

The monthly newsletter is a service to the community and our members. We welcome requests to research specific topics from the public and accept articles on local history. Please note that the Society reserves the right to accept or decline any article or material at its discretion. The Society is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any submitted material so please keep a copy for your records. Please include a note authorizing Anderson Historical Society to publish the material. We need two things from all members or those interested in local history: please be sure the Society has an updated email address and please spread the word to friends and neighbors about the Newsletter. Please contact us at: [www.andersonhistorical.com](http://www.andersonhistorical.com).

Articles for the month of March 2024 are: 1) Early Photographers of Shasta County, Part 8 Marie to Oltman, 2) Gold Rush Letter, Solomon D. Baker, Shasta April 24, 1859, 3) Gold Rush Letter, Elisha (unknown), Horsetown, May 13, (unknown: probably 1859), 4) John W. Benton, and 5) Oscar Smith Barr

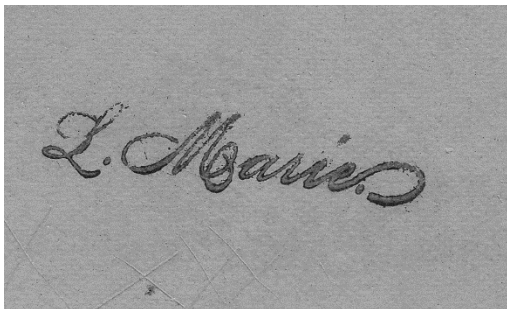
## Early Photographers of Shasta County, Part 8

**Louis Armand Marie** – operated from Weaverville from September 1874 to 1875.

Louis Armand Marie was born in France about 1827. He first appears locally in 1873 when he was naturalized at the Trinity County Court. At the same time Louis registered to vote in Trinity County as a photographer. In 1875 Louis registered to vote in Shasta County but “dropped dead on the street (in Redding) ... his death caused by dissipation.” (Dissipation was a polite manner of saying drunken.) Louis was noted for his landscape photographs some of which were published in the *London Illustrated* and *Leslie’s Illustrated*.



Odd Fellow's Procession in Shasta taken by Louis Armand Marie.



Hand stamped trademark on the reverse of the photograph of the Odd Fellow's Procession.

**PICTURES.**—L. Marie, resident photographic artist of Weaverville, will open a gallery in Shasta in a few days, and will be prepared to furnish pictures to all who desire the same. He is a splendid artist, and his photographic views of California mountain scenery have been copied and reproduced in Leslie's Illustrated and London Illustrated papers. Patronize him; he's no "slouch."

Advertisement from the Shasta Courier dated September 5, 1874 for Louis A. Marie. Courtesy of Shasta Historical Society.

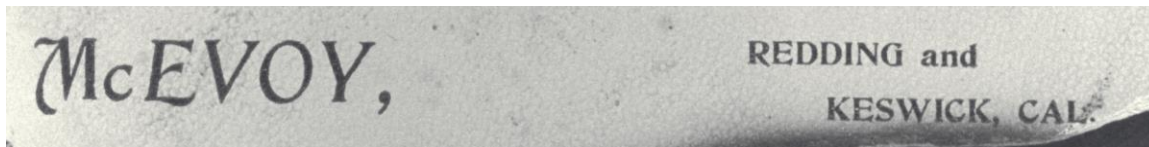
**John James McEvoy** – operated in Redding and Keswick from 1897 to 1900.

John James McEvoy was born in 1863 in Canada and immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1866. John was living in Redding by 1896 as his twin children Ethel and Athel were born here in that year. In the 1900 U. S. Census John was listed as a photographer although the name was spelled McAvoy. In 1900 U. S. Census John was married to Margaret Evans born in 1871 in Wales (immigrated in 1876, married in Idaho in 1890) with four children: Earl born 1891 in Idaho, Ether and Athel in 1896, and LeRoy born in Redding in 1898.

John may have been a jeweler by trade as he was listed at Kennett as a jeweler rather than a photographer and by 1910 the family was living in Oakland where John worked for a jewelry firm. By 1920 John was listed in Oakland as owning his own jewelry store.



Portrait of an unknown man by John James McEvoy. Courtesy of Shasta Historical Society.



Trademark for John James McEvoy.

**M. A. McKinnon** – operated at Shasta from January 1862 to about 1863.

Little was found about M. A. McKinnon other than he announced the opening of a photographic gallery in Shasta in January 1862. In March 1862 McKinnon announced that he would be traveling through the country and appears to have dropped from the records.

**Mark Meacham** – operated in Redding in 1894.

Mark Meacham was born in Indiana about 1847 and prior to moving to California he was believed to have worked in Spokane, Washington in 1892. In 1894 Mark registered to vote as a

photographer in Red Bluff and was believed operated in Redding about the same time. The only other entry found on Mark was in 1914 when he was listed as a photographer in Alameda County.



Portrait of an unidentified man taken by Mark Meacham. Courtesy of Shasta Historical Society.



Trademark for Mark Meacham.

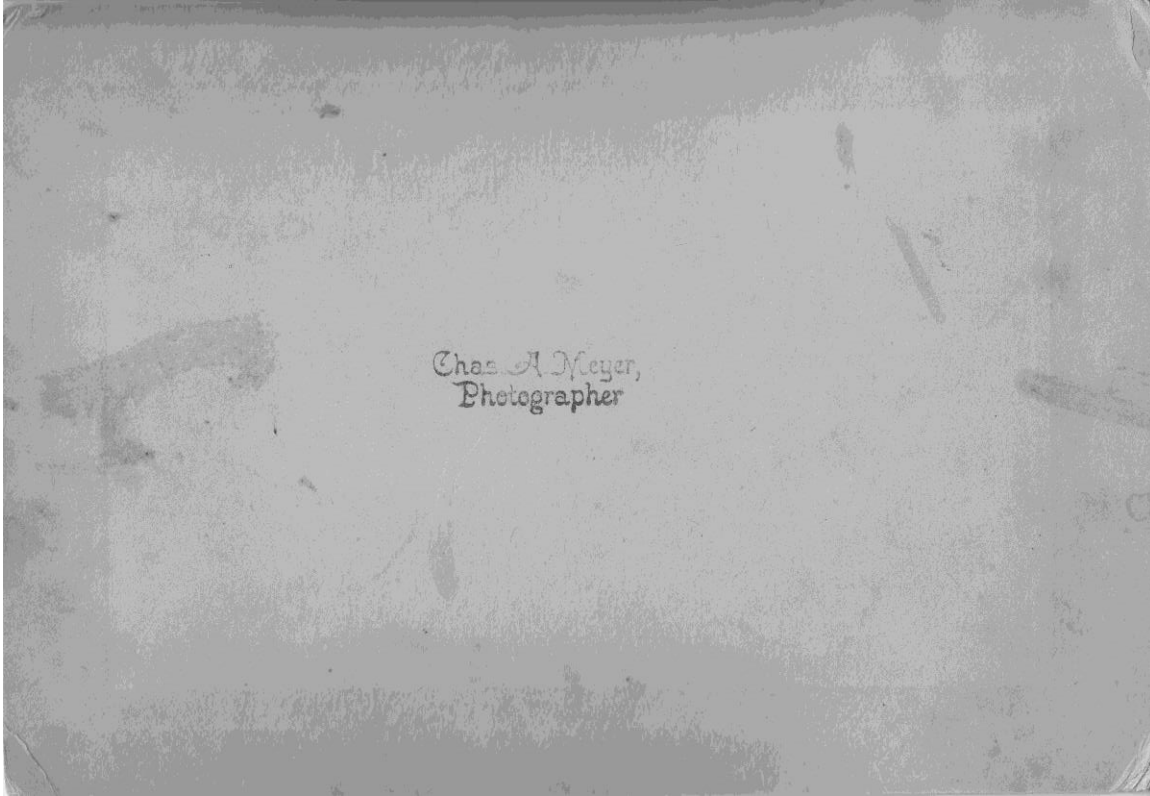
**Charles A. Meyer** – operated about 1900 at Harrison Gulch.

Charles A. Meyer was born in August 1868 in Wisconsin. Charles was the son of Anton Meyer born about 1846 in Prussia and Catherine Illy born about 1850 in France. Charles was living in Wisconsin in 1880 and was listed as a stationary engineer at Harrison Gulch in 1900. In 1910 Charles was a house painter in San Francisco and listed as divorced. After 1910 nothing was found about Charles.

Charles was the brother of Peter John Meyer who was also a photographer at Harrison Gulch around 1900-1910.



View of Harrison Gulch taken by Charles A. Meyer about 1900.



Trademark of Charles A. Meyer

**Frederick Meyer, Junior** – operated at Harrison Gulch 1895.

Frederick Meyer was born in California in 1856 and was the son of Frederick and Dorothy Meyers. He was first listed as a photographer in the 1880 U. S. Census in San Francisco. Frederick was at Harrison Gulch in 1895 but had returned to San Francisco by 1896. The last entry found for Frederick was as a photographer in San Francisco on the 1900 U. S. Census.

**Jacob E. Meyer** – operated at Shasta 1869-1870.

Jacob Emery Meyers was born in 1847 in Iowa and registered to vote as an artist in August 1869 at Shasta. Jacob was in a partnership with Jacob Benjamin Reiff in August and September 1869 and known to be at Junction City in Trinity County in November 1869. In August 1871 Jacob was registered to vote as an artist at Hydesville, Humboldt County.

**Peter John Meyer** – operated at Harrison Gulch about 1900-1910.

Peter was born in April 1876 in Wisconsin. He was the son of Anton Meyer born about 1846 in Prussia and Catherine Illy born about 1850 in France. About 1900 Peter and his brother Charles A. Meyer were at Harrison Gulch working as miners. In the 1910 U. S. Census Charles was listed as a shift boss for one of the mines with a wife Freda Albiez born about 1884 in Colorado and a daughter Marie born about 1909. By 1918 Peter was a silver miner in Nevada. In 1920 and 1930 Peter was listed as a metal miner in Los Angeles County and 1940 as a bartender in San Bernardino County. Peter died in San Bernardino in 1945

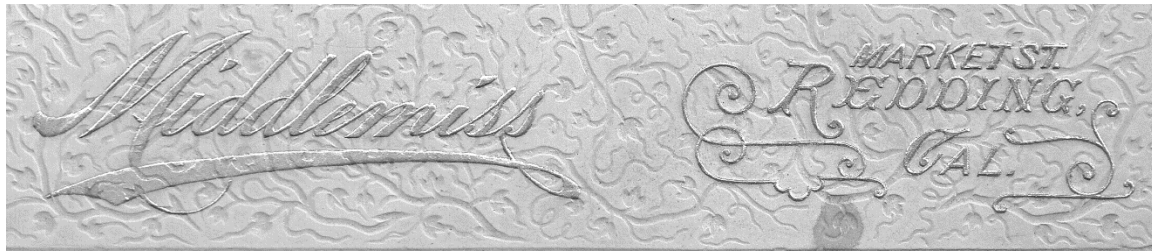
## **B. Middlemiss** – operated in Redding from 1897-1898.

No biographical data was found on B. Middlemiss other than he operated in Redding from 1897 to 1898.



Unidentified portrait of a young girl in a walker taken at the B. Middlemiss studio in Redding.

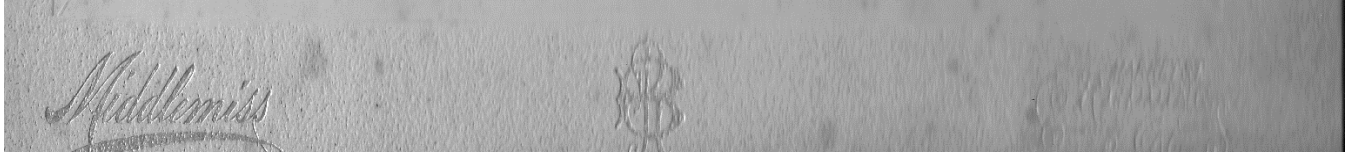




Trademark of the B. Middlemiss studio in Redding.



Portrait of eight unknown individuals taken by Middlemiss. Note the front row appear to have been added to the original photograph.



Middlemiss trademark with the addition of an entwined M and B in the center.

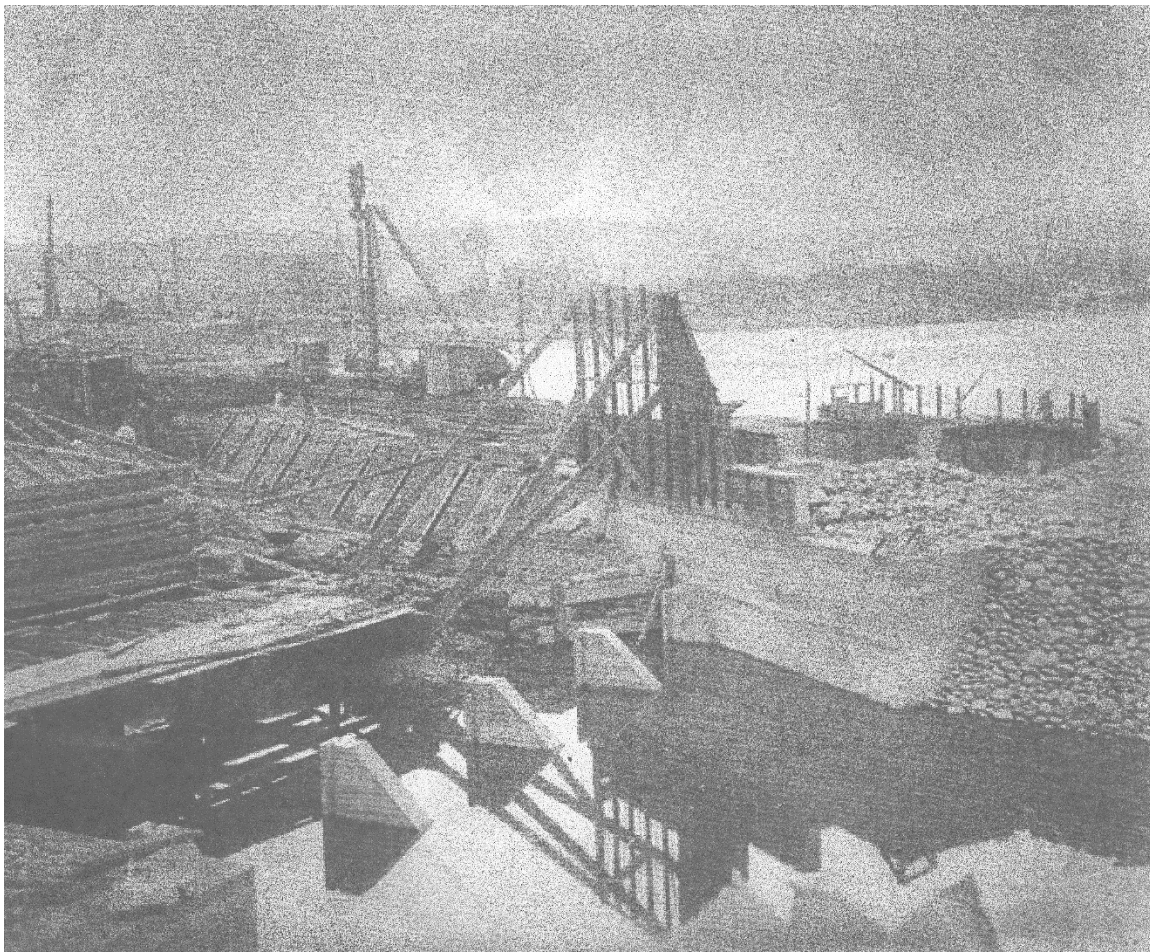
**Chester Mullen** – operated in Redding probably beginning around 1908 and continuing into the 1950s.



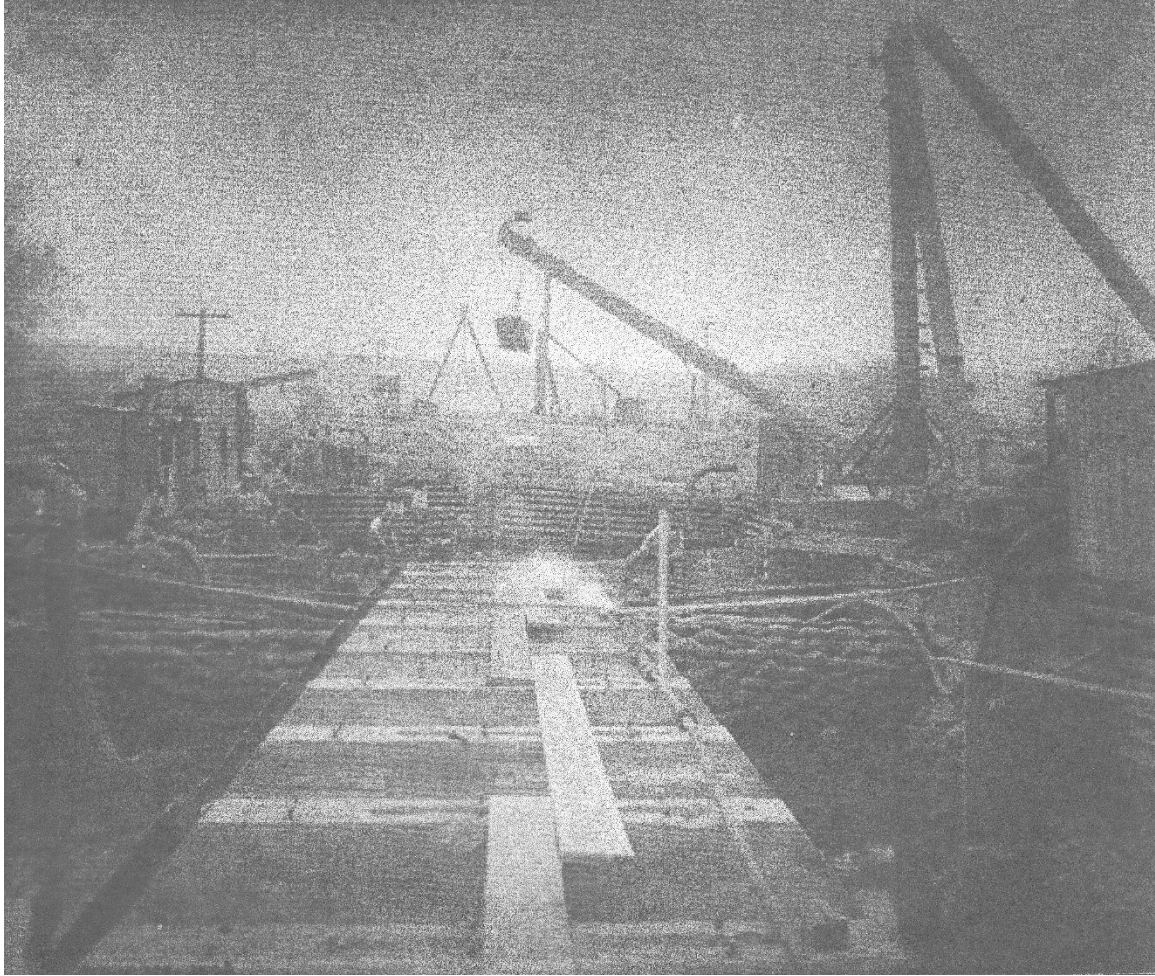
Self-portrait of Chester J. Mullen taking a photograph. Courtesy of the Shasta Historical Society.

Chester Jerome Mullen is included in this book of early photographers because during his career from 1908 to the 1950s he took hundreds of photographs about every day life around Redding. Some works cite his photography as a hobby and that is why he neither signed nor copyrighted most of his work. Chester must have had some aspirations of being a professional as he lists himself in the 1920 U. S. Census as a studio photographer.

Chester was born in 1886 on the Mullen Ranch just south of Redding. He was the son of James Mullen 1849-1930 and Emeline Smith 1850-1927 and his grandparents settled in Shasta County in 1852. After high school Chester began working as a carpenter, an occupation he lists on the 1910, 1930 and 1940 U. S. Census. In 1917 Chester married Bertha Williams. Chester lived in Redding until 1939 when retired and moved to Shasta. During World War II he was believed to have joined the California State Militia. Chester died in 1958 and Bertha moved back to Redding where she died in 1964.



Wooden frames at the ACID Canal diversion site in Redding in 1916. Mullen was a carpenter by trade but it is not known if he worked on the project. Mullen often used glass plates and seldom signed his work. Courtesy of Anderson Historical Society.



Crane working on the diversion site of the ACID Canal in Redding in 1916. Courtesy of Anderson Historical Society.



Portrait of the Shasta County High School Girls Basketball team in 1908. Chester Mullen would have been in the graduating class of 1908 and in 1906 was the business manager on the *Shasta Daisy*. Courtesy of Shasta Historical Society.



The shoeshine stand outside of McConnell's Saloon in Redding about 1910. Courtesy of Shasta Historical Society.

**Charles B. Noe** – operated in Redding in 1886.

Charles B. Noe was born about 1849 in New York and in 1870 was listed in the U. S. Census for San Francisco. The census entry states Noe works in a photography shop and was married to Elizabeth Noe born about 1850 in Frankfurt, Germany. Noe was known to be working as a photographer at Grass Valley in Nevada County in 1875 and San Francisco in 1878. In 1886 Noe was operating in Redding but was not traced after that year.

**Oliver H. P. Norcross** – 1860 to 1870 from Weaverville.

Oliver Hazard Perry Norcross was born in 1824 in Maine and was listed in the 1852 California State Census at Weaverville and reportedly opened a studio prior to 1856. In 1860 he was listed as a

daguerreotype artist at Weaverville. Oliver had married Ellen Pratt in 1849 in Massachusetts and had a daughter Nellie born in Massachusetts about 1850. After the family came west they had a second child Frank born in California about 1855. A fire in October 1863 destroyed Oliver's studio but he quickly rebuilt. In 1868 Oliver was still listed as a daguerreotype artist in Weaverville but he was also for a period a Justice of the Peace and in 1865 the local collector of internal revenue. Some reports have Oliver at Shasta in 1870 and he was known to have traveled to Shasta, Red Bluff and Eureka. Oliver died in Weaverville in 1871.

## **Oscar Frederick Oliphant** – operated in Anderson in 1894.

Oscar Frederick Oliphant was born in California in 1864. Oscar, who was usually listed as Frederick in his early years, was the son of Henry C. Oliphant 1828-1909 and Dicey Ann Oscandine (Dica, Dicia, Diana Oxendine) 1843-1893. Oscar parents were in California in the 1850s living first in San Joaquin County, then Stanislaus County by 1860 and Yolo County by 1870. By 1880 Oscar and his parents were at Shasta where Oscar was a farm laborer on his father's farm. Oscar was living in Anderson in 1892 but no occupation was given. Peter Palmquist lists Oscar as a photographer in Anderson in 1894. In 1896 Oscar was listed as a teacher at Montgomery Creek and the following year Oscar married Myrtle Irene Wiswell 1878-1952. On the 1900 U. S. Census Oscar was listed as a teacher at Anderson and in 1910 a lumber grader in Anderson. In 1920 Oscar was farming at Anderson but by 1929 had moved to Chico in Butte County. Oscar was listed on the 1928 Native American registration as being one quarter Native American. The tribal affiliation was not known but his maternal grandmother was born in the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Oscar died in 1931.

## **John D. Oltman** – operated in Shasta in 1897.

John D. Oltman was born in Michigan in December 1854. John's parents John Oltman (1816-1879) and Emma Wilhelmina Wuensch (born 1822) were both born in Germany. John's father was naturalized in Michigan in 1857 but the family moved to Minnesota around the beginning of the Civil War. In 1876 John registered to vote in San Gabriel, Los Angeles County as a farmer and his father as a millwright. John's father died in Los Angeles in 1879 and John appears to have returned to Minnesota to become a photographer as the 1880 U. S. Census lists him as a photographer at Saint Paul. John appears to have returned to California around 1890 and was listed as a photographer at Santa Clara in 1892 and working out of Siskiyou County in 1896. John traveled through Shasta County in 1897 in partnership with John Wesley Tollman. In 1900 John was listed at Springdale, Stephens County, Washington. By 1920 John was living in Santa Clara County and appears to have dropped out of photography. John died in Santa Cruz County in 1948.



Gold Rush Letters

Solomon D. Baker, Shasta, April 24, 1859

Shasta Cal Apr 24/59  
G. A. & Maggi Packard  
Dear Nephew  
& Niece  
I was delighted last evening on the receipt of your kind favor of July 28<sup>th</sup> as it was the first one I ever received from G. A., and the first from Maggi for more than a year. I had imagined that she had ceased to think of me, or if she deigned to think of me occasionally, it was as a wayward Uncle, who had deserted friends and home native home for a life companion and a home in this God forsaken Country, so you may well imagine my happiness on receipt of your kind letters and learning it was otherwise, we are all too proud

Slips  
24  
Dover

Dear  
Maggi  
and  
Nephew

to look at the dark side of  
the picture, I had imagined that  
you dear Niece had taken offence  
perhaps at my, (as you supposed harsh  
misan) misanthropy, and had ceased to  
write on that account, after my  
marriage I acquainted you of the  
fact and have never recd a line  
from you until the present time

I should have advised with  
you as a dear and prized friend  
and Niece on so important a  
subject, but you doubtless know  
by experience that love brooks no  
delay, Notwithstanding your  
silence, I should have written to you  
often, but I have been hurried almost  
to death with business affairs, and have  
been troubled pecuniarily very much, and  
in fact I am now careless about  
writing than I used to was, so you  
must excuse me and I will do better  
in future; but I have said nothing

get and have not much to say  
I had forgotten to say that myself  
and family are enjoying usual good  
health, ~~then~~ though my health is now  
very good, William is in as good health  
as usual, he lives about ten miles  
from here, you spoke of writing  
to him some two months prior to  
your writing to me, I don't think  
he received it, Say Grant has  
been down here on a visit he  
remained about a month, he is a  
fine young man, he says Maggie you  
have ceased to write to him since your  
marriage; he don't think that little respon-  
sibles and a life companion should  
prevent a mother devoting a few moments  
in writing to her relations, neither does  
your correspondent, Cousins Robert  
and Stephen I have not seen for a  
long time, Jane is married again  
and I heard a report that she and  
husband had separated but can not vouch  
for the truth of the report

Mr Packard I fear my letter will prove uninteresting to you, There is no news here of general interest, The political chaldron begins to boil, there are candidates to fill the County offices too numerous to mention, Our Old Governor or rather present governor is spoken of as a candidate for reelection,

Wangler men are numerous in this state, The Chinese question seems to be the principal topic of the day, They are a great nuisance in our state, they never can become citizens but are flocking here by thousands and exhausting our mines, our legislator passed a law prohibiting the further emigration to the state but the Supreme Court declared the bill unconstitutional and still they come, The miners have run them out of some portion of the mines, but the officers of the law, try to prevent any thing of the kind, our County was the theater of an affray a short time since between miners & the Sheriff's posse The Governor was called on for troops and ammunition to quell the riot more anon with sworn soldiers

Shasta Cal Apr. 24/59

F.A. & Maggie Packard

*Dear Nephew and Niece*

*I was delighted last evening on the receipt of your kind favor of February 28<sup>th</sup>. It was the first time I ever received from F. A. and the first from Maggie for more than a year. I had imagined that she had ceased to think of me, or if she deigned to think of me occasionally it was as a wayward uncle who deserted friends and native home for a life companion and home in this god forsaken country. So you may well imagine my happiness on receipt of you kind letter and learning it was otherwise. We are all prone to look at the dark side of the picture. I had imagined that you dear niece had taken offense perhaps at my (as you supposed hasty union) union and had ceased to write on that account. After my marriage I acquainted you of the fact and have never received a line from you until the present time.*

*I should have advised with you as a dear and prized friend and niece on so important a subject but you doubtless know by experience that love brooks no delay. Notwithstanding your silence I should have written to you often, but I have been worried almost to death with business affairs and have been troubled pecuniarily very much and in fact I am now more careless about writing that I used to was. So you must excuse me and I will do better in future, but I have said nothing yet and have not much to say.*

*I had forgotten to say that myself and family are enjoying usual good health, though my health is never very good. Hiram is in good health as usual. He lived about ten miles from here. You spoke of writing to him some two months prior to your writing to me. I don't think he received it. Boy Frank has been down here on a visit, he remained about a month. He is a fine young man, he says Maggie you have ceased to write to him since your marriage, he doesn't think that little responsibilities and a life companion should prevent a mother devoting a few moments in writing to her relations, neither does your correspondent. Cousins Robert and Stephen I have not seen for a long time. Jane is married again and I heard a report that she and husband had separated but can not vouch for the truth of the report.*

*Mr. Packard I fear my letter will prove uninteresting to you. There is no news here of general interest. The political caldron begins to boil. There are candidates to fill county offices too numerous to mention. Our old governor or present governor is spoken of as a candidate for reelection.*

*Douglas men are numerous in this state. The Chinese question seems to be the principal topic of the day. They are a great nuisance in our state, they never can become citizens but are flocking here by thousands and exhausting our mines. Our legislature passed a law prohibiting the further emigration to the State but the Supreme Court declared the bill unconstitutional and still they came. The miners have run them out of some portion of the mines, but the officers of the law try to prevent anything of the kind. Our county was the threat of an affray a short time since between miners and the Sheriff's posse. The governor was called for arms and ammunition to quell the riot. More Anon. Write soon.*

*Solomon*

Maggie is Margaret S. Baker 1830-1924 who was the daughter of Solomon's oldest brother Seth Baker. Seth died in 1846 and Margaret lived with her grandfather Dr. Isaac Baker. Margaret married Francis "Frank" A. Packard in February 1857 making him a nephew. At the time of the letter Francis and Margaret had their first child Edith F. Packard born about 1857.

Solomon appears to have married prior to 1859 and refers to a family. He was believed to have married Sarah M. Davison 1838-1878 after 1855 but a problem is noted about the child Nancy S. Baker

who was born in Indiana in 1854. In 1854 and 1855 Solomon was in California. A search of marriages in Shasta county provided the answer: S. D. Baker married Mrs. Sarah M. Beverly on December 20, 1857 so the child Nancy was a step daughter. Solomon and Sarah would go on to have four children: Christopher 1860, Ada Belle 1860, Isaac Frank 1862 and Sarah M. 1865.

The prior governor of California was J. Neely Johnson from 1856 to 1858. He was a member of the American (Know Nothing) Party and did not run again in 1858. The governor from 1858 to 1860 was John B. Weller who was a Democrat and he chose not to run for reelection. The Democratic candidate Milton Lathan became the next governor but resigned after six days thereby elevating the Lt. Governor John Downey into office.

The issue of slavery was the key national issue in 1859 and the Democratic Party was beginning to fracture. Douglas tried to hold the Union together through popular sovereignty or the right of the people of a state or territory to decide the slavery issue. The more radical anti-slavery Northern Democrats broke off to form the Republican Party. Douglas had helped California gain statehood with the Compromise of 1850.

Solomon is addressing the 1855 law "An Act to Discourage the Immigration to this State of Persons Who Cannot Become Citizens" that was found to be unconstitutional in 1857. In 1858 California passed "An Act to Prevent the Further Immigration of Chinese or Mongolians to this State" which was immediately challenged and found to be unconstitutional. In February 1859 a meeting of miners from Horsetown, Middletown and Texas Springs was held in Shasta and a proclamation issued ordering the Chinese out of Shasta County. Later in the month some Chinese were expelled from Rock Creek, Horsetown, Middletown and Oregon Gulch but the expulsion was not universally supported and came close to causing riots. At the time Solomon is writing tensions were high on both sides of the issue.

Anon is archaic for soon or shortly.

**Elisha (unknown), Horsetown, May 13, (unknown, probably 1859)**

Dear Mother  
Tuesday May 13

I arrived here two weeks since yesterday and wrote you <sup>the</sup> same evening. I believe I informed you that I had formed a partnership with two others for the purpose of working their claims between us. After due preparation we commenced operations yesterday. It looks "rather" dubious but we cannot tell how the thing will turn out until Saturday when we shall clean up when the story will be soon told. The miners have called a mass meeting to take place in a few days for the purpose of getting a reduction in the price of water which at the present rate is 1/2¢ per inch <sup>per day</sup> (we are using 20 inches) as they held one a few days since & failed I suppose this will result in a strike.

The situation though was to give me is not yet open though it was to have been on the fifteenth inst. but there is some talk of the miners backing out (the person whom they need to perform) consequently giving I am whether there will be an opening or not. If our claims pay I do not want to I have been here so long since my arrival sinking a shaft (or hole) digging a hard road sluicing etc and I haven't laid by a day when there was anything for me to do though I think I should have been stupid to if it had

with looks much better today





Company then organized the Clear Creek Ditch Company and completed the project in 1855. In 1859 the ditch was listed as 53 miles long, owned by Rhodes, Smith and Company and valued at \$140,000. The main channel consisted of an intake from Clear Creek just west of the Tower House and had forty miles of aqueducts, flumes and a 460 foot tunnel. The 60 mile name comes from the side ditches used to supply water to Gravel Hill, Horsetown, Jackass Flat, Texas Springs, Squaw Town, Oregon Gulch and Centerville. Six reservoirs were listed at Horsetown, Briggsville, Hill, Middletown, Upper Texas Spring and Oregon Gulch but there were multiple smaller holding reservoirs. The controlling company was not always popular and there was much contention, especially in 1859, over the cost of water supplied to miners. The company ceased operations in 1882. Since the period of mass meetings and a strike was 1859 this is the most likely date for the letter. By 1859 most placer mining of the streambeds along lower Clear Creek had long been accomplished and miners were working the higher banks up the ridge that required water be imported. As gold production dropped the cost of water increased and tempers flared as miners saw less and less reward in their labor. The water company in turn complained of increased maintenance cost to provide the water.

The letter reads:

*One Tree Cabin Cleminte Hill Horse Town Tuesday May 13<sup>th</sup> (in the margin: 14<sup>th</sup> it looks much better today)*

*Dear Mother*

*I arrived here two weeks since yesterday and wrote you the same evening. I believe I informed you that I had formed a partnership with two others for the purpose of working three claims between us. After due preparations we commenced operations yesterday. It looks "half \_\_\_\_\_" dubious but we cannot tell how the thing will turn out until Saturday when we shall clean up then the story will soon be told. The miners have called a mass meeting to take place in a few days for the purpose of getting a reduction in the price of water which at the present rate is \_\_\_\_\_ per inch per day (we are using 20 inches) as they held one a few days since and failed. I suppose this will result in a strike.*

*The situation \_\_\_\_\_ was to give \_\_\_\_\_ is not yet open though it was to have been on the fifteenth instant but there is some talk of the miners backing out (the person whom they were to buy out) consequently quien sabe (who knows in Spanish) whether there will be an opening or not. If our claims pays I do not want it. I have been hard at work since my arrival sinking in a shaft (a hole) digging a tail race sluicing etc. and I haven't laid by a day when there was anything for me to do though I could think I should have been obliged to if it had not been that my partners were finishing out another claim so that we were at work on ours only a part of the time. I guess I have a pair of about the worst blistered hands you ever saw and what with picking stone handling a shovel and swinging a pick all day long sluicing (and picking through a hard cement while digging our race) my hands became so bruised swelled and stiff that for awhile I was afraid my fingers would fester but the worst is over. My hands are already quite hard and I am hale and hearty as a buck. I was quite indisposed when I came here but the dyspepsia has vanished boils have "slid" or in a word "Richard is himself again." One of my partners hesitated about taking me in company at first for he said there was heavy work to do and he was afraid I was too delicate. The other night he remarked that for the last three or four days I wanted to work them to death. Ha! Ha!*

*Even though I should be unsuccessful as to making money I have regained my health which is far more valuable than gold. I am now very hearty and in perfect health. I should have written you a long letter but as I only commenced camping out yesterday I have not had a convenient place. The States mail is to be made up tomorrow and I am hastily writing this after bedtime. In next mail I will write a long letter particularizing. Please excuse the ½ sheet. I did not know I was so much out of paper. I am very impatient to return home and you are in my mind almost constantly.*

*I think I Rast must have left Frisco for I have not heard from him or you since I have been here though I am all anxiety to get a letter from you and also him.*

*Please write to me direct (to One Horse Town, Shasta Co. Cal.). That Providence may ever guard and angels attend you is the constant prayer of this affectionate son. Elisha*

(In the margin) *Please send this to sister \_\_\_\_\_. I will write her \_\_\_\_\_ long. Much love to you all.*

The letter uses a price that appears as .2/5 cents which at 20 miner's inches per day would be eight cents. The entry might have been \$2.50 per miner's inch which would have meant fifty dollars per day which for the average miner was more than he was making per day. In 1859 there was a strike against the company with numerous meeting, some destruction of company property, and a lot of angry miners.

## John W. Benton

John W. Benton was born in 1896 in Manton and enlisted to fly in France during World War I. John was utilized as an instructor for scout planes and never received orders to combat. Disappointed John resigned his commission in 1919 and returned to Shasta County to work for his father Thomas Hart Benton. Thomas purchased a sawmill at Plateau in 1895 then purchased the holding of Bass, Buick & Wrengler at Turtle Bay in 1908. The desire to fly was still strong and John rejoined the U. S. Army after about a year as a lumberman. John was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and in 1926 was selected to participate in the U.S. Army Pan-American Goodwill Flight. John while participating in a demonstration at Buenos Aires, Argentina was involved in a midair accident in February 1927 and died in the resulting crash. President Coolidge posthumously awarded John the Distinguished Flying Cross.



Lt. John W. Benton on the right



1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John W. Benton in the mid-1920s

## Oscar Smith Barr



Oscar Smith Barr at the F. H. Albright Store in Ono about 1922. Courtesy Karin Grave.

The story began when Roy and Karin Graves of Ono provided us with the photograph shown above while restoring graves at the Ono Cemetery. Thirteen members of the family were known to have been buried in the Ono Cemetery but there was not a lot of history written about the family.

The earliest member of the family buried at Ono was Aaron R. Albright born about 1839 in New York. He was the son of Aaron Albright and Cornelia Groesbeck of New York. Between 1860 Aaron moved to Michigan where in 1870 he was working at a sawmill and in 1880 was a teamster. Aaron married Susan Evelyn Smith born about 1845 in Canada who appears to have immigrated to Michigan in 1866. Susan was the daughter of Doctor James Oscar Smith 1822-1899 and Jane Cynthia Stooer 1825-1902. Dr. Smith moved to Shasta County in 1855 and settled at Middletown. In addition to being a

physician Dr. Smith accumulated a large ranch. Dr. Smith appears to have left the family in Canada as in the 1860 U. S. Census he was living alone with the McAllister family. Later three daughters would live in Shasta County: Susan Evelyn Albright, Cora McKeag 1854-1901 (married William McKeag 1835-1890), and Miss Francis Smith 1843. In 1870 Dr. Smith moved to American Ranch where he practiced as a physician and in 1885 moved to Cottonwood where he was semi-retire and listed as a capitalist. Dr. Smith died in 1899 at age seventy-seven and was buried at cottonwood.

Aaron and Susan Albright had three children all born in Michigan: James Oscar Smith born 1865, Franklin Hiram 1869, and twin Harriet "Hattie" Cordelia born 1869. The family appears to have moved to Texas sometime between 1880 and 1890 as both James and Hattie had children born there. Hattie appears to have married James Barr in Texas where she had two children Francis (Frankie) Evelyn born 1890 and James Justin born 1892. Little was found about James Barr. He was believed to have been born in England about 1868 and died in Texas in 1936. Hattie's third child Oscar Smith Barr was born in California in 1894 and she may have left her husband as no records were found of his presence in California. It appears that in 1894 the extended family moved to Alameda County. By family history Franklin Hiram and James O. S. were ranching just west of Ono in 1898. The ranch sat across from the Ogo Fire Station on Platina Road is today. In 1910 Hattie was still living in Alameda County with her three children but around that time the rest of the family moved to Ono. Franklin had opened the F. H. Albright Store in Ono and took care of his aging parents. Aaron R. Albright died in 1919 and his wife Susan died in 1922. Both are buried in the Ono Cemetery.

Franklin Hiram Albright was born in 1869 in Michigan and never married. Franklin died in 1928 and was buried in the Ono Cemetery.

James Oscar Smith Albright was born in Michigan in 1865. Family history has him ranching with his brother Franklin but most of his adult life was spent in Alameda County. James did register to vote in Ono in 1898 but by 1900 was living in San Francisco where he worked as a salesman. James married Etta Palmer born 1871 in Mississippi while in Texas and the couple had nine children: George 1894 Texas, Clara 1896 California, Nellie 1898 California, Harriet 1902 California, Oscar 1904 California, Sydney 1907 California, Etta 1908 California, John Bertrum 1909 California, and Thomas 1913 California. By 1910 James was a commercial salesman for alkali in Alameda County. By 1920 James and Etta were divorced. In 1930 James was boarding with Etta in Alameda County where he died in 1931. James was buried in the Ono Cemetery. In 1932 Etta married Edward Shultis but by 1940 she was living alone and listed as a widow. Etta died in 1953.

Of Hattie Cordelia's children Francis "Frankie" Evelyn born in Texas in 1890 married Ronald Clarence Griffin in Alameda County. The couple had a daughter Marjory Evelyn born in Alameda County in 1918 (died 2007). In 1919 Frankie died and was buried in Ono.

Hattie's son Oscar Smith Barr was born in San Francisco in 1894 and most of his life was associated with Alameda County. Just prior to World War I Oscar was working as a cook and waiter in Alameda. In June 1918 he left Camp Kearny, California as an automatic replacement draft for the Artillery Corps. Oscar was assigned to Battery B, 7<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Division in France where he received seven battle stars including St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne. Oscar also received the French Fourragere for the Croix de Guerre before returning in August 1919. Oscar returned to Alameda County where in 1923 he married Pearl Bertha Carner. In 1924 Oscar was working as a "carman" in Alameda County but by 1930 had moved to San Francisco where he was a salesman. In 1930 Oscar was listed as married to a Gladys M. last name unknown born about 1904 in California with a daughter Doris M. born

about 1926. It is not known how both marriages ended but by 1940 Oscar was listed alone as a waiter at Stanford University. In 1944 Oscar was listed as a salesman in San Francisco. Oscar died in 1966 in Alameda County and was buried at the Ono Cemetery.

Hattie's other son James Justin Barr born in 1892 in Texas had a long-term relationship with Ono. In 1910 he was living in Alameda County but by 1917 he had been farming in Igo and was married to Edna Leona Kidder born in 1895 in Ono. Edna was the daughter of William S. Kidder and Mary Elizabeth McFarlin. From 1920 to the end of World War II James was listed either as a framer, rancher or stock raiser at Ono. James and Edna had five children: Vivian Elizabeth 1918, James Justin 1919, Eloise Evelyn 1922, Harry William 1924, and Wayne K. 1933.

Of the five children the first four are buried in the Ono Cemetery. Vivian Elizabeth Barr born in 1918 first married Walter William Friday 1913-1999 but the marriage ended in divorce after the birth of their daughter Carol born about 1939. Vivian later married Edward Aaron Forschler 1918-1994. Vivian died in 2007.

James Justin Barr, Junior born in 1919 died in 1984 and was no known to have married.

Eloise "Lois" Evelyn Barr born in 1922 married Stanton Leland Wallis 1904-1990. Stanton was from Stanislaus County where the couple moved. In May 1943 the couple had a daughter Janet Clara Wallis 1943-2011 but just eight months later Lois died in an auto accident in Glenn County.

Harry William Barr born in 1924 married Frances M. VanElsberg after serving in the military from 1944 to 1946. The couple had three children: Terrell Justin 1950-1950, Lynne Eva 1951-2008, and one who wishes to remain private. The couple were divorced in 1970 and Harry William died in 1976.



Susan "Susie" Evelyn Albright 1848-1922. Courtesy Jo L. Giessner.



Oscar Smith Barr, Francis Evelyn Barr and James Justin Barr



James Justin Barr 1891-1973



Edna Leona Barr 1894-1968



