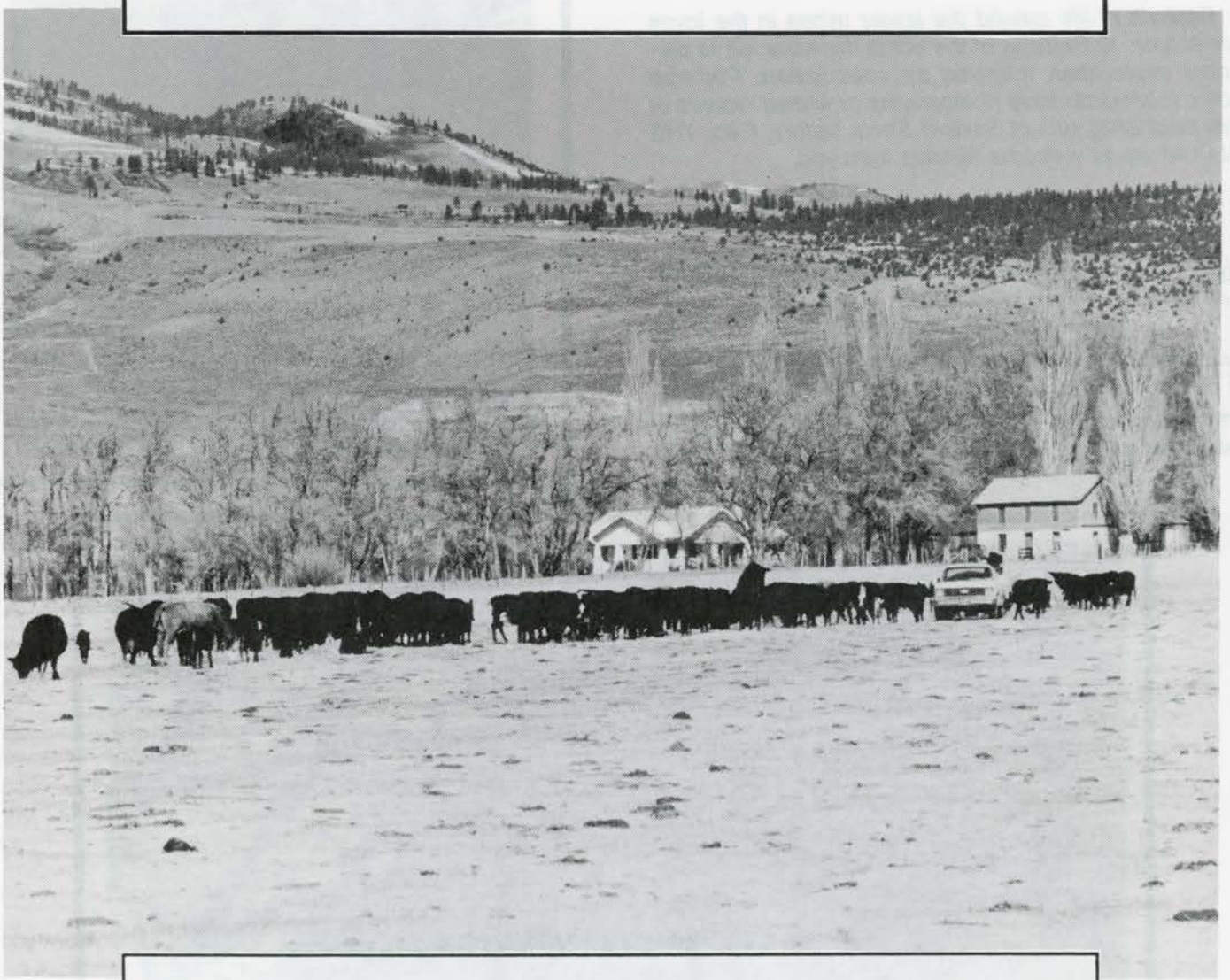
Below: The rock house is well over a hundred years old. Built of all native materials, most roof beams and some latillas remain. The magnificent fireplace and excellent rock walls would be appreciated in a modern home.



Close to the Land

A pictorial storybook of Art Schober's family — pioneers of the Owens Valley.

by Lila Bauter



"On Round Valley Road"

Here is a peaceful view from Round Valley in the Fall. There are often reminders on these back roads of the past pioneering days in the Owens Valley

The secret is out . . . I drove a tractor just like this one of Art Schober's when I was age sixteen in Nebraska. It was a Case VAC 1949.

"It was Spring of 1985 when I turned down the long driveway to Art and Lou Schober's ranch house. I locked the wooden gate behind me. I will never forget that day as I walked up to the house and stood there as a total stranger with a few photos of their cattle in my hand.

"'Come sit and chat with us here on the front porch' were the words I heard as I looked around at so many friendly reminders of my childhood days in Nebraska. A red gate swayed in the wind. Hollyhocks were planted neatly near the front porch. The smell of spearmint leaves filled the air and the old clock chimed in the front parlor. A wonderful feeling came over me and it was then that I knew a friendship was about to blossom.

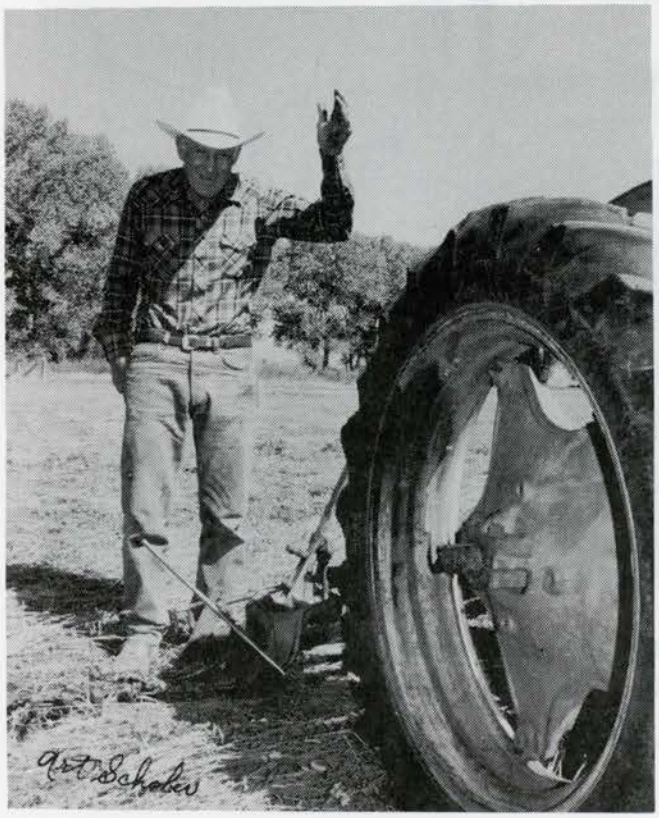
"Art began to laugh at my photos with amusement. He said, 'Why there's my Ol' Bull. What do you know about that.' I heard the tenderness in his voice as he spoke of his favorite bull. I knew then that Art feels 'Close to the Land' as I do." – Lila Bauter, Photographer

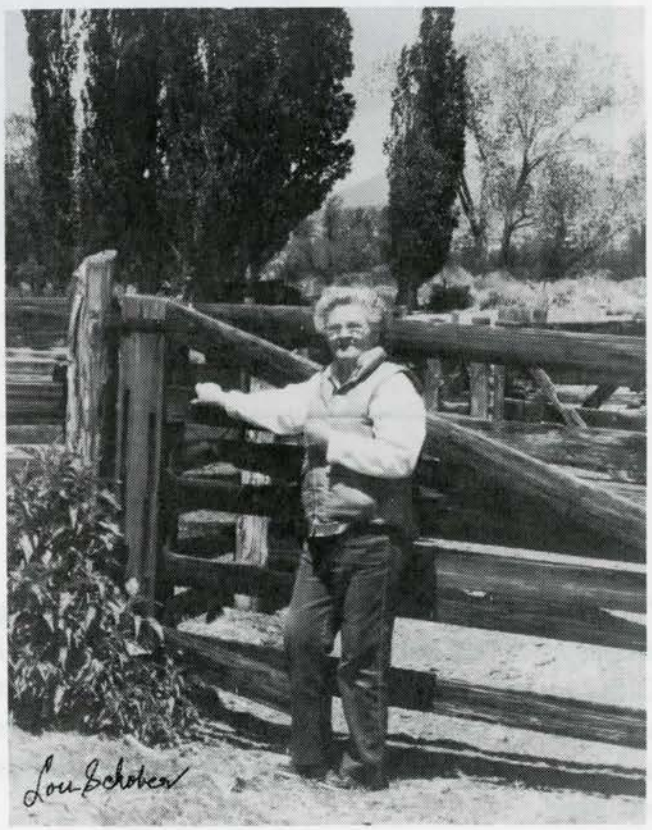
On July 17, 1990, Lila Bauter presented the Laws Railroad Museum with a photobook from her private collection of Schober family and Round Valley pictures, with title graphics by Mark Allison. Some of the photos have been seen at the Tri-County Fair, and two won first places in the Bishop Chamber of Commerce photo contest in 1990. THE ALBUM presents some excerpts here, and the book in full size and color may be seen at Laws.

"Welcome to the Owens Valley"

Art Schober

Art Schober



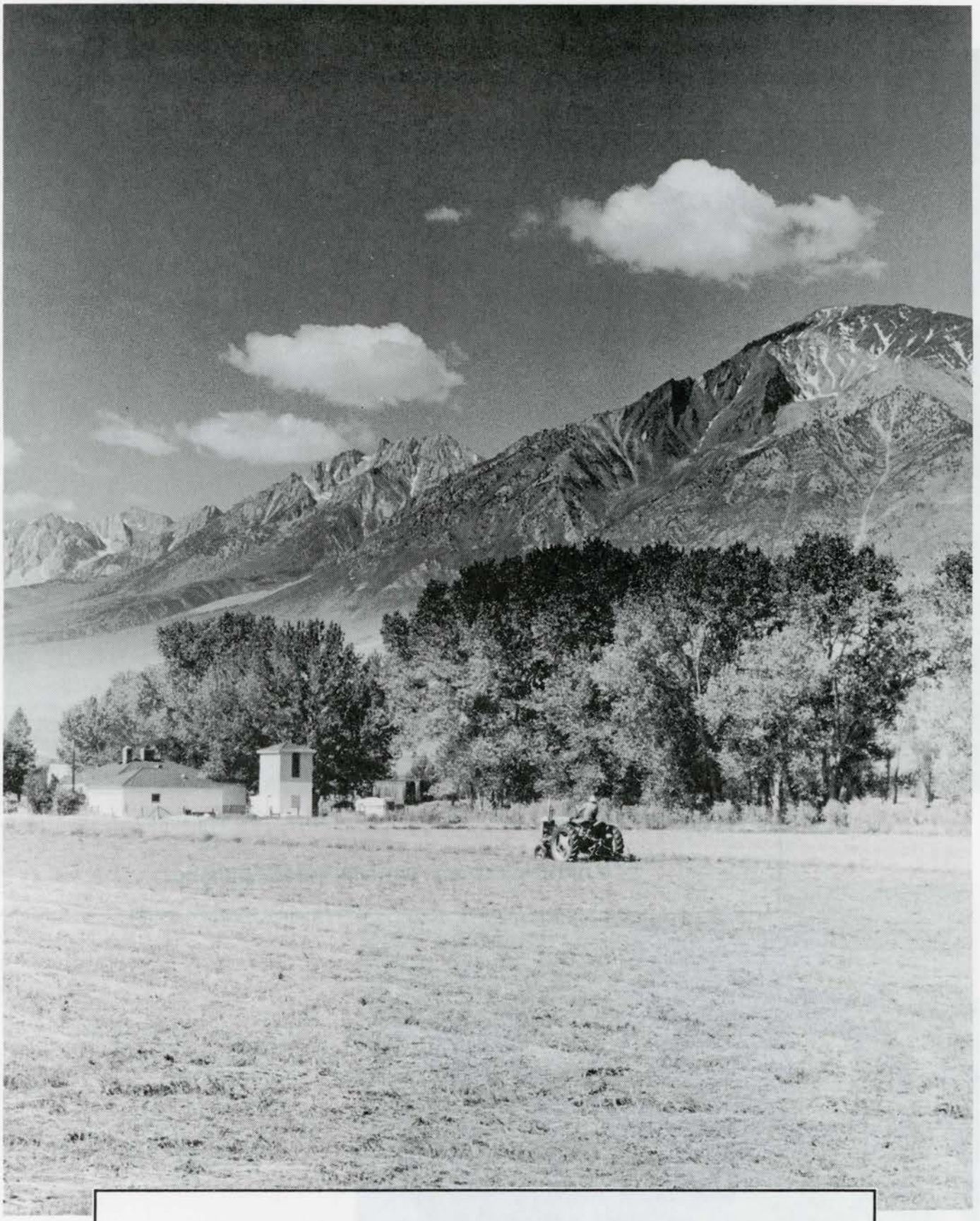


"Come forth into the light of things. Let nature be your teacher."

William Wordsworth

Lou Schober

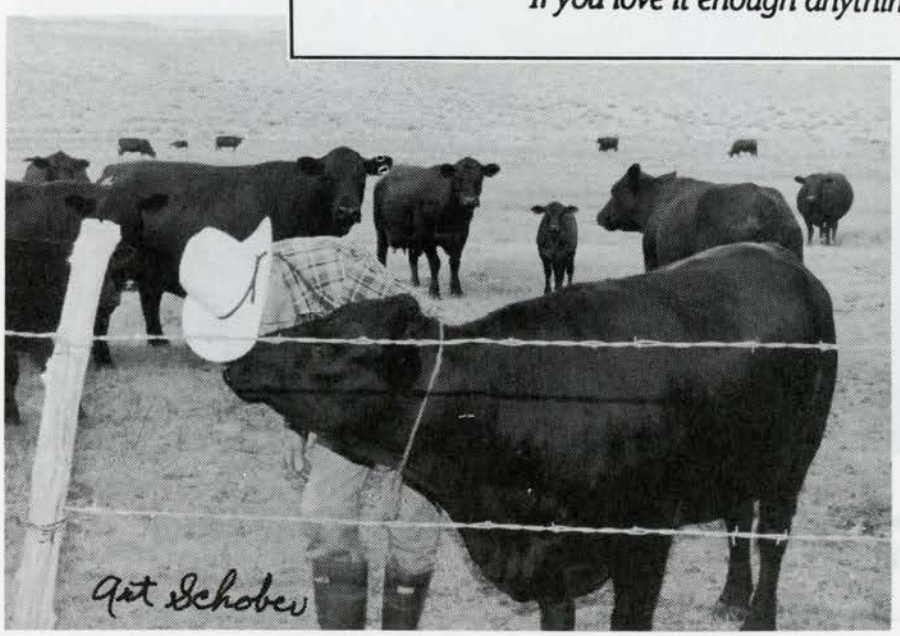
Lou Schober



I always look forward to Spring, It is the time when I again get to see Art on his tractor mowing the fields . . .

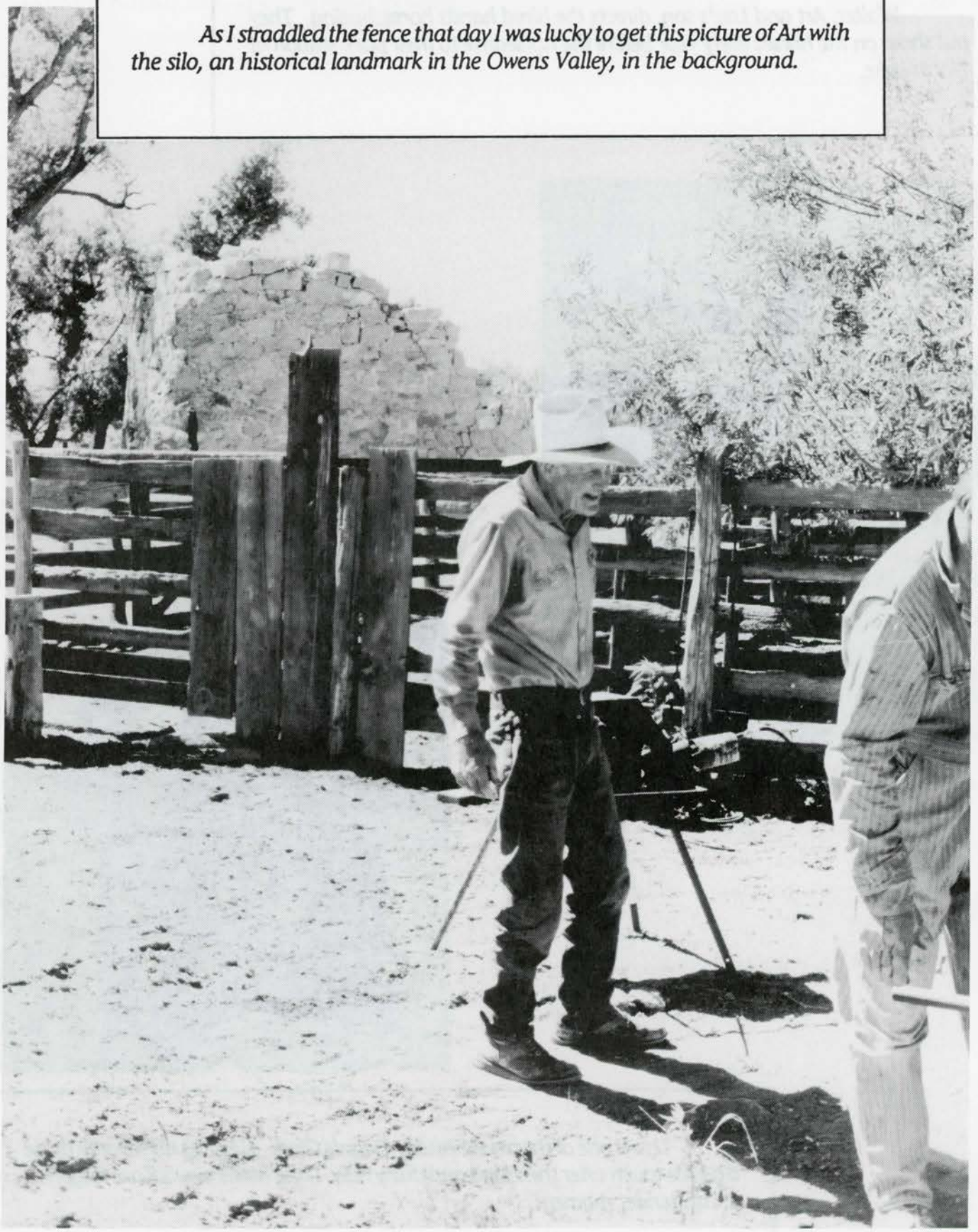
. . . and to my amazement a day or two later there lie the neatly tied bales of meadow grass to feed Art's cattle. The good clean Earth continues to provide.

"If you love it enough anything will talk with you."



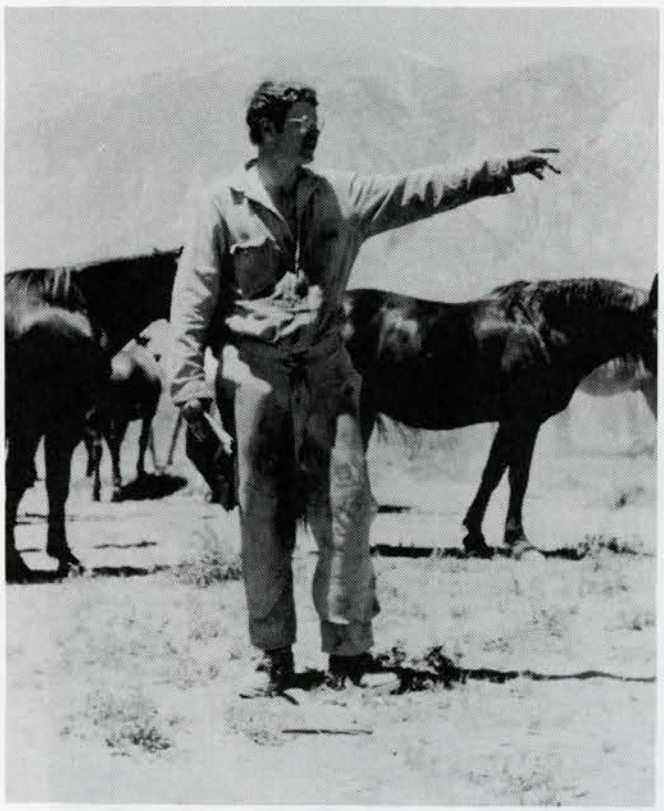
"Branding Day at the Schober Ranch"

As I straddled the fence that day I was lucky to get this picture of Art with the silo, an historical landmark in the Owens Valley, in the background.

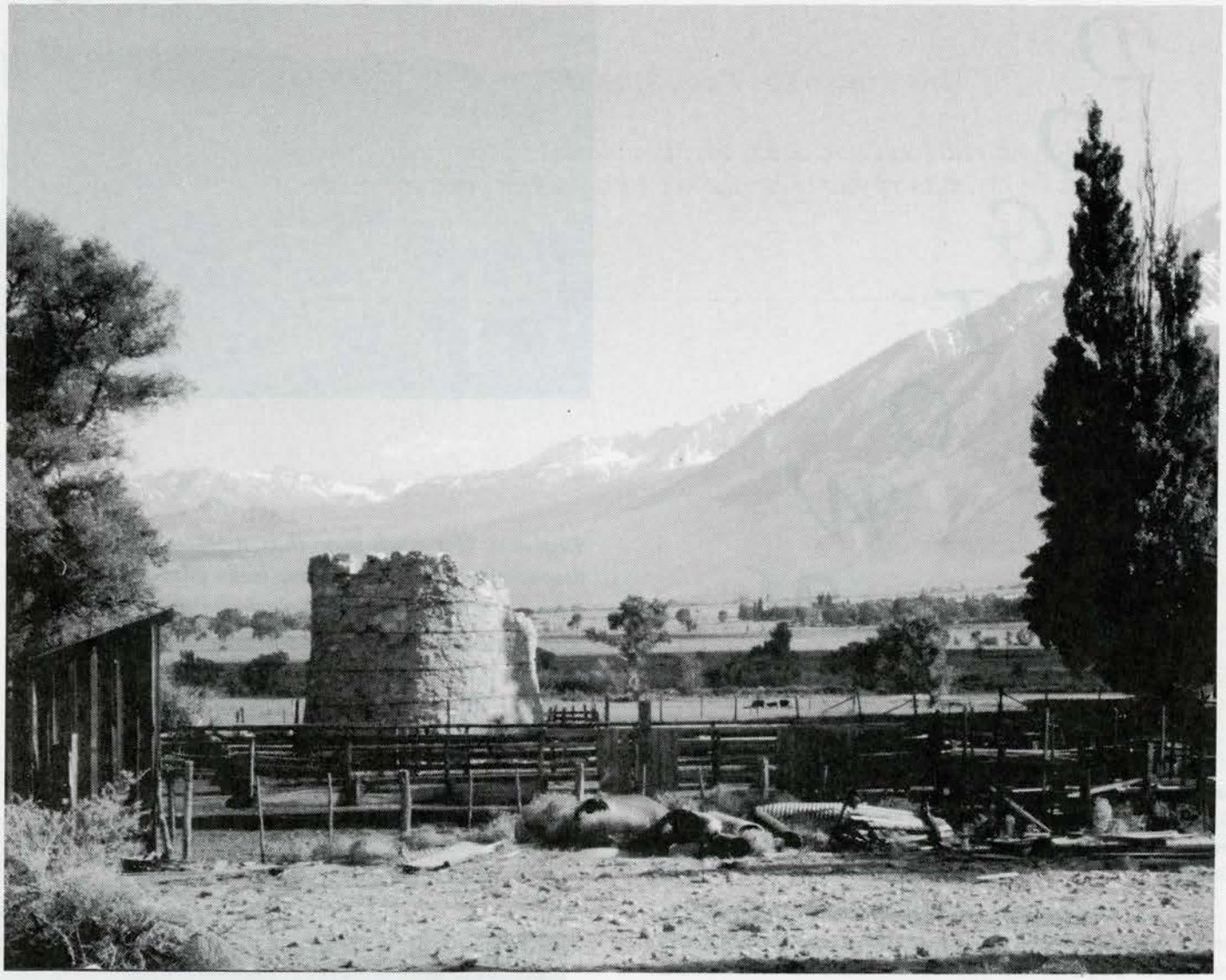


"This way to the Pack Station"

Walter, Art and Lou's son, directs the hired hands horseshoeing. They put shoes on the horses every year before the horsedrive to their pack station at North Lake.



This is one of the hired hands—Dennis Clark. He gives his favorite horse a gentle touch after their long and dusty ride. Long hours of work are forgotten in this tender moment.



"Northwest of Bishop in Round Valley stands the granddaddy of all of the Inyo County silos. William D. Roberts was said to have built this silo in 1898. The handmade silo has been a positive landmark in Round Valley ever since its construction and has long been familiar to those who drive on the old north bound route from Bishop to Reno, Nevada.

"Theodosia (Roberts) Nordyke, daughter of William D. Roberts, recalls that her father was born in Wales in 1852. He and his family came to America early and traveled across the plains to Salt Lake City, Utah by pushcart. After a few years in Utah and Nevada the family moved out to California. They settled in Round Valley where they homesteaded 240 acres. They grew alfalfa, corn, a garden and built a comfortable home, a corral and a milk house.

"This handbuilt unique silo was declared to be the first built in the West and the owner was known as 'Silo Bill.' Forty milking jerseys made the dairy that Roberts operated aptly named the Fairview Jersey Farm. It faced the superb Sierra range with tall Mt. Tom watching over all.

"Mrs. Nordyke remembers when a bad earthquake in 1906 badly cracked the big silo. It was plastered on the inside and metal rods were drawn around it outside. These were tightened by turn buckles making it very sturdy once more.

"The original house burned down in 1916 despite the bucket brigade of neighbors, and all the old records and deeds were lost. A comfortable bungalow-type home was soon built.

"The ranch headquarters remain the same today. Arthur Schober has resided there for the last 40 years and so the ranch is still in use today.

"In 1984 another earthquake caused more damage to the silo, however some of it still stands. This photograph was taken prior to 1984." — Lila Bauter

DOGTOWN

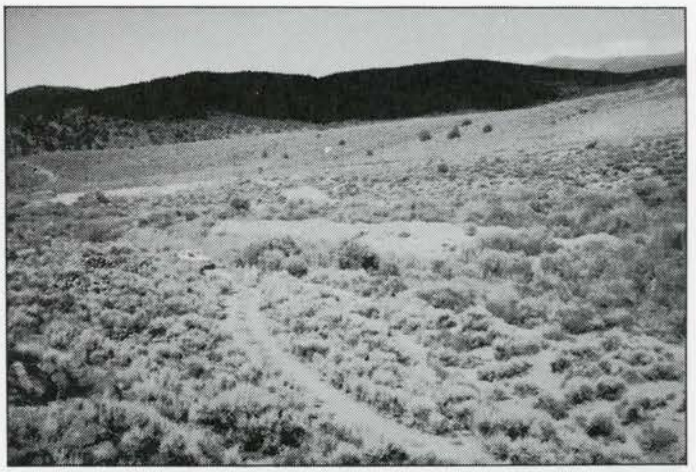
by David A. Wright

Dogtown. Funny name. A name to forget. Dogtown. Desolate place. Yet passed by millions. Bodie, Benton, Mammoth City. Places remembered. Yet each owes its very life to Dogtown. Without Dogtown, there may have been no Mono County.

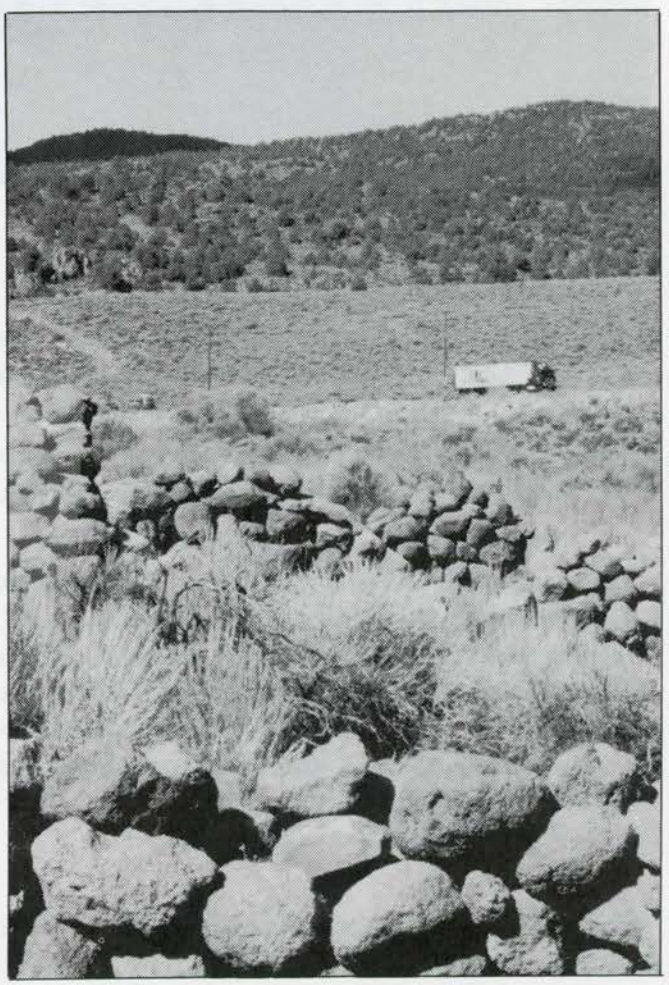
Dogtown. Like its namesake, kicked around. An underdog among towns. Neighbor Bodie has been guarded and preserved, but Dogtown has been left as bleached bones on the land. Bodie sees millions come to stare in awe; Dogtown sees millions speed by, uninterested.

I like funny names. They draw me like a magnet. I am also attracted to the underdogs. Little is told of this dog. "It was founded, it lived an insignificant life. It died." So say the books. It's funny about insignificant places: their remains seem to stick around a lot longer than those locations of fame. Dogtown's prodigy, Aurora, is a perfect example. Though Dogtown's remains lay in plain sight (to those with sharp eyes or who stop long enough to read the historical marker) a hundred yards from Highway 395, few stop to explore the stone walls that mark it. Few even care. Because the turnoff to Bodie is only a quarter mile down the road. Because a cold soda at Bridgeport is only ten minutes ahead. Because the trout are biting up at Twin Lakes or Virginia Lakes. Because we're heading to save Mono Lake. Because Tioga Pass and Yosemite are calling us. Because the casinos at Reno are beckoning. Because the slopes of Mammoth are an hour away. Because . . . just because.

That's OK. I don't mind pulling ol' Trucker III down the dusty little path leading to Dogtown. Heck, ol' Reno II back there in the bed needs a cool drink in Dogtown Creek anyway. Yeah, I need another ghost town to explore too. Come and ramble with me.



Dogtown. Not much more than a few rocks strewn and heaped along the creek, a few rocks piled into crude and weathered walls, a profile of a dejected spot next to a humming highway; its motorists passing by unknowing or uncaring about the bleached carcass that sparked the establishment of Mono County. August 1991.



Northward, a station wagon loaded with luggage and kids flies along Highway 395, down the last incline of Conway Summit, a few miles south of Bridgeport.

"Dad, when are we gonna get there?"

"I'm thirsty. I want a cold drink!"

"Me too!"

"I gotta go to the bathroom real bad!!"

"Dear, the next town is only a few miles ahead, let's stop there and eat."

Southbound, a semi-truck begins the long assault of Conway. The driver is chattering on the CB with his buddy in another rig a quarter mile behind.

"Hey, good buddy, gotta wind up the turbo to tackle this grade."

"Yeah, got the pedal to the floor. Hey, you see this sign to Bodie?"

"Yeah. Always wanted to go there someday; hear its pretty neat."

"Yeah, me too. One of these days I'm gonna swing this rig over that way. Maybe come here on vacation."

"Yeah, me too."

Heading north in a black coupe, a couple are anxious to behold the Nevada state line at Topaz.

"Can't wait to hit the bright lights of Reno, dear. How about you?"

Trailing a plume of snow, a southbound 4x4 station wagon with skis mounted braves the snow covered highway. Through the fogged windows can be seen two couples.

"Gotta get to Mammoth!"

"Yeah! Can't wait to turn tips down from Chair 21!!"

To the west, in sight of those who notice, rest a few stone walls. From north and south, a swarm of cars, pickups, campers, motor homes, semis, motorcycles, bicycles, and buses ply Highway 395 to other destinations, other sights. A considerable number of them turn eastward to favored Bodie, the site that eclipses other ghostly whereabouts in Mono County. It is the biggie in the region, but it was not the first spot east of the Sierra to cry a golden song in an attempt to lure mortals from the Mother Lode over to the desolate and unknown east side. Only a handful of trappers, sheepherders, and a few other brave souls dared to cross the crest. East of the summits lay superstitions and Indians.

Unpretentious, those stone walls west of the highway bear the distinction of starting a chain reaction that led to the creation of Mono County. Those are the stones that paved the way for Bridgeport, Bodie, Mammoth City, and Benton; the foundation of modern day Mammoth Lakes, June Lake, Lee Vining. Those stones created the need for modern roads to connect them with the world outside.

"Hey! Look at me!" they cried out to those men who braved the crossing to the unknown land. A few came, saw, looked, and left. "This place is only good enough for dogs!" they said.

Monoville, Aurora, Bodie. Each a better breed that won the attention of the increasing number of men, then women and children. Louder voices crying out golden melodies, leaving the original as the underdog. What a life. What a place. What a name... Dogtown.

The skies are still the bluest in this corner of Mono County, where the sagebrush hills butt against the Sierra. Folks come for the open spaces and attractions scattered about and beyond, but they ignore the bones of Dogtown, as they lay in the middle of 395. While you swerve to avoid the carcass, let me fill in the tale regarding these bones.

Let's see, now... In 1853... no, back up... It all started in the 1840s. Gold was discovered in California's interior. Gold, great amounts of it, washed down from the heights of the grand ridge into the foothills and valleys below. "Eureka! I have found it!" cried James Sutter. His cry was heard all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Beginning in 1848 came a stampede, each individual hoping to find it too. Over the passes they came, descending upon the rich lands along the western slopes. The east side was dismissed, especially those eastern lands between Walker Pass on the southern end of the great barrier, and what was to become Donner Pass near the northern terminus.

The stampede stopped and settled, creating the new state of California by 1850. Its eastern boundary was for the most part, imaginary. No one really knew what was contained by the ink and paper line and the Sierra crest, especially that stretch between Lake Tahoe and the Colorado River. So when it came time to divide the state into little jurisdictions called counties, those along the western slopes had their boundaries extended to the stateline with the stroke of the pen. "There, that was easy enough. No one will care, there's no one back there to care about it anyway."

There was so much gold in those great rivers on the west side of the mountains, they could scoop it out by simple means. No one even considered hard rock mining; it was that easy. And so they panned, shoveled, sluiced, and rocked their long toms. They built homes, businesses, ranches, towns, cities, capitals, mansions, and empires. No one gave much thought to what lay on the east side. Life was good, so why go through all that rubbish with danger and hardship again?

There was enough gold for many but not all, on the western surface. Only a couple of years after the stampede descended from the wall onto the west slope, a few men forgot about the perils that lay east of the mighty range, and began to cross over to hunt and explore. A magic land called Yosemite attracted men to

its cool heights; greener pastures enticed shepherds to push their flocks into the high country near the crest; curiosity led them to peek over the top to discover what lay beyond. When they did, an enormous blue eye stared back at them; a body of water that stretched to the horizon.

Along about 1852, the state government figured it was time to send a few people out to follow those imaginary lines, to scrutinize what was back there, where the lines went, and what they encompassed. Hesitantly, they began to step lightly into the new land, a land filled with strange wonders and unknown fears.

And, by golly, they found a few folks back here.

Around the border area separating California from lands claimed by Utah, folks were coming together in a few small clusters. The Mormon faith, ever willing to explore and colonize, sought out new locales to cilivize and settle. At the foot of the Sierra, lush meadowland spread out in all directions. A few latecomers in the golden dash who had stopped to rest themselves and their animals had found it a place to linger.

In the brown hills to the northeast, a few men were probing about, looking for gold in their pans, but instead found some funny blue stuff. It would not be until the latter part of the decade that the blue junk tossed aside would be recognized as silver.

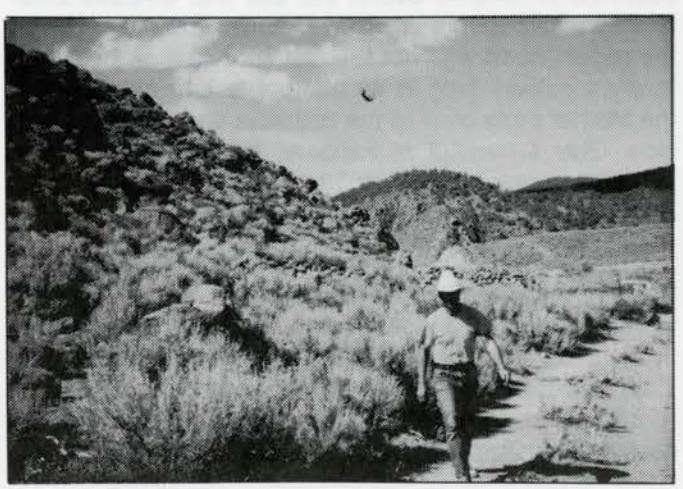
During the year government surveyors were following the paper lines across the state, one man was chasing a renegade Indian along the same path. Lieutenant Moore chased Chief Teneiya over the Sierra and into the socket of the giant blue eye, later to be designated Mono. During the chase, the glint of gold made the cavalry forget about Teneiya. Instead of an Indian trophy they brought back a golden trophy to be showcased in Mariposa. This prompted a man named Leroy Vining to lead a party over Mono Pass and down Bloody Canyon to check things out. They came, they saw, they prospected, they stayed.

By 1855, the west side placers were beginning to give out. The golden glow east of the Sierra crest was getting brighter and brighter. Soon, men were trickling into Mono country from the north, south, and west, seeking its golden treasures. Men were coming over Mono Pass, Sonora Pass, over Walker Pass and up through Owens Valley; others were coming down from Genoa in the north.

In 1857, they all collided at the confluence of two streams in the southern part of the East Walker River watershed, upstream a bit from the Big Meadows. Here, depending on whose account you accept, Leroy Vining or Cord Norst founded the placer gold that delivered unto this world the scrawny mutt dubbed Dogtown; it is certain that both were there to witness its birth. And it came into this world howling loud enough to bring more men running.

It is hard for one today to picture circumstances at Dogtown's birth. Inspecting the weathered buildings at

Jim Sauter checks out a burial plot situated right in front of one of the dwellings. "Used to be someone named Anderson, if I remember correctly" he muses. "It looks as though some [so and so] took the stone since my last visit!" Like Aurora, who helped to drain Dogtown of her few residents, its little estate has been decimated by vandals. August 1991.



Bodie doesn't begin to tell of the hardships at Dogtown, for those rude shacks are downright palatial in comparison. Those who fell upon the land where two creeks met used what nature provided them until manmade comforts could be brought in. What nature provided was plenty of stone, sagebrush, willow and aspen. And that was exactly what their homes were made of. The nearest settlements were almost a hundred miles away in Genoa (which itself was still having growing pains), or on the other side of the Sierra. Getting to the shopping center meant a long walk on your own two feet, or a lumpy ride on the mule.

Can you picture the miner at Dogtown pondering what winter would bring: a lonely miner, stuck for six months in his little 8x8 rock hut, aspen and sagebrush roof, a crude cot, a little flame of smoldering sagebrush in the corner, a few beans to nibble on, an almost empty whiskey bottle, a raging blizzard outside, constant fear of the unknown and Indians?

But by the summer of 1858 a hundred men were panning Dog Creek.

The lifecycle of Dogtown never did proceed like those of many towns of the region. This dog never had a good meal to start with, and became the runt of the litter. The town became a collection of hovels, one of them a store of sorts. Warren Loose opened up his hut of commerce and stocked it with all a man could ask for: whiskey, cigars, more whiskey, a few cans of whatever, and more whiskey. You wanted more? Fine, head on over the mountains or north to Genoa. And don't forget to bring some with you next spring!

The year 1859 brought many changes that affected Dogtown, both directly and indirectly. The blue stuff in the hills above Washoe and Carson valleys was recognized as silver ore, stupendously rich. That discovery brought a rush in reverse back across the Sierra to the lands the '49ers neglected and cursed on their way to the fabulous gold lands of California.

That year, too, brought the direct blow to Dogtown, that of an even richer find to the south. On July 4, Cord Norst decided to get a case of wanderlust on his day off, dropped over the summit to the south, and into the upper drainage of the Mono Basin. He found some gold, and came galloping back with the story to tell those celebrating the 4th.

Shortly, everyone was rushing north or south, to the rising metropolis of the Comstock or to the new strike at Monoville, in search of whichever precious metal struck his fancy. The rest of the litter was born one by one to a newly-named mother tagged Mono. She favored the new puppies — Monoville, Bodie, especially Aurora — and ignored her firstborn.

And as these new pups fattened up, Dogtown became scrawnier.

At the point of Dogtown's death, the humble Chinese took it in. They had been banished from the rich mines of Bodie, Aurora, and Virginia City, but no law prohibited them from gleaning the worked out placers at Dogtown. The dog continued lean, but it remained breathing.

Like all flashes in the gold pan, the gold became so thin that even the frugal Chinamen could not make it pay, and so they moved on. The mutt died. The piles of placered rubble covered its unmarked grave.

By this century, a few cranky contraptions given the moniker of "horseless carriage" began to trickle into the region. Soon a path was bladed through the sagebrush to lead the auto safely to civilization. In the fourth decade of this century, a huge dredge was set up to take hefty bites of the surrounding earth and filter out the tiny flakes of gold too small for the average eye to see. The skeleton of Dogtown was shaken, but not crushed, and soon the contraption was dismantled. Silence returned to the region.

Sometime during the sixth decade of the 20th century, someone decided to make a headstone to mark Dogtown's grave, but finding new freedom in their faster automobiles, looking upon forlorn remains was definitely not in the plans of bypassers.

The setting is the same today. A few people spot the head stone along the pavement of Highway 395 and stop to read the brief epitaph. A few may opt to make their way over to the stacked rock walls and wonder. An infrequent one may probe into the sad story behind the dead dog in the middle of the road. ❄

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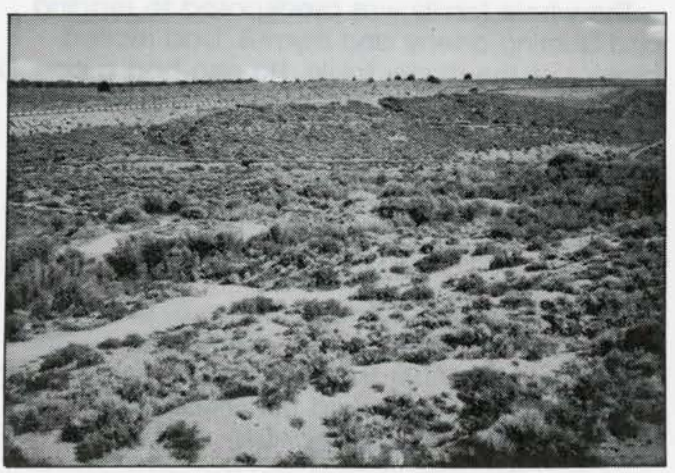
Heaps of placer tailings line Dogtown Creek, a remnant of the 1940s dredging period.



Seriously Enough...

by Jane Fisher

I've always had a little trouble with all the fuss over spring. It just hangs out there, bleak and windy, neither green nor brown, and things are only exciting when it snows in the tulips. Of course, having been born in August, I am prone to have spring fever in autumn. The only thing about spring that ever appealed to me was the prospect of a young man's fancy lightly turning to thoughts of love. Even then, I later learned that the poet had been misinterpreted.

Perhaps I read too much poetry during my desperately contrived excuses for avoiding a share in the family chores. "Too much homework," I would sigh heavily and sneak off to one of my hideouts with Keats, Sara Teasdale, or a lot of Anonymous, which Dad carefully censored.

If I was rightfully trapped into dishwashing, sweeping mulberries off the big back porch, or sitting on the cold cement cellar steps to wash and candle eggs, my mind ranged freely through the moors of Scotland and the daffodils and greenswards of the English countryside. How often I sat with egg yolk dripping stickily through my fingers into my shoes as I dreamed of Bayard Taylor's "Bedouin Song"... "From the desert I come to thee, On a stallion shod with fire; And the winds are left behind, In the speed of my desire, etc., etc., etc."

And how the dishes shone with excess rubbing as I gazed through the window into the blossoming orchard and lived again the pain of Edna St. Vincent Millay with "Love has gone and left me, and the days are all alike. Eat I must, and sleep I will — and would that night were here!" I had no idea what it was all about — like spring — but I sure enjoyed the agony.

The whole family was predisposed to reading and quoting poetry and rhymes. Dad recited classics at the dinner table. He also had a couple of little horrors he used as object lessons. They began with something about "Grunty Grunts, she eats in a mess, and gets her food all over her dress," although he seldom got past the first line before someone cried loudly, "Pass the biscuits and make Carl quit swiping my corn!"

My sister was great at nursery rhymes and later was rumored to know a few ripe limericks — not for the family dinner table, of course. Our brother was inclined more toward the "Nyah, nyah," school of sayings, but they often rhymed. I laid around on the back of my neck writing my own stuff, most of which has vanished. For which the literary world may give thanks.

Mama kept little notebooks wherein she jotted especially poignant words of inspiration and beauty, but she didn't have much time for that in spring. She was busy with baby chicks, baby plants and babying runny noses. The one lovely thing we could see in the season was the thawing of ice on the mud puddles so they became properly squishy. That didn't do much for shoes and sore throats, but it was a source of temporary satisfaction while we waited impatiently for the first day to go barefooted.

Pussywillows were a rare thing of grace in the thin suns of bitter March. Once I was so inspired by a stand of them across the west fields that I led my little brother and sister away to sit beneath them on the damp ground, shivering while I read to them, for some obscure reason, a long and colorful description of the Carlsbad Caverns. Mama soon missed the squabbling and sent out a search party. My efforts went totally without appreciation; and my sister's bronchitis flared up again. What's more, in later years I visited the aforementioned natural phenomenon, and while the caverns were dramatically lighted and comfortably paved for touring, they were not the pastel folds of pink and gold, the crystal waterfalls of rainbow hue described by that author. Spring was always a disillusionment, one way or another.

As far as falling in love went, we were always in love, starting in the third grade, seasons notwithstanding. We were in love for every party, madly sorted out who would be in love with whom for Valentine's day, huddled together the last few days before school each fall to decide who we would be in love with to make the return to classes palatable, and of course every school dance throughout our high school years called for some sort of romantic attachment. Temporary, of course. Who knew what might come up that would call for a fast change of affections?

The slightest breeze could change the direction of our interests. We fell in love with the boys who smiled, who didn't smile, who praised us for hitting a homer, who fought the best, who lost the fight. We fell in love with movie stars, with boys our fathers disapprove of, with the football or baseball or basketball players and with the ones who sat on the sidelines. Spring had nothing

whatsoever to do with it. Nor did much of anything else.

In college we discovered spring in Southern California. The seasons never changed but the activities certainly did. Spring break was nice, but Easter week at the beaches was even better. Of course Dad restricted me from such activities in firmly rounded tones and stern offers of retribution, long before police, homeowners, and beach towns banned such gatherings. But those of us too timid to go or too skinny to be invited, vicariously enjoyed the adventures of our more sophisticated classmates.

When we lived back east for a while, I finally discovered the spring of the poets. Dogwood blossomed in Virginia, the Potomac banks were sweet with tender green and vines hid the shacks on the backroads of the Blue Ridge Mountains in a froth of emerald. There truly were heartrending fields of daffodils atop the verdant hills of Maryland and cherry trees in blossom around the Tidal Basin in Washington. It happened without notice, almost overnight, and it was everything Emily Dickinson and Robert Browning promised about spring.

And guess who longed for the high, bleak gray and white of the Sierra ridges, homesick for the icy mud puddles and silver pussywillows of the ranch, where spring was a raw new wind and smelled of baby chicks and freshly turned fertilizer!

—From "Home Town in the High Country"

by Jane Fisher

Mama loved spring on the ranch

COMING EVENTS

In the January issue, we promised more stories than we have pages for this April number. Rather than forego sharing the pictures, documents, and maps that bring an article to life, we've moved some forward to July and October.

In the revised mode, then, we promise to bring the following contributions in forthcoming issues, thus avoiding disappointment by readers and writers — or me.

Still to come are the three briefs about Mammoth that Gwilym Williams has gleaned from his research of records for Chicago Title. He promises us a map that will try to show ownership transfers. A tough assignment.

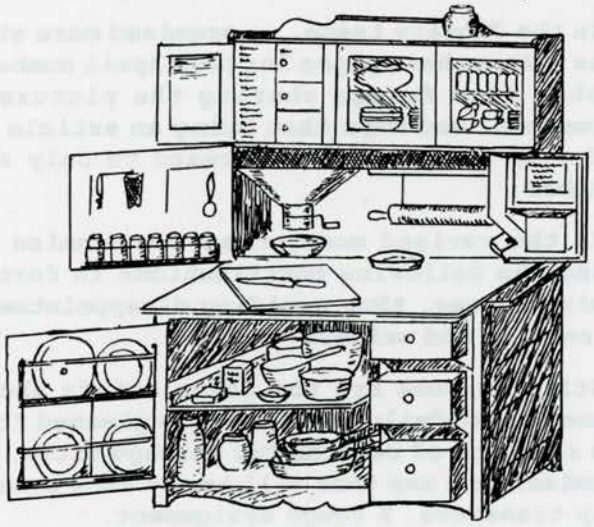
Louise Kelsey is preparing two more segments on the Conway family story, after the move to Bishop, and the years after Gladys and Katie married, raising their own families in Inyo and Mono counties.

One more installment of Mary Gorman's history and writings will conclude the story of her life, but whether it concludes the many-faceted tale of the Watterson family connections remains to be seen. Demila Jenner is working on her own book, a history of the Benton area, but her rich research has led into so many paths that we hate to give her up.

The Holeman Collection of photographs and articles is still to come, as are more stories by Dan Farris, Marye Roser, David A. Wright, Frances MacIver's recollections of the Skinner family of Lone Pine, and pictures and stories of the late John Lubken, one of Inyo County's picturesque supervisors (if I ever find the time to write it from notes and documents shared by his granddaughter, Betty Halamicek). Lila Bauter has fallen in love with that Schober Ranch in Round Valley and is researching its history, preparing an article on the Roberts family who first settled there.

There are other surprises in store, but we are especially delighted to have acquired nine little histories by junior high school students. These were 1991 Inyo County Speech Contest winners and finalists, whose topic was "A Piece of Inyo County History."

A GOO-OOD COOK BOOK



Here are some more recipes from the cookbook produced by the Palisade Glacier Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for the Bishop Centennial 1861-1961. Some for fun and some for downright good eating, but all collections from cooks of an earlier time.

SUET PUDDING

Bessie Stevens from Pioneer Jessie George

1 scant c. flour
1 full c. bread crumbs
1 full c. molasses
1 full c. sour milk
1 full c. shopped raisins
1 full c. chopped suet
1 tsp. each cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg
1 tsp. soda beat into milk
Steam 3 hrs. As good as plum pudding.
(Very old recipe)

BANBURY TARTS

3 or 4 c. of fruit mixture:
chopped appl es (cooked first)
raisins
figs or dates
citron or watermelon preserves
Grated rind and juice of 1 lemon
Bit of rind of orange or candied orange peel, about 2 c. sugar, 1½ tbsp. flour, 1 beaten egg, ¼ tsp. cinnamon, dash of salt.

Mix thoroughly and stir until thick over slow fire. This fillng may be kept for days and made into tarts when desired.

Cut rounds of pastry about 4" diameter. Place tsp. of filling on 1 side. Wet edges of dough. Flip over and press together. Press edges together with a fork. Prick dough. Bake in hot oven.

POTATO CAKE

2 c. sugar creamed with 1 c. butter, or less of some other shortening, 4 tbsp. ground chocolate, 4 beaten eggs, 1 c. seeded raisins, 1 c. hot mashed potatoes, ½ c. milk, 2 c. sifted flour, 1 c. chopped walnut meats, 1 tsp. mixed cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg, 2 tsp. baking powder, 1 tsp salt and 1 tsp vanilla extract. This is to be baked in a rather slow oven. It makes a fruity and delicious cake. The quantity in the recipe is for a large cake pan.

MOUNTAIN BEANS

Laura Lutz

1 lb. Red or Pink beans
3 lb. lean beef short ribs (approx.)
1 lg. onion chopped
4 stalks celery sliced
1 tsp. dry mustard
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1 can peeled green chiles (opt.)
salt, pepper to taste - garlic (opt.)

Soak beans over night in cold water, simmer for about one hour — add other ingredients - simmer till meat is tender.

SAUSAGE AND HOMINY HOT DISH

Gwen Wight

1 lb. pork sausage
1 large can hominy
4 tbsp. sausage drippings
4 tbsp. flour
2 c. milk

Form sausage into small balls, brown well. Make white sauce with sausage drippings, flour and milk, salt to taste. Mix sausage and hominy in white sauce, place in casserole. Heat in 350 oven ½ hour. Serves 4 to 6.

Editor's Corner

We have two new writers to introduce this time. DAN FARRIS, whose story about a beloved horse appears on page 13, is a third generation Californian and packer on the Sierra Nevada western slope, in the Sequoia Park area. He has been packing in the Mammoth Lakes area since 1964.

Dan's forebears arrived in Tulare County in 1850 and due to a small difficulty with the Union Pacific Railroad ended up in the foothills of the Sierras in the 1870s. His grandfather had the first commercial pack train in Mineral King, where his grandparents had spent their honeymoon in 1911 and his mother spent the first few years of her life.

Dan was raised on a small ranch at Milo, on the North Fork of the Tule River, where he led his first mules during World War II.

Like many other modern "cowboys" Dan has talents beyond the stereotypical wrangler-packer. Some of his other credits include two years working for Time-Life books as guide and consultant on *The High Sierra,* from the *American Wilderness* series, followed by consulting on *The Cowboys,* from the *Old West* series. He conducts training sessions for various mountain sports and feels a strong sense of stewardship for the Sierran beauties he shows to visitors.

TOM BUDLONG, who takes us on an exploration of the ghost mines of Beveridge on page 33, was born and nurtured in the eastern states, coming to California thirty years ago after completing an engineering degree.

Tom has been hiking here and in other western states ever since. He spent ten years developing missile guidance and space exploration hardware, and twenty years developing computer hardware and software. His current interest is in discovering and exploring unrecorded trails, mines, and other evidence of the Inyo Range mining boom in the last half of the 1800s.

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Letters to the Editor

WANTED

Jeff Parker, grandson of Tom Yerby, is researching the history of Tom's Place. He would like to hear from anyone who fished with his grandfather, knew him and/or has any reminiscences to share. Jess' address is ***c/o Tom's Place, Bishop, CA 93514, phone 619-935-4879.***

Nola Mattox Ezell wants to know if any readers remember the Inyo-Kern picnic held in the Los Angeles area. She remembers going to one with her grandmother in the 1940s, and would like to know in which city or park this one was held and when they stopped. "I have very fond memories of this annual event, and I can still remember how happy my grandmother, Ora Meads (Frinier) was to see her old friends from Bishop," Mrs. Ezell says. She can be addressed at ***11521 Wembley Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720-4052.***

MEMORIES TO SHARE

It was a delight to receive a gift copy of THE ALBUM recently. It was sent to me by my friend Margaret Tyson. Of particular interest was the article titled "As I Saw It," by Irl Newlan. My daughter-in-law Laurie is the daughter of Dr. Sam Smith who was a descendant of the Newlan family.

I also have a sister-in-law who is a descendant of a Gunter family who were pioneers in Round Valley.

My husband and I moved to Bishop in 1948 and we lived there until 1979, when moved to the Northwest. Almost anyone who had kids in school in Bishop or Round Valley during those years knew Bill. I still consider Bishop "home" since I spent 23 years of my life there and have many friends there... I think (your publication) is a great contribution to Owens Valley history... ***Ruth Keleman, Bellingham, WA***

AND ***R.N. Hogan of Lakewood, CA*** says: "Best $14.00 spent all year! This check always written with a smile of satisfaction and anticipation. More communities should take such pride and interest in their own history."

THE WHITNEY PORTAL CABIN
1935 to 1985

1935 The plans were drawn in 1935. Mr. Shellenbarger, then president of the school board, invited us up to Hunter's Flat (Whitney Portal) for a steak fry. We were newlyweds and Gunnar (Wahlquist) had just secured a teaching position in Lone Pine.

This was depression time and the job was very welcome. As we were enjoying our dinner across the stream from where our cabin now stands, Mr. Shellenbarger said, "This area is being opened for development of cabins. It will be special, a model area. There will be exact restrictions: all cabins must be built with a half-pitch roof, materials for building will be natural rock, brown siding with green trim. The understanding is you will have a 99 year lease. Wouldn't you two like to take a lot and build a cabin?"

We had just borrowed one hundred dollars to get married, our first paycheck would come after the first month of teaching which would be the middle of October. Even our groceries, bought at Chambers' Market, were being charged. But our imaginations were soaring, visions of a little cabin across the stream for us. That evening in our recently rented house on Hay Street in Lone Pine, Gunnar began drawing plans. I had taught school in Thermal for two years and saved three hundred dollars, quite a sum in those days.

Margaret Sparrevohn, reporter for the Lone Pine newspaper, was due for a vacation before school started and asked Gunnar if he would fill in for her for two weeks at five dollars per week. Of course Gunnar gratefully accepted. During this time a man came into the office to place an ad for some second hand lumber. The old soda bin was being torn down near Owens Lake. The lumber had been milled up in Mammoth at the turn of the century and was knotty pine at twenty dollars per thousand and rough lumber at ten dollars per thousand. Gunnar immediately said "I'll take it. Don't even bother to put the ad in the paper." Our dream of a cabin saw its first reality.

The man hauled the lumber up the steep mountain road in his own truck for ten dollars. The cabin frame and rough siding was built and covered with tar paper by the winter of 1935.

1936 The spring brought help from my father who had been manager and bookkkeeper of a lumber yard and who also knew carpenter work. Gunnar's father, a cement contractor, also came. The big twelve-inch plus knotty pine boards were ripped into window and door frames by Gunnar (by hand) and put together by my father. The rock work on the cabin and the fireplace was done by Gunnar's father when he was seventy-five years old. We hired a carpenter from Lone Pine for ten days. And I shingled a third of the roof.

1937 This summer we had a big celebration. Gunnar made it a surprise party for me. Twenty people came to celebrate the cabin's building. During the summer many people came to visit, eighty four in all.

1940 A wonderful event, David was born September 7, 1940. We missed being at the cabin for the summer.

1942 WAR! There were only four cabins built by this time: Rich Dunn's, ours, Brichaga's, and Father Crowley's... For ten years no more cabins were built.

1944 Another big event, the birth of Glenn on July 26, 1944. Again we were not at the cabin for the summer.

1945 We were at the cabin most of the summer with our two boys, cooking on our wood burning stove, heating the water, and washing the old fashioned way on the washboard. This was the year of the big cloudburst. Two clouds met and changed the terrain that day. We heard subtle rumbles that became louder until it became a roar. When we looked out the whole earth seemed to be moving rocks and water. Soon the creek was flowing over the bridge and dashing down the road in a torrent. Add to this lightning and thunder, an awesome experience!

We had visiting relatives who thought they should move their cars to higher ground in Knoppel's driveway. About that time George Putnam came down the road expecting guests and intending to meet them. Having driven onto the bridge, he found water was coming into his car. He stopped, got on top and yelled for help... When everything calmed down we all took a walk and discovered the terrain across the way quite changed. A big gully had formed, with immense boulders as big as cars. A tent in the campground had been nearly covered with mud but the occupant had been pulled out just in time. The building at the pond was filled with mud up to the window sills, but a man inside had escaped through the window.

1951 Gunnar started his dissertation and the addition of a rock bedroom to the cabin. We entertained thirty-six young people from the Methodist Church Youth Fellowship.

1953 Gunnar and David went to the top of Whitney. David caught his first limit of fish.

1958 - 1960 (Marian tells of fishing trips, adding onto the kitchen with the help of Dean Preuitt, and church group visits.)

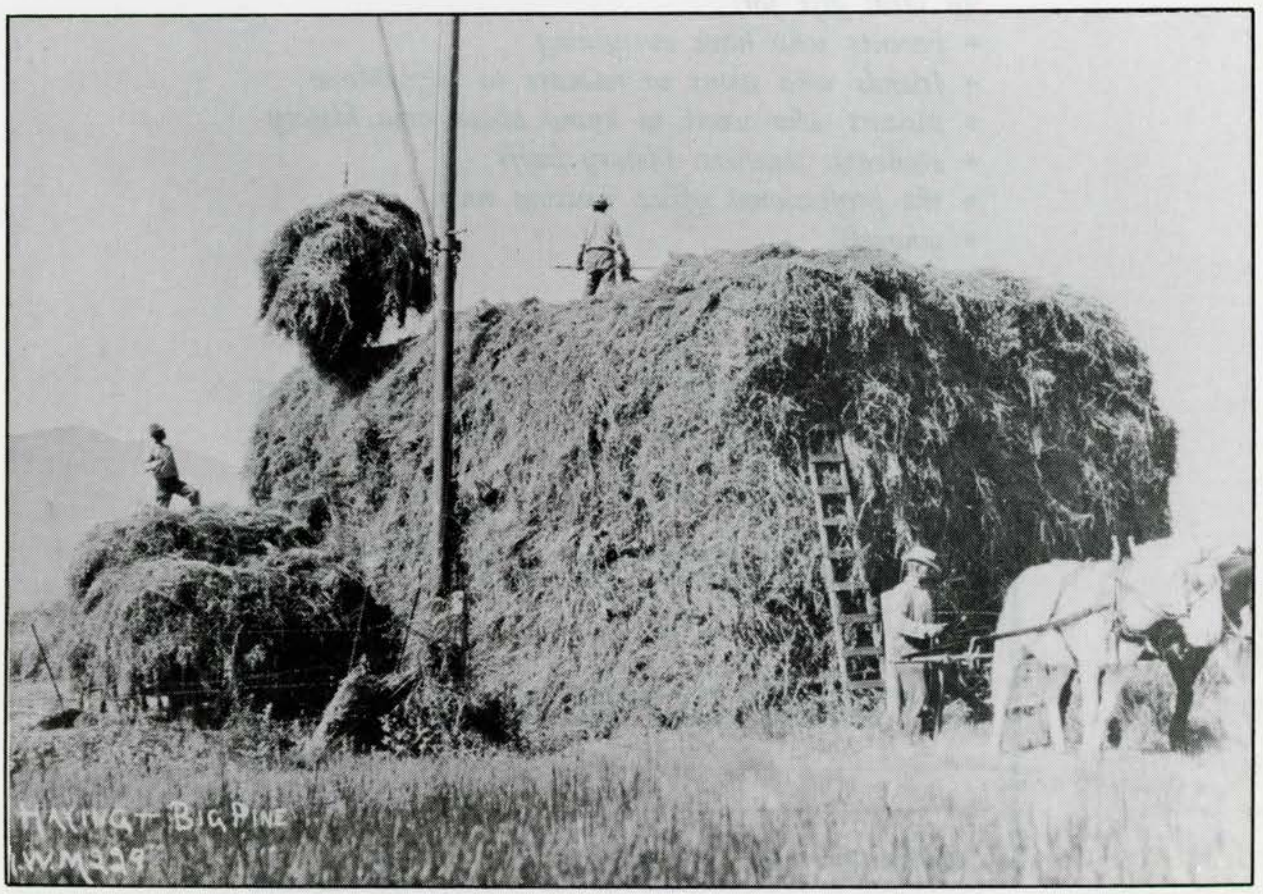
1961 We were threatened with the loss of the cabin. The popular belief was that we had the lease for one hundred years, but the Forest Service decided we were on a year to year basis. Negotiations followed and we got a twenty year lease.

1963 - 1977 (Marian records the visits, additions to the cabin, marriages and honeymoons at the cabin.)

1978 Death of Gunnar Wahlquist, beloved husband and father, October 3. Life goes on at the cabhin, with friends and relatives.

1983 Met Loyd Brooks while walking in Hemet. How we did both enjoy those walks! Loyd helped me bring up a small wood burning stove for the bedroom in July. He fell in love with the cabin.

1984 Big event. Loyd and I married in Hemet in a small chapel at Meadowlark... we ended our honeymoon at the cabin. Our wedding made 15 so far. We all declared it an ideal spot. ***Marian Wahlquist Brooks, Hemet, CA***



Haying in Big Pine. H.W. Mendenhall photo. Cheeseman collection.

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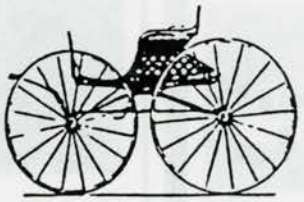

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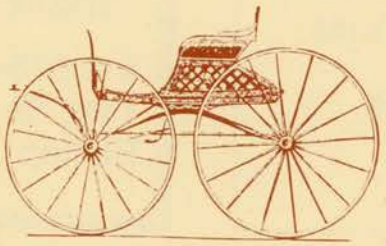

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