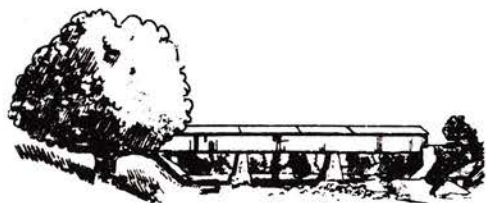


STANISLAUS

STEPPING

STONES



QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF THE STANISLAUS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume I

December, 1976

Number 1

The Story of Estanislao

EDITOR'S NOTE

The story of Estanislao and his battles with the Mexican government of California in 1829 often has been told but seldom with much accuracy. As early as 1933, San Joaquin County residents proposed a state historical monument to commemorate the battle and Landmark 214 was adopted by the state.

That landmark never was erected, nor has its proper location been settled. The early proponents thought the battle had been fought some six miles west of Ripon on the north bank of the river, in San Joaquin County. More recently, Ripon interests have suggested the monument should be erected in their city — on the Chamber of Commerce lawn. A third researcher, Blaine Heald of Turlock, has recommended the monument be placed in Caswell State Park since that is state property and representative of the

country in which the battle was fought.

The Stanislaus County Historical Society took a new look at the controversy this year, following Blaine Heald's lead and turning to the late Dr. S. F. Cook's translations of Spanish language documents surrounding the battle itself for authority. As a result, I. N. 'Jack' Brotherton and Thorne Gray have concluded the battle occurred on the south bank of the river, almost certainly between Salida and Ripon. They, and the Society, have suggested the monument be located in Riverbank, at the great bend of the river, but marking only the "general vicinity" of the battle.

All important, the Society feels, is the location of the monument in Stanislaus County. Not only does the county bear Estanislao's name, but the evidence that his fortresses were on the south bank of the Stanislaus River is conclusive. The story of Estanislao's struggle follows.

The Fight For The Stanislaus River

By Thorne Gray and I. N. 'Jack' Brotherton

Father Narcisco Duran, president of all the California missions, would have been alarmed at the desertion of 400 Indian "souls" from any of his missions during his regime. But when as many vanished from Mission San Jose in May of 1827, he must have been doubly alarmed. Mission San Jose was Father Duran's own headquarters, the deserters his own Christian neophytes.

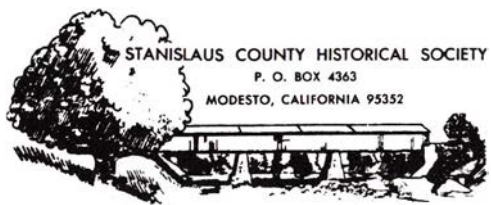
The trouble, Father Duran wrote Mexican Commandante Ignacio Martinez at San Francisco, stemmed from a number of American fur trappers in the Central Valley. They had been enticing the

Indians away from their Christian obligations and luring them back to their native villages. Duran was certain the Americans were under the command of Jedediah Strong Smith, the overland explorer whose men were camped that spring somewhere to the east while Jedediah himself returned east for supplies.

Contemporaries and Jedediah himself later denied luring any Indians away from the missions and historians tend to side with him in the matter. What, they ask, would Smith's men have wanted with even one additional Indian, let alone 400?

But the fact was, Smith had established a base

(continued on page 3)



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Photo by Al Golub

STANISLAUS STEPPING STONES

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Dear Members,

Seasons Greetings to all of you, both old and new. The time has come in this great Bicentennial year of 1976 to pause and reflect on the happenings that have occurred within our nation, state, and county. We have witnessed a joyous 200th birthday celebration throughout our land. We cannot begin to fathom how the year 2076 will be celebrated. We do hope and pray that America will still be the land of the free, one nation under God, and that a democratic form of government will still prevail.

We realize our country is but a fledgling when compared to the nearly 6,000-year-old nations of antiquity; that Stanislaus County is a mere youth, and that the Stanislaus County Historical Society is but a babe at 10 years of age. We truly hope that the interest in history generated by this Bicentennial year will not wither and die, but that it will continue to grow, both on a local and national level.

We hope to stimulate interest with this, our most recent venture STANISLAUS STEPPING STONES we hope will build a bridge from the past to the present. It is our desire to provide something more than a bi-monthly meeting for our members. Most of our bicentennial efforts which have included workdays in the Citizens Cemetery, marking historical sites, preserving the gold dredge at La Grange, disagreement with the State Landmark Commission on marking the 1829 battlesite between Mariano Vallejo and Estanislao, have been frustrating, and will take the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon to resolve. This project however, along with our small part in the completion and resoration of the Knights Ferry Firehouse has been one of joy and anticipation, though not without its share of problems. We had hoped for a July 4th birthdate, but are a few months overdue. Now that the labor and birth pangs have subsided we have produced a healthy addition to our Society. We hope all of you will share in our joy!

Dena J. Boer
President 1976-77

Welcome to the Stepping Stones

History, as we who have dealt with it all know, is an elusive commodity with perhaps one overriding property — the tendency, if not propensity, to evaporate.

With this first issue of **Stanislaus Stepping Stones**, the Stanislaus County Historical Society hopes to capture and recondense some of that historical mist which envelops our past.

The goal is to publish the bits and pieces, and from time to time the larger, more comprehensive chunks, of our county's precious history.

This issue is devoted to the history of Chief Estanislao, for whom our county was named, and something of his followers and how they fared in our early days. We include, as we hope to in every issue, an interview with one of our old timers taken this month from "**Touring Knights Ferry With Tom,**" the newly published history by Marjorie Willms. "Tom" is Tom Prowse of Oakdale, age 99, and we have selected his recollections of the Knights Ferry Indians as reported by Marjorie.

In the future, we are planning articles on Stanislaus County's towns and regions, its explorers and pioneers, its bandits, bordellos, bean planters, bootleggers, breadwinners and bushwackers.

We expect you, our readers, to help. Are there old letters, diaries or newspaper clippings in your trunks or attics which tell a story of Stanislaus County's past? Have you an old photograph, or an entire album? Might a search turn up an old advertisement, an invitation to a dance or an election notice? Did your father or grandfather tell a tale which you can remember, verified or otherwise? We are interested. We want to publish as many such letters, photos and recollections as possible.

That is why we call this quarterly publication "**Stanislaus Stepping Stones.**" Once a year, we plan to index our work, putting the stepping stones into the path of our county's history in the fond hope that someday we will have created a highway mosaic, rich in intimate detail, bumpy as the historical truth tends to be, a bit winding as befits the road from our past to our present.

We expect to make mistakes, and we expect to challenge some cherished family beliefs. We expect we will be wrong much of the time. You, our members, are our contributors and critics. We, your editors, expect and depend upon you to catch our mistakes and correct them.

Estanislao's Story...

(continued from page 1)

camp on a river he called the Appelaminy, generally believed to have been the Stanislaus. Jedediah departed with two men, leaving the others for what they knew would be an extended stay in Mexican California. Their leader was, in fact, gone from May 20 to Sept. 18, 1827.

What happened meantime on the Stanislaus remains largely conjecture: Why would a party of American trappers have fortified themselves for an extended wait in territory where they had reason to fear both Indians and the Mexican government? Would they have put their backs to the river, occupied a high bluff, dug trenches or built breastworks of timber? Would they perhaps have established a second fortress upstream where they could retreat and regroup if driven from the first?

Smith's men were gone from the Stanislaus just a year before Father Duran reported new trouble with the Indians — this time the rebels were identified as the village called Lacquisamnes on the Stanislaus River (so later named) — the leaders were one Cipriano of Mission Santa Clara and Estanislao of Mission San Jose.

Details of the Mexican's first encounter with Estanislao and Cipriano are most coherently told by Antonio Maria Osio, a near-contemporary historian.¹ Veteran Indian fighter Sgt. Antonio Soto was sent with a force of 15 men into the interior to route the rebellious Indians. He found his foe in about March of 1829 deep in a thicket of willows, oaks, and wild grapevines, an almost impenetrable natural fortress.

Soto sought a parley, but the Indians offered only jeers and taunts, calling him a coward. Apparently in rash anger, Soto dismounted with six men and marched directly through the thicket to a meeting point with his other soldiers. His support troops, however, could not surround the Indian encampment and Soto found he must beat a retreat to his starting place. In doing so, he lost two men and the other four suffered numerous arrow wounds. Soto himself was hit in the right eye, a wound from which he was to die after his return to San Jose.

Juan Bojorques almost certainly was a member of Soto's inadequate force, although when his memoirs were recorded 50 years later he recalled his commander as Corporal Pablo Pacheco, not mentioning Soto. Pacheco, so far as is known, never led a campaign against Estanislao or Cipriano.

But it is to Bojorques and his interviewer from the Bancroft Library that we are indebted for our one description of Estanislao himself. Almost as an afterthought, Bojorques said:

He was a man of about six feet in height, of skin more pale than bronze, of slender figure, with a head of heavy hair and a heavy beard on his face. Of 33 to 40 years of age, he was born

and raised at Mission San Jose and was employed as a vaquero, or breaker of mules . . ."

Bojorques also recalled the site of the battle was "on a high bluff along a wide bend of the river where there was a thicket of oak, willow and wild grape vines."

As if to tantalize us, Bojorques' tiring mind suggested a link between Estanislao and the American fur trappers (Smith's men?), but it is a link perceived by no one else whose memories survive.

Sgt. Jose Sanchez, a man of many campaigns to the Central Valley and many encounters with the Indians there, was selected leader of the next foray against Estanislao and the hostile Indians on the Stanislaus River. As he marched from Mission San Jose in the early days of May, 1829, he commanded a force of 25 cavalymen, a corporal, two veteran artillery men and their three pounder cannon, six militiamen and 70 Indian auxiliaries — Indians faithful to the mission system and hostile to Estanislao.

He carefully reported his route in his diary — through Mission Pass to the Pocitas del Valle on the first day, over Arroyo Las Positas (present day Patterson Pass) on the second, descending into the San Joaquin Valley near present Tracy and camping on the "lower" shore of Laguna del Blanco," White Lake.

This lake, a well-known landmark of Sanchez day, which survived long enough to appear on the first U. S. Government Surveys of San Joaquin County, was but a few miles from a suitable ford across the San Joaquin River, probably about where Mossdale is located now.

Sanchez ferried the San Joaquin in reed rafts on May 6, then travelled through the night until his scouts told him he had reached the Stanislaus and his foe was on its opposite bank.

Later writers said Sanchez first tried to set the woods on fire, a tactic which failed when the brush proved too green. Sanchez himself, however, told of his military disaster without that detail.

First, his cannon failed after only three shots. Next, crossing the river he carefully organized his men to enter and surround the deep woods in six groups of seven men each, including a corporal. After some fruitless negotiating with Estanislao, during which another Indian took a shot at Sanchez without benefit of musket balls, using only powder, he committed his force to the thicket at 8 a.m. May 8.

In the deep woods and vines, Sanchez found Estanislao barricaded behind a "stockade of thick, strong timbers," as Osio told it. The battle continued indecisively for three hours before the tide turned in favor of Estanislao. "Everything went wrong through the rashness of four soldiers," Sanchez reported later.

Disobeying Corporal Lazaro Pina, the four struggled to the river for a drink and were cut off. Only two could be saved and the distraction left Sanchez's forces in disarray. Estimating he had killed eight of



Estanislao's braves, Sanchez counted eight wounded regulars, three seriously hurt, plus eleven wounded auxiliaries, in his command. Ammunition was low, weapons had been destroyed and a few muskets and bandoliers of ammunition had fallen to the Indians. It was 4 p.m. when Sanchez broke contact with his enemy and began a painful three hour march west along the Stanislaus to camp near a pool about four leagues (10 miles) from the battleground, retreating next to Laguna del Blanco and then Mission San Jose.

Defeating the well-armed Sanchez was a major victory for the Indians, and they became bolder. "They are extremely insolent, committing murders and stealing horses, stripping bare the unwary, seducing other Christians to accompany them in their evil and diabolical schemes, openly insulting our troops

and ridiculing them and their weapons," complained Commandante Martinez.

Supplied with reinforcements from Monterey, Martinez now sent a young ensign, Mariano G. Vallejo, into battle against Estanislao. At his side, under his command, rode Jose Sanchez. At his back marched the entire Mexican armed forces of Northern California, some 107 men and 50 Indian auxiliaries backed by a three pounder artillery piece. Artilleryman Joaquin Pina kept a meticulous diary.

By May 29, Vallejo arrived at the Stanislaus River and crossed it, approaching the forest where Sanchez had fought before. There was not a sound, until he ordered his men to set the woods on fire and attack.

The Indians were there, all right. They answered

the attack with yells and showers of arrows. Vallejo ordered his artillery into play and deployed his men for a frontal assault on the thicket, as well as for an attack from the river bottom below the bluff. After more than an hour of firing, Vallejo ordered a general advance toward the Indians. Some men reached within ten paces of the first Indian stockade before Estanislao counterattacked, his warriors wounding three of Vallejo's corporals with arrows.

Momentarily, the Mexicans were beaten back. Hastily they retreated before the Indians surrounded them, barely reaching their horses on the edge of the woods before the Indians had a chance to steal them. Vallejo called a halt to the fighting and made camp for the night but by morning he was ready for battle again.

Cautiously his men approached the now-burned thicket, using axes to hack away the remaining underbrush in their path. The Indians had slipped away in the night, leaving their palisades and trenches. Pina observed a great deal of blood and places where he deduced Indians had hastily been buried.

Acting on information from a captured Indian, Vallejo now pursued the Indians to the village of the Tagualamnes, on a river about 10 miles from his camp. From Pina's description, the site could have been on the Tuolumne River near Waterford, or the south bank of the Stanislaus near present Knights Ferry. The latter location, perhaps just east of Wildcat Creek, seems to fit but there is no certainty.²

Advancing at night, Vallejo found the Indians had begun to build a stockade, again in thick woods. He wasted no time lighting fires and surrounding the village, and soon a merciless slaughter began. One Indian to die was the Indian captive. Ordered to tell Estanislao and his followers to give themselves up, this man instead warned the Indians to fight. When this was discovered, he was shot on the spot.

Another Indian, named Matias, did abandon Estanislao's cause to join Vallejo. Later, he, too, was shot dead in his prisoner's bonds.

But dislodging the Indians from their fortress was no simple task. The maneuvering and battle continued all day May 31 and at one point Vallejo's soldiers in the thicket found themselves surrounded by fire, whether their own or one set by the Indians. Vallejo broke off the engagement after the narrow escape but held his men near so Indians could not make a second nighttime escape.

Many, including Estanislao, did escape and dawn revealed to Vallejo and his men the Indian trenches and palisades, littered with dead bodies. There were some survivors. Three old Indian women were found and "shot on the spot." Another, an Indian from Santa Clara, was believed to be one who had burned

the bodies of the two dead soldiers from the Sanchez expedition. Vallejo's Indian auxiliaries begged him for a chance to kill the man with their arrows. "They were given this permission," Pina relates. The unfortunate Indian stood in a circle while the auxiliaries shot 73 arrows into him. He would not die. Finally a cavalry soldier shot him in the head. His body was hung from an oak. Four other men and four women also were hanged, Pina relates.

Was Estanislao beaten? Perhaps. He appears but seldom in the later pages of California history, the indication being that he returned to Mission San Jose where he was pardoned by Father Duran and lived until about 1836 or later. One 1830 account found him "in the Tulares by permission of the Father" with 100 horses. When San Jose citizens objected in 1836 that the missionaries were harboring known Indian criminals, one of those identified was Estanislao.

Were Estanislao's people beaten? Not by the Mexican government. The record shows his battle was the first, and largest, of many forays to follow. The Indians became bolder and bolder. Some, particularly his follower Jose Jesus, made friends with early American immigrants like Capt. Charles Weber, the founder of Stockton. Others traded with American and French fur trappers who made more and more visits to the valley. By 1842, in the words of Dr. Cook, "the valley Indians were fighting the Mexican Californios to a standstill, making their lives intolerable with incessant raids upon ranches and missions." Cook refused to predict that the outcome might have been had not the gold rush interrupted the struggle.

And so the battle faded into memory. Vallejo went unpunished for the atrocities his men committed. Indeed, he won promotion and fame. Details of the campaigns were lost. In 1933, there was a flurry of interest in naming a state landmark to honor the struggle. This was done and wording was adopted to commemorate the "Site of the Battle Between Forces Under General Vallejo and San Joaquin Valley Indians." Estanislao's name was not mentioned. His Stanislaus River people were called Cosumnes Indians. Mention is made of the use of cannons and the Indians are accused of "stealing cattle, horses and sheep and murdering people during raids of the Spanish ranches."

1. *There is a distinct possibility that Osio did not have this account at all correct and that Soto never engaged his enemy at all — further research is necessary and continuing.* jh

2. *Father Pedro Munoz, visiting the Stanislaus River in 1806, encountered the Taulamne Indian village near or upstream from Knights Ferry. The Taulamnes probably were the Tagualamnes encountered by Vallejo, thus placing their location on the Stanislaus, not the Tuolumne.* jh

Old Timer Recalls the Knights Ferry Rancheria

A number of historians, including some who interviewed Capt. Charles Weber, the founder of Stockton, have told the fascinating story of Jose Jesus, one of Estanislao's followers and Weber's friend. Jose Jesus was chief of the Knights Ferry Rancheria, a refuge for Indians who were allies of the Americans in the struggle for California's independence from Mexico.

Other historians, particularly Sol Elias in his **Stories of Stanislaus**, report on Estanislao's other warrior companion Cipriano. Like Jose Jesus, Cipriano was friendly to the Americans and helped bring other warring tribes to the conference tables on the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers in 1851.

Federal reports tell us the 300 or 400 Indians on the Knights Ferry Rancheria, with the exception of Jose Jesus and a few others, were in destitute condition when the Indian Commissioners arrived to make peace between them and the United States that year. The treaty offered hope to these friendly chiefs for their people, for the commissioners promised them land, teaching and tools. They readily signed, while Indian tribes in the southern San Joaquin Valley chose to fight instead, a decision which led to the Mariposa Indian War.

But submit or fight, the Indians were the losers.

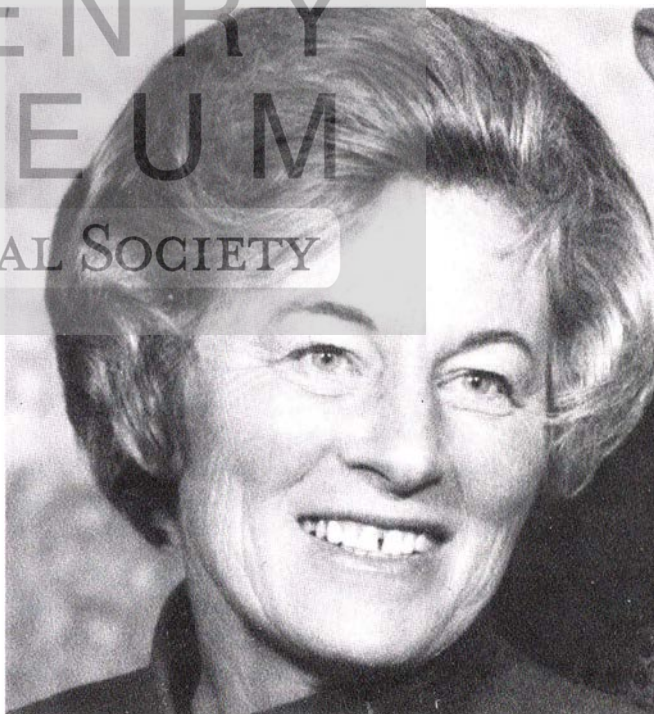
The United States Senate never ratified any of the treaties. The government never put adequate money behind the system of government reservations, instead of Indian reservations, which were established. In 1881, historian L. C. Branch recalls how the Knights Ferry Indians held dances and begged to survive. Others have related how many California Indians resorted to prostitution and stealing to stay alive. Irene Paden and Margaret Schlichtmann described the deterioration of the Knights Ferry rancheria in their work, **The Big Oak Flat Road**, in 1959.

But there was another side to the Knights Ferry Rancheria (not to be confused with the Rancheria Del Rio Estanislao land grant at Knights Ferry), a friendly and heartwarming side which has been noted by many including Paden and Schlichtmann, and which now is brought alive by one of Stanislaus County's oldest residents.

He is Tom Prowse of Oakdale, now 99, the marvelously lucid subject of **Touring Knights Ferry With Tom**, just published by Marjorie Willms. Tom's picture of the Indians at Knights Ferry is published here with Mrs. Willm's permission. Through his eyes and memories we perceive the friendship and mutual esteem among the surviving Knights Ferry Indians and their "newcomer" neighbors, the Knights Ferry pioneers.



Tom Prowse



Marjorie Willms

Marjorie Talks With Tom

By Marjorie Willms and Tom Prowse

"The Indians lived at Goat Hill until the miners wanted to mine it off, then they were moved to Buena Vista (the village south of the covered bridge). They lived in little wooden cabins . . . there were quite a number of them.

And There Was an old Indian Lady called 'Old Chatta', she lived there for years. I have her picture in there. Everybody knew old Chatta!

You Know, she saved Jimmie and Albert Morrison from drowning! . . . That first little house after you pass Squaw Gulch . . . (she lived there) . . . There was high water and those two little boys went down to the river and fell in, and by golly, Chatta happened to be around and she fished them out and saved their lives!"

"What Kind of Houses did the Indians live in? . . . Just plain board cabins. Dirt floors? . . . Sure! A door and a window . . . they all had a roof, of course. They had a 'sweat box' there too, on the Indian Reservation . . . underground . . . I don't know what the ceremony was . . . the old sweat box . . ."

"Another family there had a boy . . . Jimmie . . . he went to high school here. Jim Murtha, in town here, got him in that Indian School near Riverside. He graduated from there and then he came back and just turned 'Injun' again!

Johnny Jacks . . . 'Dandy' Barnes, we called him! He at one time was at the Presidio in San Francisco, riding cavalry horses. He was quite a rider . . . broncbuster! There was another one, Charlie Gomez . . . he was part Mexican.

There was one Indian there, name of 'Old Perachio'. He had a cabin over there in Buena Vista, on the other side of the river. He did an awful lot of rawhide work. He made quirts and other rawhide. When he got on too much firewater, though, he was a holy terror!"

Tom named other Indians at Knights Ferry . . . "Indian Ella and Louie Ganna, Tom Light who went to war and was killed in action, the other Lights . . . Laura, who lives in town (Oakdale) now . . . A lot of those pictures I have of old schools show Indians lined up there with the rest of us . . . Johnny Light, Eddie Gomez, Asher brothers, Roy Westbrook . . ."

"Our Indians went up to Chicken Ranch (Tuolumne County)¹ . . . it is all built up with residences now. There was a kind of congregation for Indians . . ."

"They'd hike all the way up there from Knights Ferry. I was pretty well grown up when the last one that I knew went up there . . . Nasha . . . Amelia Nasha. He worked with us in the powerhouse for a long time. He had quite a little family . . . there was Joe, Jimmie, Lucy . . ."

"No Washing Machines . . . always used a washboard. The Indians used it to pat it out on a rock!"



Old Chatta

Again Tom spoke of Chatta . . . "Chatta, I never knew her by any other name than just Chatta. I think she was Lilly Westbrook's mother.² . . . A real old Indian woman!" Tom smiled in fond remembrance . . .

"There was one old Indian there called 'Indian Frank'. He roamed around there quite a bit. No matter how hot the day was, he always had on a big overcoat . . . Old Indian Frank!" Tom smiled again . . .

"Louie and Ella . . . Beth (Shuper) can tell you a lot about them. They lived in a cabin on the Indian Reservation, as they called it. There must have been 20 of them, or more . . ."

"When the Acorns were ripe and it came time to gather them, you'd see them take off for the woods; the old squaws packing the sack on their backs, the old Indian bucks following them up, making the lady folks do the work!" Again Tom chuckled . . .

¹ . . . According to our friend, Steve Wooster, of Copperopolis, the congregation of the Indians was a gathering of the tribes for exchange of food. Steve recalls his father, "Buster" Wooster, telling him the legend that every year the Indians came over the mountains from Carson Valley, Nevada, to trade pine nuts for the acorns from the valley Indians. mw

² . . . It was a big thrill to learn about Mrs. Westbrook's mother. I knew and loved Mrs. Westbrook and still treasure the crotchet work that she did for me! The patterns were very intricate and similar to our own. I wonder now how she picked them out since she did not read or write our language! mw

KNIGHTS FERRY HISTORY

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Stanislaus County — 1854-1954 — A Century of Growth by Herndon Carrol Ray, Secondary Coordinator, Stanislaus County Schools

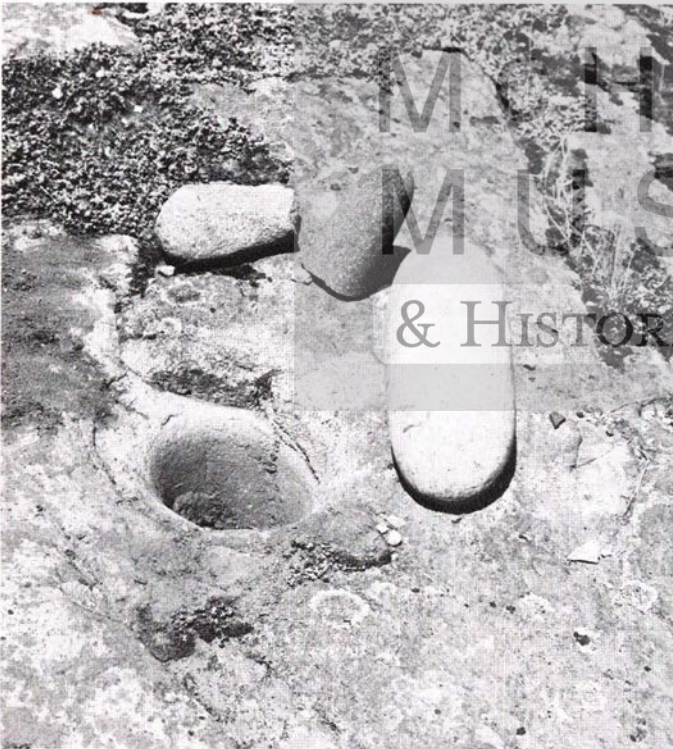
Headed by Mrs. Laverna Perrin and Elizabeth (Corson) Simms, some Knights Ferry School pupils set out in 1953 to photograph the history of their town and tell its story. Below are the photographs they asked Manuel Dias, then photographer for the Stanislaus County Schools Department, to take of Indian graves and artifacts at the edge of town.



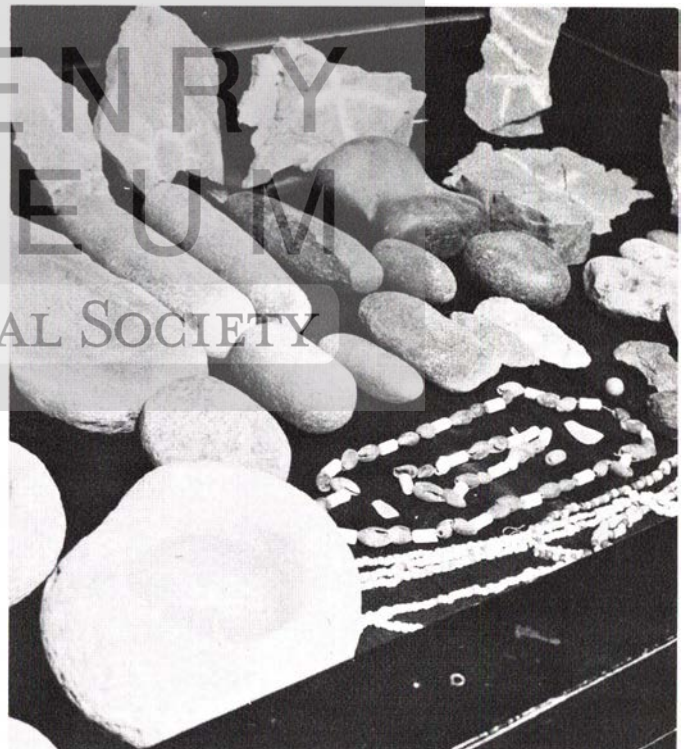
The last Indian cabin at Knights Ferry, occupied by Lou and Ella Gamma before it was abandoned.



Indian headstones of wood are nestled in a secret place where they have survived vandals.



Grinding rocks and a mortar in the bedrock are near the river.



Mortars, pestels, arrowheads, beads and Indian paintings have been found and preserved.

History of Stanislaus County Historical Society

by Dr. John Caswell

The Stanislaus County Historical Society preserves and publicizes the history and culture of the county and region. Its meetings are held at approximately five week intervals from September to June. Speakers have dwelt on such varied topics as the development of dairying, the history of medicine, movies of Modesto, old photographs of the Turlock region, the construction of the new Don Pedro Dam, and a biography of Frank Mancini, Modesto's music master. Picnics have been held at Lake Don Pedro and at the Ghost Town adjacent to the Gold Dredge Historic Site. A tremendously successful dinner meeting was held at the Odd Fellows Hall in La Grange.

The Society has fostered the acquisition of lands for the La Grange Gold Rush Park, and its representatives have appeared repeatedly before the Board of Supervisors in connection with purchase of the Park and the gold dredge. The Society has sponsored the reprinting of L. C. Branch's **History of Stanislaus**

County, California, originally printed in 1881. It has encouraged the tape recording of reminiscences, the collecting of historic photographs, the identification of historic sites and the preservation of historic structures.

Established at the urging of a number of people attending a dinner meeting discussion of local museum projects, the Society's convener and first president was Herbert Florcken, long-time chairman of the social sciences division at Modesto Junior College. The Society was incorporated in November 1966 as a public, non-profit organization under the sponsorship of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors.

Membership is open to all upon payment of the appropriate membership fee. The Society solicits your interest and support through your financial contributions, your attendance, and your participation in its activities. Guests are welcome at all meetings.

DALTON GANG DAYS

Frank F. Latta, the prolific San Joaquin Valley historian, has pursued the story of the Dalton Gang almost since he was seven years old and living near them in Stanislaus County.

Now he has published their story in **Dalton Gang Days**, a \$15 hard cover book published by Bear Flag Books, 304 High St., Santa Cruz.

In making sense out of the countless Dalton Gang stories, rumors and false leads, Latta spent years of research. His first real break came when he found former Sheriff Eugene W. Kay of Tulare County alive in San Francisco some 30 years after he had retired in 1934.

His second break came when he persuaded Littleton Dalton to "sing" about his brothers and their escapades, years after the events.

Dalton Gang Days can be purchased in Modesto from Mrs. Geraldine Asell, 416 Bonita Ave., one of Latta's many close friends in Modesto and Stanislaus County. She reports his long awaited book on Joaquin Murieta soon will be published and she plans to invite him to speak to the society again soon.

I would like to enroll as a member in the
STANISLAUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY in
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History of Stanislaus County

by Herbert Florcken

In 1850, when California first became a state, the Legislature divided the new state into a few large counties, one of which was Tuolumne. In 1854, as many mining areas became unprofitable, and miners began to drift down into the San Joaquin valley, a new county was sliced off of Tuolumne County and called Stanislaus. But its growth was very slow. Not until 1862 did farming begin to attract settlers, and soon huge grain fields began to spread out for miles up and down the valley floor. The grain thus grown was shipped by river steamers and by freight wagons to Stockton and other deep water ports for reshipment to all parts of the world.

Then in 1870, came the railroad. The men who in 1869 has completed the transcontinental railroad, now built an independent railroad down the San Joaquin valley to compete with the river steamers for the hauling of grain to Stockton and Oakland. From

then on the prosperity of Stanislaus County rose and fell according to rainfall and the price of wheat and barley. Good years and bad years took their turn, until the late 90's when a series of dry years combined with a severe drop in the price of grain causing many people to think that just as mining communities had fallen in the past when gold became scarce, so could a dry farming area like Stanislaus County fade away after too many successive dry years. Then came irrigation.

A few determined leaders succeeded in inducing the State Legislature to pass a bill permitting the formation of an irrigation district which was permitted to build a dam on the Tuolumne River and construct canals to bring water to the valley floor when it was most needed, during the dry summer months. This "turning on of the water" was the turning point in the history of Stanislaus County. In 1904, when water first flowed through irrigation canals over the thirsty land of the county, the entire county came back to life. Up to 1904 the county had hardly as many inhabitants as it had in 1870. But as soon as irrigation water, in abundant quantities, was provided, the county entered upon a period of growth and prosperity that has never yet come to an end.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT THE McHENRY MUSEUM, MODESTO

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by Florabell Brennan

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by Frank L. Latta

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by Mildred Lucas, the Story of Ceres, California

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Quest For Deep Gold

The Story of La Grange by Thorne Gray

Streams In A Thirsty Land

A history of the Turlock region.

Waterford Centennial

Also a historic site map of Stanislaus County researched and drawn by Jack Brotherton, published by the Stanislaus County Bicentennial Committee.

McHenry Museum is continuing the Pioneer Families series in 1977 by featuring the Whitmores in January, 1977; the Briggs, Vogelmann and Rice families in February and the Browders in March. Also the cities of Oakdale in January and February and Turlock in March. Please try to visit the museum during these months.

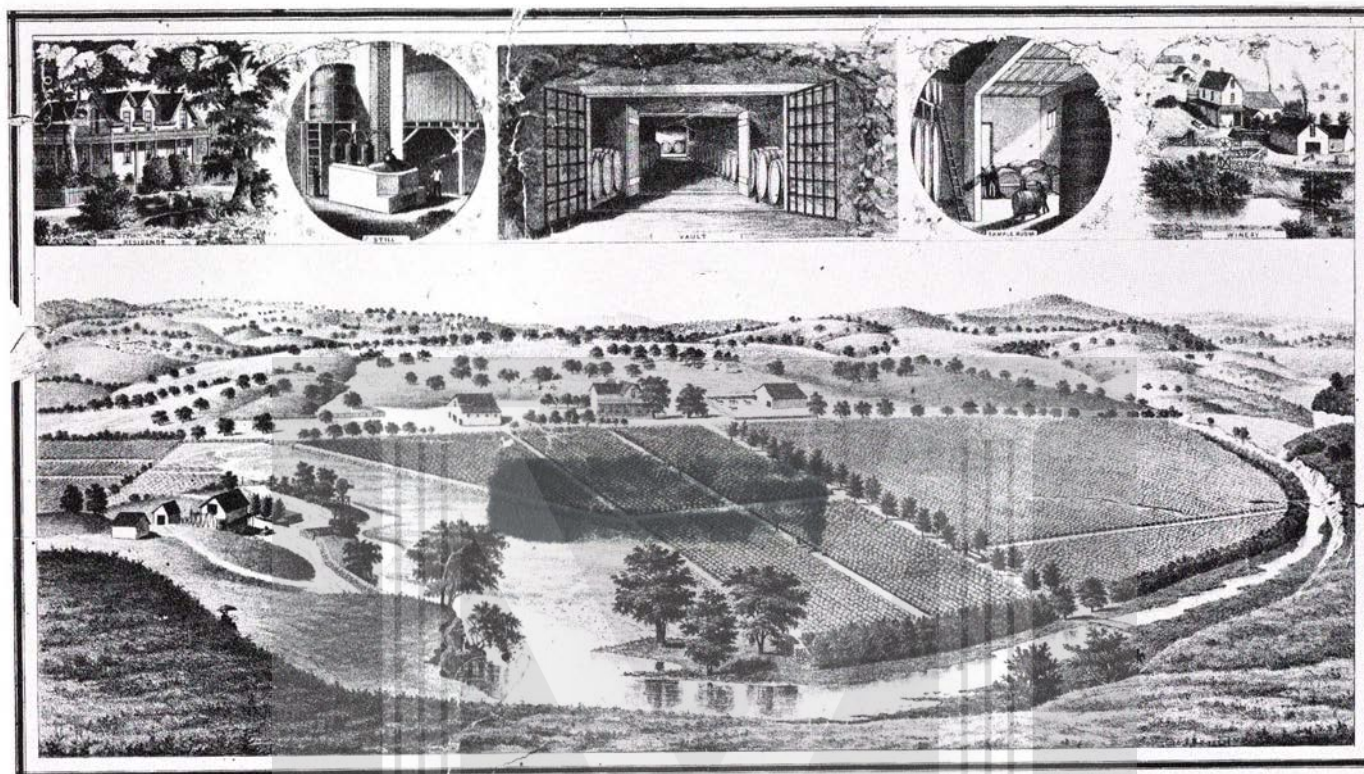
The Indians

Little or nothing is left of the Indian occupation of the county. Two major groups lived in Stanislaus, the Miwok in the foothills, the Yokuts in the plains, both having names signifying "the people" in the Indian tongue. These Indians could in no way be compared to the complex type of midwest Indians. Tribes were made up of 200-500 Indians, who lived in smaller groups called by the Spanish "rancherias." Because of their vulnerable position in open country, the Yokuts were dispersed by the onrushing gold-seekers, but the Miwok lasted longer.

Marriage was an informal affair, sometimes marked only by the ceremony of calling the bride's brother "brother-in-law". Dress was also informal; men wore loin cloths or nothing. Nose rings, bone ornaments and tattooing were customary, and shells gathered from visits to the coast were used as money. Annual public mourning for the year's dead was held at the end of summer, when the Indians abstained from meat, the women cut their hair, and a ritualistic destruction of the property of the dead was conducted.

A treaty made at Dent and Vantine's Crossing (Knight's Ferry) in 1851 between the Indian chiefs and the U.S. Commissioner for Indian Affairs was intended to bring an end to the Indian Wars and to provide land and protection for the tribes. The unrealistic pact, being written for Indians of a far higher culture, was scorned in Sacramento and rejected by the United States Senate.

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 preserving the continuing series.

ATTENTION! MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the Society will be January 30, 1977 at 2 p.m. in the McHenry Museum. This will be the only announcement of this meeting except a reminder in the Modesto Bee.

We have invited Bill Keeler to come down from La Grange and tell us the history of Gold Mining in the Mother Lode. He is very knowledgeable on this subject, to the point that he has taught many classes from various schools in the Valley how to look and pan for gold. He will demonstrate this ability, which has become something of a lost art. He will be glad to answer any questions you might have. Coffee and refreshments will follow the program.

We would also like to thank Dr. John Caswell for filling in for Frank Latta on very short notice at our November meeting. He gave a fine talk on the pioneers who came to this valley from 1850 on. It was a stimulating and thought-provoking presentation as evidenced by the questions asked. Again our sincerest thanks to John.