

JOE GHIORSO
and
The Ratto Ranch
(Shaws Flat)

by

Richard L. Dyer

Shaws Flat, California
December, 1976

Interviewee Joe Ghiorso
December, 1976

Tape 1, Side A

Topics Introduced

Biographical information

Father: "John" Giovonni

Mother: Maria Leonardino (corrected)

Children: Kate, Johnnie, Frank,
Chester, Joe & Pete

Joe Ghiorso: born Nov. 27, 1891

Raised by Kate and her husband

Relatives

Italian ties

Childhood in Tuolumne County

Family homes

Neighbors

Schooling

Young ranch hand

Haying

Trips to Bodie to sell fruit

Side B

Description of Mono Road

Earning spending money

Amusement

Swimming

Hunting

Trips to Mississippi House

Tape 2, Side A

Joe's vocations

Reasons for selecting various jobs

Ranching

Cowboys

Indians

Horses

Side B

Cattle dogs

Side arms

Attire

Busy period

Slack period

Rodeos

Trips to town

Cattle ranching

Sheep herders

Various breeds

Prime bulls

Hoof and mouth disease

Interviewee Joe Gniorso
December,, 1976

Tape 2, Side B

Topics Introduced
Cattle ranching (Continued)
Diseases and sicknesses
Branding
Feed lots
Marketing
Expenses.....profits
Singing to cattle

Tape 3, Side A

Cattle rangelands
Winter
Summer
Areas
Use permits
Dangers
Accommodations for cowboys
Damage to grasslands
Firing the rangeland
Long Drives
Changes through the years
Rustlers

Side B

Would you do it again?
Changing Tuolumne County
Land costs
Residents
The Hard life
Uniquess^{NC} of Tuolumne County

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NOTE: The next tape is an overview of the Ratto Ranch.
See the enclosed "Chispa" article for related information.

Tape 4, Side A

Topics Introduced
J. B. Ratto
Purchase of Knight Ranch
Children share in ranch

General description
Local roads
Shaws Flat
Ranch Buildings
House
Barn

Interviewee Joe Ghiorso
December, 1976

Tape 4, Side A

Topics Introduced

Ranch Buildings (Continued)

Smoke House

Bunk House

Garden

Orchard

Water sources

Ranch activities

Haying

Raising animals/fowl

Turkeys and chickens

Pigs

Milk cows

Horses

Beef cows

Canning, sewing, knitting, etc.

Side B

Socializing

Yearly routine

Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

The Rancher's life

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Joe's mother, Maria Leonardino, died in 1891 while giving birth to him.

Joe's father, "John," remarried (Katherine).

Joe attended Browns Flat School for about 7 or 8 years.

Catherine "Kate" Ratto, Joe's sister, died in 1962.

Adolph "Dolph" Ratto, Kate's husband, died in 1935.

Joe moved to the Ratto Ranch during the early 1900's.

Joe served in the U.S. Army Infantry about 1918 - 1919.

Joe acquired the Ratto Ranch with the death of Joe Ratto,

"Dolph's" brother, in 1963.

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Joe Ghiorso and the Ratto Ranch

By Richard Dyer

IN SHAWS FLAT at the turn of the century the unwary traveler could "bog out of sight" in the winter mud on the roads. In the summer he would stir up the powdery dust so ranchers would see a dust cloud before the rider. These were common conditions in rural Tuolumne County at the time but they did not deter Giovanni Batista Ratto — Sonora merchant and not too successful part-time miner — from securing loans to purchase the Knight Dairy Ranch of Shaws Flat in 1867, and additional acreage nearby shortly thereafter. Eventually J. B. Ratto acquired 240 acres but died in 1907 in debt. It was not until the 1910's that his children, Perry, Dolph, Emile, Joe and Mary, were able to use a small inheritance from a relative in southern California to pay off the mortgage on the ranch.

The flats in the area had been systematically excavated by the gold seeking miners exposing large limestone boulders but later during the course of the hydraulic mining in neighboring Columbia and Springfield the run-off of silt and debris settled in the depressions and the native grasses, clover and filaree returned to the flats.

The old Knight house was removed about 1908 to make room for a more modern two-story ranch house which still stands. Construction lumber was secured from the Conlin Lumber Mill at Strawberry in exchange for hay raised on the ranch. Some of the Sugar Pine lumber



Joe Ghiorso and his veteran cow dog and best pal, Brownie.

Five of Tuolumne County's well known and highly respected senior citizens, whose memories of local life extend back to the end of the last century, are featured in this issue.

Each is a descendant of a family which has been closely associated with this area for well over a hundred years. All have experienced the drastic technical and social changes which have shaken and reshaped the world since the days of their youth when life was more predictable and lived at a slower, perhaps more satisfying, pace.

In their accounts they reveal that they shared the common experience of hard work and responsibility which was an accepted part of life at the turn of the century, and collectively they reflect the fact that the economy of this country was then dependent upon the soil and its products, whether produce, livestock, timber or gold.

The sketches presented here are based on oral interviews made by members of the editorial staff of CHISPA.

was purchased for \$15 to \$20 per thousand board feet. John Rocco was hired to supervise the construction of the new home for \$3.00 per day and board at the ranch. Assisting John Rocco were the Rattos and the young Ghiorso boys, Joe and Pete, who had moved to the ranch after their sister, Kate, married Adolph "Dolph" Ratto in 1904.

The upstairs of the house was never finished since Perry and Joe Ratto and Joe Ghiorso and an ever changing list of hired hands chose to sleep in a nearby two-room bunk house.

Work at the Ratto ranch was demanding and the hours were long for the men and women. Before sun-up the women would be preparing the food for the day and washing, mending and sewing for the men. The women "had something to do all the time." The men would be milking the half-wild Durham cows, feeding the horses, cutting wood, preparing the field equipment and harnessing the plow horses for work in the fields.

Even during the winter repairs were made, painting was done, harnesses were oiled and blacked, miles of fence was checked and animals were slaughtered and the meat was smoked, corned and cured. Sausages, prepared with special herbs, spices and meats, were smoked and put up to season for use later. During their slack time, the ranch hands were regularly riding herd and doctoring sick "critters." A rancher never quite finished his chores.

About March, or as soon as the heavy clay soil could be turned, the plowing started. Vegetables were planted near the orchard and oats and, occasionally, wheat were sown. Usually three fields were worked — one recently sown, another with grown oat hay and the last lying fallow for use next season. In May or June the grass and oat hay were cut and stored in the barn. Also at the same time, surplus Durham cows and calves were sold; a pair

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"CHISPA," the title of the quarterly publication of the Tuolumne County Historical Society, is a word of Spanish origin which enjoys a special association with the history of this area. Although it had a variety of meanings, ranging from "sparks" or "embers" to "cleverness" or "wit," locally it acquired an additional colloquial meaning as it was also used to describe any nugget or specimen of gold, and particularly one of great beauty or high radiance.

The term was introduced to the diggings of Tuolumne County by pioneer miners from the State of Sonora, Mexico, and was quickly adopted into the vocabulary of the many nationalities who mined here.

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sold for as little as \$12.50. Dolph Ratto sold the grass fattened stock to local merchants and families.

Haying was a busy time at the ranch. The hay was mowed, raked, shocked, hauled and temporarily stacked for drying. By the end of the summer a neighbor with a hay bailer helped bail the oat hay; he received \$1.50 to \$2.00 a ton. The bales, some weighing as much as 200 pounds, were lifted by one man and "pushed with the belly" to a stacker on a nearby wagon. About half of the Ratto hay was sold to the Standard Lumber Company in Sonora for as little as \$10 a ton. The remainder was stored in the barn for sale later, hopefully for a better price.

The long hours and dirty work during the early summer were broken by the Fourth of July holiday. This was the long awaited patriotic celebration in Columbia, Sonora or Jamestown.

The booming of a small cannon on Leonard Hill in Sonora at daybreak announced the start of the celebration. While firecrackers crackled around the town, the families participated in the festivities. People thronged the streets to view the parade. The Goddess of Liberty, colorfully attired school children, elaborately adorned wagons, marching groups and elected local officials delighted the onlookers. After the parade and patriotic speeches, the youngsters entered the sack race, greased pig contest or three-legged race; an adventurous few even tried to climb the greased pole to get the cash prize attached to the top. The men entered the horse races, double jack drilling contest, tug-of-war or other activities designed to pit their manly prowess against a neighbor-competitor. The women looked forward to visits with relatives and acquaintances not seen since the last celebration.

Patriotic observances were taken for granted — but woe on those who kept their hat on when Old Glory passed by. Sonora Banner editor, A. J. "Old Man" Jones, packed his revolver as a silent reminder to a few mindless onlookers that the hat must be doffed for the passing flag. In the evening many joined the dancers at one of the halls for an evening of "jollification," in fact, for an evening and a half since the dancers usually didn't

leave until almost sun-up.

During the summer months, Dolph Ratto, Joe Ghiorso and occasionally other family members drove a four-horse wagon across the rough Sonora-Mono Road to the eastern mining camps. Dolph purchased boxed fruits and tomatoes from the local ranchers and filled the wagon. The 11-day trip to Bridgeport, Masonic and Bodie was a respite in the busy schedule, and a means of supplementing the family's woefully short supply of cash. The 20 pound boxes of fruits and tomatoes were sold to merchants, boarding houses proprietors and home owners in Mono County for \$2.50. Although the trip was beset with thunderstorms, dust and breakdowns, a profit of \$500 was adequate inducement for the family. Local apples and vegetables were even taken by wagon to Stockton for sale. After selling the produce, Dolph purchased flour, salt and sugar in 200 pound barrels for the return trip to the ranch.

To further supplement the family income, Dolph and Joe Ghiorso would use a team and wagon to work on the neighborhood roads. The roads always needed attention — bog holes were filled, grading was done, riverbed rock was spread and the drainage was improved. After Dolph had done work amounting to \$400, his employment with the county was terminated; another neighbor would be hired to complete the project. Public funds had to be widely distributed among the ranchers.

For a short time, hogs were raised for sale but for less than 2¢ a pound Dolph decided the small profit, if any, did not warrant the risk and the last hogs were sold. Eggs were traded to the grocers for 15¢ to 20¢ in merchandise. These sales and exchanges added very little to the family's cash reserves but the Rattos and their neighbors, who were usually cash-poor, needed to devise various means to pay for their essentials.

The Ratto ranch ran as many as 1,200 cows and a dozen or more breeding bulls during a good year. In the winter and spring the cows were kept on 1,800 acres of summer grass, burr clover and filaree at their nearby Melones Ranch. By early summer most of the feed in that area was gone. Usually by mid-June, Dolph, Joe Ghiorso and a few ranch hands would drive a "band" of as many as 250 Durham cows through Sonora to the summer pasture near Long Barn. By mid-July the cows were again moved to Piute Meadow in the summit country. Various members of the family remained with the cows until the "snow flew" in the fall, then they were returned to the ranch. Calves and selected cows would be sold before the "band" was returned to the Melones winter



Joe Ghiorso and his dog, Brownie, standing in front of the old summer kitchen. The Ratto home is to the right, rear.

range. These long drives lasted almost 60 years — the first Ratto drive was in 1909; the last "band" was driven from Piute on October 20, 1968, by Ed Burgson and Joe Ghiorso.

The rancher had little time for vacations or social functions. During the slack time Joe Ghiorso had wood to cut and a multitude of chores which had been put aside for such an occasion. Joe did remember one family vacation — a trip on the Sierra Railroad to the San Francisco Exposition in 1915.

Socializing was usually with the neighbors or at the Ratto ranch for dinner. The women would prepare a traditional old world dinner with home made ice cream for dessert. Turning the crank was less of a chore than a joy for a boy especially if the women left enough ice cream on the dasher for some good licking. But, as Joe Ghiorso said, "them days are gone." You don't see the big Italian family get-togethers anymore. "Times have changed!"

Birthdays and holidays were less important to the Rattos and Joe Ghiorso than Christmas. The Christmas season was preceded by a flurry of cooking, baking and house cleaning. Mince and pumpkin pies, small gift fruit cakes for the neighbors, lasagna, ravioli, beef, turkey, preserved and canned fruits and vegetables from the garden, fresh bread, butter and home made wine insured that this holiday would be the most memorable of all for the family.

Although the women were always busy with their household chores and assisting the men, they did find a few hours a week to visit with one of the neighbors. They always seemed to know just where the next meeting place would be — the Rattos, Medinas, Liljedahls, Morris', Sylvas, or Lawrences. Sometimes they even walked the four-mile dusty road to Jamestown to visit the Mangante family.

A question must be asked by the author. Why did so many of the Dolph Rattos and Joe Ghiorsos remain on the ranch when hardships and misfortune regularly haunted them?

These new Americans had an abiding attraction to land. Their formal education was usually limited, as was their exposure to new vocations in the rural environs. Employment at the turn of the century was frequently limited to a few developers of the natural resources. Service trades, government, education and the communication media employed few in those days. The Rattos and Ghiorsos were inexorably drawn to ranching.

Most of the ranchers, once committed, were caught in an entangling web of circumstances. Frequently liens were on their stock or property as a result of one of many unexpected financial reverses. It was virtually impossible to leave the ranch unless foreclosure proceedings were instigated but personal pride and honor kept them from giving up.

The closeness of the old Italian family was proverbial. They lived and worked in close harmony and could be expected to assist one another when times were difficult. This closeness established a pattern that was hard to change, and it tended to keep them close to the land.

The rancher's love for the "critters" and belief in the productiveness of the land helped make him an eternal optimist. In spite of the adversity besetting him, he spoke about paying off the banker after the next harvest. He always had a plan about making some real money during the coming season. Also, those who have lived close to the land value their independence; we, living in a highly technical and government-dominated society, can never understand just how deep-seated this feeling was with our old timers.

Edna McArdle Hardin

By Mary Etta Segerstrom

THEY WERE MINING PEOPLE," says Edna McArdle Hardin (Mrs. Rowan Hardin of Sonora) as she speaks of her grandfather and father and her early memories of life on the McArdle ranch, on the slope of the hill above Woods Ferry and the Stanislaus River. And it's the disappearance of the mines and the mining people that she finds a sad change in Tuolumne County life.

The mines were a major aspect of life in the county. Even the home that she and her husband built on North Washington Street across from St. James' Church, and where she lives today, was built over the tunnels of the old Bonanza Mine. Mrs. Hardin laughs as she tells of the fish pond in their yard that disappeared after a day of blasting in the Bonanza workings. When she taught school as a young woman at Mountain Pass and in Jamestown her pupils came from the families of miners who worked in the busy quartz mines of the area.

The earliest mining people in her life, however, were her grandfather, Terence Hugh McArdle and his wife, Mary Duffy McArdle, who arrived in Columbia in 1855, and settled near present day St. Anne's Catholic Church. Terence McArdle had first come around the horn by ship and made his way to Columbia in 1852 and mined briefly. Returning to Boston, he was joined by his future wife and they were married in Worcester, Massachusetts on May 18, 1855. Thomas H. McArdle (their first son) was born and shortly thereafter they sailed for California via the Isthmus of Panama (on the same vessel was Mrs. Rehm, mother of E. H. Rehm, also en route to Columbia and to become a life-long friend).



EDNA MCARDLE HARDIN

Shipboard life was memorable for young Mrs. McArdle, who was later to tell her granddaughter of traveling with the infant.

"I guess they had quite a time with him. He was just a baby, and he made such a disturbance on the ship. My grandmother said she was lucky to save him and they didn't throw him overboard," Mrs. Hardin relates with a smile. The mother and baby rode muleback across the Isthmus.

Columbia was a large mining camp in 1855 and the McArdles lived there for several years within sight of the big flume which crossed the flat back of the Fallon House Theater (Tuolumne County Water Company flume).

"My grandmother said one day she came out and saw my father walking along the top of the flume, and some of the miners rushed and saved him. She was glad to go down to the ranch and get away from there. There were so many people living there during the mining."

Ferguson McArdle was born two years to the day after his brother, on May 18, 1857, and shortly thereafter the family moved to the land they were to homestead and mine below Tuttletown, on the right hand side of present-day Highway 49 above the approach to the Stevenot Bridge. Although he raised cattle and hogs and was to plant bountiful orchards and gardens, now long gone, Terence McArdle principally placer-mined along the river and on what was to become the McArdle Mine.

Four other children, Terence F., Agnes, Mary and Rose were born. Their school was a long, 2½ mile walk up to Coffers' Corner, and school days for the boys were followed by chores and milk deliveries to the nearby miners. As the boys grew to manhood they joined their father in taking up mines along the river.

Thomas H. McArdle and Mary Doherty of Chinese Camp were married in Sonora's Catholic Church in February, 1886, and their daughter, Edna, was born on November 12, 1887, at the home Thomas had built on a portion of the McArdle ranch.

Mrs. Hardin was to live there with her parents until she was eight years old. When her school years began she walked each day down the hill to cross the river on the ferry while her mother stood on the hill outside their home and watched to see her safely across. The school was on the Melones side upstream where the big tailings pile now towers. Sometimes the ferry man would come in a small rowboat for her; other times the large craft for horse drawn vehicles would come. Woods Ferry had been started by Harvey Woods, and he and his brother, James, and a nephew, Percy, ran it for many years, according to Mrs. Hardin. Her mother recalled a day when old Mr. Woods, advanced in years and usually dissuaded from working when the water was high and rough, came for the school-bound child, and had quite a struggle to get the little rowboat across the river some distance below the usual destination while Mrs. McArdle anxiously watched from her hillside.

At that time both the Norwegian Mine, owned by the Lawson family upstream from the McArdle place, and the Melones Mine — complete with homes and a boarding house — were very active and some 15 children attended the school under teacher Mary Gann, who was later to marry Terence McArdle and become the aunt of her pupil.

Until 1892, Mrs. Hardin was the only child on the ranch, but in that year her cousin, Annetta Morris Fowler, whose mother died when she was six weeks old, came to live with them, the beginning of a life-long close relationship.

Looking back down the years at Tuttletown and the neighboring ranches and the people of the area, Mrs. Hardin can recall the legendary Gillis brothers and Dick

Stoker. She tells of the time her husband was asked to speak at a memorial service for Dick Stoker and he said, "I know only one living contemporary of Dick Stoker, my wife."

Although Thomas McArdle continued to mine with his brothers in Calaveras County, when his daughter was eight years old he moved his family to Jamestown, to Gold Springs Ranch, on what was later the Sonora Golf Course below Volponi Acres. Edna McArdle attended Jamestown School, from which she graduated and received her teaching credential, after completion of an extra year's preparation in Sonora at classes in the old Baptist Church, now the Aronos Clubhouse.

Chinese Camp, Stent, Quartz and Rawhide were busy mining towns in the early 1900's and Edna McArdle taught first at Chinese Camp and then at Jamestown in the old schoolhouse on the hill above the road to the Harvard Mine. In the three-room building she taught the intermediate classes. The principal's room was first occupied by Joe Ryan, and later J. P. Gallagher, who kept discipline problems to a minimum. "There was order, he was always kind but firm," Mrs. Hardin comments. Children always seemed to look nice and well groomed despite dusty roads, and the fact that water had to be brought up the hill to the school from a well down by the creek.

Her teaching days ended with marriage in 1910 to Sonora's City Attorney, Rowan Hardin, who had also prepared for teaching, but instead read law with Senator J. B. Curtin and whose offices were in the block where the city park is now. The marriage united two pioneer families, as Rowan's father had arrived in California on January 1, 1850, and in Columbia shortly thereafter. The Hardin family later were to homestead near the North Fork of the Tuolumne River in the Long Barn area.

During their marriage another facet of the mining influence in the county appeared, since Mr. Hardin was to become a specialist in mining law. He was elected as Tuolumne County District Attorney shortly after the marriage and held the office for 16 years.

"I was thinking the other day. He made \$1,500 a year and paid his own stenographer. Imagine!" Mrs. Hardin told her interviewer.

Four children were born to the Hardins, Rowena, Ben, Annetta, and James Rowan Hardin, who has followed in his father's footsteps with a decided interest in mining law.

Memories of life on North Washington Street in earlier years mingle with memories of neighbors now gone. The Rother home stood where the Union gas station is, and was occupied by the Divolls, parents of Mrs. C. A. Dambacher. On the north lived Mrs. Alonzo P. Johnson (whose husband had been known as "Bonanza" Johnson for his mine), from whom they had purchased the lot for \$1,000 on which they built their home).

"It was so nice, so quiet here. We didn't have all this traffic."

Ever interested in mining, Mrs. Hardin mentions another neighbor of those years, Robert Thom, County Surveyor and engineer, who once told her of going down into the Jumper mine and seeing a wide streak of unmined gold ore, and commenting that there will always be gold to be mined in Tuolumne County.

Alert and capable at 89, Mrs. Hardin herself, however, will be the historical footnote to the McArdle Mine. The Army Corps of Engineers is negotiating with the family owners and it will become part of the green belt and public lands that surround the banks of the New Melones reservoir as it slowly backs up the Stanislaus River obliterating signs of the mining lands that once made the area busy and prosperous.

Fred William Leighton

By Sharon Marovich



ADVENTURE, HARD WORK and accomplishment characterize the life of Fred William Leighton, now 92. One of seven children of pioneer parents Leighton recalls with vivid detail the people, places and events which punctuated his long life. With a devotion worthy of the best historian or researcher, Leighton has documented his career with photographs, newspaper clippings, correspondence and other memorabilia all methodically arranged in file cabinets, indexed boxes and albums. A glance at the file on family history reveals that Leighton was born in Arcata on January 23, 1885, to John S. and Lizzie Shaw Leighton of Tuolumne County. Lizzie Leighton was born in Jeffersonville (near Rawhide) in 1862 to Benjamin G. Shaw, who came to California from New Brunswick in 1854, and his wife, Lou, also of New Brunswick. Mrs. Shaw and her sister, Mary P. Call, followed Shaw to California in 1859, arriving in San Francisco that fall after an arduous journey that included trips aboard two steamers (**John L. Stephens** and **S. S. Baltic**) and an overland crossing of the pre-Panama Canal Isthmus.

Fred Leighton's father was born in Monson, Maine, on April 6, 1851. He left there in 1879 to come west. He met Lizzie Shaw here and married her on April 27, 1884. A few months later Lizzie traveled to Arcata where her parents, the Shaws, had moved because she wanted to be near her mother at the birth of her first child. Following Fred's birth the Leightons returned to Tuolumne County, settling in Springfield, then moving to the Haslam Ranch (on Big Hill east of Columbia) when Leighton was three or four years old. Leighton's father, who leased the ranch, provided for his growing family by logging the property and using six and eight-horse teams to haul hand-hewn timbers to mines in the area. He also broke colts for Dave Rosasco and drove cattle to summer pastures in the Crabtree range east of Dodge Ridge.



Hales & Symons office — a young Fred Leighton, left, sits at a desk next to his employer, T. F. Symons. The cash register to the extreme right is still used at the firm and Mr. Symons' roll-top desk is adjacent to his son Irving's office. The abundance of wall calendars indicates the date is February, 1915.

School on Big Hill

While the family lived at the Haslam Ranch, Leighton walked five miles each way to attend a one-room school where he was taught by Miss Nellie Marcus, herself a member of an early day family which settled in the Sawmill Flat area. Leighton was one of 12 students. By this time his grandparents, the Shaws, had moved back to Tuolumne County and were living in a house halfway between the school and the Haslam Ranch. Leighton attended the school on Big Hill for two years before his father and his uncle, Alvah Shaw, purchased a ranch from Dave Rosasco in the Bald Mountain area; now owned by Superior Court Judge T. R. Vilas. Leighton described its location as being near the Phoenix Power House built while the family lived there. His father continued in the cattle business but was also employed at the Hyde Mine (later called the Bellevue Mine) near what is now referred to as Crystal Falls but was known then as Calder Falls. After the elder Leighton found employment at the Jumper Mine in Stent he sold his interest in the ranch and the family moved to Stent. While he worked at the Jumper Mine prior to the family's move, young Fred had the responsibility of riding to Stent with clean clothes for his father. On one trip in 1897 his horse bolted at Dan Mann's corner (intersection of Belle Mooney and Campo Seco roads) after seeing for the first time a Sierra Railroad train hauling passengers and freight to the station in Jamestown. A year later track would be laid to Sonora.

While living near Bald Mountain, Leighton attended the Phoenix Lake School, a distance of two miles from his home. There he was taught by a Miss Carroll and Maime Burke. He was 13 when the family moved to Stent and he was enrolled at the two-room Poverty Hill School which continues to be used for educational purposes. Leighton remembers life with his family as happy and full of hard work.

"We learned how to raise vegetables and milk cows," he said. "We didn't have too much money in those days. We only had to buy sugar and a little meat."

Children of his era did not have much time for games because of their importance to the family's economic life.

"When it was good weather you went out and worked," he said. "For me, I always had to work outdoors. On winter nights I stayed in the house and did schoolwork."

The Jumper

Upon graduation from Poverty Hill School in 1900 Leighton, age 15, went to work at the Jumper Mine running a mill car. For 10 hours a day at a wage of \$2.25 per day he guided cars carrying one-ton of gold bearing ore down a gentle slope to a 60-stamp mill 400 yards away. On the return trip he pushed the empty car up the slope, a total of 50 trips a day.

"An old man with a limp kept track of the number of cars. He just about killed me off in the first two weeks," Leighton recalls.

He lived at home while working at the Jumper, then owned by a French company. In the two or three years he worked at the Jumper he reflected often on his back-breaking labor and decided to save enough money to finance further education.

San Francisco

In 1903 he moved to San Francisco where he boarded with the Baker family, friends from Stent, who had taken up residence in a three-story home at 84 Haight St. so their children could benefit from educational opportunities in The City. The Baker's two boys enrolled with Leighton at Heald's Business College on Post St. at Kearney St.

While at Heald's for a year and a half Leighton studied penmanship, spelling and bookkeeping, a skill he perfected and one which served him well throughout his life.

A country boy "had a lot to look at" in San Francisco and "I looked it over as I went along," he said. Since his savings and an allowance from home meant he did not need to find employment while at Heald's, Leighton and the Bakers used their leisure time for roller skating, ferry boat trips to Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County and swimming at the beach near the original Cliff House. When he completed his studies at Heald's in 1905, graduating as a bookkeeper, Leighton went to work as a clerk in the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company's San Francisco office. He quit after a short time because "there was not much money in that job." Employment as bookkeeper with the Globe Grain and Milling Co. followed. He moonlighted as a penmanship instructor for 25 Japanese students at his alma mater, Heald's.

The Earthquake

In the early morning hours of April 18, 1906, San Francisco was devastated by earthquake and Leighton's thoughts turned to home. Although he was in no danger and neither he nor any member of the Baker family was injured when they were shaken awake it was necessary for them to leave their home because firemen were dynamiting structures in an effort to halt the spreading flames. The Bakers headed for Golden Gate Park, fast becoming a tent city for refugees. "I thought I'd be in the way," Leighton remembers, so he packed his belongings in one "little grip" and made his way through rubble, fire and confusion to the Ferry building and the next boat for Stockton. He was among the first to leave The City, noting that only a dozen people were on the boat. After arriving in Stockton he walked to the Southern Pacific depot and bought an armful of Stockton papers to take home. They were, by then, full of news from San Francisco. When he arrived at the Jamestown station he hopped aboard DeLay's Stage for the trip home to Stent. "I held on to those papers," he said. "Everyone wanted to learn about the disaster."

Union Construction Co.

Leighton was without a job but he heard about an immense construction project on the Stanislaus River. Eager for employment he walked from Stent to Sonora to inquire about the development, but he had to go further.

"I kept walking to Columbia," he remembers. "I knew Tom Conlin. He used to have the gold scales at Wells



EDNA HALES LEIGHTON

Fargo. I saw him and he told me all about it. He said they were starting to build a headquarters in Vallecito so I kept walking to Vallecito."

When he arrived that April of 1906 the Union Construction Co. was building bunkhouses, warehouses, cookhouses and offices as a first step in a multi-million dollar contract with United Railroads of San Francisco to supply electricity for The City's street cars. The major portion of the contract was the construction of Relief Dam in the northeastern part of Tuolumne County. Water stored in the reservoir would flow 45 miles downstream to Sand Bar where it would be transferred to a flume system designed to carry it to a powerhouse at Camp 9. Leighton was hired that day as part of the staff of the paymaster's department. He lived in a bunkhouse at the headquarters camp and for one year he was also required to run a cookhouse. In 1908 he was promoted to Paymaster. At the peak of employment during the three-year project 1,500 men were on the payroll. Manpower was always in demand and recruiting was in the hands of "mancatchers," according to Leighton. One crew, 100 Yugoslavs, was hired for road construction because of their experience in building rock walls. Leighton recalls they demanded and were supplied a cook who could prepare their native dishes.

In the spring of 1909 only Relief Dam, a rock-fill structure using granite quarried a few yards away, remained to be finished. The headquarters at Vallecito was closed and most of the staff returned to the company's office at 85 Second St. in San Francisco.

"Four or five of us moved to Sonora where an office was established on North Washington St. (opposite Howard's Restaurant) to process the payroll for the remaining workers," Leighton said.

At the end of each month Leighton, the paymaster, rode by horseback to Relief Dam to help the payroll clerk there. It was a two-day trip on dirt roads. He would make it as far as Strawberry on the first day, staying overnight at a boarding house operated by Maggie Conlin. The next morning he would continue along the dirt highway, by then a state road not a toll road, turning off at Kennedy Meadows and heading into the wilderness to the Relief worksite.

Edna Hales

In the summer of 1909 Leighton met Edna Hales, the only child of W. J. Hales, founding partner with T. F. Symons of Hales and Symons. The couple met on Knowles Hill in Sonora at a popular open air dance pavillion. However, their courtship was interrupted that fall by the completion of Relief Dam. The Union Construction Co. closed its Sonora office and transferred the staff to its Second St. office in San Francisco. Leighton left his bachelor quarters, a room he rented at Mrs. Smullen's house on N. Stewart St. at Jackson St. (now the location of a large apartment building). He returned to Sonora on December 28, 1909, when he married Miss Hales in her parents' home. The couple established their first home in San Francisco.

Return to Sonora

In 1913 they moved back to Sonora, taking up residence in Michigan Heights (a residential area just north of Hales and Symons) in a cottage next door to the Hales'. Leighton joined the staff of Hales and Symons, then primarily in the hauling business and a supplier of feed, fuel, mine supplies and ice. Leighton recalls the firm's long line teams of 12 horses pulling wagons of marble blocks up Washington St. from the Columbia Marble Company's quarry in Columbia to the railroad depot

near Hales and Symons. The teams, some as small as four horses, also hauled supplies to the mines. Leighton had many duties with the firm but mainly he directed teams, sold merchandise and worked with the pine block fuel, the main source of cord wood for homes. The pine blocks were left over from milling operations at the Standard Lumber Co. adjacent to Hales and Symons and they kept piling up in an outfall bin.

"We had to keep that bin empty," Leighton said.

Yellowhammer

The summer of 1917, when he was 32, was a turning point in Leighton's life. It marked the start of his summer trips into the Emigrant Basin, a rugged wilderness he had ridden as a boy when he was in the mountains with his uncle on cattle drives. For that first trip Leighton and his wife left Sonora by horseback for the two-day ride into the wilderness and a two-week camping vacation. This trip rekindled his love of the outdoors and the ardent hunter and fisherman decided to return the following summer.

In 1919 he and a friend, Bill Burnham, owner of Burnham's Candy Store in Sonora, obtained a U. S. Forest Service permit from Vic Wulff, Supervisor of the Stanislaus National Forest, to allow construction of a cabin at Yellowhammer (an isolated spot 20 miles east of Pinecrest and eight miles north of the Yosemite Park boundary) and a special grazing permit to pasture their saddle and pack horses in a nearby meadow. From their picturesque camp in the wilderness Leighton and Burnham and the friends who joined them rode into the granite mountains on sure-footed horses trained to travel on the rugged terrain.

Check Dams

One of the frustrations of the high country trout fishermen, according to Leighton, is streams which dry up in the summertime, thereby killing the rainbows. On one of his vacations Leighton conceived the idea of damming lakes at their drainage point and building valves into the dams which would allow the release of water all summer. He built the first "check dam," as he calls them, at what was later named Leighton Lake in his honor. He fashioned it out of rocks and a clay dirt he found there. The dam proved successful and Leighton embarked on a campaign to introduce the idea to the U. S. Forest Service and Department of Fish and Game. He rallied support from the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce, the State Chamber of Commerce, Tuolumne



Yellowhammer cabin built in 1922 by Fred Leighton, Hi Pruett and Bill Durham. The shake roof was put on by Zeke Goodwin and Ed McMahon. The rock pile on the right is part of the fireplace of the old John Rosasco cabin built about 1896.

County Fish and Game and the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors which gave \$1,000. His efforts were so fruitful that in the summer of 1931 there was enough money to hire two seven-man construction teams. They built five dams that summer using cement and native granite. The dams ranged in height from eight to 24 feet. Eventually, a total of 14 check dams were built on lakes throughout the Emigrant Basin, thus assuring generations of fishermen a summer-long supply of rainbow trout.

Until 1974, when he was 89, his camp at Yellowhammer was the scene of many happy gatherings of family and friends. It is now used by the U. S. Forest Service and Department of Fish and Game in their efforts to perpetuate the stream flow maintenance program.

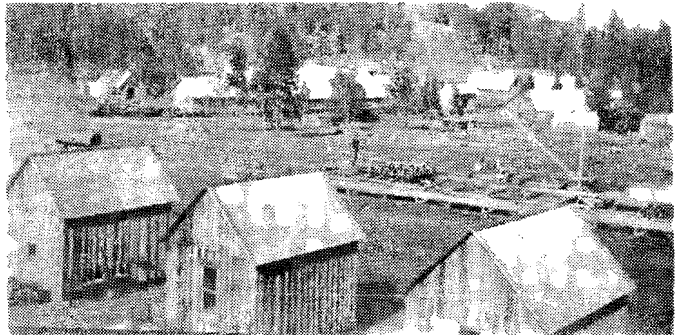
Hales and Symons

One of the most interesting chapters in his 48-year career with Hales and Symons spanned the years between 1920 and 1932 when the company operated a flour mill. Leighton ran the mill after learning from a miller the company hired. The mill processed wheat grown in the Blanket Creek area and the flour was sold under the Tuolumne brand to local bakeries and businesses. The mill was on the upper floor of the Bradford building at the corner of Bradford and South Washington streets. The building still stands but without evidence of the mill operation which included a conveyor-belt with scoops to carry the wheat upstairs to the grinding area. It was not uncommon, according to Leighton, to see flour sacks piled up along the sidewalk. Two factors led to the company's decision to close the operation: the decline in local production of wheat as farmers went to work for lumber companies and a determination that it was just as profitable to buy flour wholesale and then retail it to customers.

Leighton retired as secretary-treasurer of Hales and Symons in 1962. He lives in a home he and his wife built in 1941 on a 10-acre knoll behind Hales and Symons, called Hilltop Acres. Two or three horses graze nearby, the "last remnants," Leighton said, of the stock he used to take into the mountains each summer.

He proudly reports he is a 50-year member of the Sonora Elks, Tuolumne Lodge F. & A. M., Tuolumne County Sportsmen and Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce which has honored him as an Outstanding Citizen of Tuolumne County.

Mrs. Leighton, who died in 1973, was active in Eastern Star and the Rebekahs. She was an accomplished singer and pianist.



A familiar sight to Fred Leighton. Middle Camp warehouses and barns for long line teams. Located west of Sugar Pine on the back road where the Standard Lumber Company Railroad crosses. The camp was constructed during the period 1906-09 for storing cement and other equipment and supplies used during construction of Relief Dam.

Rose Segale Gookin

By Jean McClish

ROSE SEGALE GOOKIN is affectionately known as "Grandma Gookin" by the townspeople of Groveland who frequently see her familiar figure walking slowly along Main Street carrying a bag of groceries purchased from the old grocery store built in the gold rush days, or stopping at the nearby post office to ask for her mail.

She has lived all her 92 years never more than a few miles from the Segale Ranch on Moccasin Creek where she was born.

Her father, John Segale, came from Italy in 1869 when he was 18 years old, traveling with his brother, Louie, to Big Oak Flat where their uncles operated a general store.

Mary Castignetto, Rose's mother, was born in Coulterville in 1861. Mary's parents, Francisco and Mary Castignetto, were one of the first Coulterville families. They raised vegetables which they packed into Yosemite Valley.

Rose, one of 12 children, grew up on the Moccasin ranch. The old house still stands, guarded by two huge fig trees that lean over the porch. The realignment of Highway 49 bypasses the house. In earlier times the road, the main route from Chinese Camp and Jacksonville to Coulterville, passed between the house and the barn.

Rose attended school at Moccasin, walking the two miles along the creek to the Cavagnaro ranch on whose land the schoolhouse stood.

Homework? "Yes!" Rose remembers, "and we had to have it done, too! We'd walk all that distance and come home and do the chores — bring in wood, help in the garden."

John Segale was a miner. "He had sluice boxes and we'd go see the gold in the boxes."

The Segale ranch had its own garden and orchard. "We raised everything. We had our own vegetables and fruit. We had to work hard."

All the children were born at home. "There was no place to go — no doctor, the poor thing. She suffered so sometimes. There was a midwife, a Mexican woman. I remember that. We didn't know where babies came from. Nowadays they know everything! We didn't know anything. We'd have to stay away and they never told us anything. We didn't know what was going on!"

The 12 children were born over a span of nearly 30 years. Some of the older ones had left home and had families of their own before the younger ones were born.

Rose hired out to Dr. Stratton in Chinese Camp in her teens. She did some of the housework and washed dishes.

"I'd take Dr. Stratton's daughter, Viola, over to Jamestown for her piano lessons. Her grandparents lived in Jamestown and I used to stay there while she had her lesson. I'd drive the old horse hitched to a cart. It's a wonder we didn't get killed! The train would go by and the old horse would get scared and the line would get under its tail and the horse would run! I don't see how I drove without killing myself! When you're young you do crazy things."

Rose met Al Gookin while she was waiting table at the hotel in Chinese Camp. He was driving the stage line for Morris Bros. from Chinese Camp to Yosemite.

Al Gookin's father, George Dana Gookin, came to Campbell's Flat to mine in 1849. Earlier Gookins had emigrated from England to the new world in Colonial days. It was a Gookin that founded Newport News, Virginia. Daniel Gookin was trading with Indians on

Manhattan Island.

Al Gookin and Rose Segale were married in 1905. they lived on a ranch at Don Pedro for several years, and it was there that three of their six children were born.

Al drove a team for Morris Bros. and was gone from home for days at a time. Sometimes Rose stayed at a neighboring ranch during his absences. It was on one such occasion, in April, 1906, that the earthquake which devastated San Francisco also registered sharply in Tuolumne County. "The house shook and at first I thought a cow had gotten into the cellar!"

The family moved to Chinese Camp around 1910.

The Eagle-Shawmut Mine in the canyon of Woods Creek, three miles southeast of Chinese Camp, bolstered the economy of the former gold rush settlement. Residents of Chinese Camp lived with the incessant booming of the 100-stamp mill that crushed ore brought up from the 2,400-foot level.

Pay vouchers were redeemable for goods at the Morris Bros. store in Chinese Camp. On payday a stream of miners followed the path from the mine to town and converged on the store.

Occasional rodeos held on the main street of the town attracted crowds from as far as Calaveras and Mariposa counties.

Rose remembers, "They used to ride the rodeo right in the main street. Just a few buckaroos and the ranchers would ride. We used to go up to Garrett House — my kids and I. We used to sit on the porch and watch them ride."

The Mother Lode Magnet reported one such rodeo held on April 20, 1912. Fred Cavagnaro placed first in the day-long affair that was preceded by a dance at Eagle Hall the night before. Leo Casenave, who had the misfortune to dislocate a shoulder when his horse ran into a fence, placed second. Dan Carlson was third. Judges of



Albert and Rose Gookin at the time of their wedding in 1905.

the day's actions were Joe Sanguinetti, Frank Shell, John Rosasco, J. F. Munn and B. S. Keller.

The owner of a jackass challenged all comers and offered a prize for the successful riding of the untamed animal. Ten men were unseated in the futile attempt.

In 1915 the Gookins bought the Trujillo ranch in Spring Gulch on the Priest-Coulterville road in partnership with Rose's brother, Joe Segale. "We couldn't make a living on it any more than we could fly! They thought they could. My brother quit, but we stayed."

The original ranch had been homesteaded in 1860. Rose and Al homesteaded an adjoining parcel on which they built a new home. Rose walked back and forth from the new home to the gardens adjacent to the old Trujillo house, carrying a 5-gallon drum fixed with a handle to make a bucket so she could bring home the vegetables when they ripened.

Rose visited her mother at Moccasin Creek occasionally. She'd put all the kids in the cart and go across country — out through the Chauncey Alexander place and down by the Kelton Mine. "I remember going up and down Priest Grade. I'd put the kids in the front seat and away we'd go!"

Lena Alexander, Rose's sister, lived on the neighboring ranch and the two of them, with the children tagging along, frequently walked down the three miles of road to the Cuneo ranch to visit Lena Cassella. There they sometimes ate watermelon that had been put down in the cellar — cool and juicy and sweet. "We often visited one another. They always had the coffee pot on and something to eat on hand."

The Alexander and the Gookin children were classmates in the schoolhouse Al Gookin built down by the road on the corner of his ranch when the old school on the Musante ranch near Priest's lapsed for lack of enrollment.

The school teacher boarded at the Gookins — Miss Logan, Miss Nelson, Miss Rozier.

The year Marie Rozier taught at the Spring Gulch school the only pupils were John, Minnie and Bill Gookin. Stella and George had already finished their elementary schooling, and Harry wasn't old enough to begin his.

Marie Rozier recalls, "Mr. Morgan (County Superintendent of Schools) called me with the Spring Gulch assignment. He said, 'There are three children and you will board at the Gookin ranch. I understand the fare is mostly beans and bacon. I replied, 'fortunately, I am

able to eat both of them.' But God love them, I had no idea what that really meant! There was always good food.

"I went home the first weekend and when I got back to the Gookin's there was all these sacks of stuff on the porch, and I said, 'What in the world is this?' Mr. Gookin replied, 'This is our supply of beans and prunes for the winter.' And I said, 'do you mean to say you use that much?' And he replied, 'yes, and we might even run out.' Well! If my mother bought 30 pounds of beans for the winter that was a pretty good supply for us. There were 300 pounds of beans and 100 pounds of prunes!"

"Mrs. Gookin could make anything taste good. She was the best cook — and the bean pot was never empty. We had bean sandwiches for lunch. They were those good cranberry beans, you know. We had beans and beans and beans."

"They had a garden a ways from the house. They had such tomatoes! I nonchalantly said one day, 'I just love tomatoes — I could even eat them for breakfast!' So I had one at my place at breakfast every morning until the season was over."

Rose recalls, "We didn't have much in those days. Of course, we had a garden and cows."

Water for the ranch was supplied from a well. At the end of the summer of 1932 the well ran dry and Al Gookin hauled water in barrels by team and wagon from the Alexander's spring. On one such trip for water, the horses bolted and one of the careening barrels tipped out, falling on Al and mortally injured him. Rose stayed on at the ranch for several years.

During the depression there were people mining along the creeks in the vicinity — women as well as men. "They lived in old shacks. Every week they'd take their gold and go into town to buy groceries to last the week."

Rose moved to Big Oak Flat around 1940 to assume care of an infant grandchild when her daughter-in-law died of complications following the child's birth.

Later on, when she lived in the house up on the hill behind the Cassaretto store in Groveland, several of her grandchildren and Leonard Cassaretto used to play cops and robbers out on the hillside in the brush. Rose was like a mother hen. She could hear the children hollering and screaming — she was sure they were getting half killed!

Rose has lived for the last 15 years or so in her neat white cottage tucked between two of Groveland's business establishments. She keeps house for herself and cooks her own meals. Until recently she worked incessantly at embroidering pillow slips. Members of her family drop by often. She is not lonely. "I guess I'll stay here the rest of my life!" she says.

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By Joan Gorsuch

David met and later married Maria Peirano³ of Douglas Flat, Calaveras County, on August 18, 1877. They were married by the Rev. Thomas Phillips of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Sonora. Interesting details of the wedding were found in the Union Democrat of August 25, 1877.⁴

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* **STATE SCHOOL FUND.**—The August apportionment of State School Fund amounts to \$266,756. The total number of census children in the State entitled to receive school money is 200,067. Amount per child, \$1 33½.

Gardening was David's life-long occupation. He ran a wagon three times a week in the summer and once a week in winter to Tuolumne (Carters), Soulsbyville, Confidence and Sugar Pine carrying vegetables. Sometimes

As a young man the first animal that Henry owned was a jackass which he bought for about \$2.50. He later sold it to buy a horse. His brother, Joe, began to herd cattle up to Cooper's Meadow for Father Patrick Guerin⁷ of St. Patrick's. Cooper's received its name from William Cooper who ranged cattle there starting in 1861. The first cabin built by Cooper's cowhands in 1865, is now



Henry David Sanguinetti serving as Grand Marshal of the 1968 Mother Lode Round-Up Parade. He is an honorary member of the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Posse, and has nine grandchildren and 12 greatgrandchildren.

used as a barn. The second cabin, built in 1875, is still home to the Sanguinetti family when they move their cattle to the summer range each year. These historical buildings are currently under consideration for possible inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Henry went to Coopers in 1912 for the first time to help herd. About this time the priest visited Coopers and each morning would dash from the cabin and jump into the creek for his bath. Father Guerin sparked Henry's interest in horses when he asked Henry to take a team of horses to the Tarantula Mine at Shawmut. Father Guerin said that someone would soon drive Henry back to Sonora. The days turned into weeks and months — he stayed from 1913 until 1915. He was paid \$50 per month with board and room to care for Father Guerin's team and drive V.I.P.'s to and from the railroad at Chinese Camp. Henry recalls that this team was exceptional and he could drive them from Chinese Camp to Sonora in about 20 minutes when he was in a hurry to get home. After the first year he was given a nice buckboard to use in bringing provisions to the mine. During this time Henry went to Coopers for four or five days at a time when he could get away.

Until 1975 the only time Henry missed going to Coopers was when he was drafted into the Army on July 17, 1918.⁸

Henry and Rose Margaret Copeland were married in San Francisco on April 22, 1919. Her grandparents were early settlers⁹ in Tuolumne County. Their three sons, Ray, Marion and Henry D., Jr., were reared in the ranching tradition and use their father's "Double Anchor" cattle brand. Rose looked after ranch hands and aspiring cowboys as if they were her own sons and they were always welcome at her home and table. Many mourned Rose's death on July 9, 1975.

In 1925 hoof and mouth disease came to Tuolumne County and many ranchers had to destroy their herds. The Sanguinetti's were lucky. All grazing permits¹⁰ were cancelled, however, that fall Cooper Meadow received one of the few allotments for a test herd.

In addition to ranching Henry cut firewood under contract to the jail, court house, schools and hospitals. The cut wood was hauled into Sonora with a four-horse team. Before the advent of "off the road" vehicles he also had a dude ranch at Twain Harte where horses were hired out. A rodeo¹¹ was started (on the site of the current Twain Harte Golf Course) with one cow and one bucking horse. The rodeo grew rapidly, attracting top cowboys and thousands of visitors. The dude ranch venture lasted about 30 years.

Henry is one of a few persons to successfully raise

"hennies." This is an animal in which the father is a horse and the mother a donkey (a mule is an opposite cross). The result is a particularly alert, sure-footed animal, well suited for mountain terrain. Henry has never owned a watch or felt the need for one with the sun as his timepiece. He works in his garden and around the ranch having no need to "hurry up" as most of us are prone to do.

There have been many changes in our county; some relegated to memory such as the cattle drives to the Sierra summer ranges. Some things are lost when trucking the cattle up Highway 108; exhilaration, fatigue, comradery, a job well done. With these thoughts behind him, Henry talks of the much-needed Sonora bypass to ease traffic congestion and possibly bring tranquility again to Sonora.

FOOTNOTES

1. Interview February 10, 1976, in preparation of the "On the Go" Series, aired February 16, 1976.
2. David Sanguinetti, born January 4, 1842, Genoa, Italy; died September 11, 1932.
3. Maria Peirano, born April 13, 1848, Genoa, Italy; died September 11, 1941.
4. Union Democrat, page 3, col. 3.
5. On Hope Lane, near Lyons St., Sonora.
6. Frank Peirano and Company.
7. Stanislaus National Forest records show Father Guerin took over Coopers Meadow from Henry Stockel in 1909 until 1912.
8. Pvt. Sanguinetti, CO. B, 3rd Div. Bat., Camp Lee, Virginia. Discharged December 4, 1918, Camp Stearny, California.
9. Chispa, Vol. 15, No. 2, "The Story of Addick Meentzen."
10. Stanislaus National Forest, Sonora.
11. Daily Union Democrat, May 1, 1968, page 1, col. 1.

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