



1934

The early history of Tuolumne County, California

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THE
EARLY HISTORY
" OF
TUOLUMNE COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA

By
Frank C. Coates
April 20, 1934

A Thesis
Submitted to the Department of Education
College of the Pacific

In partial fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

APPROVED:

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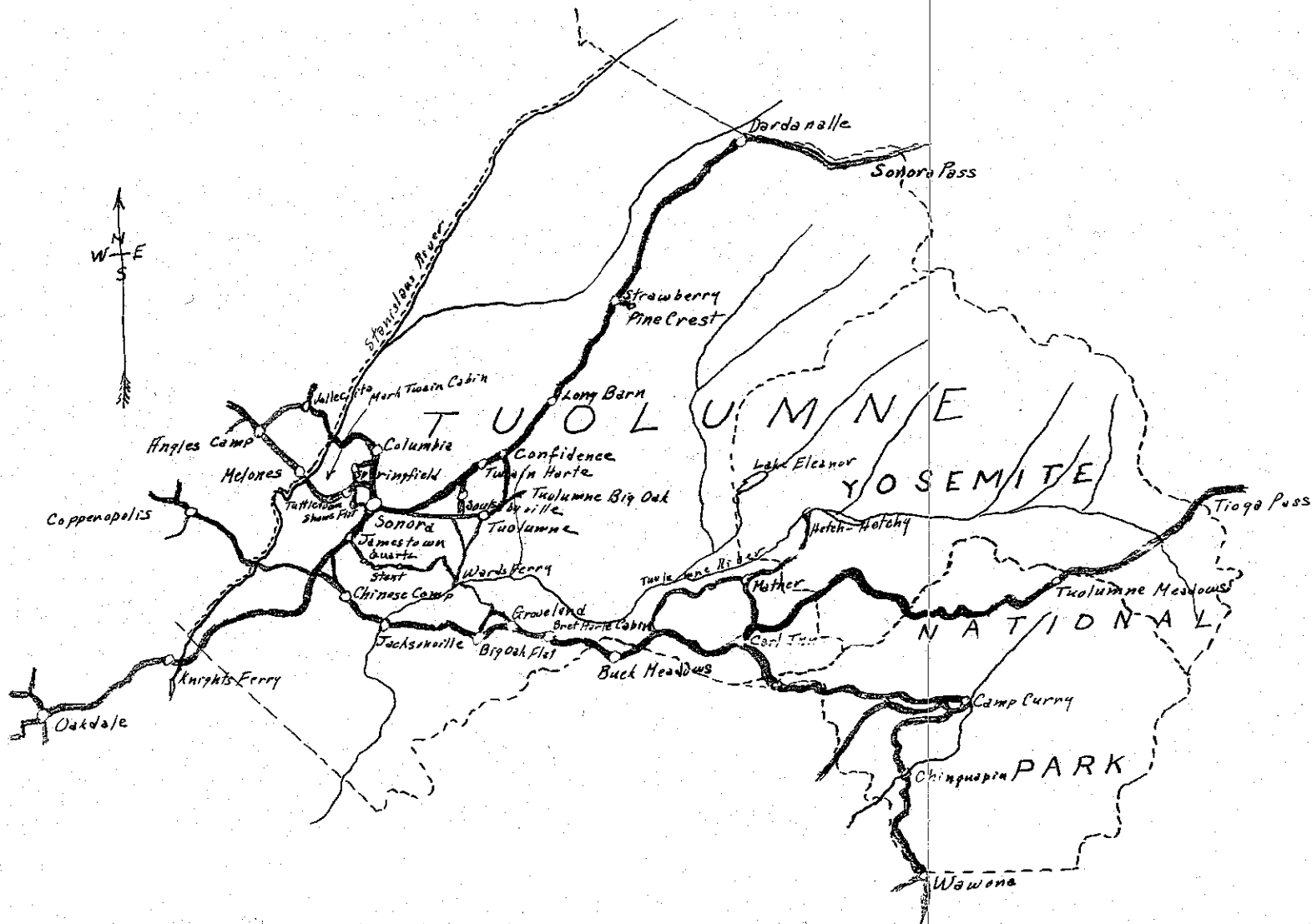
June 6, 1934.

PREFACE

The youth of America should be acquainted with the history, the development and the ideals of our nation. They should know under what conditions our nation had its birth; what problems have beset it; and how they have been solved. They should know something of our present problems, and such knowledge can be built only upon an understanding of the past. They should know the facts of our nation's history, of which they should be proud.

Not only is this true of our nation, but it is just as true of our state and our immediate locality. It has been my purpose to gather together some of the interesting facts of Tuolumne County's history and present them in a form suitable for the use of high school pupils. I trust that all who read these pages will be inspired with an appreciation of and a greater reverence for the forefathers of Tuolumne County.

Frank C. Coates



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CHAPTER I
TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Tuolumne

Oh, the California Counties
Are scattered far and wide.
Some lie by snow-crowned summits,
Some kiss the ebbing tide.
Some sleep in sunny valleys,
Some house the fir and pine.
But take them all in all I say--
Tuolumne for mine.

Some count the lore of acres
Lush with harvest gold.
Some claim the seas, some count the breeze,
The finest charm they hold.
But let them hoist fame's banner
To reach perfection's test--
Right here today I want to say
Tuolumne's the best.

Nowhere will you find finer
The touch of Grandure's might.
Nowhere the days are brighter
No fairer dreams the night,
And nowhere else upon the earth
The trees are quite so fine--
You take your choice, but hear my voice--
Tuolumne for mine.¹

Tuolumne County is today, and was from the earliest time, one of the most interesting and romantic spots in California. It was one of the original twenty-seven counties of the state, as organized in 1850.

Size

At that time it was much larger than it is now and

¹ Harry T. Fee, Written especially for the Sonora Banner,
Published August 2, 1929.

extended from the summit of the Coast Range and south of San Joaquin County eastward to the summit of the Sierra Nevada Range. It included all of what is now Tuolumne County, Stanislaus County, and parts of other counties. Its description as it was laid out by the Senate Committee on Counties follows:

Sec. 30. County of Tuolumne. Beginning on the summit of the Coast Range, at the southwest corner of San Joaquin County, and following in an easterly direction, the southern boundary of said county to the summit of the Sierra Nevada; thence in a northeasterly direction following the summit of the Sierra Nevada to the dividing ridge between the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers, thence following the top of said ridge down to the plains at a point equally distant between the said rivers, thence in a direct line to the San Joaquin River to a point seven miles below the mouth of the Merced River, thence up near the middle of the San Joaquin River to the mouth of the Merced River, thence in a southwest direction to the summit of the Coast Range and thence in a northwesterly direction following the summit of said range, to the place of beginning. The seat of justice shall be the town of Stewart, formerly Sonorian Camp.¹

This act, first dividing the state into counties, was passed February 18, 1850, and designated the old Sonorian Camp as the seat of justice, renaming it Stewart. However, two months later, a new act changed it again to Sonora.²

Origin of Name

Authorities are in conflict as to the origin or

¹ Report of the Senate Committee on Counties, published in the Stockton Times, March 20, 1850.

² Statutes, 1850, 63, 263.

meaning of the word "Tuolumne." It appears to be unquestionably of Indian origin and has been given several interpretations. One authority says it means "The land of mountain lions", the Indians having named it so after one of its leading characteristics. Another says it refers to the many protruding, jagged rocks which are the chief characteristics of much of the territory.

According to the California Blue Book, the word is a corruption of the Indian word, "Tal-ma-la-me," meaning "many stone houses or caves," thus having a meaning similar to "Shasta", but in another tongue. There is a statement of early date bearing this out: "Tuolumne is a corruption of the Indian word 'Talmalame' which signifies a cluster of stone wigwams."¹ The authenticity of this statement is doubtful, as the Indians of this region never dwelt in stone houses or caves, but constructed their tepees or "oochums" of limbs and bark. Another suggestion is that the name was derived from the word, "tel-a-la-me", a name by which the Indians on both sides of the Stanislaus were known. The first three syllables, "tel-a-la", was the name of a sort of soup made of ground up acorns and water, which, with "noo-pah", a mixture of the same materials of the same consistency of cold mush, was the common food of the Indians. Considering the abundance of the acorns and

¹ Stockton Times, May 18, 1850.

that the Indians were called "Tel-a-la-mes", this explanation seems the more satisfactory.

Spelling of the Name

In the early days there was some variation in the spelling of the word. The old town of Tuolumne (on the river of that name), from its founding until toward the end of the year 1850, was spelled Toalome more often than any other way in news items and advertisements of the Stockton Times. Toward the middle of that year, the following question appeared:

Query 1--Can any of our readers give any information respecting the word "Tuolumne"? Which of the following is correct? Toalome, Tuolame, Tuolumne, Toulumne, Toualome, Twalame,¹ Tuolawme, Toulawme, Twaloulme, Twuolawme, Tuouloume?

Woods Crossing

The history of Tuolumne County properly commences with the date of its discovery by the Americans, early in 1848, at which time a party of Philadelphians came to Woods Creek. They were the vanguard of that unprecedented wave of immigration that brought throngs of gold seekers and adventurers to the gold fields of the Southern Mines. They named the creek which they had discovered Woods Creek after their leader, the Rev. James Woods. James Savage,

¹ Stockton Times, May 4, 1850.

J. H. Rider, and Charles Bassett were also of this party.¹ They were in search of the famous El Dorado, and camped on the creek one evening. A few minutes prospecting the next morning, before breaking camp, yielded such promising returns that they decided to remain and mine. There being a natural crossing over the creek where they had made camp, ~~this first settlement~~ became known as Woods Crossing. News of the rich strike spread rapidly and an increasing number of immigrants turned their steps this way.

Sonora

The next settlement was made by a party of Sonorian Mexicans who pushed up Woods Creek about four miles beyond Woods Crossing and located Campo Sonoreno or "Sonorian Camp."² This camp was made up entirely of Mexicans until probably the spring of 1849 when the first Americans arrived. The exact date of their arrival is doubtful, though the weight of evidence places it as early as 1849. Neither is it clear as to who were actually the first Americans, but it is well established that a Mr. Keeler and R. S. Ham were among the first. Keeler entered upon agricultural pursuits on land later occupied by Messrs. Turner, Clark, Johnson, Hansen, and others.³ Both the Sonora and Woods

¹ Herbert O. Land, History of Tolumne County, Calif., 2.

² Ibid., 2.

³ Ibid., 2, 3.

Creeks, which flow through the town, as well as the tributary gulches, were found to be immensely rich. The gold was very coarse and the claims yielded many nuggets weighing from one to twenty pounds apiece. Within a short time the population of Sonora was made up of people from almost every clime. It was a nondescript community, cosmopolitan in the extreme. Like the neighboring diggings it could boast of many men and women of the highest character and many of the lowest.

Jamestown

The next settlement, on Woods Creek, was made in August, 1848, by George F. James, commonly called Colonel James, who located four miles southwest of Sonora. Here he entered into extensive mining operations, in the course of which a village was founded and called Jamestown.¹ Deposits of the precious metal in this vicinity were extremely rich as is shown by the statement, since made, that more gold was taken from Woods Creek than from any other creek of its size in California. Colonel James was a lawyer and speculator and man-of-the-world who had come from San Francisco. He spent a few days at Woods Crossing, then moved a mile up stream where he located. Tradition has it that he had an inherent abhorrence of work and believed in letting others do the "hard graft", but worked his brain overtime.

¹ Theodore H. Bittell, History of California, III, 131.

He was enterprising to a degree that soon found him identified with numerous mining ventures, some of which showed large profits while others entailed heavy losses. When the latter became the more abundant and he found himself struggling under debts he could never hope to "square up", he took the means of squaring up used by many frenzied financiers and left between two suns.

When it became known that the "pride of the community" had "lit out", public indignation became so pronounced that a meeting was held and the name of the place changed to "American Camp." The new name had a patriotic ring to it, but was too new and too long and did not stick. The miners preferred the old, shorter, more familiar name which could be corrupted to "Jimtown", and so by unanimous consent the original name was revived and Jamestown it is today, except to those who still shorten it to "Jimtown."

Tuttletown

The settlement later known as Tuttletown began its history as Mormon Gulch because of the fact that a company of Mormons had settled there in the spring of 1848.¹

About the time Colonel James was beginning the settlement at Jamestown, Judge Tuttle arrived at Mormon Gulch. Instead of putting up a cloth tent or Mexican Remada or

¹ Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III.

brush house as the others had done, he built himself a log cabin. Though he was not the first to arrive, his log cabin was the first attempt at a pretentious dwelling and seemed like a palace among its surroundings. This, the first log cabin in the county, became the nucleus of a village which, according to the custom of the times, was named Tuttle town.¹

Jackass Gulch

Jackass Gulch was settled in the early summer of 1848. The story goes that a jackass strayed away from Mormon Gulch. The owner set out to search for it and finally found it a mile or so up the river and near what is now known as Robinson's Ferry, in a gulch at the foot of a steep hill, down which it had fallen. Hence the inclegant name was applied to the hill and gulch. In finding the jackass the owner also found rich deposits of coarse placer gold. Many rich pocket mines were located in the gulch and the hill, and this region at once took rank as being among the very richest of the diggings. Major Means and his brother took \$10,000 from a claim of 100 square feet. They also discovered on their claim a quartz vein which ran two-thirds of its weight in gold. A Mr. Carrington found a vein which paid from \$100 to \$300 a day for

¹ Herbert O. Lang, History of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 3; San Francisco Bulletin, October., 1857.

years by simply pounding the rock in a mortar.¹

Big Oak Flat

Big Oak Flat, about eighteen miles south of Sonora, was so named because of the enormous oak tree growing there. It was first located by James D. Savage who started mining there in 1849. This is the same James D. Savage who discovered the famous Yosemite Valley not far away. Savage employed a large number of Indians of the neighborhood and paid them in blankets and provisions and in protection against the encroachment of the whites. He had been one of the party, who with Rev. James Woods, had settled Woods Crossing in 1848. He had developed a facility for dealing with the Indians and soon built up a very lucrative business as employer and supplier of their wants. The deposits of gold at Big Oak Flat were in a bed of gravel from two to twenty feet deep on a bedrock of granite.

A quarrel arose between one Rose, a Texan, and Lotario, an Indian Chief, in which Rose stabbed Lotario to death. The Indians retaliated, shooting Rose with their arrows. The whites thereupon attacked the Indians and killed a number of them. Relations between the Indians and whites became very strained, whereupon Savage patched up the difficulty and moved away with most of the Indians to a point

¹ Herbert O. Lang, History of Tuolumne County, Calif., 4.

higher up in the mountains.¹

Columbia

Columbia, the "Gem of the Southern Mines", was the largest and probably the most interesting of all the towns of early Tuolumne County. It is located four miles north of Sonora. Gold was first discovered there in March, 1850, and at once it became celebrated for the extent and richness of its deposits. There are at least two versions of its discovery. One story is that the discovery was made by a party of Mexicans from Santiago Hill about a mile northwest. Their operations were observed by a party of Americans, including Dr. Thaddeus Hildreth, his brother George Hildreth, and John Walker, William Jones, and Alexander Carson. Being told that the place was rich, they stayed to try their luck and found it rich beyond their expectations. They returned home for supplies to last for several weeks and then came back to their discovery which they now called "Hildreth's Diggings."

Another story is that the same group of Americans encamped one night under an oak tree that stood on what is now Main Street. A heavy rain had fallen during the night, and while they were remaining in camp the next morning to dry out their blankets, Mr. Walker prospected in a little

¹ Resources of the Pacific Slope, 38;
Herbert O. Leng, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 54-55.

gulch leading up to what is now known as Kennebec Hill. The results were so encouraging that the party decided to spend the day in examining the neighborhood. The result was that they located it at this point.¹

Thus there will ever be the question as to whether it was discovered by Mexicans or Americans, but it is certain that both Mexicans and Americans were mining there from the very first. However, during the first few days it was sometimes called "Hildreth's Diggings" from the Hildreth brothers, the supposed discoverers, and sometimes "American Camp" from their nationality.

The following item appeared in the Stockton Times of April 27, 1850:

American Camp (Four Miles above Sonora)

Our agent, Mr. McKiernan, kindly informs us that they have visited this exceedingly rich "diggings" and that they have seen upwards of sixteen ounces washed out of one pan, the labor of two hours; a lump of seven pounds was taken from the same hole, which they consider a very beautiful specimen of quartz and gold.

Also on May 11, 1850, the following appeared:

Columbia City

This is the name which has been given to a new city situated about four miles above the town of Sonora and already contains a population of 5,000 persons.

¹ Herbert O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 22; Heckdorn and Wilson, Business Directory, 185-6.

Extraordinary Discovery.--Mr. Peter Mahan of Sonora informs us that the present placer at Columbia City is not less than three miles square. On Friday last a Mexican found a lump of gold lying near the surface weighing four pounds and seven ounces, and he, Mr. Mahan, also has in his possession a lump weighing seventeen ounces found near the same spot. The placer has been discovered to be of extraordinary depth. Throughout the whole depth, from six feet below the surface gold in great abundance has been taken out from many holes. Miners have been taking out from four to five pounds of gold per day.

On the 29th day of April, 1850, the diggings were formally named Columbia by Major Farnsworth, Major Sullivan and Dr. D. E. Alexander. Columbia demonstrated one of the quickest and largest growths in the history of mining towns. By the end of the following April, or less than 45 days after the discovery, there are said to have been more than six thousand persons in the neighborhood,¹ and the population soon reached 15,000. Columbia thus became the second largest city in the state. There is a tradition that in 1853 Columbia lost a movement for locating the state Capitol there by just two votes.

As evidence of its largeness and liveliness, it is said that, soon after its founding, it contained 103 Faro Banks in active operation and a gambling capital of between a million and a million and a half dollars.²

At the close of 1853 the town had four banks, three express companies, 26 produce stores, 30 saloons, 7 bakeries,

¹W. G. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 126.

²Ibid., 20.

a printing office, a theatre, a brewery, churches and lodges, a school and an amphitheatre for bear and bull fights, four livery stables, and about 90 other business houses, a military organization and a fire department.

During the spring and early summer after its discovery, gold continued to be taken out in large quantities. As summer came on the miners were forced to carry their dirt in sacks to the streams and wash it in rockers. Yet many were able to wash out five or six ounces a day by this laborious process. By midsummer the scarcity of water became critical and, before water was brought down in large quantities by ditches and flumes from the higher regions to supply the entire territory, the miners were accustomed to carry their gold bearing gravel down to Springfield in carts and wash it out there. There were often as many as 150 carts running at the same time. In this way the men averaged from ten to twenty dollars a day, and there were instances where a single cart of dirt paid as high as \$1,000.¹

Other Settlements

Other important settlements of the early days include Cold Spring, a mile northwest, and Springfield, three miles south of Columbia, which with Pine Log, Shaw's Flat and

¹ Resources of the Pacific Slope, 27-28;
H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 27-28.

Sawmill Flat, were on Columbia's limestone belt. They also included Chinese Camp, Jacksonville, Montezuma, Poverty Hill, Algerine, Soulsbyville, and Cherokee, which were either on or near the Tuolumne River, as were also Hawkins's Bar, Steven's Bar, Indian Bar, Texas Bar, Morgan's Bar, Don Pedro's Bar, Roger's Bar, and Swett's Bar, where numerous attempts were made as at Jacksonville to turn the river aside so as to mine the riverbed.

Jacksonville was founded in the spring of 1849 by Colonel A.M. Jackson. He discovered Gold where Sullivan's Creek flows into the Tuolumne River. He at once built a store building so as to be ready to supply the miners he knew would stampede to the new diggings. Jackson was preceded in this location by a man named Smart who took no interest in mining but tilled the soil and set out fruit trees. This was the first orchard in Tuolumne County and afterwards became known as Spring Garden.

During the summer months, when the river water was low, all the residents turned to mining the riverbed. Various attempts were made to hold the water back or divert it into other channels,¹ but the freshets and floods drove the miners out and destroyed their work.

¹ Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III, 130.

The largest and most expensive of these works was attempted in 1850 when a stone dam was thrown across the Tuolumne River and a canal 2380 feet long dug to divert the water. Just as it was being finished a freshet swept everything away. Not disheartened the promoters constructed a wing dam and for a while took out over a thousand dollars a day. For a number of years thereafter they built log dams and were richly repaid for their efforts.¹

Chinese Camp, about eight miles south of Sonora, was so named from the Chinese who settled there. It was a placer mining town of "dry diggings" and not a great deal could be done until ditches furnished a plentiful supply of water. Chinese Camp attracted most of the Mongolian population of this section and in a short time it became their "little Peking."

Springfield received its name from two remarkable springs supposed to run under Knapp's Ranch just east of Columbia. One of the early founders and residents of the place was the enterprising Dona Josefa Valmaseda, formerly of Guaymas, Sonora. It appears that she assisted the Americans during the Mexican War and thus incurred the hostility of the Mexican Government and was obliged to seek safety in San Francisco. Later she moved

¹ Resources of the Pacific Slope, 58;
B. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 51-53.

to Springfield where she hired some of her countrymen and conducted a thriving business.¹

Thus was Tuolumne County settled. People came from all parts of the earth. They came from the states via Cape Horn, Panama, and across the plains. All in all, they made up a portion of that rugged band--the pioneers of the West.

Would God that we, Their children were as they,
 Great souled, brave hearted and of dauntless will,
 Ready to dare, responsive to the still
 Compelling voice that called them night and day
 From this far West, where sleeping greatness lay,
 Biding her time. Would God we knew the thrill
 That exquisitely tormented them until
 They stood up strong and resolute to obey.
 God, make us like them, worthy of them; shake
 Our souls with great desires; our dull eyes set
 On some high star whose quenchless light will wake
 Us from our dreams, and guide us from this fen
 Of selfish ease, won by our father's sweat.¹
 Oh, lift us up--the West has need of men.¹

¹ E. L. Hutchinson, The Vanishing Race.

CHAPTER II

EARLY MINERS AND MINING

Thus were the early settlements made in Tuolumne County, the urge in every case being the desire for gold. Gold was found in abundance along the creeks, in the bars and on the flats. Good fortune attended almost all the diggings.

The typical prospector usually wore a woolen shirt, trousers, heavy boots, and slouch hat, a leather belt carrying a pistol and a Bowie or butcher knife. When he travelled on foot, he carried a roll of blankets, a knapsack, containing pork, beans, flour, salt, sometimes coffee and tea, a dish or two, a gold pan, a shovel and sometimes a pick. If he was lucky enough to have a pack animal, he had a larger and more varied supply of provisions, cooking utensils, clothing, bedding, tools, etc. When several traveled together with pack animals they often had a tent.¹

The simplest method of mining was with the pan. The gold pan was a sheet iron pan with sloping sides 12 to 18 inches in diameter and three or four inches deep. The pan, with the earth to be washed, was held under water and agitated with a peculiar circular motion which was calculated

¹ Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III, 46-47.

to wash the lighter particles over the edges while the heavier ones settled to the bottom. Larger nuggets were picked out as the washing proceeded, and the smaller particles of gold, being denser than the rock, were collected in the pan as the final result of the washing. In prospecting new ground the pan was invariably used to test the richness of the dirt. An experienced hand could save nearly all the gold and estimate with accuracy how much a body of earth would yield.

In some instances, in very choice localities, where the gold was coarse, the pan was dispensed with and the gold was scooped or picked out of crevices with spoons and knives.

An improvement over the pan for washing the gold was the rocker which was introduced into California by Isaac Humphry, a miner from Georgia. The rocker resembled a child's cradle with rockers beneath, but with the lower end left open. A hopper or sieve was fixed above the upper end. The bottom of the hopper was a piece of sheet iron or rawhide perforated with half inch holes. The earth to be washed was placed in the hopper and the whole then rocked from side to side while water was poured in on top. "Bars" or "riffles" or cleats were tacked crossways on the bottom of the rocker and behind these the fine gold was impounded. After washing for a while the gravel and gold

that had lodged behind the riffles were placed in a pan and the gold extracted by panning. By this means more earth could be washed than by the pan alone.

Where there was much very fine gold, mercury (quick-silver) was added above the riffles or in the pan. Since mercury has a great affinity for gold it gathered and held the finer particles. The mercury was later vaporized and driven off by applying heat.¹

When it became necessary to wash larger quantities of earth, the "long-tom" and "sluice" were resorted to. The long-tom consisted of a shallow trough of boards not less than fifteen feet long, fifteen inches wide at the upper end and increasing in width at the lower end, through which a continuous stream of water was kept flowing. Earth, shoveled in at the upper end, was carried along by the current to near the lower end where there was a sieve or "riddle." A miner stood here with a pitch fork or shovel and threw out the larger stones. The finer materials were carried through and fell in tiny streams into a shallow box with an open lower end, but with cleats on the bottom like the rocker. The many tiny streams kept the deposits constantly agitated. The mud and dirt were washed away while the gold was caught by the cleats.² The sluice was

¹ Charles B. Turrill, California Notes, 155; Theo. T. Johnson, Calif. and Ore. or Sights in the Gold Regions, 164; F. Gould Buffum, Six Months in the Gold Mines, 50-52, 61.

² Ralph Raven (W. Shaw), Golden Dreams and Leaden Realities, 155.

a similar but longer wooden trough with sufficient inclination to insure thorough washing of the earth. The gold was captured by means of cleats or riffles.

The presence of so much free gold in the gravels of the creeks indicated that it had been washed there from higher levels, and gave rise to the supposition that there were "fountain heads" of the precious metal, or spots where it could be gathered in unlimited quantities. This belief caused great restlessness among the miners; so much so that they were rarely satisfied long in one place and kept searching for better locations. They were thus in condition to listen to almost any story about new discoveries; and the more extravagant the story, the more credence it received.¹

In time it became clear that there were no fountain heads, but that the gold had been forced up with quartz by volcanic action from lower levels through fissures in other rocks, and had solidified as nuggets, or sheets, or threads, or grains mixed with quartz. Many veins were located at or near the "placer diggings," and many have been located further up. As the placer diggings began "to play out," the miners turned more and more to working the veins. In places the gold occurred in large quantities in "pockets" in the quartz. Two rich pocket regions were Jackass Hill and Sonora.

Probably the greatest pocket mine ever discovered lies in the very heart of Sonora and is called the "Big Bonanza." It has yielded a comfortable fortune to a number of men. It is located on Piety Hill within a few blocks of five churches. It was first worked by Chileans in 1851. They took out a large amount of gold from near the surface. Along in the 70's the claim was bought by James G. Divoll, Charles Clark, and Joseph Bray, who worked it for years with little gain. Then one day they struck a body of almost solid gold. The next day they shipped \$160,000 in gold to the San Francisco Mint, and within a week they had shipped half a million. The mine has since produced over two millions.

Some Rich Strikes

In the early years of the history of the county there were many rich strikes, both placer and quartz. Three men in three weeks took out \$30,000 from one hole in the new diggings at Columbia besides one lump weighing five pounds.¹ A man washed three pounds of gold in half an hour from earth in front of Colebrook's Bowling Saloon in Mormon Gulch.² A new placer was discovered in Sonora which paid from 16 to 120 dollars per day.³ Six men in

¹ Stockton Times, May 4, 1850.

² Ibid., May 7, 1850.

³ Ibid., October 25, 1850.

the employ of Mr. Peter Mehen took out upwards of 13 ounces from one hole in the town of Sonora.¹ Some Chileans dug from the new placer in Sonora one lump of free gold weighing 136 ounces and another weighing 113 ounces.² A Mr. Bours dismounted from his mule to kick off a piece of quartz with which to ignite a match to light his cigar and found it studded with gold. The vein was ten inches wide and ran nearly 50% gold.³ Col. C. K. Gillespie discovered at the head of Jackass Gulch a rich vein from the center of which he took a chunk of free gold worth \$201.50, specimens from the vein assaying \$10 to \$20 per pound.⁴

Some Large Nuggets

A nugget containing 75 pounds was found by William Gulnac at Woods Creek in 1848.⁵ In 1850, the next morning after he reached American Camp (Columbia), Captain Anent went for a walk and picked up a nugget weighing 3½ pounds. In 1850 a 64 pound nugget was found at Sonora.⁶

¹ Stockton Times, November 9, 1850.

² Ibid., November 16, 1850.

³ Ibid., January 22, 1851.

⁴ Ibid., January 25, 1851.

⁵ All weights of gold are given in Troy weight.

⁶ Stockton Times, March 25, 1850.

A 95 ounce and a 66 ounce nugget were also found. In one week alone 30 nuggets weighing more than three pounds each were taken out at Sonora.¹ In 1851 a Mr. Wheaton found a nugget worth nearly \$5,000 in Holden's garden in Sonora.² In the same year another resident, on taking an early Sunday morning walk among the hills, stubbed his toe on a rock and discovered that it contained more gold than quartz.³ One morning a resident of Sonora, leading his mule up Washington Street, when attempting to remove a stone from in front of his cart wheel, found it to be a 35 pound nugget.⁴ In 1853 three Frenchmen, who three days before had offered their claim for sale for an ounce of gold, found a lump weighing 249 ounces. In 1858 a nugget weighing over 50 pounds and containing over \$8,500 worth of gold was found by Mr. Strain about one-half mile east of Columbia on a trail leading up the slope where it had been repeatedly passed by many others.⁵ In 1859 Mr. Virgin found a nugget worth \$7,000 at Gold Hill near Columbia.⁶ In the same year a quartz boulder weighing 37 pounds was found near there which, when crushed, netted 29 pounds of gold.

¹ Stockton Times, April 3, 1850, May 25, 1850.

² H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., 64.

³ Frank Marryat, Mountains and Molehills, 278-79.

⁴ G. J. Player-Froud, Six Months in California, 53.

⁵ Second Report of the State Mineralogist of California, Sacramento, 1882, 147-150.

⁶ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., 286.

The "Sonorian" Lump of Gold

Early in 1850 a large nugget was found in Sonora. The following quotations have been extracted from newspaper reports concerning it:

We have seen the eighth wonder of the world! We have had in our hands the "Sonorian" lump of gold, weighing 22 pounds, six ounces. This is no clap-trap report circulated to lure the people to a particular locality for pecuniary gains.....Such a lump, we believe, could work any wonder from stopping a newspaper to depopulating a town....

The following is a brief history and description of this fine specimen of the precious metal. During the month of January of the present year, three Sonorian Mexicans were following their mining pursuits in the arroyo of the town of Sonor; and discovered this pile; but they, possessing rather erratic timbers, being flushed with the wonderful success, and stout devotees of the "Rosy God," in a few days had squandered the whole amount in "riotous living." The prize afterward fell into the hands of our worthy friends, the firm of Hegberg & Co. of Sonora, who sold it.....for a considerable amount to Messrs. Alonzo Greene and Joshua Holding, merchants of the same place, for a very high premium. To our own knowledge these gentlemen have again been offered \$2,000 for it above the intrinsic value. It is estimated that there are about four pounds of common quartz mixed up with the precious metal, as is generally the case with large specimens. We believe it is the intention of Messrs. Greene and Holding to send it to the states where its beauty and richness will doubtless excite a great sensation, not only among mineralogists,¹ but among those who are animated by the love of money.¹

We are informed upon good authority that the Sonorian Lump of Gold has been sold during the week for the sum of \$10,000.²

¹ Stockton Times, March 16, 1850.

² Ibid., March 23, 1850.

The famous Sonorian Lump of 28 pounds was found in a shallow gully about three hundred yards from, and about twenty-five feet above the town of Sonora. The gully had been superficially worked before and it was of the second digging that this piece was taken out.¹

From the time of the discovery in 1848, the production of gold increased rapidly. The total gold output of the state during 1848 was less than a quarter of a million dollars. In 1849 it was forty times that amount, and in 1850 it was eighty times as much. In 1851 it reached \$75,000,000, and in 1852 the record output of \$81,294,700 was reached. Since then the yield has gone up and down. From the State Mining Bureau we learn that the total output from 1848 to 1907 has been \$1,469,513,691, which includes only that of which public record was made. Professed authorities place Tuolumne County's gold output to be at least three hundred million dollars, of which Springfield Flat alone produced over \$55,000,000.

¹ Stockton Times, March 30, 1850.

CHAPTER III

HABITS OF THE MINERS

The early miners played an exceedingly important part in the formation of the state and in the evolution and development of the character of the Californians. Thus a study of the peculiarities of the old miners, both as a class and as individuals, becomes highly significant and to some extent indispensable, to an understanding of the history of the county.

The earliest miners, or the men of '48, as they were sometimes called, were a different class from those who came late in '49 and subsequent years. They were chiefly of the old population of California who had come out as frontiersmen, or in the service of the United States, discharged members of Stevenson's Regiment of New York Volunteers, or of the Mormon Battalion.

Toward the end of the year others began to come in from Oregon and Mexico. The former were of the same general class as the Californians; and the Mexicans, chiefly from Sonora and Sinaloa, while less desirable, kept to themselves and at first did not exercise much influence or cause much disturbance. In the main, the early miners were steady, hard-working men, honest, kind, and mutually helpful, and not averse to hard labor and privations. They

were neighborly and friendly and generous and well disposed to one another. There was little quarreling or disorder. Theft and other crimes were practically unknown.¹

During the latter part of 1849 and the years immediately following there came a change. Though the adventurers who came out in these year were, in the main, steady and industrious, they found themselves suddenly transported from a settled community life to a wilderness with the conditions of which they had had no experience. Here were no laws, no rules, no customs of binding authority, and no restraints whatever. Moreover, the prospect of quick gain had attracted many dissolute and vicious persons, professional gamblers and criminals.² When the "Hounds of San Francisco" had been broken up in the summer of 1849, many of the members made their way to the mines where they contributed to the lawlessness.

Such conditions, combined with the absence of respectable women and the lack of refined or even decent amusements, occasioned dissipation and vice. Gambling and drunkenness ruined many who might otherwise have escaped. Though the Mexicans were inveterate gamblers and squandered the immense sums they dug from the earth at the Monte Table, the English speaking immigrants, when they had allowed

¹ Peter H. Burnett, Recollections and Opinions of an old Pioneer, 341-2; Ryan II, 22; Charles H. Shinn, Mining Camps, etc., 1, 118-9.

² P. H. Burnett, Recol. and Opinions of an old Pioneer, 342.

themselves to start down the deceptive path of indulgence, became far worse and traveled much faster than any others.

Wherever the miner penetrated the mountains, the saloon and gambling houses were the first institutions set up. Even during those times numerous attempts were made to estimate the number of human wrecks whose ruin was attributed to these causes. Some estimates were placed as high as fifteen percent.¹

In spite of many men of this type, the early pioneers were a most active, industrious and enterprising body of men. Four-fifths of them were young men between the ages of 18 and 35 years. They came from all sections of the country and from foreign countries. Here they found a great leveling tendency in that, since all were compelled to labor, each man was the equal of every other man. Men who had been governors, legislators, and judges in other states worked beside outlaws and convicts; scholars and students worked beside the illiterate; those who had been masters worked beside those who had been slaves.²

One effect of this leveling was to elevate, at least in his own mind, the low-grade man. A more common and general effect was to level pride, since everyone had to

¹ James L. Tyson, M. D., Diary of a Physician in Calif., 10; Theodore H. Hittell, History of Calif., III, 163.

² Pioneer Magazine, III, 132.

work with his hands if he wished to live. Ex-legislators, lawyers, physicians, clergymen and merchants drove oxen or mules, cooked, made hay, hauled wood and performed all kinds of menial tasks.¹ Labor was dignified and honorable. Every man passed for what he was. Social distinctions were obliterated. Those who did not live by actual physical toil were regarded as a sort of parasite. At first, though there were gambling and drinking and profanity, everybody was honest and thefts and robberies were unknown. Some attribute this to the fact that everyone went armed and knew that swift retribution would follow crime,² though it was undoubtedly due rather to the spirit of the men.

When conditions changed during the winter of 1849-50, the spirit changed also, and it became necessary to guard one's property carefully. One cause of the change was the great influx of criminals, especially from Australia. Another cause was the severity of the winter which prevented supplies reaching the outlying mines. Many were thus forced to abandon their mines and seek refuge in the cities. The lack of employment, together with depraved morals and bad example, induced many to resort to stealing for a subsistence, and there thus began the extraordinary

¹ A. Delano, Life on the Plains and Among the Diggings, 242.

² James L. Tyson, M. D., Diary of a Physician in Calif., 58; Frank Marryat, Mountains and Molehills, 249.

season of crime famous in California mining history. The most atrocious crimes, including murder, became common, and in time the vigilance committees and lynch law came into being.

Probably the most marked and best characteristics of the miners were their kindness and hospitality, their fondness for children and their sentiment towards good women. They were ever ready to give assistance to the sick or destitute.

When respectable women became numerous and the miners became married men there was a great change for the better. There was less low conduct, less coarse conversation, less drinking, less gambling, more refinement, more civilization and more culture. It has often been stated that the first women who arrived in Sonora were the two sisters, Mariana and Jesus Ramirez, but the latter, who became the wife of J. W. Cobesert, says that distinction belongs to other Mexican women of the house of Leon who arrived several months previously.¹

The following quotation from an editorial of the time remarks the upward trend and expresses gratification therefore:

¹ E. J. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 5.

We are gratified to see the marked improvement that has taken place in the society of our little city in the past year. As an evidence of this, witness how differently the Sabbath is observed. On past years on this sacred day there might have been seen a fantastically dressed Mexican clown, preceded by a band of shockingly bad music, parading the streets and notifying the citizens of a bull and bear fight about to come off. Now, instead, at the same hour of the day, troops of rosy faced, quiet, orderly children are seen returning from Sunday School, and well dressed men and women on their way to the House of Worship. We can boast now of five churches of different denominations, and all of them well attended--good evidence of an advanced state of civilization.

Then, on the same day, the city was crowded with the inhabitants of surrounding camps, quarreling, fighting, drinking, swearing, squandering the hard-earned means of the past week at the gambling table, or at some low brothel. Now, although not such as could be wished, things are changed. The day is regarded by the public generally more as one of rest from labor, and not as one of debauchery and dissipation.

And what has caused this great change in public sentiment? To what else can it be attributed but to the presence of woman; virtuous, pure, sympathizing woman; whose influence is as effective in the formation of public character, as it is felt in the domestic circle; the great controller of public opinion, without whom society is dull and existence a blank.

The very considerable accession to our population in the last year of some fairer portion of God's creation is a source of intense gratification to all, and we indulge in the pleasurable anticipation that the coming year will furnish a still larger number.¹

During the first year in the mines, gold was often left exposed without fear of its being taken. Money was borrowed on honor. The borrower expected to return the loan at his earliest convenience but did not want to be

¹ Sonora Herald, March 25, 1854; H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 128-9.

asked to do so. The following quotation expressed the condition at Big Oak Flat:

From the Mines
Mr. White:

Oak Flat, Dec. 24, 1850.

.....

Where in the whole world can a parallel to this be seen? And then too, the men employed in that which the wiseacres in the old states would fain make us believe is so debasing--gold seeking. Men are not more peaceablebe it known that here where there are some three or four thousand people scattered around, we have neither Court or Justice of the Peace, and consequently no law.

"But," you enquire, "how do you settle the difficulties which will always arise among so many men?" Simply by arbitration, which for three reasons is better than going to law:

1st--It is more sure.

2nd--It is the quickest.

3rd--And last but not least, it is the cheapest.¹

The mines were not the place for men of sensitive or refined natures, for, unless one had an extraordinary strength of character to resist the strain, he was carried away in the universal swirl of excitement.

Rough as the early population was, it contained many men of intellectual vigor and strength of character who made their mark in the development and progress of the state. Among these may be mentioned J. M. Jones, Benjamin F. Moore, Oliver M. Wozencroft, and Benjamin S. Lippincott, members of the State Constitutional Convention

¹ Stockton Times, January 4, 1851.

of 1849, and Charles M. Creaner, Isaac S. K. Ogier, James W. Coffroth, and Leander Wiernt, prominent judges and lawyers.¹

At first there were no gold scales and the value of gold was guessed at. A pinch of gold represented a dollar, a teaspoonful was called an ounce, while a wineglass full passed as \$100. All counters and gaming tables were covered with blankets to catch the gold that was dropped.²

Diversions

Besides drinking and gambling the miners indulged in other diversions, such as dancing, where some men took the parts of ladies, amateur theatricals, witnessing cock-fights and bull fights, and bull and bear fights.

The larger mining towns boasted theaters from an early date and many of the famous actors and actresses of those days played before audiences in the mining camps. When entertainment was scarce the miners themselves produced their own plays.

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 125-6.

² Ibid., 11-12.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL PROGRESS

As time went on and men became more settled they remembered the social institutions they had left in the East and began to establish them here. Husbands brought out their wives and families. Miners married servant girls, Mexican girls and even Indian women, and homes were founded. Lodges, churches and schools were established.

Lodges

The earliest record of a lodge meeting follows:

The first Masonic Meeting was held at Sonora on the 28th day of April, 1850. A lodge is about to be organized immediately, working under the dispensation of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York.¹

The Masons laid the cornerstone of their hall June 24, 1851. Those who took part in the ceremony were Charles M. Radcliff (Master of Ceremonies), Judge Tuttle, E. Linoberg, Mayor Dodge, A. L. Chatfield, Captain Tormey, William Perkins (Orator of the Day), W. Vyse, Major Sullivan and others. This building was constructed of adobe and its life was very short. On the eighteenth of the following January the interior was completely burned out. Rain

¹ Stockton Times, May 4, 1850.

fell upon the unprotected walls making them unsafe and part of them fell in. The county contracted to repair the building and use it as a courtroom, but for some reason did not do so, and the remaining walls were later pushed in. This building stood on the corner of Church and Washington Streets.

The following is taken from the diary of Mrs. Lewis

C. Gunn, under date of Dec. 26, 1851:

The Masons held a celebration today in a pouring rain. They must have had a fine time walking around town in the mud. They had some music and were dressed up in aprons, blue sashes, etc., but every man had his trousers either rolled up or tucked in his boots, and some had on rubber coats.¹

Sonora was not the only town to boast of a lodge. Soon Columbia had a Masonic Lodge, as also did Groveland. Sonora, Columbia, Jamestown and Big Oak Flat all had their Odd Fellows Lodges at an early date. The old brick hall built in the 50's by the Odd Fellows of Columbia is still the meeting place of the Lodge today, as is also the one in Big Oak Flat.

Religious Affairs

Religious affairs, as is usually the case with all new settlements, especially mining towns, did not at first receive much consideration. A slight sprinkling of God-

¹ Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 167.

fearing men began in a quiet way to make their influence felt as early as the fall of 1849. About this time Padre Arnault settled in Sonora. He came from Mexico and gave freely to endow the first Roman Catholic Church which was completed in the summer of 1850.¹

St. Anne's Church was erected at Columbia in 1856. It is situated on a hill overlooking the town and the vast limestone region that yielded so much gold. The church stands as a testimony to those stalwart pioneers who paused long enough in their mad rush for gold to erect a temple in which to worship the Giver of the great bounty. The Presbyterian Church (still used today) was built in Columbia the following year.

In Sonora the followers of the Epispcal faith held their services in the Court House until 1859 when the St. James Episcopal Church was erected at the head of Washington Street, where it still stands like a sentinel guarding the town. The church was built by popular subscription and at one time was partially destroyed by fire. The Methodist Epispcal Church was built on Yaney Street at a cost of \$3,300. It was conceded to be the finest church building in the county. It was 35 by 40 feet and extended 90 feet upwards to the top of the spire. It was built

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 21-22.

under the supervision of the contractor, Mr. George Fairfield, and was completed in just twelve days.¹ That many had respect for the better things in life is shown by the fact that by March, 1854, Sonora could boast of having five churches of different denominations, and all were well attended.

Schools

As family life came to be more abundant it was only natural that some attempt would be made toward educating the children. The first school in Sonora, and in fact, in all Tuolumne County, was opened the week of the big Sonora fire, June 18, 1852. A Miss Hawkhurst was the preceptress. This school was very much of a success for a while. It averaged from 18 to 20 pupils of from four to ten years of age, all from American homes.

A notice in the Sonora Herald informed parents that a Miss Sharp planned to open a boarding school for young ladies. Board and tuition were to cost \$25 a month. Music, French and dancing were to form the curriculum. The notice also stated that a class would also be formed for grown up ladies whose early education had been neglected. It is presumed that this school did not prosper as there

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 88-89.

is no evidence available as to its having continued.¹

In the summer of 1852 Mrs. Haley established the first school in Columbia.

The pastor of the Methodist Church of Sonora started a school in 1852 after the attempts of two different women had proved unsuccessful because of lack of pupils.² During the spring of 1854 Mrs. Harmon conducted a private school of some twenty pupils. The older pupils were paid for at the rate of \$8 per month, while the younger ones under twelve years of age paid \$5. Mrs. Harmon was the wife of Rev. S. S. Harmon, at that time a prominent Presbyterian clergyman of Sonora and later principal of Washington College of Alameda County.³

Just when public supported education began in Tuolumne County is not clear, though it must have been in the fall of 1857 or shortly before. Mrs. L. C. Gunn, in her letter to her people in the East, under date of March 5, 1859, mentions that a school house was being built, and, in order to raise sufficient money to finish it, the School Committee gave an entertainment in which the school children took part.⁴

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 89-90.

² Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 172.

³ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 120;
Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 219.

⁴ Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 243.

The earliest record of the Tuolumne County School Superintendent yields some interesting facts. The following are taken therefrom.¹

Mr. George S. Evans was the first County Superintendent of Schools. The earliest recorded date is December 8, 1857, and refers to the Jamestown District, stating that O. Bradbury, B. Butterfield and John Harriman were the school trustees.

The records show the following to have been the first County Superintendents: George S. Evans, 1857- 9; B. A. Mardis, 1860-2; C. S. Pease, 1863; John Graham, 1864-65; H. H. Spencer until March 2, 1868; W. I. Clark until March 7, 1870; and then C. L. Metzger.

The first Board of Examination of Tuolumne County met in November, 1860. B. A. Mardis, County Supt., Dr. L. C. Gunn and P. Mulford were present. W. C. Dodge appeared before the board and "after a rigid examination was found qualified to teach a grammar school and accordingly a certificate was granted him."

On December 1, 1860, Miss Sarah Gunn was duly examined and granted a certificate. At the next meeting she took the place of her brother, Dr. Gunn, on the board.

In April, 1868, the following requirements were set by

¹ Record Book of the first County Superintendent of Schools, Tuolumne County, Calif., kindly loaned by G. P. Morgan, present incumbent and County Supt. for the past 48 years.

the board of examination for the various certificates: For First Grade Certificate--an average of 80% in examinations and one year's experience; for Second Grade Certificate--an average of 65%; for Third Grade Certificate--an average of 50%.

Members of the Board of Examination received \$3 per day and traveling expenses. The Board traveled to various parts of the county where examinations were held.

Trustees were required to maintain a five months' school in their districts.

John Gamble, the teacher at Big Oak Flat, was the first teacher to get one of the new First Grade Certificates. He passed the examination April 3, 1868. It was ordered from the State Superintendent April 6 and was delivered to him April 28. Charles L. Metzger passed the requirements for a First Grade Certificate May 9, 1861, and was the second to receive one.

In 1868 Emily Graves was teaching in Poverty Hill School, C. S. Pease was teaching in Summerville (now Tuolumne), Marion Collins was teaching in Confidence, J. T. Davies was teaching in Curtis Creek, Emma Reuter was teaching in Greene Springs, H. H. Spencer and Rose D. Owens were teaching in Columbia and G. W. Smith was teaching in Shaws Flat.

On April 15, 1869, the County Superintendent visited school in Chinese Camp, where S. K. Reynolds was teaching, to

investigate the many complaints that had come in of his
cruelty to the children.

CHAPTER V
FOREIGNERS IN THE MINES

It would seem that all races have prejudices against foreigners. This trait is particularly strong among the Americans, both past and present. Nor did this trait fail to show up during the days of the occupation of California. The feelings and prejudices of the old miners against foreigners manifested itself in the rules and regulations of some of the mining districts. Many of the foreigners, and particularly many of those who came from Mexico and Australia, were of very bad character. Their disregard for peace, honesty and order soon led to serious difficulties; many of the adventurers from Sonora and Sinaloa knew more of monte and brigandage than mining and were a very disreputable class. Most of the "Sydney Ducks," as the ex-convicts from Australia were called, because of race and language, were at first difficult to distinguish. The feelings against the Mexicans had developed previously to and during the Mexican War and was largely responsible for the so-called Foreign Miner's Tax and License which was passed by the first State Legislature, April 13, 1850.¹

¹ Statutes, 1850, 221; Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III, 263.

The Foreign Miner's Tax

The act legalizing the tax on foreign miners was entitled: "An Act for the Better Regulation of the Mines and the Government of Foreigners in the Mines." The act contained fifteen sections, the most important of which provided that no person not a citizen should mine without first obtaining a license; the Governor would appoint and commission collectors; licenses were to cost \$20 and be good for thirty days; the County Sheriff was to assist the collector in enforcing the law.

L. A. Besancon was appointed Collector with offices in Sonora.

The almost immediate effect of the attempt to enforce the tax was to drive the better classes of foreigners out of the country and scatter the worst classes into the remote and secluded places and practically depopulate the towns, causing losses to everyone engaged in business.¹ In this way Sonora and Columbia suffered greatly, the latter losing almost four-fifths of its population.

The press of the time was quick to see the evil result and cry out against it. From Stockton we read:

The Tax--What Should Be Done?

The news from the mines spread an unwonted gloom over the markets of the new towns, and much anxiety is felt as to the ultimate effect of the tax on the foreign miners in

¹ Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III, 128.

the district of the San Joaquin. We again recommend a careful perusal of Leo's letter, and advise that the Governor be memorialized to call an extra session of the Legislature, which body may be prayed to bring a tax of four instead of twenty dollars per month. We are, echoing the sentiments of every merchant in Stockton.¹

Crowbars were selling at Sonora on Monday last at \$8 each, but on Wednesday at 50¢. This was the effect on the pockets of the store keepers occasioned by the alarm of the Mexicans at the new tax.²

As we expected, the collection of the new tax is producing a ruinous effect upon the trades in the Southern Mines. Business in many places is at a complete standstill; confidence is shaken; there exists an unusual feeling of distrust among the miners; man is set against man. None condemn more strongly than we do the violence that has been done to the law by the foreign population, but at the same time, few lament more severely the cause which awakened this opposition. We do not quarrel with the tax per se, but we deny the policy of the amount proposed to be collected from each miner. In the report on this bill we remember that its authors stated that the certificate would be a protection to the foreign miner, while at the same time it provided revenue for the state. Now we respectfully submit that, as the tax stands, the legislature, in five cases out of ten, has placed it out of the power of the miners to obtain this protection, and we fear but a comparatively small sum will be collected for state purposes. Had the cost of the certificate been five instead of twenty dollars, every foreigner would have claimed that certificate as a boon. We sincerely believe that these sentiments are shared by nearly every American in this district.³

The tax provoked great opposition and indignation on the part of the foreigners, especially in the Southern Mines. One reason for this was that the adventurers who

¹ Stockton Times, May 25, 1850.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., June 1, 1850.

came up from Mexico reached these mines first and stopped here and formed a nucleus around which the later comers congregated. In early 1849 the Mexicans were in the majority in and around Sonora, but as the Americans moved into this territory, collisions were bound to follow. Many Mexicans became satisfied with the amounts of gold they had taken out and returned to Mexico; but enough remained to occasion disturbances for years to come.¹

A number of lynch-law proceedings during these early years had their origin in the feelings thus called into play and a too ready disposition on the part of some American miners to despise and abuse all the Spanish speaking foreigners as "Greasers."

In addition to the state law there were many instances of local laws or rules, many of which prohibited all foreigners, except such as intended to become citizens of the United States, from mining, either for themselves or others. Resolutions were passed at Mormon Gulch to drive all Mexicans from the mines, and the Mexicans were notified to quit within fifteen days or be expelled by force. Many of those opposed to the Mexicans were themselves foreigners. A mass meeting of miners held at Sonora, Sunday, July 21, 1850, adopted a preamble and

¹ Thomas Butler King, The Wonder of the Age, 27-8.

resolutions to the effect that:

Whereas the lives and property of American citizens were in danger at the hands of lawless marauders of every clime and creed, and scarcely a day passes without the commission of horrible murders and robberies, and whereas there were present on every side the peons of Mexico, the renegades of South America and the convicts of the British Empire, therefore be it resolved that all foreigners in Tuolumne County, except those engaged in permanent business and of respectable character should leave within fifteen days, unless they obtain a permit to remain from a committee of three Americans selected at each camp or diggings; all foreigners without licenses should be notified to turn over all fire arms and deadly weapons to the committees; that every good citizen had power to disarm any foreigner, and that all good citizens should be a committee to see these matters carried out.¹

Unscrupulous Americans found opportunity to capitalize on this situation and, contrary to the law, hire Mexicans to work for them.

In one portion of the mines a party of Mexicans, working under Americans, have perched themselves on a piece of table land existing on the top of a mountain and here, secreted from the eyes of the tax collector, they are making a pile. We pity the tax collectors. They must have the eyes of Argus to find all.²

A great deal has been made of the reception of the Miners Tax in Tuolumne County. The arrival of Collector Besancon, on Friday, May 17, 1850, caused great excitement and the assembling of the foreigners, but the bloody strife recorded by some chroniclers did not take place. Two widely differing versions appear in the same issue of

¹ Stockton Times, July 29, 1850; H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 44-46.

² Stockton Times, July 20, 1850.

the Stockton Times; one from Sonora by "Leo," (probably Dr. L. C. Gunn) and the other from Mormon Diggings, signed "Hunt." Mr. Hunt modified the gruesomeness of his story in the following issue.¹

It would seem that with the coming of Captain Bescancon the Mexicans, Chileans and Frenchmen assembled outside Sonora and consulted as to means of evading payment of the \$20 per month. About noon two deputations entered the town and interviewed the authorities and endeavored to ascertain if it would be possible for the governor to stay the collection of the tax, or, if not, to have the justice of the tax explained to them. They maintained that it would be impossible to pay such an amount, but that \$4 or \$5 a month would not be objected to. As one American, who desired to get out of the crowd, elbowed his way through, a Mexican and a Chilean drew pistols. In a moment a dozen more were out. No shots were fired and the foreigners made a precipitate retreat. Dame rumor got busy and soon all sorts of stories were circulating in the surrounding diggings. Sonora was reported besieged by the foreigners. To relieve the siege 500 armed Americans marched from Mormon Creek. Others marched in from Woods Creek, Pine Crossing, Sullivan's Creek, Murphy's, Indian Gulch, Coyote Creek, Carsons and

¹ Stockton Times, May 25, 1850, June 1, 1850.

all the diggings on the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers.

When the excitement was at its height, word came to Columbia that during the uprising at Sonora, Charles Bassett had been seized and was about to be murdered. One Rochette, a Frenchman, and friend of Bassett, hastily organized a company of armed men and with the American Flag at the head of the column marched on Sonora to rescue Bassett or avenge his death. When they arrived and found him free and in good health they settled down on his store, restaurant, butchershop and dairy and practically ate and drank him out of house and home.¹

A man on horseback came galloping into the little encampment at Mormon Gulch and breathlessly told the miners who eagerly gathered around him that Collector Besancon had arrived in Sonora and issued his notice calling on all foreigners to come forward and pay their first month's assessment of twenty dollars; that the foreigners were now in a state of intense excitement; that meetings had been held and demonstrations against the tax made; that Sonora was in the hands of a foreign mob of two or three thousand men; that the safety of the place was menaced; and that American citizens were fleeing; and that couriers had been sent to the surrounding camps asking assistance.

¹ F. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 28-29.

The many rumors that had been going the rounds had prepared the miners to such an extent that this information was like a match in gun powder. Word was sent to all the miners to gather within the hour and march on Sonora.

On the way to Sonora this self-constituted "army" met several later comers from that place, from whom conflicting statements were received. Some told them the truth, that all the excitement was over; others that their services were needed immediately. Still a mile out of Sonora they passed a Mexican camp and noticed the men quietly seated in front of their brush houses, playing monte, etc., who became greatly excited on seeing the column of marching yelling men. Headed by fife and drum and the American flag the column finally entered the town. They marched the length of the street to a saloon where they "liquored up." Then they marched back, stopping at other saloons, and finally halted in front of the principal hotel where Collector Besancon spoke to them, instructed them to rest for the night as there was business for them to do on the morrow.

After supper the arms were stored, a watch set up and relief and patrol organized. In the morning a column of 300 armed men, accompanied the Sheriff and Collector, marched through the camps. They found only terror and confusion. The foreigners were packing up and crowds were

in retreat. Search was made for a place where it was rumored foreign flags had been raised, but none were found and the "army" was disbanded. Thus through terror, were the mines depopulated and hatred for Americans engendered in the minds of the foreigners. Many left for their old homes; others scattered over the country to commence the career of bloodshed which stained the pages of California's history during the next few months.

As a result Sonora and Columbia were practically depopulated. Affairs remained inactive until the foreign element began to return and work in the mines. Neither of the two camps ever again recovered the entire bulk of its population.

All this resulted in a demand for the repeal of the obnoxious Foreign Miners Tax and on March 14, 1851, it was repealed. Later a similar law, fixing the tax at four dollars and making the sheriffs the collectors, was passed, but it was seldom enforced except to harass the Chinese.¹

The most violent hatred invoked against any of the foreigners was invoked against the Chinese. This hatred seems to be due, not because, as appeared on the surface, the Chinese were all oily tongued embezzlers, but rather

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 29-34; Statutes, 1855, 62; Hittell's General Laws, 3144.

to the disturbances they caused in the white man's demands for wages. Their presence in large numbers tended to lower the white man's standard of living, and consequently the Chinese were legislated against in many of the mining districts. Probably the earliest enactments against the Chinese were made in Columbia and forbade Asiatics or South Sea Islanders to mine either for themselves or for others, also forbidding others to sell claims to them. In other districts they were excluded from holding mines even by purchase. However in some of the more respectable neighborhoods they were allowed to occupy and work grounds that had been abandoned by white miners. It became a known fact that rich grounds that had been worked over several times by white men might be profitably worked again, but if once worked over by the Chinese there was no use working it again. Because of the feeling against them and the persecution they received, the Chinese never became numerous enough to be a threat or attempt combined resistance or attack the whites.

After the fire of 1857 the Trustees of Columbia took action against the Chinese element by debarring them from residing within the corporate limits of the town and ordered the Town Marshall to instruct them to remove at once on a penalty of a fine of from \$50 to \$100. Those refusing to move were to be proceeded against as dangerous

to the safety of the town.¹

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 223.

CHAPTER VI
TRAVEL TO THE MINES

Travel to the Southern Mines was very constant during the year 1849 and subsequent years. Those who came to California by way of the Panama Canal and Cape Horn came through San Francisco and Stockton. The road from Stockton to Sonora became quite celebrated, and it is recorded that during the early part of 1849 the campfires along the route were close enough together to show the traveler on his way at night. Along the route were dealers in mining tools, provisions, and general merchandise, who also sold liquors, furnished a plate of pork and beans for a dollar, or a night's lodging for the same price, the sleeper to furnish his own blankets. Board was charged for at the rate of three dollars per day.¹

A contemporary description of the trip will probably give a clearer picture of travel at that time:

Now for our journey. The stage was to come for us at seven. We had breakfast and put our duds in the basket just as the stage drove up. If I should describe it, I would be describing a Newburyport stage in every particular. I had expected to see a cart or some kind of a wagon. There were ten people inside with the children, and four or five outside. We rode over a plain of forty miles, and the dust, so thick it was like ashes, poured into our faces. At this season there is

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 11;
Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III, 125.

no grass to be seen, only bushes and oak trees. You would be surprised how very green they look. Only a foot below the surface the earth is moist.

At last we reached the hills, and stopped at a place where there are many Indians. We dined there at a rough dirty-looking house. A nice looking woman in a calico gown, collar and pin was cutting up meat on a table in the only tolerable room. There was a long table with the dinner on it, but the children and I did not go to it. We stood outside the door and had some rice and sauce, and each a cup of goat's milk, very nice indeed. It was a beautiful place (probably Knight's Ferry) close to the river, with high hills all around. Indians of all ages; men, women and children were sitting on the ground. They had very black hair, and it sticks almost straight from their heads. They are good natured but ugly, darker than the Indians of the Atlantic States, indeed, almost black.

There we left the stage and took a strong wagon, like a Dearborn, as we were going up into the mountains. The road is often on one side of a hill, and two wheels are up and two are down. At a very bad place the gentlemen would get out, and when not very bad they leaned to one side. Every now and then the driver would call out, "Lean to the right", or "To the left," and thus it was all the way; and the dust was so bad that once they stopped to have it settle down a little to be able to see the way. I had on my green linen gown, straw bonnet and veil, and I put my old red shawl on and pinned it tight around my neck to keep the dust out, and it was hot enough to melt. The scenery was lovely, high hills with beautiful little valleys, and mountains beyond. Table Mountain is level on top for miles and miles. We saw part of it. We crossed a river, driving right through it, it is now little more than a brook at the place where we left the stage. We got to Sonora about six o'clock.¹

After 1849 many of the later comers to Tuolumne County came overland across the plains. Of those who came to the Southern Mines and Tuolumne County, some crossed the Tahoe Range where Kinsbury grade now is, then into

¹ Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 142-43.

Placerville and then South; others came over the old Emigrant Trail and through Sonora Pass. Just who came first by this latter route is not clear. Tradition has it that General John C. Fremont, previous to 1849, had traversed and blazed this route and halted for a week or more to rest his horses at what later came to be known as Relief Camp. Tradition states further that he left a brass canon of the howitzer type near the summit where it was seen by many of the later comers. However, there is no record of what happened to this canon and its authenticity is therefore questionable.

In the early 50's a party of men was caught in the first storm of early winter while ascending the east slope of the Sierras. They abandoned their wagons and pushed over the summit in a blinding snow storm and descended to a sheltered place. As their provisions were nearly exhausted, a few pushed on to the Jarboe ranch across the river from Tuolumne. A relief expedition was organized and brought in the disheartened snow-bound people. The place where they had camped has since become known as Relief Camp.

The real trouble and perils began when the wagon trains took this route. The first wagon train to complete this route was the Duckwall Train. The Duckwall party consisted of W. J. Duckwall and wife and six

children, John and Si Murphy, and a Mr. Collins. This party had kept company with the Train party for over 1500 miles from Illinois and Indian Territory and were undecided at what point to cross the mountains. At the sink of the Carson they were met by George Washington Patrick who warned the Pilgrims against every other route as being strewn with dead people, victims of treacherous slides and murderous Indians, and told them that the Emigrant Trail was a good broad highway from the Walker River westward. However, no royal road was found, and from the beginning of their ascent of the Sierras they met trouble, toil and danger. The trail led across deep canyons, between immense boulders, close to steep precipices, and sometimes the wagons had to be lifted bodily over obstructions. On the day they began their descent some cattle strayed from the Train party and while they were hunting them the Duckwalls took the lead. By hitching two oxen in front and four behind as a hold-back they reached Relief September 27, 1853. The Train group arrived the following day.

Then followed the tide of travelers over this route by wagon, each party making some improvement to the road until it became a fairly passable trail, except that the last few miles into Relief always remained a hazardous stretch.

Thus did the early comers travel to the mines. It was no easy journey and was a test of the characters of those who attempted it.

A picture of what some of these hardships were may be obtained from the writings on one who made the trip.

In retrospect I recall the hot sand and alkali deserts, deprived of all the comforts, and most of the necessities of life. I also recall the heroes whose life trail crossed my own when I was a child, with whose comradeship I went out to serve the needs of my generation as the vanguards of civilization.

There were no battlefields but over every mile of the long trail stalked the shadow of death. And what was waiting to greet us in California? A wilderness marked by faint trails of wild Indian feet, and slow agonizing death caused by the poison fangs of rattlesnakes who were in countless numbers.....

We passed countless skeletons of cattle of all kinds, bleached in the hot sun. This road, followed by the early pioneers, through deserts and mountains of eternal snow, is a land of mystery, suffering and death that never has (and never will be) recorded or known. The wrecks of broken wagons, wagon chains, or yokes, and the countless bleached bones of suffering cattle is the only history they left on the record for future generations to read....

Father was fortunate in being able to secure a well ironed wagon. No extra weight was allowed, and only a limited wardrobe. Mother included a small bag of garden seeds to the utility box, and later on they proved a great value. Firearms and a great quantity of ammunition, medicine for ourselves and stock was necessary.....

Very often we traveled for weeks not knowing the names of the rivers we crossed, or the Indians we passed....

Our cattle were becoming footsore and leg weary. We camped often when conditions were favorable, for we must have food and water for the cattle. Our own food was scarce. We renewed our larder when necessary by killing a fat young buffalo. Our clothes were worn and we all needed rest.....

For some time we had noticed a change in the conduct of the Indians. They did not visit our camps and show a friendly desire to trade. We would often see a party on their ponies, mostly on a hill....By their actions we concluded they were not friendly. We kept moving and paid no attention to the Indians. Shortly after crossing the Nevada line, we unexpectedly came upon a wreck of three or four wagons with the contents scattered in every direction. Evidently the emigrants had been surprised, and, being a small train, were unable to defend themselves or stock.....

I do not believe there is any combination of circumstances that will unite people as closely as are the members of a train, after weary, heartbreaking months of privation, unending toil, dangers, and hardships.....¹

¹ Mrs. Lee Whipple Haslam, Early Days in Calif., 6-9.

CHAPTER VII

GOVERNMENT

On June 3, 1849, General Riley, Military Governor of California, issued a proclamation ordering a general election. This was the first election held by Americans and was without legislative authority, but solely to meet immediate needs. In Sonora the following were chosen as delegates to the Constitutional Convention to meet September 1, 1849: Colonel B. F. Moore, formerly of Texas; J. M. Jones, a lawyer formerly of New Orleans; P. M. Wozencraft and B. S. Lippincott.

On November 7, 1849, the citizens of Sonora met and formed a town government, the principal purpose being the building of a hospital and caring for the sick who were suffering from scurvy, caused by lack of proper food, many having lived during the previous winter principally on salted foods. This first town council or governing body consisted of C. F. Dodge, Chairman; Joshua Holding; Peter Mehen; C. Labetoure; E. Linoberg; J. B. Litton; Wm. Perkins; and a Mr. Williams. One of their first acts was to order a survey of the town into lots. This work was given to Cooper and Calledge whose map became the official chart of the town. When news came of the appointment of Sonora as the county seat, the council

passed an ordinance claiming all vacant lots as the property of the town, and designating the money derived from their sale at public auction to be applied to paying the costs of the survey and hospital expenses.¹

On April 1, 1850, there was a general election under which the new state and county governments were to be put in operation.

The county was divided into six districts or precincts, as follows:

1. Sonora, Shaws Flat, Pine Crossing, American Camp and Sullivans and all territory lying in the vicinity and between.
2. Mormon Diggings, McLean's Ferry and Peoria.
3. Curtisville, Green Springs and Barnetts.
4. Jacksonville and Stephens Bar.
5. Tuolumne City and vicinity.²

The following were elected to positions in the county: Clerk of the Supreme Court--R. L. Murphy; District Attorney--B. B. Harris; County Judge--A. A. H. Tuttle; County Attorney--H. P. Barber; Recorder--L. C. Gunn; Assessor--D. L. Blanchard; Surveyor--A. W. Richardson; Coroner--V. Payton; Sheriff--C. Work; Treasurer--F. A. Waters.³

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 17-18; Stockton Times, March 23, 1850.

² Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 83.

³ Stockton Times, April 3, 1850.

On June 1, 1850, the first term of the Court of Sessions of Tuolumne County was held at Sonora.

On the sixteenth of April, 1850, a petition was sent to the Legislature praying that Jamestown be incorporated a city. The signers were: B. F. Butterfield, Lewis C. Gunn, F. O'Neill, Charles M. Raffe, C. Esty, Edward C. Andrews, J. W. Van Benschoten, John McDonald, Allen Mardis, A. Coindreau, A. W. Richardson, Zinas K. Smith, William Weight, Byron Woodworth, Robert S. Miller, Ralph J. Forbes, William E. Cuttrell, J. B. Rochette, S. Demilt, Henry Holmes, J. Van Wagner, Charles Briggs and John Hunt.¹

On April 27, 1850, an election was held in Columbia for six aldermen and Major Collinsworth, Peter Mahan, F. A. Waters, Peck Cutrille, A. B. Hatfield, and Wm. Donovan were duly elected and a common council consisting of these six men and Alcalde R. P. Sullivan was formed.²

In May, 1854, Columbia was incorporated under the General Incorporation Act, her first Board of Trustees then being: Samuel Arnold, Sewell Knapp, F. F. Bartlett, Alden Sears and James McLean. Captain Haley became Marshall, C. Brown became Treasurer and P. G. Furgeson became Assessor.³

¹ Anna Lee Marston, Records of a Calif. Family, 83.

² Stockton Times, May 4, 1850.

³ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 113.

A special petition to incorporate was granted to Columbia by the Legislature August 13, 1856, and a new government was formed April 9, 1857, with trustees as follows: A. C. Goodrich, Patrick Smith, B. C. Northrup, C. E. Parsons, and Sylvanus Pitts. Robert Mullen was Marshall; A. E. Hooker, Treasurer; and J. A. Poor, Assessor.¹

Sonora got along with her original city organization until in 1851 when on May 26 the new Common Council, provided for by the legislative act of May 1, 1851, held its first meeting. Mr. C. F. Dodge had been elected the first Mayor and H. W. Theall, I. P. Yaney, A. F. Chatfield, L. C. Gunn, H. T. Fuller, R. S. Galdwin and Abraham Tuttle, councilmen. The following city officers were appointed: Recorder--Leander Quint; Treasurer--Daniel Sayre; Assessor--Ethen Allen; City Attorney--L. A. Besancon; Marshall--J. F. H. McFarlane; Clerk--A. W. Lockett. All these were confirmed at an election a few days later except Ethen Allen, who was defeated by J. W. Richardson who was elected Assessor in his stead.

Two outstanding ordinances were passed by this council. They were Nos. 14 and 15, which prohibited games of French Monte, Three Card game, String game, Thimbles, Lottery, Chinese Puzzle, Lock game, or any game having fraud

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 225.

as its tendency. Any one convicted of promoting one or more of these games was to be fined from \$25 to \$100 or be imprisoned up to ten days or both at the option of the recorder.¹

The first meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Tuolumne County was held July 1, 1852; on January 24, 1863, they advertised for bids for the construction of a Court House. The contract was awarded to Bell and McBernie for \$6,500. The building was completed and accepted September 21, 1852.

The slavery question became an issue in the campaign of 1852. Excitement was great in Tuolumne County and especially in Sonora where the Slave Party tried to capture the election by voting for the pro-slavery men on both the Whig and the Democratic tickets. However, the Whigs succeeded in electing their entire ticket. Young Coffroth was elected to the State Senate and Wilson to the Assembly. Both men were under 25 years of age.²

Alcaldes

Probably the most notable characters of the gold rush days were the American Alcaldes. The office of Alcalde was that of magistrate and Justice of the Peace under the Mexican law, and until after the organization of the state

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 35, 37, 74, 81-83.

² Anna Lee Marston, Records of a California Family, 176-77.

government there were no other judicial tribunals than those held by alcaldes. Thus during this time of transition the jurisdiction of these courts was extended to embrace everything the Alcalde wished to claim. As a class these officers were irresponsible, rough, and held lightly the amenities of life. They boasted the possession of "horse sense" and that they could not be cajoled by technicalities or refinements of reasoning. They were readily influenced by a skillful advocate but not by one who appealed to law books or technical language.

One particularly interesting Alcalde was R. S. Ham who was the first Alcalde of Sonora. It is asserted that he assumed this position without the formality of a vote or even the request of his fellow citizens. He endeavored always to render judgments acceptable to public opinion. If there was a popular cry, just or unjust, against a person, there was no hope for him if haled before Alcalde Ham. Ham was finally deposed by the efforts of Charles Bassett, who called a public meeting of the miners and induced them to elect James Frazier, August 1, 1849. His efforts were all for the purpose of saving a friend from being sentenced to death by Ham. Frazier was the first Alcalde to be elected by Americans on the Western Slope. Herman Theall followed him and was in turn succeeded by Charles Dodge, who served until the town of Sonora was organized,

when he became Justice of the Peace.

In Columbia the general lawlessness during the boom of 1850 occasioned an election in which Major Sullivan was selected Alcalde. Alcalde Sullivan had a regular system of swindling everyone with whom he had dealings. At any rate, he managed to get large fees, and not always from the proper persons. In one of his first cases, where a Mexican was charged with stealing a pair of leggings, the accused was convicted and fined three ounces for stealing and the complaining witness was asked to donate one ounce for troubling the court. At another time a man brought suit for a mule. He proved his property and the defendant was ordered to restore the mule and pay an ounce fine and three ounces costs. As he had no money to pay, the plaintiff was ordered to pay the fine and costs, as the court could not sit without pay.

Early in 1850 the State Legislature abolished the office and jurisdiction of Alcaldes and provided for Justices of the Peace with very restricted powers. Yet, by force of habit, many of the new officers continued to assume for a year or two more the very broad powers formerly assumed by the Alcaldes.

Probably the most notorious of these mining camp Justices was R. C. Barry of Sonora who was Justice of the Peace in 1851. He was a very illiterate man and attempted

to follow the forms of law and in doing so made many ludicrous blunders. For instance, in issuing a summons against two persons for forcible entry, he charged them with a "nucense" and stated the plaintiff "claimed a writ to dispossess them and to have restitution according to law, with appropriate damages for the imposition now about to be carried out against him by such high handed and mucenary arrogance on the part of the afforesaid accused." As ridiculous as Barry was when attempting to write, he was, nevertheless, plainly direct and incisive in his speech.¹

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 12-13, 25-26, 68-69; Theodore H. Hittell, Hist. of Calif., III, 222-8.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR LAW AND ORDER

From the first the miners in the various camps found it necessary to draw up codes for their own government. These codes provided for sizes of claims, etc., and that the major differences between the miners be referred for arbitration. One of the earliest of the codes was that of Jackass Gulch, previously mentioned. This code specified the size of claims at the first and at later workings, laws of transfer, renewal notice, etc. This code applied to Soldier's Gulch also.

The code for Springfield provided for the size of claims, the manner of staking and notices, the time of working, and the manner of registering. All disputes were to be referred to a committee of five selected by the miners.¹

The Jamestown district was regulated by Miner's Meetings which were held twice yearly, and oftener, if special need arose. In 1853, the laws in force having become very unpopular, the miners held a rousing meeting and adopted an entire new set.

At Sawmill Flat the miners' code provided that disputes over claims or water privileges should be submitted

¹ Charles H. Shinn, Mining Camps, etc., 237.

to five arbitrators (two to be selected by each party and the four to select a fifth). In Brown's Flat all five arbiters were to be selected by the Standing Committee which was itself to be the court of appeal.¹

On June 20, 1851, an unusually large group of miners assembled at the store of Mr. Graham in Tuttletown for the purpose of making laws by which to govern the quartz mining operations in Township 2, Tuolumne County. The meeting was called to order by Capt. John Sutton and Col. C. K. Gillespie was appointed President and J. D. Patterson Secretary. The president explained the object of the meeting and the necessity of drawing up a code, and appointed a committee, consisting of Mr. Saunders, Dr. Brown, Captain John Means, Mr. Miller, Dr. Ingersoll, Mr. Bowles, and Mr. H. H. Means, to draft suitable laws and resolutions. The principal elements of their code were that a man could locate 200 running feet on his own discovery or 100 feet on one already discovered, and that disputes were to be settled by arbitration.²

In districts where there were Alcaldes, few codes made provision for arbitration since jurisdiction belonged to the Alcaldes, though some did recommend arbitration or "conciliacion" as it was known in Spanish law.

¹ Charles H. Shinn, Mining Camps, etc., 238-242.

² San Joaquin Republican, July 4, 1851.

Various codes had special provisions to fit special needs, as for instance, the protection of pay dirt thrown up in the dry diggings during the summer for washing in the winter; and the diversion of streams of water without the consent of those interested and already using them.¹

Each set of laws or code was calculated to fit the conditions of its special jurisdiction, yet there was a tendency toward simplification and uniformity in the main provisions, and by degrees a system of mining laws developed. In 1851 the Legislature provided that in actions respecting claims the customs, usage and regulations of the diggings embracing the claims should govern, and thus the development of mining laws into a system was aided.²

Commencing in 1850 the history of Tuolumne County abounds in thievery, murders, lynchings, failure of justice and the work of vigilance committees. In this year Miles O'Connor drew a pistol to shoot a man who had insulted him, fired twice and killed two passersby.³ On May 7, 1850, one Mexican in a fit of jealousy shot another through the heart and beat the woman they had been living with nearly to death. A great deal of smuggling, principally of Serapas and blankets from Mexico, was going on.⁴

¹ Charles H. Shinn, Mining Camps, etc., 243-246.

² John S. Hittell, General Laws, 5552; Statutes, 1851.

³ Stockton Times, March 30, 1850.

⁴ Ibid., May 11, 1850.

On Sunday morning, June 12, Samuel Whetmore shot down Mr. Mackey of the house of Mackey and Beltand as a result of an argument over a monte table the previous evening.¹ Three Mexicans murdered Mr. Miller and Mr. Orlando two miles west of Jamestown.²

With fifty people in the room, one hundred dollars disappeared from a blanket on a monte table when the operator stepped away for five minutes. Three Chinese surprised three Americans, killed one, wounded another and the third escaped. Numerous robberies were reported at Jamestown, Ward's Ferry and Sullivans.³

A Mr. Stratinaum was murdered on the 13th of July between Carson's Creek and Coyote Diggings, supposedly by Mexicans.⁴ A Mr. Bucke and a Mr. Dolf were murdered between Sonora and Sullivans Diggings on October 20, 1850. A lynch case occurred in Sonora in April, 1851. John M. Jones, a resident of Mormon Gulch, was accused of stealing a horse from M. Shoemaker. A lynching jury was formed, comprising H. G. Paine, F. Boggs, J. F. Eastin, D. L. Baldwin, C. F. Cherry, N. H. Pike, Joel R. Smith, J. C. D. Camp, G. W. Schuman, S. L. Pierce, J. W.

¹ Stockton Times, June 8, 1850.

² Ibid., June 29, 1850.

³ Ibid., June 29, 1850.

⁴ Ibid., July 20, 1850.

Bostick and S. Capps. Their verdict follows:

We, the jury, find the prisoner, John M. Jones, guilty of theft and assess the punishment at four dozen lashes, well laid upon the bare back with a cowhide, to be lain on by the accusers: Robert McGarvey, S. M. Miller, L. Gillman, and Deputy Constable Curtiss; also to have his head shaved, and he is hereby ordered to leave Tuolumne County immediately. It is also ordered by the jury that a copy of the proceedings be published in the Sonora Herald and the Stockton Times.¹

In 1865, a blacksmith by the name of Kittering was murdered by Justice of the Peace W. H. Worth because he had accused the latter of being one of the robbers of Judge Brunton. In the trial that followed Worth was acquitted.²

John Sheldon, night watchman at Sonora, was murdered by three Chileans in revenge for the death of a countryman in what was known as the "Riot in the Tigre." Escobar and Sebada were captured the next day in Tuttletown and found guilty and sentenced to hang, August 3.³

On October 10, 1855, J. H. Smith of Knickerbocker Flat was murdered in Martha's Saloon on the corner of Main and Jackson Streets, Columbia. Martha's young husband, John S. Barclay was taken from the jail, tried by lynch court and hanged from the flume.⁴

¹ Stockton Times, April 16, 1850.

² H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 178-187.

³ Ibid., 189-90.

⁴ Ibid., 190-94.

These few examples selected at random show that crime was rampant in Tuolumne County, and especially in the Sonora region. The lynch cases show that the better part of the community was determined to put a stop to crime and the failure of justice, resorting to vigilance committees and lynch juries when necessary. The new Judiciary, provided by the State Constitution, was looked forward to with favor, and there was a disposition to try the efficiency of the new courts in protecting the community. However, it soon became evident that the technicalities that had grown up in the body, substance, and procedure of the criminal law, made it next to impossible to convict any person of crime who had money or friends to secure a lawyer. And many felt it was still necessary to resort to lynch law to enforce the fair dealing the regular tribunals failed to enforce.

In June, 1851, Antonia Cruz and Patrico Janori were arrested for stabbing Captain George W. Snow to death and taken to Shaw's Flat to be tried. A lynch court took them from the proper authorities and tried and condemned them to be hanged. This lynch court was composed of men who had previously upheld the District Court but had lost faith in its efficiency.¹

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 74-76.

Jim Hill was tried by lynch law at Campo Seco for robbing a store at that place and was condemned to death. Some of the crowd demurred at the death penalty for robbery, but crime had been so much on the increase that the Legislature had left it within the discretion of juries to impose it.¹ When he was taken out to hang there was a division of opinion and Sheriff Work managed to rescue him and start back to Sonora with him. Word reached Sonora ahead of the Sheriff, and Mr. E. Linoberg, a prominent merchant, and L. D. F. Edwards assembled a crowd, met the Sheriff, took Hill away and bore him off to a tree behind the El Dorado Hotel where he was hanged.²

There came to be so little confidence felt in the administration of justice by the regular courts that in June, 1851, it was felt necessary to form a permanent Vigilance Committee. This movement was stimulated by the attempt of some of the criminals to burn the town (Sonora) and profit by the confusion that would result. This committee was initiated, conducted and carried out by the most orderly and respected citizens; and in about two weeks' time it had cleared the moral atmosphere by dealing justly with the law breakers.³ By 1852 a Vigilance Committee was organized in almost every mining town. Lynch law was

¹ Statutes, 1851, 406; J. S. Hittell, Gen. Laws, 1459, note c.

² H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne Co., Calif., 77-79.

³ Ibid., 80.

resorted to again in 1853 and several times in 1855, and vigilance committees were pretty much in evidence during the whole decade.

Military Organization:

In these stirring years it became the pride of the town to support a military organization. Columbia had to outdo her neighbors by supporting two.

The first military group to be organized in Duolunne County was the "Fusiliers" of Columbia, which began its life in January, 1854. The members were dressed in snappy uniforms which were quite attractive to the eye and they always "cut quite a figure" on special days when they were on parade. Their place of meeting was John Leary's Armory Hall in Columbia.

The next military company to be organized was the Sonora Greys, a company of 50 members, who were organized in the spring of 1854, having been inspired by the Columbia Fusiliers. The "Greys" were commanded by Captain H. W. Theall, an accomplished officer and drill master, who was at that time postmaster of Sonora. They were provided with arms and accoutrements by requisition upon the U. S. Quartermaster General. Their uniforms were tastefully designed and neatly made of gray cloth. During the first two years, they resolved to erect their own armory. They raised Major Ball's building an additional story and

had their quarters on the upper floor, where they had a space sixty by twenty-nine feet. This they fitted up neatly with the assistance of many public spirited citizens. Captain Stewart had now become their drillmaster.

In June, 1857, the people of Columbia organized a second military group, the Columbia Light Artillery. This organization became quite a definite feature in the County. Being resplendent in its uniforms and trappings, it far outshone the more commonplace organizations of infantry. They were commanded by Major J. B. Urmy, who was Associate Editor of the Tuolumne Courier. Lieutenant Hooker and Sergeants McDonald and Leavitt assisted him.¹

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 139-140.

CHAPTER IX
DEVASTATING FIRES

Almost all of the important diggings suffered from one or more destructive fires. In the main the buildings were of cloth or wood, and in the summer months they became so dried out that the fire hazard was very high.

The closeness of the buildings together made it extremely difficult to stop a fire once it was well under way.

Sonora's first great fire occurred June 18, 1852. (A small fire had occurred November 14, 1849). Fire broke out about one a. m. in the Hotel de France which was located on the old Plaza facing Washington Street. The fire spread northward as far as where the Episcopal Church now stands, and even further in places. The only buildings saved in this neighborhood were the Rev. Deal's new M. E. Church and the Rev. W. H. Long's Wesleyan Church. About \$1,000,000 of damage was done.¹

Sonora had two fires in 1853. The first occurred on October 4th, and started in Labetoure's building, midway between the two branches of Sonora Creek. The building was speedily destroyed and the fire spread rapidly in every direction, burning as far north as Cooper and McCarthy's livery stable, which was the last building on that side of

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 86-87; Anna Lee Marston, Records of a Calif. Family, 171; San Joaquin Republican, June 19, 1852.

the street. The bank buildings of Wm. Hammond and Co., Adams and Co., and Wells Fargo and Co. were destroyed. E. B. Lundy, a Canadian, who was asleep in the rear of Holden's saloon was burned to death. Through the efforts of the hook and ladder and the hose companies and the citizens generally the fire was finally checked. The fire had lasted one hour and the loss aggregated \$300,000.

Less than a month later (November 1) a blaze started in a building occupied by Chinese. It spread to Batchelder's "Daguerrian Gallery," a tin and stove store, Mes-
 sech and McCullough's Carpenter Shop, Neil's Sadlery, the "Shades Saloon," a barber shop, the law office of Hall and Greenwood, Wood and Purdy's paint store and others. The damage totaled \$50,000.¹

On July 3, 1854, Sonora had another fire in which twelve buildings were burned and one man lost his life. On November 11, 1857, another fire occurred. On August 7, 1858, a fire broke out in the "Tigre" and did \$50,000 of damages. Another fire occurred in the "Tigre" August 2, 1860. Sonora had another great fire August 6, 1861. It broke out in a house adjoining the Democratic Age office on the corner of Washington and Yaney Streets and spread to surrounding buildings, including the Placer Hotel across the street. The loss was about \$150,000.²

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 134-135.

² Ibid., 229.

On July 10, 1854, fire broke out near Clark's Hotel on Broadway in Columbia. Before it was checked it had consumed nearly every house on Broadway, Fulton, Washington, State and Main Streets. The principal exception was the fire-proof building of Donald and Parsons on Main and Washington Streets. The damage was \$500,000.¹ A small fire occurred in December of the same year.

On August 25, 1857, Columbia's second great fire occurred. This fire was even more destructive than the fire of 1854. It broke out in a Chinese dwelling on the north side of Jackson Street and burned over the whole northern part of the town. The burned-over district lay between Pacific Street on the north, Columbia Street on the east, Main Gulch on the South and Broadway on the West. Supposedly fireproof buildings (brick) disappeared as if by magic. A large quantity of gun powder in the store of H. N. Brown exploded, killing H. N. Brown, William Toomey, J. M. B. Crooks, Dennis Deiscoll, Captain Rudolph and seriously injuring several others. The fire companies of Columbia and Sonora rendered able assistance until the water in the hydrants failed. The loss was \$500,000.² On July 27, 1861, Columbia had another fire in which the loss totaled \$26,000.

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 113.

² Ibid., 221-222.

Tuttletown suffered by fire on October 11, 1851. Poverty Hill was destroyed by fire September 20, 1854. Jamestown had a \$75,000 fire October 6, 1855, and a \$20,000 fire October 6, 1858. Montezuma was destroyed by fire in July, 1866; and Big Oak Flat practically destroyed on October 20, 1863. Big Oak Flat's loss was over \$50,000 and only three brick buildings withstood and remain to this day. One of these buildings was one in which a store was maintained in the early days, first by a Mr. Dexter, then by a Mr. Gamble and then by J. D. Murphy.¹

¹ Information furnished by Mrs. E. G. Gobden of Big Oak Flat.

CHAPTER X
EARLY NEWSPAPERS

The first newspaper to be printed in Tuolumne County or anywhere in the mountains of California was the weekly Sonora Herald. The first issue appeared on the morning of July 4, 1850. The advent of this mining paper was heralded by the following notice in a Stockton paper.

Advertisement--Sonora Herald. On or before the 4th day of July next, the first number of the Sonora Herald will be published¹ in the town of Sonora. Part will be printed in Spanish.

The first seven issues of the paper were printed on paper nine by thirteen inches. With the eighth number the page was enlarged to twelve by seventeen inches. Several issues of the paper were printed on wrapping paper as news print could not be obtained. The subscription price was twenty dollars a year. Single copies sold for fifty cents each. Advertisements cost \$4.00 for six lines or less.

The press upon which the first issues were printed had an interesting history. Brought by ship from Boston to Monterey in 1832 by Augustine Zamorano, after the American occupation it was used by Colton and Semple to

¹ Stockton Times, June 22, 1850.

print the California Star, the first paper issued in California and on the whole Pacific slope. When the Star was united with the Alta Californian, the press was removed to San Francisco, from which place the combination paper was issued. When improved machinery was purchased the old press was moved to Sacramento and used to publish the Placer Times, the first paper of the interior. The press was then purchased by James White and W. A. Root, who used it to publish the Stockton Times and later the Sonora Herald.

It was finally sold to the editor of the Columbia Star, who failed to pay for it and it was attached by creditors, but before it could be removed it was carried to the street during the night and burned by sympathizers.

The frame, platen, ribs and part of the bed were of wood, the bed on which the forms lay were of stone, and the screw by which the impression was taken was of iron.

During the existence of the Sonora Herald a large number of editors shaped its policies and politics. The following is a list of the editors in chronological order, some having had the position two and three times: James White, J. G. Marvin, J. R. Reynolds, Dr. L. C. Gunn, E. L. Chrisman, Walter Murray, J. O'Sullivan, Dr. C. Gunn, J. O'Sullivan, Alexander Murray, E. A. Rockwell and J. O'Sullivan. In politics it was Independent,

Democratic, American (Know Nothing) Whig, and finally Republican.

The Herald usually ran two or more columns in Spanish and occasionally a column in French. The first number carried an advertisement of the first stage line from Sonora to Stockton and another of Judge J. G. Marvin's express line connecting San Francisco with the Southern Mines. A May, 1851, issue states that the census is about to be completed and that the population of Tuolumne County will be shown to be between eighteen and twenty thousand persons. Another note in this issue stated that the subscription price was to be reduced from twenty to ten dollars a year.¹

Dr. L. C. Gunn bought an interest in the Sonora Herald in November, 1850, and soon thereafter began building an adobe house to be used for a printing office, recorder's office (he being the County Recorder), with dwelling rooms in the upper story, his family now being on their way from the States. This was the first two-story house in Sonora.²

A March, 1851, issue of the Placer Times of Sacramento carried an editorial telling of the shipping of a press to Nevada City and the beginning of the Nevada Messenger, which it heralded as being the first paper in the mining region. In answer to this the Stockton Times noted as

Theodore H. Hittell, History of Calif., III, 35-37, 71;
Anna Lee Marston, Records of a Calif. Family, 252.

² Anna Lee Marston, Records of a Calif. Family, 84.

follows:

We beg friend Lawrence's pardon--The first newspaper in the mountains was the Sonora Herald established by the proprietors of the Stockton Times; James White and W. A. Root.¹

On October 25, 1851, the first issue of a new weekly newspaper, the Columbia Star, was issued by W. Gore on the old Ramage Press formerly used by the Sonora Herald. The first copy struck off was purchased by Mrs. De Noille for an ounce of gold. Mrs. De Noille was the first white woman in Columbia and the second in the county and was very much interested in the progress of the city.²

The life of the Columbia Star was very short and the paper was soon in financial difficulties.

In November, 1852, a new weekly, the Columbia Gazette, edited by Colonel Falconer, made its debut. This paper prospered for three years and on November 10, 1855, it was merged into the Columbia and Southern Mines Adviser. A year later Colonel Falconer sold his interest to John Duchow and T. M. Yaney, Mr. Duchow becoming editor. Yaney sold his interest to R. J. Steete later. The combined paper was a four page issue, just a little smaller than the Sonora Herald.³

¹ Stockton Times, April 2, 1851.

² H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 101.

³ Ibid.

The Clipper was established in Columbia in May, 1854, by Heckdown and Gist.¹

On June 21, 1856, the weekly Columbian appeared. Messrs. Oliver and Wilson were editors and proprietors.

On June 20, 1856, the Tuolumne Courier appeared at Columbia. The editors and proprietors were W. A. and J. C. Duchow and J. E. Urmy.

In June, 1858, the Sonora Herald suspended publication and on July 16, 1866, the Tuolumne Courier suspended.

Thus, many newspapers were begun, and met with various success; some suspending after a few issues, and others thriving over a span of years.

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 114.

CHAPTER XI
BRINGING IN THE WATER

Water supply early became a problem in the mines. Labor in the mines in many of the diggings was seasonal. At best only a little pay dirt could be thrown up in the dry season for washing when the rains came. In many diggings the wet season was very short indeed. In other sections the amount of water was very inadequate and provided washing facilities for only a few.

In Columbia there came a crying need for water very early after the first great rush. In June 26, 1851, a number of interested people from various camps met in Columbia to determine the advisability of bringing water from the Stanislaus River into the diggings. W. H. Carleton was appointed President; C. C. Richardson, Vice President; and George Graham, Treasurer. The attendance was large and spirited. A company was organized and a constitution and by-laws were adopted. The stock was divided into 200 shares of which 163 were immediately subscribed.¹

On July 1, 1851, the Tuolumne Water Co. began work at Summit Pass. One hundred and fifty men were at work on the ditch. Their purpose was to bring the water to

¹ San Joaquin Republican, July 2, 1851.

Columbia, Yankee Hill, Shaws Flat, and all other gulches leading into Woods Creek. Joseph Dance had been made President and General Bernard Engineer. The company ran short of money and were assisted by D. O. Mills & Co., bankers of Sacramento, who afterwards established a branch bank at Columbia. A "twenty tom" stream from Five Mile Creek was turned into Columbia May 1, 1852, and for a while this was the only support of the mining industry. The ditch was later constructed to the Stanislaus and brought in a 150 tom stream.¹

The Tuolumne County Water Co. completed the extension of their canal to Montezuma, December 1, 1852, and built a reservoir there. The ditch brought in a stream $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide and 2 feet deep.

The Tuolumne Hydraulic Association tapped the Tuolumne River 25 miles east of Sonora at an elevation of 5,000 feet and built a more extensive ditch.²

There were a few smaller companies. The Seco Company's race brought water from Woods Creek into Campo Seco; the Jackson Flat Race brought water from Mormon Creek into Jackson Flat. In February the Sonora Water Company's ditch began conveying water from Sullivan's Creek to Sonora. The Sullivan's Creek Race brought

¹ San Joaquin Republican, July 9, 1851;
H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 120, 126-7.

² H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 115.

water from Sullivan's Creek to Shaws Flat. This race was able to bring in water during only a few weeks each season, but it paid the expense of digging and handsome dividends besides. Miners flocked into the vicinity of the water, and life and activity prevailed in a region which was afterwards nearly deserted. This company extended its ditch to the Tuolumne River and was able to supply for a longer period the following year.

In the fall of 1854 the Columbia Stanislaus River Water Co. was formed because the Tuolumne Company was not bringing in a sufficient supply of water and their charges were said to be too high. A meeting was called in September and the following directors were elected: J. W. Coffroth, President; G. W. Whitman; S. Ingersoll; James McLean; John Jolly; S. Knapp; Dr. Windler, Secretary; T. N. Carneau, Treasurer; W. Daegerer (of Wells Fargo Express Company); A. Fletcher, Supt.; and T. L. Trask, Engineer.

The ditch was to be 20 miles in length but was later extended to 60 miles. The upper 8 miles was in deep loamy soil and required ditching only. The next section was over broken country, a considerable portion of which had to be flumed to carry the water across gullies or barren, rocky places. The last nine and one-half miles required fluming all the way. However, along the entire

course there was an abundance of fir, pine and cedar which could be used for fluming. Flumes were built of boards to carry the water across the gullies or over places too stony for ditches to be dug.

Owing to financial matters, little was accomplished until the next spring and it might not have been completed at all but for a favorable circumstance.

The miners felt that they were paying the Tuolumne Water Co. too much for their water. They met and petitioned the company to reduce the rates to \$4.00 per day for a one ton stream. The company replied that it was impossible to reduce the price. The miners met again and pledged themselves to strike against the price, and arranged to have all claims of those who would cease operations and strike protected against jumpers. They also petitioned the office of the Columbia and Stanislaus River Water Co. to recommence work on their canal in order to provide work for the striking men. This company agreed to do so, providing at least 200 miners would provision themselves while they worked. They were to be paid in stock at the rate of \$4.00 per day. Arrangements were also made to provision an additional number who were not able to do so for themselves. It was estimated that 500 men could finish the work in 35 days. The miners accepted and began work at once.

As might be expected the Tuolumne County Water Co., seeing their mistake, their water going to waste, and a large competitive ditch being rapidly finished, offered to hire the idle miners to enlarge their ditch and extend it for $12\frac{1}{2}$ more miles so as to get a larger supply. They agreed to pay in scrip at the rate of \$4.00 per day, which scrip would be good for water at \$4.00 a day for a one ton stream. This offer also was accepted by the miners. The south fork of the Stanislaus River was found to provide an insufficient supply of water so the ditch was extended to the north fork. This latter work was completed in 1858 and a great water celebration was held Monday, November 29, 1858.¹

¹ H. O. Lang, Hist. of Tuolumne County, Calif., 162-172.

CHAPTER XII
TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The topography of Tuolumne County is varied in the extreme. It ranges from low foothill country to the high Sierras. In the lower regions the hills are rounded, the valleys are wide and mature and large flat areas abound.

In the higher portions the mountains are steep and sharp, the valleys are in extreme youth and there are no flats. There are many bars along the more level portions of the river and creek beds. The Stanislaus River cuts across the northern and the Tuolumne River across the southern boundary of the County, and many large and small creeks cut across the county and drain into the one or the other.

Deep soil covers the region in many places, while in others, even on some of the flats, jagged rocks lie exposed. Some of the rocks are igneous in character, others are shale and slate and limestone.

A distinguishing feature of the county is Table Mountain which rises 1000 to 2000 feet above the surrounding country. It extends across the country as a gigantic basaltic wall with a bare, almost level top and nearly perpendicular sides. Geologically it is in a class by itself. It was formed centuries ago by a stream of lava, poured from a volcano or fissure near Silver Mountain in Alpine

County, which flowed in a southwesterly direction for 40 miles down an old river channel which branched about fourteen miles above Columbia. Here it cooled and hardened. During the succeeding ages the banks of the ancient stream, offering less resistance to erosion than the lava, have washed away to a depth of from 500 to 800 feet below the top of the lava, leaving the basalt and lava and even, in places, the gravel of the old river bed above the general level of the country. This solidified stream of lava now appears as a flat-topped mountain, ranging from a few hundred to 2000 feet in width. The lava itself is from 60 to 300 feet in depth. Below the lava is a layer of about 50 feet of clay and sand, and then a layer of gold-bearing gravel of the old river bed, about 25 feet in depth.¹ The layer of clay is rich in the fossil remains of plants, leaves and silicified wood, which place the gravels of this long extinct river bed in the Neocene age. It also contains bones, tusks, and teeth of primitive animals, including man. As well as implements made and used by pre-historic peoples. More than 200 feet below the surface, among the stones of the ancient river bed, at Springfield Flat, a slab of granite, bearing marks believed to have been carved by prehistoric peoples,

¹ Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, III, 147-8; J. Ross Browne, Resources of the Pacific Slope, 38-40.

was found by a miner of the Springfield Tunnel and Development Co. From nearby were removed some bones declared by paleontologists to be those of the three toed horse known as the Hipparian.

The Stanislaus River has cut across the lava flow below Abbey's Ferry and other streams in other places. The State Highway between Oakdale and Sonora passes through two such gaps in the two branches of the mountain, one just east of Yosemite Junction and one about a mile and a half west.

In the gravels beneath Table Mountain there is much gold. Miners have tunneled great distances to reach it and while millions in gold have been taken from beneath the mountain, millions have been spent in getting it, and it is estimated that \$1,000,000 more has been spent than has been taken out.

The topography of the county has undergone many changes. Formerly a very high mountain range lay east of where the Sierra Nevada now stands. All territory to the west was then under the Paleozoic Sea. Volcanoes were numerous and active and oscillations of the earth's crust were frequent. The volcanic ashes that fell into the shallow seas became amphibolite schists, while those that fell upon the land became first mud and then slate. As time went on erosion cut down the lofty elevation to the east and filled in the shallow seas to the west, the sea

receding. Later the Juratrias Sea covered the Mother Lode region and the territory to the eastward. Toward the close of this era a mountain range running in a generally northerly direction, was gradually raised from out of the sea midway between where Sonora and Montezuma now are. By the beginning of the Neocene period it had been eroded to a rolling peneplain with only an occasional monadnock to break the monotony. Later came the volcanic eruptions to the east which were accompanied by masses of rhyolitic pumice which gorged the waterways, causing many to spread out as lakes (now flats). When the eruptions ceased the streams began cutting regular courses. Their grades were made more precipitous and their erosive power augmented by the pushing up of the Sierra Nevada Range by internal forces. Volcanic eruptions came again bringing volcanic mud, conglomerate, sand and fine tuff. Valleys and low hills were buried beneath the torrent of lava and the channel of the large stream, draining the Sierras, was filled. During the succeeding ages the adjoining hills were eroded away, leaving Table Mountain.

The geology of Tuolumne County is very "erratic." A mining engineer, W. H. Storms, has said, "It is more than probable that a cross section taken every half, or even every quarter mile along the Gold Belt, would show an

entirely different structural condition."

The gold was originally thrown up with quartz through fissures or cracks in other rocks. These gold bearing fissures are located mostly on the Western slope of the Sierras from one to four thousand feet above sea level. One of the chief of these is the Mother Lode and its branches or companion veins, distinctly traceable on or near the surface from Mariposa County to Amador County.¹

Geographically the Mother Lode is divided into three systems; the foot wall vein, the large amphibolite schist vein, and the east vein which is by far the richest. The Mother Lode is not a continuous vein of quartz, but disappears absolutely for considerable distances. Actually it is a chain of overlapping veins, all of which occasionally disappear, to continue again in a true line on the opposite side of a barren stretch. Occasionally the quartz continuity is preserved by another vein, perhaps overlapping, lying to the east or west. Some of the larger veins or stringers are banded or ribboned, which has resulted from reopening and refilling the fissure.

The torrential rivers, falling over a hundred feet to the mile, cut through the quartz veins, and with tremendous force tore out the gold and carried it downstream

¹ J. Ross Browne, Resources of the Pacific Slope, 14-15.

to be deposited far or near as circumstances might direct. There were many ancient river beds, "dead rivers", whose currents had run at right angles, north and south, to the courses of present streams, and whose deep gravels abound in placer gold. The greater portion of the gravels of the ancient river beds were quartz, while quartz makes up only a small proportion of the gravels of modern river beds. As might be expected, the gravels of the ancient river beds are much richer in gold. It is very probable that the ancient rivers ran in or along the rich and extensive quartz veins. As time went on most of these old channels were covered up by other deposits. Hence it was that at or just below the places where modern streams cut through ancient river beds the largest deposits of gold have been found.¹

¹ J. Ross Browne, Resources of the Pacific Slope, 38, 40.

CHAPTER XIII

INDUSTRIES

Though mining was the first industry in Tuolumne County it was not the only industry for very long. We have already pointed out that as early as 1849 some settlers were turning their efforts towards agricultural pursuits and making no attempt at mining.

After the glamor of the search for gold had worn off to some extent many who had come to mine realized that the soil was fertile and a living awaited him who would work its surface. Men settled on the land, brought their families ir, and life became more stable. Agricultural products are grains, hay, vegetables, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, honey, and alfalfa.

Stock raising began with the early settlers. Many of the early emigrants, who crossed the plains, brought cattle with them. Though few in number they were important as a beginning. Others obtained a start by purchasing "long horns" from the Mexican rancheros in the valleys. Though this nucleus was of low grade, the quality has been steadily built up. Milk and cheeses are important products.

At one time the sheep business was important and large herds were owned by citizens of the county, and many thousands were brought in to graze on the mountain ranged during the summer months, but conditions have

changed and there are now few sheep in the county. Goat raising and hog raising are profitable.

Fruit growing was begun early in Tuolumne County, but after a short time attracted less interest. After a time it was again revived as an industry, and has now attained great prominence.

It is stated that John Mass planted the first commercial apple orchards. These orchards are now known as the Macomber Orchards, and they have produced the apples from which cider has been made since pioneer days. The Macomber Cider plant was the first factory of any kind in the state and in fact on the whole Pacific Coast. It was established early in 1850.

Tuolumne County is famous for its "big red apple." The principal varieties grown are Winesap, Delicious, Stayman Winesap, Rome Beauty, and King David. The apples grow best at elevations above 2800 feet and the fruit from the higher elevations is superior in size, flavor and keeping qualities to that grown at lower elevations.

Orange trees were planted in frost free areas at French Gardens by Mexicans. This is said to be the first Orange grove in the state and it is still producing.

Other fruit crops are peaches, pears, English walnuts, almonds, figs, olives, cherries and prunes.

A large industry is the utilization of the extensive natural limestone deposits of the county. Marble quarries near Columbia produce very high grade marble. Here they have been taking out marble since 1857 and seem to have hardly made an impression on the supply. The Columbia Marble Co. was organized as a co-partnership in 1891 by W. D. Bannister, David Hearfield, J. J. Crooks and Paul R. Jarboe. They are working upon a body of ore more than a quarter of a mile long, 200 feet wide and a depth approximating 1000 feet. The stone is almost pure lime carbonate. Besides being pure white, some of the marble is veined, some mottled, some in black, some a delicate blue, and some contains buff and red streaks. Mammoth kilns produce a superior grade of lime and kindred products. Other plants produce grits for poultry raisers.

The forests of Tuolumne County are extensive. The early demand for lumber caused the development of many small mills. What is now the plant at Standard City was formed by the uniting of smaller plants. Though there are still a few small plants the lumber industry of the county has become centered at two places--Standard City and Tuolumne City. The forests of the county contain a heavy percentage of sugar pine which is considered the very best of all pine lumbers. All kinds of construction lumber as well as doors, windows and box shooks are

produced. The West Side Lumber Company built its mill on Frank Baker's ranch at Carters, now Tuolumne. This is the eastern terminal of the Sierra Railway. This railway furnishes transportation for the lumber which is cut. The railroad has made the West Side Lumber Company and the West Side Lumber Company has helped to make the railway.

A rival lumber mill was built up five miles away at Standard City. Later both mills came into possession of the Pickering Lumber Company. The nearer timber has been largely cut over and there are now logging railroads running back from both mills up into the higher elevations to tap the virgin forest there.

CHAPTER XIV
BUILDING THE RAILROADS¹

The thought of building a railroad into Tuolumne County dates from the early 50's. Dr. L. C. Gunn became interested in the building of the railroad into Stockton and hoped to have it extended into the mining region. There were others who had similar ideas, but it was not until 1897 that work was actually commenced.

It was at this time that Mr. T. S. Bullock became interested in the possibilities of such a road. At that time Mr. Bullock owned a large acreage of fine timber and he knew that a railroad, which would tap the region, would add greatly to its value as well as provide transportation for the lumber that might be manufactured from it. Mr. Bullock was also the founder of the mill from which the Standard plant has grown.

The original plan was to build the railroad out of Stockton, but for some reason the plans were changed and it was built out of Oakdale.

The Sierra Railway Company of California was incorporated February 2, 1897, and work on the roadbed was started within the month. The contract for construction was given to the West Coast Construction Company which was paid a set rate per mile in the securities of the

¹ The official data of this chapter were furnished by Mr. Cheney of the office of the Sierra R.R.Co., Jamestown.

railway company. It is not clear whether they kept these securities themselves or sold them on the market, though it was probably the latter. There are no figures available as to the actual cost of the road, but it is estimated to be close to \$3,000,000.

When the railroad was first started it met with antagonism and opposition. A large portion of the population opposed the railroad on the ground that it threatened to put the picturesque freight wagons and stage coaches out of business. However the work advanced steadily and in time trains were being run as far as Coopers-town. The stages thereupon took Cooperstown as their western terminus rather than Oakdale. In time the road was completed to Chinese Camp and then to Jamestown. Up to this time no great engineering problems had arisen, but from here on, railroad building was not to be so easy. Mr. W. H. Newell was then called in and made chief engineer, a position which he held until 1932, when he retired from active service.

Under the supervision of Mr. Newell the railroad was pushed on to Sonora and thence to Carters (now Tuolumne), and a branch was built from Jamestown to Angels Camp. This branch brought in many problems in engineering, since the roadbed had to drop to the grade of the Stanislaus River and rise again on the other side, and the character

of the surface was very rugged. It was decided to use a system of switchbacks to make the descent to the river and the ascent on the other side. They were so installed, and are in use today, one of the few cases in which such a system is still being used in America.

At the eastern terminus of the road, Carters, the West Side Lumber Company established its huge plant on what was then known as Frank Baker's Ranch, but which had first been settled by Mr. Frank Summers. From this point they built their logging road, the Hetch Hetchy and Yosemite Valley Railway, up into the high Sierras to the eastward where it taps the vast timber belt.

From Campbell's (now Ralph's) Station, the Standard Lumber Company built the Sugar Pine Railway to tap the great sugar pine belt and bring the logs to their mill at Standard City.

Thus the Sierra Railway is directly responsible for the building of the West Side Lumber Mill and the growth of the Standard Mill from a very small beginning. The roadbed extends from Oakdale in an eastward direction to Tuolumne, a distance of 57 miles, and, with the Angels branch of about 20 miles, comprises about 77 miles of track, most of which passes through mountainous regions abounding in beautiful scenery.

The principal shipments over the Sierra Railway are lumber and lumber products, including sashes, doors,

blinds, boxes, etc., lime, limestone, marble, chicken grits, gold and other ores, fruit, cattle, etc., and the food and clothing that is necessarily shipped in.

CHAPTER XV

PLACES OF HISTORIC INTEREST

The State Highway, which leaves Oakdale toward the east, passes through Tuolumne County. Traveling along this highway, one enters Tuolumne County just east of Knights Ferry. The road passes on, winding around low hills and dipping in and out of ravines until, as it rounds the point of a row of monadocks on the peneplane, one catches the first glimpse of Table Mountain. As one approaches he marvels at the vertical sides and recalls that where that mountain now is was once a valley, and where he now is was once the location of a mountain that has long since been eroded and washed down to the sea. A gap appears in the mountain. One passes through where a stream once cut a channel. As one comes out into the valley beyond, he sees another branch of the mountain a mile or so distant. Just before reaching this other section one finds that the road divides. The branch to the right leads into Yosemite Valley over the Big Oak Flat road. Continuing straight on, within a minute or two, one passes through the gap in this section of the mountain. A few miles further on another branch of the road leads to the south. This branch connects with Yosemite road and will be considered later in a side trip.

A few miles further on the road cuts through the point of a hill. On the little hummock left on the right hand side of the road a monument built neatly of stones is to be seen. On its front there is a bronze plate. This monument is one of a number placed throughout the county by the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce to mark the location of historic spots. The inscription on the bronze plate states that gold was first discovered in Tuolumne County at a point 100 yards south, where the old road crossed the creek. On the site of Woods Crossing there is little to remind one of the days of '49. As one continues around the hill he sees activity on the mountain side where a mine is in operation. Half a mile further on, across a concrete bridge, is Jamestown. Here along the one street are to be seen old buildings with iron doors, a characteristic necessity of the "days of gold", when bullets were sent flying with little provocation. Jamestown does not all lie on this one street in the valley. Upon the hill to the right are to be found the elementary school, churches, the depot and many modern homes. Leaving Jamestown one crosses over the tracks of the "Angels Branch" of the Sierra Railway. The highway continues on up Woods Creek over a hill, and, four miles above, drops down into Sonora.

Sonora is a modern town of four or five thousand people. Yet many of the buildings date from the gold rush

days. Only a very few of the buildings on the principal thoroughfare (Washington Street) still retain their iron doors, but one block off this street are to be found many such mementos. Many of the buildings have been modernized, and, at first glance, there is little to remind one of the past. However there are frequently window displays of relics of the past and the county is now gathering relics for a museum.

The Episcopal Church still stands at the head of Washington Street, and though once partially destroyed by fire, it is much the same as it was when first built in 1859.



Episcopal Church, Sonora

Passing out of the town at the southern end, the highway leads on around the sides of hills and crosses Sullivan's Creek over a concrete bridge. Just across the bridge the road turns abruptly to the left (the branch straight ahead leads into Tuolumne City) and passes on to Twain Harte, Confidence, Long Barn, Strawberry and Pine Crest, which are scenes of summer resorts and

winter sports. The highway continues on past Dardanelle and Sonora Pass and finally across Mono County into Nevada.

Those who wish to view the many historic places of the county must take a number of side trips from the main highway.

One very interesting of these side trips is to leave the highway about four miles below Jamestown. This road soon connects with the Big Oak Flat Road leading to Yosemite Valley. The first historic place on this road is Chinese Camp. Here are found a few old buildings and

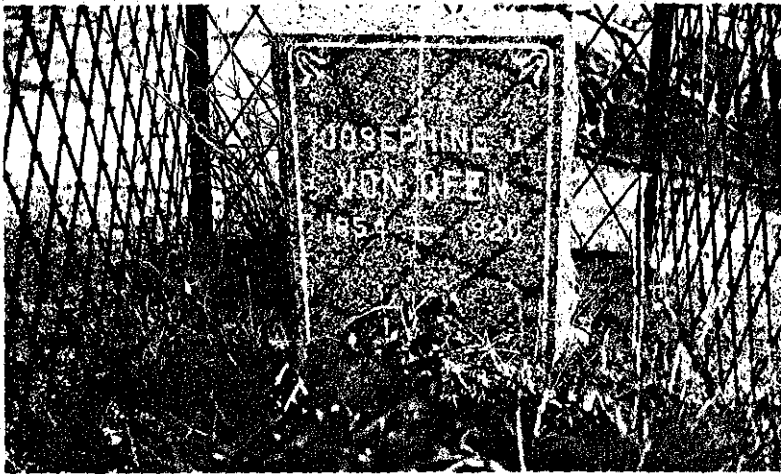


Old Building at Chinese Camp

parts of the walls of others that have fallen into decay. One old building is in good repair. It is now being used as the post office. Its old iron doors are easily discernible in the picture. Four miles further on across

Sullivan's Creek is Jacksonville. Eleven miles beyond, up the long climb of Priest's Grade, lies Big Oak Flat.

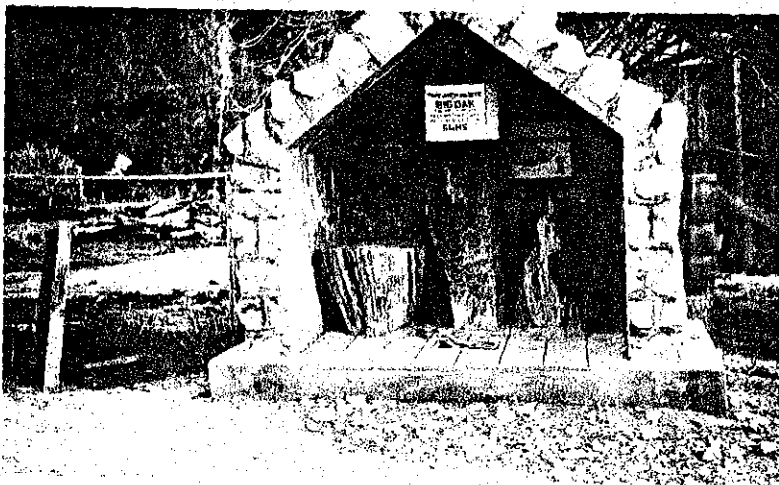
Big Oak Flat has still some of the earmarks of the early days. Some of the old buildings remain and the town still has the appearance of being a mining camp. Here one may meet two dear old women, Mrs. Norman Smith, who was born at Moccasin Creek in 1868, and her sister, Mrs. E. G. Cobden, who was born in Big Oak Flat in 1870. Their father was an early settler by the name of Lewis Marconi and a relative of the inventor of wireless. They will tell stories of single shovels full of dirt that contained as high as \$80.00 in gold. They will point out the grave and tombstone of the first white child born in the town. She was Mrs. Josephine J. Van Ofen, nee Voight,



Grave of Mrs. Van Ofen

whose ashes have been interred in the same grave with her mother, not in the regular cemetery, but on a little

knoll about three blocks below the cemetery and a block from the highway. These women will tell of the Catholic Church on the hill above the town and that it was built before their birth (probably 1854). Both women were confirmed there by Father Alamany, first Bishop of San Francisco, who was then between 80 and 90 years of age and who passed away soon afterwards. They will show you over a brick building, now in their possession, which was one of three or four that withstood the great fire that destroyed the remainder of the town. This building was built for a store and was owned at different times by a Mr. Dexter, a Mr. Gamble and J. D. Murphy. They will tell of the big oak from which the town received its name. They will tell that the tree was undermined in the search for gold, that it fell over before they were born, that they played on and around its fallen trunk in their childhood, that the tree was set on fire (supposedly by tramps)



Remains of the Big Oak, Big Oak Flat

on February 10, 1910, and most of it consumed. The few remaining pieces have been preserved in a neat little stone and cement house.

Two miles further on is Groveland, a town which also has survived the gold rush days. Many of the old adobe buildings still remain. Some are unrecognizable as such with their overlaid sheet iron fronts and stucco coatings. Here may be found a Mr. Laveroni who was born in this town some seventy years ago. He will point out the oldest



Old Jake's Saloon

building in the town, constructed, not of adobe, but of blocks of hewn stone. The building is now used as a billiard and soft drink parlor. In former days it was the saloon kept by old Jake Farri and was the "hangout" of Black Bart.

Two miles further on are to be found two more objects of interest. They stand one on either side of the highway.

Hangman's Tree is a large oak that frequently served this gruesome purpose some eighty years ago and stands just off the left of the highway. In fact the highway swings around it.

This memento of the past has been delimbed and is now almost dead. A few years more and it will belong to history alone.

Across the highway, hidden behind a service station, is the old Bret Harte Cabin. This old cabin has



Hangman's Tree

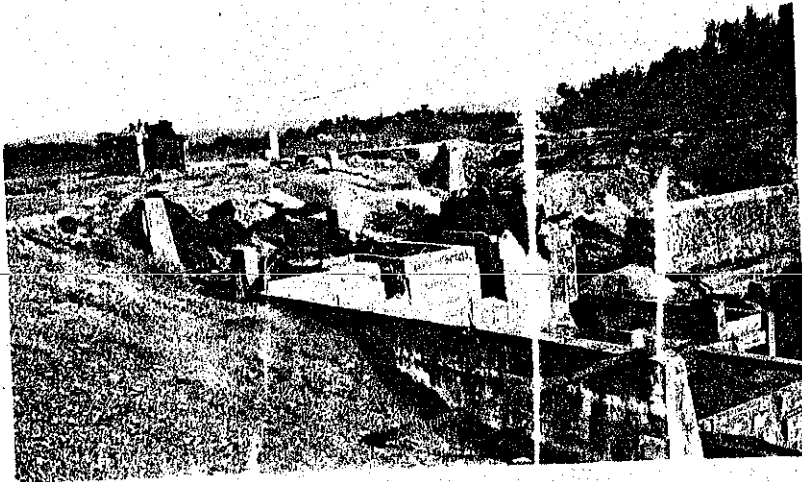


Bret Harte Cabin

been made famous as being the home of Chamberlain and Chaffe, the heroes of "Tennessee's Pardner", and for that reason has been christened the "Bret Harte Cabin."

On the way back, partly down the grade below Big Oak Flat, one may take a branch road down to the Moccasin Power House on the Tuolumne River. This power station was erected by the city of San Francisco in 1925. It is a modern, up-to-date plant and includes a modern little city of 32 homes, a club and boarding house, an elementary school of 46 pupils, paved streets, green lawns, shade trees, etc. The population is between 175 and 200. Leaving here one may take the road down the river and so connect with the highway near Jacksonville.

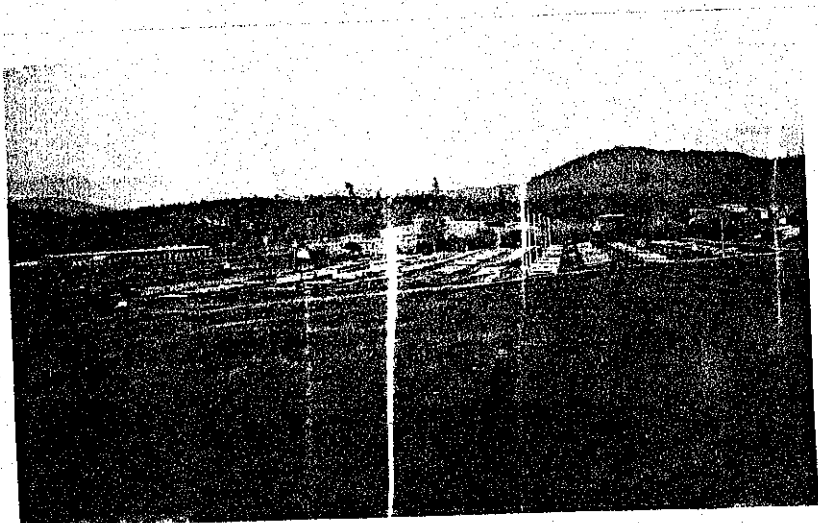
Another side trip from the state highway leads off south from Jamestown. Just below Jamestown is Quartz, once also called Quartz Mountain. There is little here but the name. All is desolate. Fire has taken a fearful toll from some of the fine mine buildings. Steel rails lie twisted out of shape. Only the concrete foundations remain. A mile or so farther on is Stent, known in pioneer days as Poverty Hill. Here is another city that has not survived. There remain a few scattered buildings dating from more recent times. There are numerous holes in the surface that were once cellars under houses now long since passed away. From Stent one may return to the highway by a more easterly route and pass by Montezuma,



Remains of a Mine at Quartz

Algerine, and Wards Ferry.

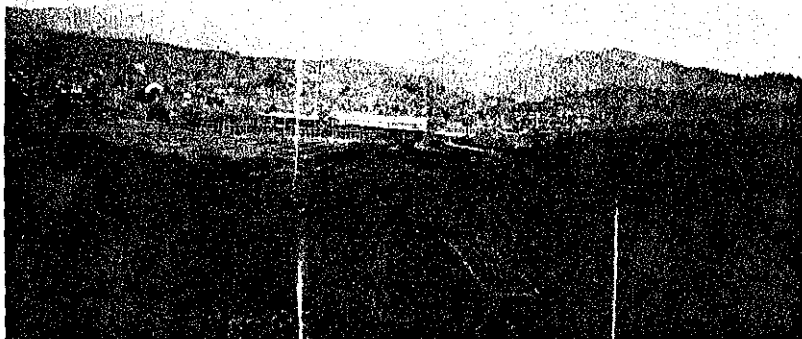
Another side trip to the south of the state highway leads straight on after crossing the bridge over Sullivan's Creek three miles east of Sonora. This is a paved road and passes near Standard City and on to Tuolumne City. Standard



Standard Lumber Plant

City is the location of a large lumber plant on the left of the road, about five miles east of Sonora. The city itself lies tucked among the hills about a mile off the highway. It is mostly the property of the Pickering Lumber Company, the owners of the Standard Mill.

Five miles further on is Tuolumne City. One may get his first view of this city by looking across the lumber yards as he comes down the hill from Ralph Station. The



Looking Down into Tuolumne

name Tuolumne was applied by the West Side Lumber Company after they built their mill here. The town began its existence as Summerville. Franklin Summers, a Missourian, was a California immigrant in 1850, coming by way of Cape Horn. He mined successfully at Shaws Flat and in 1852 returned by way of the "Horn" and brought his wife and family across the plains to the mines. In the fall of 1854

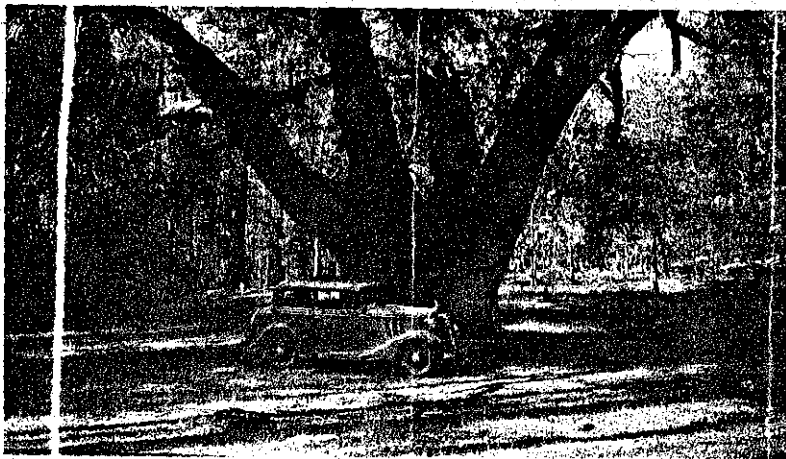
after selling his claim in Shaws Flat, he moved his family into an unbroken wilderness in the eastern part of the county. This farm later became the location of the West Side Lumber Company and the town of Tuolumne. The next people to come into this region were the Scott brothers, halfbreed Cherokees. They found gold two miles further up Turn Back Creek in 1855, and the town of Cherokee sprung up. It is now but a memory. In 1856 Mr. Summers was murdered at French Bar, now known as La Grange. Mrs. Summers opened a boarding house for the miners who were locating on Turnback Creek. The settlement including the Summers home and the miners cabins was called Summersville by the miners in compliment to Mrs. Summers.¹

Later the settlement extended up the gulch to the northeast. Afterward in order to avoid confusion with another town in the state, the postal authorities changed the name to Carters. The West Side Lumber Company were responsible for the change to Tuolumne. Over the hill between Tuolumne and the Mono Road is Soulsbyville, founded in the late 50's by Ben Soulsby. It is the location of several quartz mines, including the Soulsby Mine. Out seven miles beyond Tuolumne on the other side of the north fork of the Tuolumne River is the Tuolumne Big Oak, which

¹ Mrs. Lee Whipple Haslam, Early Days in Calif., etc., 7, 14-16.

is said to be the largest live oak in existence and whose foliage shades nearly an acre.

To the north of the state highway, east of Sonora, is to be found Phoenix Lake and the Phoenix Power House. This is now the property of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The present installation in the power house



The Tuolumne Big Oak

produces 1200 kilowatts.

A most interesting part of the county lies north of the highway. This territory is best reached by leaving Sonora on the road to the north. This road leads out past Brown's Flat, an old placer digging. Just beyond the road divides, one branch leading to Columbia and the other toward Angels Camp.

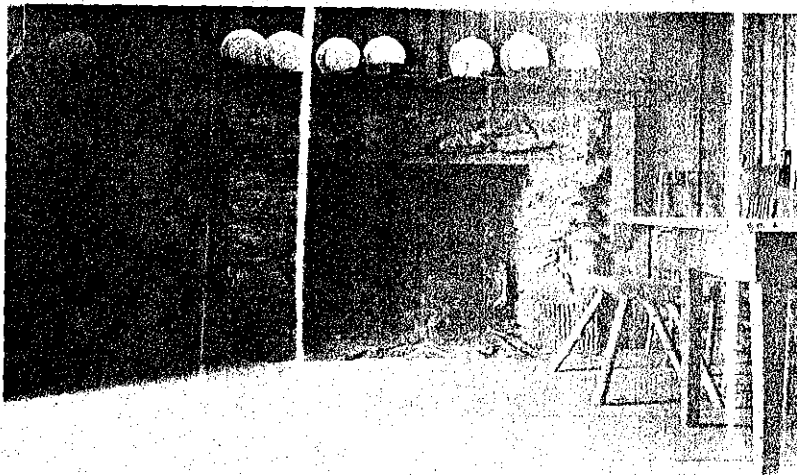
A few miles out on the Angels Road lies Tuttletown. Probably the most striking object in Tuttletown is the



Old Schwerer Stone Store

old Schwerer stone store with its iron doors, but this is not the oldest building in the town. That honor goes to the one story section of the J. Edwards establishment in front of and to the right of the stone store. This was formerly the old Bryce Hotel.

Continuing on toward Angels Camp one may climb up Jackass Hill and view more old mining shafts and the Mark Twain Cabin. The original Mark Twain Cabin



Fireplace in the old Mark Twain Cabin

was destroyed by fire but the fireplace remained intact. A new cabin on the plan of the old one has been constructed around the fireplace by the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce. The site has been purchased by the Board of County Supervisors. In the cabin may be seen relics of former days, including an old spool bed, other furniture and chinaware. Mr. Harry Thienes is caretaker of the property.

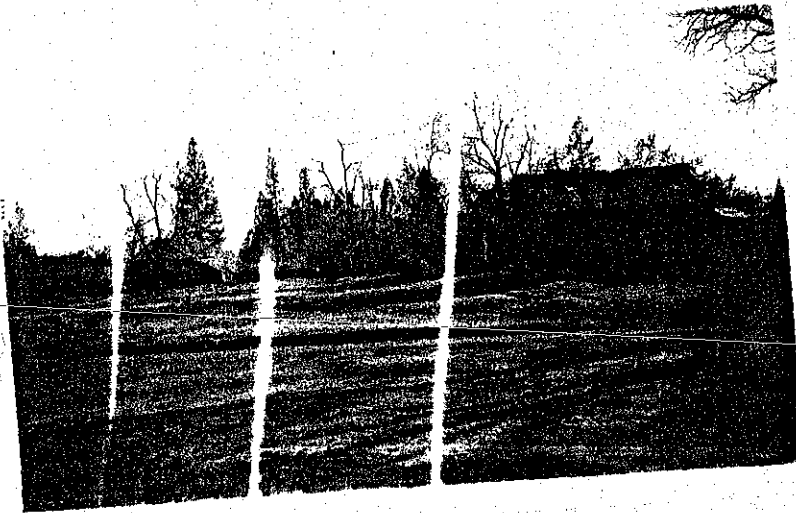
One may retrace his steps from Jackass Hill back through Tuttle town and turn off on the old Sonora road to Shaws Flat. Here is to be found an old building of the 50's, now used as a service station and store. It



Old Hardware Store, Shaws Flat

was originally a hardware store kept by Mr. John B. Stetson of Holbrook, Merrill and Stetson of San Francisco. The building is in fair repair and within are to be

found many relics of former times.



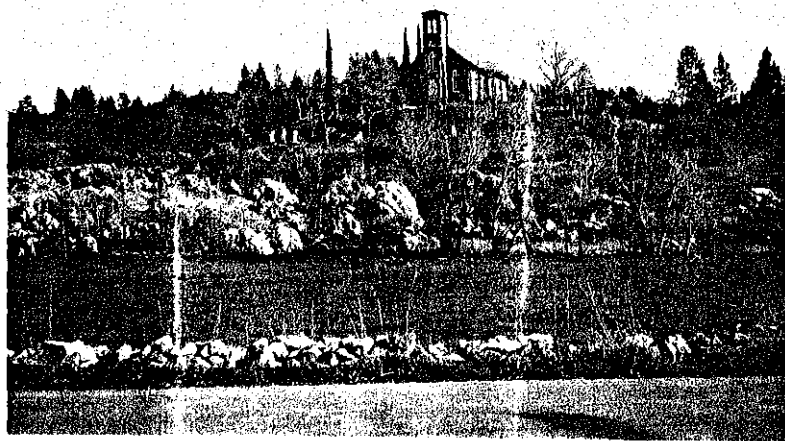
Springfield Today

Turning back abruptly at an angle of 50 degrees in front of this store, one may soon reach and cross the highway. One mile beyond the highway lies what remains of Springfield, just a few old frame houses. Between Springfield and Columbia is the vast limestone belt that produced so many millions in placer gold. On this area, which was once a tree covered plain, some five to fifteen feet higher than at present, we see only limestone boulders protruding through the scanty soil. The road runs eastwardly toward Columbia, joining the Sonora-Columbia road at a sharp angle. At the vertex of the angle an old bell has been mounted on an iron pipe and just back of the bell inside the fence is an old brass canon on a base of concrete, both mementos of former days.



Old Brass Canon

Continuing on toward Columbia one may get a splendid view of St. Anne's Church on the hill to the right. This church was built in 1856. The statuary, frescoes, and altar coverings are renowned for their beauty and delicacy.



St. Anne's Church from the Highway

Among the older residents of this town is Mr. Leon Ponce born nearby at Valledito (little valley) some 68 years ago, but who has lived at Columbia since a few months of age. He will obligingly point out the places of interest in Columbia.



Old Express Office, Columbia

Columbia is rich in mementos of the days when it was the "Gem of the Southern Mines." There is the old Presbyterian Church, built in 1857. There is the old brick building used as the Wells Fargo Express office since 1855; the original office, founded in 1852 having burned in the fire of 1854. In this old building, now used as a museum, are many relics including the pair of scales that is reputed to have weighed

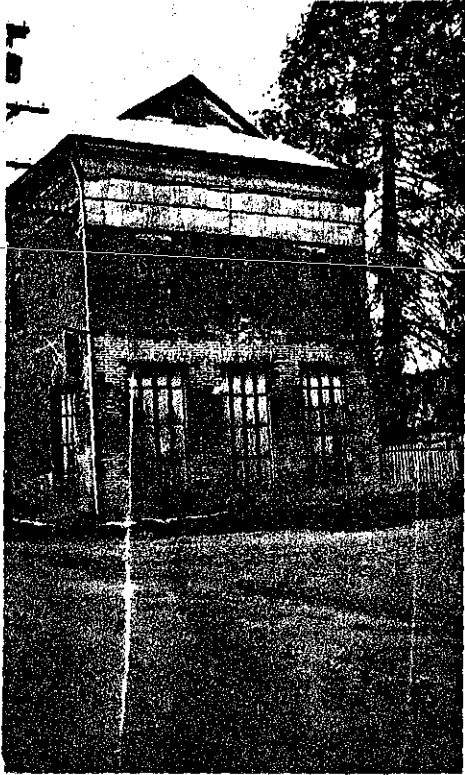
fifty-five millions in gold. Another old brick building connects this building with what appears to be a modern building. However, this building, which now houses a very modern candy factory and store, is the one which was used by the old O. D. Mills Bank and is about the



Old Mills Bank Building, Columbia

same age as the Express Office. Just across the street
~~is another old building. This was the old stage building.~~
All stages arrived at and departed from this spot. The
old stage bulletin board is still to be seen on the
corner of this building. It is now used as a lounging
and reading room and contains many relics, and is main-
tained by the bounty of a past resident of Columbia, and
donations left by visitors. Columbia is richer than
any of the other "diggings" in old buildings that have
survived. Another old building that is worthy of men-
tion is the two story Odd Fellows Building which was
built in the early days by Tuolumne Lodge No. 21. It
is still their home.

Thus it is seen that Tuolumne County is rich in history and abounds in historic places. While many of the old buildings with their furnishings have suffered the ravages of fire, there still remain many in good repair. It is only right and proper that efforts should be made to preserve those that do remain. An interest seems to be awakening along this line.



I. O. O. F. Hall, Columbia

Old Tuolumne¹

It is tinged with all the romance
 Of the days of forty nine,
 It is fringed with all the beauty
 Of its cedar trees and pine;
 And it spreads the wings of memory
 Like some fairy fantasy
 To the days of ancient glory
 Of Old Tuolumne.

And the miner in his red shirt
 O, a treasured memory fills,
 As he treads an old-time pathway
 Down the red dust of the hills.

¹ Harry T. Fee in the Stockton Record, May 11, 1929.

And he comes back to the old haunts
Just as he used to be
To the county and the bounty
Of Old Tuolumne.

I sit here in the sunshine
With the veil of romance spread
And I conjure life and beauty
From the portals of the dead.
From the treasure house of dreamland,
O, it all comes back to me
The glamour and the glory
Of Old Tuolumne.



Old Stage Saloon

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