

TAPE #18GEORGIA WHITE & FRANK WHITE

Reference: Early days in Pine Grove and Volcano---and logging.

Recorded: February 26, 1979

(Will you tell us about the Volcano bell?)

Caldwell McGee was a freighter, he hauled freight from San Francisco, Sacramento and various points. He hauled that bell to Volcano. It came overland; up the shake ridge route. And Volcano Hill, you know, is that hill where the stone quarry is. That's the way they all came into Volcano. The bell was hauled to Volcano for the Temperance Hall. It was put in the hall and then the people from the Methodist Church swiped it for the church. It travelled back and forth between the two places for quite a while.

Now, ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Caldwell McGee was my mother-in-law, Margaret Gillick's, Father. He was Sara's great grand-father. He was an Irishman, and he brought the bell from San Francisco.

(How did the Methodists get it?)

It was a plain matter of ~~thievery~~ thievery, you know. There were a lot of problems at that time between the temperance group and the Methodists.

(Where was the Hall?)

It was right there on the hill in back of the Catholic Church. I think it was on Badger Street. And ya know, one rainy night the bell was stolen from the Methodist Church by those gangsters at the College of the Pacific. They hauled it down there, and they buried it. Muriel Thibaut somehow got hold of this information and got it back. The natives over there didn't have enough get up

and go to do anything about it. They were a passive lot. Well, Muriel went down there single-handedly and made them give back the bell.

The same night they stole our bell, they stole the bell out of the Pine Grove schoolhouse. That was the first school house in Pine Grove. My Mother went to that school; she was one of the first persons born in Pine Grove. The first school-house, some rats moved that from where it was built, and right across from my Grandfather's house---and it became a saloon.

(When was Pine Grove settled?)

Volcano was very well established before anyone went to Pine Grove. It was about 1860. You see, I have the document in 1863 when Grandpa was chairman of the board, and the ridge route was put in. And they taught French and Algebra and Geometry in the Grammar School too. I'll tell you where it was. They have now fenced in the area, and it's called the Pine Grove Cemetery.

(Where is that?)

You know where Amador Auditing is? You turn left there, and the cemetery is up there. It used to be beautiful, there were gigantic ponderosa pines around there---and they have all been destroyed.

(Your Grandpa came out here in 1849?)

Yes, he did. We figure he came down Volcano Hill in October of 49. He got into Placerville, and then came right on over. He got here when Volcano was just starting to boom. I think Grandpa was about 35 then. Grandma was around 36 when they had their first child.

(Did it come here to mine?)

No, he came here for his health. He thought he'd live longer in Calif.

He was born in Virginia, but his Father moved to Missouri when he was two years old. You see, his Mother had died when he was born. Then Great-Grandpa re-married and went to Missouri. There was a little baby born named Jeffrey, but he was beaten by his mother who was very ~~frank~~ cruel.

(Did your Grandpa come out here by himself?)

The wagon-train was 74 wagons long. They left Independence, Missouri and he was hired as a guard or rider. He rode a horse; he didn't ride in a wagon. In Salt Lake settlement he bought two new horses. They got there in August and he bought an Indian pony and another one and paid a hundred dollars for both of them. They started across the Salt Lake desert with the full compliment and 30 turned around and went back.

(So Grandpa got to Placerville and then headed for Volcano?)

Yes, he went over the old stage route that come through by Fiddletown. It comes out at Rancheria. And from there into Volcano.

(How did people get gheir land?)

Grandpa staked out his claim. It was allowed to be 20 acres. They had to go into the recorder's office and file.

(Frank)

A lot of them didn't ever get clear title. You'd go into town to file, and someone else would come along and take the claim. At that time this was Calavaras County, and the Recorder was over at Double Springs, the other side of Mokelumne Hill. It would take a full day on a saddle horse to get the paper work done. And while you were gone some other guy would come along and probally state mining.

(Georgia)

The claim would go as high as 20 acres, but you could have a smaller amount of land. Some of the mine claims were a hundred foot square. Like Soldiers' Gulch in Volcano.

Our house in Volcano is 125 years old. It was built by a man named Hanford, you know. I had four children there.

(Well, what happened to Grandpa in Volcano?)

He staked his claim in Indian Gulch. The first one. You go up Clapboard and then you turn a bit to the left. Just go up Clapboard, and you're in Indian Gulch.

(Mixed conversations)

...some gypsies invaded Volcano one day, and they went to talk to this old Swiss lady. And while they were talking to her, one sneaked in her bedroom and stole all her Swiss money.

(Georgia)

I only lived in Volcano for 31 years, you know.

(Tell us something about Main Street in Volcano.)

Well, to start there were about 5000 people in Volcano at its peak. It grew very fast.

(Frank)

It was much larger than Sacramento. Sacramento was only Sutter's Fort. And when the miners came the Fort almost went to ruin. Columbia grew too, and there was talk at one time as to whether Volcano or Columbia would be the state capitol. Sacramento wasn't anything, but what made it important was that freight from San Francisco was transported by river to Sacramento and then freighted up here. So it was a river port, but as a town it was nothing.

(Georgia)

Grandpa had a hand in building the school-house. My ~~sister~~ Mother continued in grammar school until she was 18, because they had all these additional subjects that are now part of high school. She and Grandpa went up and papered the schoolhouse. I'll never forget her talking about it.

(How did you come to go from Volcano to Pine Grove and all that?)

All the business was in Volcano. Grandpa took his gold to Volcano to ship on Wells Fargo. At one point Grandpa left Volcano and went to Mokelumne Hill. That's where he met Grandmother. She came around the horn to California. For her health. Everyone who came here thought they would improve their health.

Grandpa was one of the five people who named Pine Grove. He was in Pine Grove during the Civil War.

These were all Mama's people.

QWhere did your Mama meet your Dad?)

When she was post-master! He came to California for his health. In Idaho a doctor told him, you get outta here and go to California. And Papa had a good gold mine there. So he gathered up his guitar and his violin and he left. He took his bedroll and his 45 too; the 45 was in his jeans at all times. When he left the lodge at Murray, Idaho he just looked at a map of California and decided he was going to Pine Grove.

(Frank)

He just picked out a postoffice to have his mail forwarded to. So he came to Pine Grove to get his mail.

(Georgia)

He went to the window, and sure enough, Mama had some mail for him. And he walked out of the post office and he said to himself, Hm, she's pretty! I better stay away from her. So he married her! By this time he was working in the Mooser Mine in Mokelumne Hill. And he'd walk to Pine Grove for his Mail, ya know. And he'd walk over to take Mama to church. And they'd have Sunday afternoon to visit.

(Why did he walk; didn't he have a horse?)

No horse; in those days people walked everywhere---for miles! And when I was a girl too, people didn't have horses. They didn't all have wagons, and so we walked.

In the last years of his life Papa bought a ~~Model~~ Model T Ford. He used it to haul ore from the mine. He intended to teach me to drive it, but Papa died.

(Frank)

He was past sixty when he learned to drive it. He taught himself to drive.

(Did they live in Moke Hill, then?)

Not very long. My brother was on the way, and Mother wanted to come home to be near her Mama.

(How did they get back into Volcano?)

They didn't. They always lived in Pine Grove. I lived in Volcano. I'm the only one of the Prestons who lived in Volcano. I married John Gillick and went to Volcano.

I was there for 31 years.

And if you could see the place where I was born. And if you had

awakened every morning of your life to that glorious view of Crystal Range, you'd know. There was no smog or anything in those days. It was magnetic.

(Your Papa built the house?)

First he built the adobe down there; and my brother Mark and my sister were born there. Then he found out that up on top of the hill, Preston Hill I call it, the sun rose much earlier in the morning and it was much warmer. It was just beautiful. So he went up top, and built a log house and moved up there.

We moved back down to the adobe after my sister died. No one kept the roof repaired on the log house, and it fell in after Frank and I were married.

(Frank)

The year she and I got married the house fell down. I didn't know if that was a good omen or not!

(Georgia)

Has Sara told you that her Grandmother Gillick operated that hotel. Her father was a bartender in that saloon when he was nineteen years old.

You see, Grandma Gillick, my husband's mother, took over the hotel. The reason it didn't work out was that there was too much family involved. Too many to eat off the profits.

...when I went to Volcano Mrs. Giannini became one of my dearest friends. She's a lovely woman---and about 95 now!

But the Gillicks did operate the St. George Hotel, and Tony Galuci Mrs. Gillick's son-in-law was there, and Sara had two cousins who were born in the hotel. Her Aunt Lotte's two little girls.

I think her Aunt Nellie's two daughters were born there too.

(What about A.P. Giannini, and his relationship to Volcano?)

Well, I stuck my neck out about that. When I lived in Volcano Uncle Jim and Grandma Grillo always told me that he was born up above Volcano. Now this guy from the Bank of America says it isn't true. But I know where the Giannini property is up the road where he grew up.

(Frank)

Before you told me, Georgia, some old-timer told me the same thing that you said.

(Georgia)

It got confusing with this man from the Bank of America, so I backed off.

(Frank)

Until now, people just weren't interested in old things. I found some old bricks the size of standard bricks, but they had square holes drilled right through them. I guess it was for ventilation or something. They used to be laying all over. The land belongs to the Mondani brothers---they wouldn't let anybody on it. They are on New York Ranch Road. Just this side of Jackson. They don't let anybody go there, so I bet a lot of the stuff is still left. I haven't been in there for over 20 years!

(Can you take us on a walking tour down Main Street in Volcano?)

The butcher shop was next door to the St. George. And across the street and to the left of the present post office was ~~XXXXXXXXX~~'s <sup>Boydlin</sup> Boydson's Photograph Gallery. Then a drug store. His home was up where Leona Wilson lives.



(Was the butcher shop later the undertaking parlor?)

I'm not sure, but the Grillo boys did have the undertaking business.

Then further up the street, on the right, was the livery stable.

It was beautiful. They should have been shot for tearing it down.

It was made of beautiful red brick with white mortar. They thought it would lower the taxes, so they destroyed it!

And this so-called Cobblestone Gallery; that was Lavezza's Saloon.

I had a sister-in-law born in the back room of that saloon. And her sister married John Barone.

I wish they'd leave the old names on things!

He was called old man Lavezza, ya know, by us kids. And his little ones---there was Mary and Della, when they were little devils, about four, they'd have that glass of wine and get drunk! I remember Grandpa Gillick telling me that.

My first memories of Volcano were going with Papa delivering eggs and groceries. Papa raised chickens to help support his family.

He sold the eggs to various merchants. At that time the store was operated by Charlie Cassenela. It was a fascinating store. They had these wooden barrels full of cookies and stuff. And in the back they had shelves of shoes clear to the ceiling. I can remember Papa setting me down there to try on a new pair of shoes.

I went to town with my Father a lot, and I remember that livery stable. And over where Sara lives there used to be a big barn and a windmill, and it was so nice. And now they tear things down and get rid of things and soon it will all be gone.

Volcano had five banks. There was one up on Stony Point.

And you know that Mehalie Flat Road where you turn off at the bottom of Boardman Hill and go up to the highway, ~~that~~ that was Stoney Point.

(And what area is Grass Valley?)

(Frank)

Grass Valley is right here; it's when you get to the highway.

(Georgia)

The CYA camp is in Grass Valley.

(What about the Union Hotel?)

Pete Jonas always ran that. That was ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Arnold's Father.

~~You~~ You see, it was his father's before him. And Arnold's Father was born there. And Grandma Gillick was his Godmother. His folks were German, and they took him out, and they dipped him in the rain barrel.

(Did they run the St. George at one time?)

Not Pete Jonas.

(Gert said she lived up there.)

That's because Gert was a Barone. You must be thinking about Lou Cook.

(All I know is that Gert said she lived there as a kid.)

You see, her father was running it for his father-in-law, Lou Cook.

You also see, her mother was Ruby Cook---get it! Ruby Cook was Lou

Cook's daughter. And Pete Baroni's father bought the farm on the

~~meadow~~ meadow below Rams Horn Grade. He moved there the day he was 42.

And he lived there 42 years after that. That was Corny Barone's Father.

Gert's father and Corny, all the kids, were born on Stony Point.

(Where is ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Stony Point?)

When you're at the bottom of Boardman Hill and go up Mehalie Flat

Road (Aqueduct Road now). That's where it is. And so the Barones'

were born there. And when Pete was 42 he bought the ranch up there

on Sutter Creek. He was a very strong, powerful sort of man.

You know, he was not a citizen! He had flitted off to Italy when Gert's

father was 2 years old. He was going to inherit some money there.

He renounced his citizenship, and became Italian. Then when he finally came back here he never regained his citizenship. And he was one of the loudest voices in Volcano of his criticism of the government. And he came back and married Mary Lavezza when Pete was two years old. She was born in the saloon.

(And the Country Store was?)

That was ~~CASINELLI'S~~ Casinelli's. Grandpa Casinelli, he was one of the early settlers. It has changed hands through the years, but I'm sure that was the first name on the store.

(What about the Jug and Rose?)

That was a stone building in the town of Rancheria. Ask Johnny Matson about it. Those rocks were stolen from Rancheria. That's a story! In the beginning I think a bakery was there, but I'm not sure. Now, Aunt Sara's place, deserted up there, with goodies galore, which meant nothing at the time; everything vanished from the place. All the antiques.

(What about across the street?)

There was a big store too there. That was Grillo's store. And across the street was the opposition, ~~XXX~~ Casinelli's store. And there were a lot of Saloons.

(Where was the Clute place?)

I think...well I don't know. They packed up and went to San Francisco. John Clute and a brother were in the store together. And I feel sure that our schoolbooks were bought there. And all the material for our clothes was bought in Clute's store. The Clute house was across the street from our place. There are two lots that Sara's Aunt, Sadie

Grillo, owns. And on the lot next to it that Ernest Poggio owns, was where Peter Clute's home ~~XXXXXX~~ stood. That home burned.

(Did the Jonas' own the present post-office?)

It was a place of business.

(I'd like to get a list of the old manes of the streets and towns.)

There was ~~xxx~~ whisky flat and mehalie flat...they were very prominent mining points. Mehalie is an Indian word. It was a name they applied to women. ~~XXXX~~ The Indian bucks would say, my mehalie's not home.

Understand?

Now, the Indian Camp at Pine Grove was down across from where Egger's Garage is now. And my Grandparents became friendly with those Indians. And Grandma was a very kind lady. There were two old Indian squaws, Old Sal and Old Lil, and they knew what day of the week Grandma would make bread. They'd come over and press their noses against the window. Grandma knew they were going to do this, and she would always bake a loaf for them.

One of her direct descendents is one of the only two indoans living on the reservation now.