

TAPE #13

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Recorded: April 21, 1976

Reference: Jose Amador

I am the 4th great grandson of Jose Amador. On the maternal side. About 6 months ago, in Gilroy, I found his unmarked gravesite. Through the course of time this has happened to many Spanish Californians. They went broke; the family could afford a wooden cross and after some years it was decided to clean the cemetery by burning it off. They did this and burned all the wooden markers. But, fortunately, I did happen to run into Father Ryan, the cemetery keeper, and he does have all the maps, and we do know exactly where he is.

And our project is to mark his grave. We would also be proud if Amador County would like to have some part in doing this. The project is threefold; the family would be responsible for buying the headstone, we want to keep it simple. And I think it might be appropriate if Amador County worked toward placing a bronze marker on the tombstone. The DAR in Livermore, named after Amador is planning to do the same.

Initially the whole ~~plaque~~ plaque ~~which~~ would run 225 dollars. This will vary according to what you want to put on the plaque. It measures 6x8 inches. We have some ideas, but it would be your project.

Have you anything to say?

(A question is asked, but the tape didn't pick it up.)

He came to Amador Crossing to look for gold. This is very near Amador City. About three miles east of Amador City. One thing that made

him different from any other miner was the fact that he had his plan all worked out in advance. He went home, gathered up his partners and a small group of his most trustworthy Indians. He thought if one miner with a shovel can get so much, perhaps with two dozen Indians working for you, you can get that much more. He was right, because he was here for only a year yet became very wealthy from it.

The graveyard is at the St Mary's Catholic cemetery.

(Where did the name, Amador, come from. I know it means love of gold, but is this a coincidence?)

We don't know for sure. It is a Spanish name, but Jose's father, Pedro, was from Mexico and was born there.

Amador County is the only county in the state to be named after a native Californian. He was born in San Francisco at the Presidio. When he came up here, first he went to John Sutter, then over to the American River, it was a Mormon camp. I believe, then he migrated up to here. He made his one big strike and lived here from six months to a year. We don't know for sure.

He had a land grant, but it was in Livermore. It centered around Dublin.

(Why did he leave if he struck it rich?)

The climate didn't suit these Spanish Americans. It didn't agree with them to be out-of-doors. Also, he states that some of the indians had left him, but mainly because he heard that his wife was ill.

And he came home to her. He came back once more, about a year later, and figured that he could sell some of his cattle up here.

He drove 700 head of cattle up here. He sold them for 70 to 100 dollard apiece.

You may be wondering why he did die in Poverty. By the time the gold rush was over, about 1853, the miners began to look for other ways to make a living. So they began to look for land to settle. And they were surprised to find that the land was owned by the Mexicans. By that time Calif had become a state of the union, and there were bitter disputes because some of these miners decided to move in on the Mexicans. The government decided not to recognize Mexican land grants, if it was not proved in court. The Mexicans had to bear the cost of these battles and surveys and bit by bit had to sell off their land. They were land rich but money poor. He had three wives and 37 children.