

Anderson Historical Society Newsletter

August 2018

The October 2018 Newsletter contains three articles: 1) History of the Ono Grange, 2) Pioneer Dredging Company Town, and 3) The Los Angeles Mounted Rifles

Gill/Paxton Electric Works

One of the main goals of the Shasta Dam, after flood control, was to bring electric energy to Northern California. For rural Shasta County residents the anticipated power was delayed due to World War II. Electric power as an essential war need was diverted to the San Francisco Bay area to help war industries like Kaiser's production of Liberty Ships. Only towards the end of the war did the government resume providing for rural electric power.

The first power in the area was a temporary line to support major dredge operations such as the Pioneer Dredge Company in Igo. The folks in Ono being independent decided not wait for PG&E and other companies and started local electrical generation projects of their own. The Hubbard/Paxton Ranch had water generated electrical power starting in the 1930s. The water was brought down by ditch to the north side of Placer Road just east of Eagle Creek. The water was run through a dynamo and the power was run through lines to the ranch building on the south side of Placer road. The water ditch was later replaced by pipes to increase the efficiency of the project. When power from Shasta Dam reached Ono the operation was suspended and all that remains is a lone electric pole next to Placer Road just east of the Hubbard House.

Other ranches that generated electrical power were the Driscoll Ranch using water from Hoover Creek and the Miller Ranch using Happy Valley Water Company water via Edmond's Gulch. The Company House at Messelbeck Dam also generated its own electricity.



Pearson House, Igo

An old house on Placer Road in Igo is now known as the Pearson House for Raymond and Josie Pearson who lived there. Other than a note that Edna Willson's father helped build the structure little was known of the history. While doing research an old map it showed that the house was initially the Terbush house and was next to the Willard Store that was moved to Red Bluff in 1901.

The map used the name Terbush but it is actually Turbush and the family was one of the first farmers in the Igo area. Peter F. Turbush was born in New York in 1813 and moved to Shasta County in the fall of 1849. He mined on the Trinity River without success for a year then returned to Shasta County after the 1850 Census. He established a farm on Dry Creek and a parcel of land north of the Northern California Veterans Cemetery is still known as Turbush Flats. In 1852 Peter was elected Deputy County Assessor. He was also known for being a founder of the Eagle Creek Debating Club. The 1860 Census lists Peter as a farmer married to Kate age 27 (born Saxony, Germany in 1833) and four children, Plato age 5, George age 2, Nelly age 1 and Lelia age two months. All the children were born in California. Another daughter of Peter and Kate was named Louisa but she died at age 25 days on March 28, 1857 and was buried on the farm.

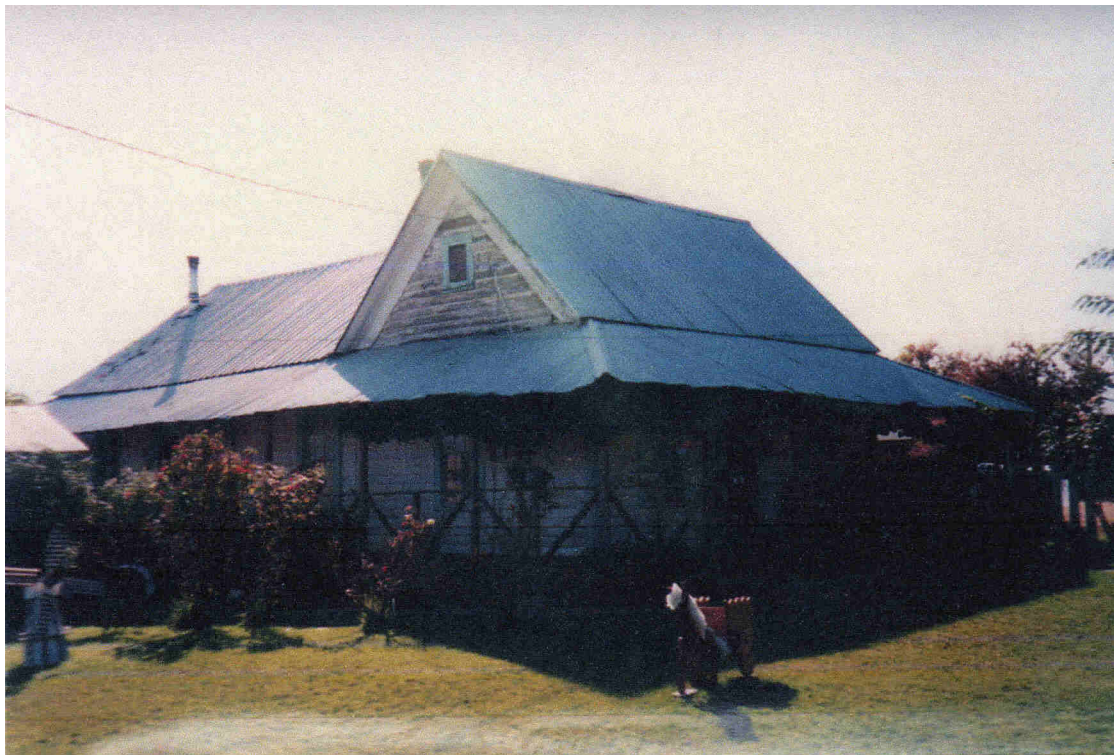
The 1870 Census does not list Peter although he lived until January 1, 1886 (buried in the Igo Cemetery). The reason for this may have been that he was known to have had a spinal injury and may have been at the county Hospital. The Census lists Kate age 37 along with Kate age 15 (possibly Plato on the 1860 Census), George F. age 12, Nellie age 11, Lelia age 10, Jennie age 8, and Willie age 5.

The 1880 Census lists only Kate age 47, George age 22, and Jennie age 18. There are no listing on the 1910 and later census. George F. born on March 6, 1858,

was known as an insurance agent in Igo and died on November 20, 1928 (buried in the Igo Cemetery). Willie was born in 1865 and died on August 15, 1872 is also buried in the Igo Cemetery.

The real clue to the house came from the marriage of the daughters. Nellie married William R. Thomasson on November 29, 1876. Jennie married R. G. Harvey on June 24, 1880. Lelia married George H. Anderson on November 19, 1879. Katie married George K. Willard on September 21, 1875.

The house was built next to the Willard Store opened up by George K. Willard in 1868. In the 1880 Census George and Katie were living in Igo with their two children, Olive and Harry, and a Chinese cook. The house probably dates from 1868 to 1880. In 1900 the family moved to Red Bluff (with three children and George's brother Charles who joined in a partnership in 1880). In 1901 the store was moved to Red Bluff leaving the house vacant for the Pearson's.



History of the Ono Grange by Merla Clark

The Grange organization was formed in the late 1860s to improve the economic and social positions of the nation's farm populations. The Grange provided services to rural areas, including economic development, education and legislation to assure a strong and viable rural population.

The first meeting of the Ono Grange #445 was held in a rented building on Buell Road in Ono on April 2, 1930. The first master was James J. Barr Sr. and the first secretary was Lena Driscoll. The charter members were: James Barr Sr., Mrs. Martin Driscoll, Olive Miller, David Miller, Marshall Gill, Richard Edmonds, Bob Jordan, W. Kingsbury, May Kingsbury, C.M. Murphy, Joseph N. Moon, Pauline

Stevens, Eugenia Graham, Sydnie Jones, Nelly Murphy, Mrs. Addie B. Graves, Charles Plumb, Mabel Fowler, Frankie Fowler, and Mrs. Julia Edmonds.

The By-laws were adopted August 6, 1930 and the first orders of business were to find a hall for meetings and rent or buy a piano. In February 1934 negotiations began with David Boyer of Ono to buy the lot next to the hotel and blacksmith shop where the current Grange Hall resides. In May 1934 Mr. Boyer donated the lot and was granted a life membership in the Grange.

Construction began immediately and by May 25, 1934 a platform was erected as the first stage. During the period of a platform only, rails were added and dances and political debates were held that became quite popular. During this period the cutting, dressing and hauling of poles for the building framework was in progress from the hill above the Edmonds and Driscoll farms. Some of those that worked on the cutting and hauling crew were Bernard Alberg, Scott Fairley, Lee Foster, Martin Driscoll, Richard Edmonds and Mose Grant. The board and batten siding lumber was purchased from Thatcher Lumber Company in Redding. The hall was completed and dedicated by the State Grange Master in May 1937.

The Grange was and is important as a social network for the Gas Point, Igo and Ono areas. There is a long history of community service associated with the Grange, ranging from providing the local 4-H Club a meeting place, a point for USDA commodities distribution, and a place for the community to come together for memorial services, weddings, etc. There are long standing traditions including the Old-Timer's Dinner, Santa Claus Ride-in, pancake breakfasts, quilt shows, and a place for local groups to hold fundraisers.

The Grange first had electricity installed in 1940 when Vern Williams operated a power plant on Eagle Creek. Some furnishings have been in the Grange since practically the beginning. One of the first electric refrigerators is still there and in operating condition. There is a large wooden cupboard purchased from Mrs. Huelseman for three dollars in 1938. In the 1940s the Grange borrowed money from its members to pay for walls inside the hall. These walls now have more than four hundred historical photographs on public display. The oak flooring was laid by members in the 1950s and the benches came from the old Redding Greyhound station. The kitchen was remodeled in 2000 by members under the lead of Jim Gray and John Francis. The mural behind the stage was painted in 2008 by member Lisa Baechtle and the handicap ramp was added in 2009.

It is an ongoing endeavor to retain the historical integrity of the building and to keep up to date with county regulations and the usual health and safety codes.

Pioneer Dredging Company Town

In 1935 the Cryer & March Mining Company began operations along Dry Creek and set up a camp in the area called the Dry Creek Gap to the southwest of the water tower at the crossroads of Cloverdale and Clear Creek Roads. In early 1936 the Pioneer Dredging Company owned by Ralph Baker and Oliver Warren bought out Cryer & March. To start operations two diesel powered dredges with 1 ½ cubic yard drag lines were rebuilt in Dry Creek. The dredges could process 6000 cubic

yards of gravel in three eight-hour shifts. The camp to support operations housed about 100 people including families. The camp contained tarpaper houses, bunkhouses for single men, cook shack, as well as a machine shop and warehouse. Later a school was opened with Mrs. C.H. Plumb of Igo as the teacher. Electric power was supplied to the camp in 1936.

Operations ran from just behind the Igo-Ono Elementary School down Dry Creek to Gas Point Road. Operations appear to have been done on Sandstone Gulch and Big Gulch. Three shifts ran seven days a week with shift changes taking place on Mondays.

The two smaller dredges were later replaced by a doodlebug brought in from Buckeye. The drag line for the new dredge had a three cubic yard capacity and processed 5500 cubic yards of gravel every twenty-four hours. The new doodlebug was an electric operation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company had to install temporary lines along Happy Valley, Hawthorne and Cloverdale Roads to serve the big dredge.

The advantage of the new 6-pontoon dredge was that it could be dismantled in three days and moved to a new site along the creek. Water to float the dredge was supplied by the Happy Valley Water Company but usage was limited as the dredge only drew two feet of water. A land based crane and bucket manipulated by cable took gravel from the front of the pond and deposited it on the front of the dredge in a hopper. The gravel was washed in a cylinder and the finer material deposited in a riffle box where the gold was trapped using quicksilver. The debris from the operation was deposited at the rear of the pond. About every ten days the riffle boxes were cleaned and the gold/quicksilver mix was taken to the retort shack. At the retort shack the quicksilver was distilled off for reuse and the remaining gold was ready for shipment.

By 1939 the sites along Dry Creek were no longer profitable and operations ceased. The dredge was moved to Spring Gulch to start new operations. With the removal of the equipment the 40 or so employees still at the camp soon disappeared.



The Los Angeles Mounted Rifles

This story has little to do with Shasta County other than it involved a similar exodus of pro-Southern officers from local forts just prior to the Civil War. It is presented for the surprise that California had the only company of Free State Militia to defect to the Confederates. Part of an organized California company with all their arms and equipment escorted Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston, the resigned Commander of the Department of the Pacific, out of California with the aim of reaching Confederate territory in Texas without the U. S. Army responding.

In 1861 Los Angeles had a population of between 3500 and 4000 mixed inhabitants. Much of the population was Mexican, Indian and a mix of German Jews, pro-Southern and pro-Northern Americans. It was still a rough frontier town boasting 50 to 60 murders per year. The California Militia system was founded in 1850 but most units were little more than social groups or "paper" organizations. Unless called into emergency service by the Governor little was done to keep track of them. With the growing crisis in the East after the election of Abraham Lincoln, Governor John Downey called for the formation of militia companies "to preserve order." One unit to answer the call was the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles.

In mid-February 1861, after the succession of several States, a petition was presented to the County Judge for Los Angeles County, to form a militia company under the 1850 law. The enrollment of a company was authorized by Judge Dryden and on March 17, 1861, some 80 new members mustered in. They named the unit the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles and elected officers. The officers reflected the ethnic make-up of the community but the largest group were pro-Southern. Captain Alonzo Ridley and George Washington Gift were the main organizers along with Judge Dryden and all later admitted the unspoken aim of the unit was to aid the Confederacy. In the organizational phase it was the intent of the unit to cause difficulties within California.

A request was placed with the Adjutant General, William C. Kibbe, requesting 80 rifles, 80 Colt pistols and 80 sabers. The Governor authorized the release of 40 rifles from a warehouse in Los Angeles. With the aid of a unit member, the Under Sheriff, Tomas A. Sanchez, rifles and sabers were diverted from defunct units in Southern California. Some required a bond but none was ever paid. After news of the shelling of Fort Sumter reached California caused an increase in local Union activities, the unit's plans were changed to reaching Texas to join the Confederate forces.

The plans were again altered with the arrival of Albert S. Johnston. The commander of the Department of the Pacific had moved to Los Angeles with his family after resigning his commission in the Union Army. Prior to his resignation Johnston had remained faithful to his oath and taken steps to stop Southern conspiracies. After his resignation Union forces expected Johnston to attempt to join the Confederate Army. Johnston was kept under observation and under the threat of arrest.

The leaders of the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles offered their services to help Johnston escape and the offer was quietly accepted. The departure date had to be moved forward based on information that both Johnston and Captain Ridley were to

be arrested for treason. This change in plans meant that some members who wished to go would be left behind.

On June 27th, 1861, the group assembled at Warner's Ranch. The party consisted of twenty-six members of the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles under the command of Captain Ridley. They were joined by the following resigned officers: Brigadier General Albert S. Johnston, Captain and Brevet Major Lewis A. Armistead (previous commander at San Diego), Lt. R.H. Brewer (1st Dragoons), Lt. Aaron B. Hardcastle (6th Infantry), Lt. Nathaniel Wickliffe (9th Infantry), Lt. Francis Mallory (4th Infantry), Lt. E.B. Dudley Riley (4th Infantry), Lt. Arthur Shaff (4th Infantry), General Johnston's freed black servant, and Capt. Armistead's teenage son. General Johnston was offered command but deferred to Captain Ridley and the other resigned officers followed his example.

It was a party of sufficient size to discourage Indian attacks but the unit still faced three crisis points occupied by the Union Army: Fort Yuma, around Tucson, Arizona, and at Ft. Fillmore in New Mexico. The first crisis was forestalled when Fort Yuma on the Colorado River was reached and a majority of the command was sick. A few soldiers at the fort desired to join the party and burn Fort Yuma. The offer was rejected on the basis that the command had not been accepted into the Confederate forces and thus the act would be a criminal offence. This sense of honor would prevail during the entire march.

From Fort Yuma the party continued to follow the Overland Stage Route along the Gila River, to the Pima Villages, then down through the Picacho Pass to Tucson. The party found Fort Breckinridge abandoned and much of the town hostile to Union forces as they had destroyed the town's gristmill on their retreat. A citizen's group wished to combine with the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles and take revenge on the Union troops. Once again the offer was rejected.

The next stage of the march was through warring Apache territory to Apache Pass. At the sole well, after a two-day dry march, they were confronted by a pro-Union party leaving Texas to join forces in California. The mounted Rifles were not to be denied water but conflict was avoided when the pro-Union party continued west rather than contest the ownership of the well.

Although discovering Apache destruction of stages the party passed through Apache territory without contact. On July 27 the party reached the Rio Grande fifteen miles north of Fort Fillmore. From a captured Mexican the party learned that the fort had been captured by Confederate troops from Texas. Not believing the informant they told him they were a forward Union patrol and released him. The informant immediately returned to the Texas forces. Not knowing the full strength of the Union command a spy was sent out from Captain Coopwood's Company of Baylor's Brigade. The spy was captured and luckily Captain Ridley knew Captain Coopwood, so arrangements were made for the party to cross into Confederate territory. On July 28, 1861 the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles entered Mesilla, New Mexico that was occupied by Colonel Baylor. Baylor was to go on to organize the Confederate Territory of Arizona and later be opposed by the California Column.

With their arrival in Confederate territory the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles were officially mustered out of the militia. Although a few stayed with Baylor's command most went east to enlist in both the Confederate Army and Navy. Albert

Johnston became Commander of the West before being killed at the Battle of Shiloh. Captain Armistead rose to the rank of Brigadier General before he died from wounds received at Gettysburg. Captain Ridley commanded General Johnston's bodyguard until Shiloh, after which he served in Texas. Ridley was captured at Fort Butler in 1863 and survived his captivity. Most of the resigned lieutenants rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel or Colonel in various commands. Private George W. Gift who helped organize the militia company joined the Confederate Navy and progressed to the command of the CSS Chattahoochie and CSS Tallahassee. Private William D. Robinson fought in Texas throughout the war returned to California and was elected to the State Assembly in 1867, the first ex-Confederate to do so.

Some of the members who remained in California tried to reach the Confederacy as individuals or small groups. One who succeeded was Private Joseph L. Brant who was commissioned an ordinance officer in Virginia. Brant transferred west for the Red River Campaign and by the end of the war was a Brigadier General in command of a Louisiana Cavalry Brigade. Brant was the only citizen of California to become a Confederate general.

The members of the party had a great impact on the Confederate Command and on early morale but it also had an effect on California. The loss of a militia company and General Johnston shocked Union authorities in California. The State legislature immediately called for reports on all other units and established Camp Wright to block any large parties from using the Overland Stage Route. Due to the distrust of units raised in Southern California, units from Northern California including Shasta County were sent to garrison the southern part of the State including Camp Drum in Los Angeles. Arms were placed under tighter control and the use generally restricted to federalized units. All-in-all the small unit had much more influence than its size would indicate: they disrupted military activities in California and went on to greatly aid the Confederate war effort at sea and on land.