

Tape #19GEORGIA WHITE & FRANK WHITE

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

Recorded: February 26, 1979

If you kids have gone around the cemetary in Volcano you would have noticed the Ferry plot, which was Aunt Sara's. I don't know how many babies she lost---dyptheria and whooping cough was bad, you see. Look at the old headstones, you can tell when there was an epidemic.

(Frank)

...Georgia's Grandpa came down over Kingsbury Grade, over there near Genoa. Before they started over the Sierras they would stop at where Genoa is now. They saw the first house they had seen since they left Salt Lake in Genoa. But there was no town there; it was a Mormon rancher who had a house there. The next year Genoa became a settlement. They came over the mountain to Lake Tahoe. Then down to Placerville. The route more or less followed where the highway is now. And there was a hot springs that they came to...when they got to it they found out that a wagon train before them had run out of water and had stopped there. They found the skeletons of the animals, and even human skeletons. His party was out of water too, and they couldn't get the water cooled down for the animals to drink. Also it had so much alkali in it that it was bad. So they took a long shot and made it for the Humbolt River. When they got there they got water, and there was grass along the river for the animals. They were also able to catch fish.

They stayed there a few days, and were able to get cleaned up. Another place I'm pretty sure he stopped was a place they called Sorefoot. It's between Firnley and Silver Springs. They called it Sorefoot because an earlier wagon train came along with animals that needed shoeing...and they called it Sorefoot. One of the earlier men was a blacksmith and he shod the oxen, and another train came along and wanted him to do the same. So he set up a blacksmith shop and they called the place Sorefoot. The only thing there now is a marker.

(Where did Boardman Grade get its name?)

(Georgia)

It was named after the old gentleman who staked it out.

(What other names, old names, can you think of?)

Well, when you go up Main Street and continue straight ahead---that's Volcano Hill. That is where the pioneers came in.

(Where was Bedbug?)

That was Ione. Now near here we had Slabtown---that was a mining town that completely vanished. It was on the road to Lake Tabeau. Frank Podesta was born there.

(Georgia)

Grandpa had his last mine there. It was a quartz mine. I helped him in the mine; I may have been more of a hinderance than a help.

(Frank)

The first miners who came here got what you call "free gold", placer gold. It isn't in the rock; it's free. They got it mostly from stream bottoms. That was easy; that was the first gold. Then the first gold that they mined was in quartz. that's where the free gold came from. Well, after they got all the free gold they had to come up with another process altogether to get the gold from the quartz. It had to

go through a stamp mill and be pressed and then seperated. And this required an entirely different type of mining. And the first miners couldn't figure this out. And in order to find people who understood hard-rock mining they brought in the Slavonians and the Welch and the people who understood it in Europe. That's how the ~~foreigners~~ foreign people got here. The Mother Lode needed them. ~~THEIR~~ <sup>Their</sup> knowledge was needed.

(Georgia)

My brother was a prospector. But Papa was a hard-rock miner. He was also a placer miner. He had the "~~XXXX~~ <sup>Fourth</sup> of July" placer claim over her in Grass Valley. Near Grass Valley Creek. You know the Mitchell Mine Road that turns to the left at the foot of ~~the~~ Pine Grove Hill--- well, Papa's mine was a mile and a half down that creek.

(He had to be a geologist and everything.)

That's right. Now, the Haverly Mine, which he sold before he died, was a mile and a half over. It was a quartz mine.

(Frank)

Her Dad bought nothing but books on mining. And geology and all that. He was a self taught man. He had a very inquisitive mind.

(Georgia)

And I'll tell you, the reason he carried his guitar and his violin from Murray, Idaho was because one day when he was wandering down the main street of Murray he saw a sign above a door that advertized reading the bumps on your head. This was supposed to tell you your potential. Well he paid his money, and the man said to him: Well, I can tell you one thing, young man, you'll never learn music. So Papa went and bought two instruments and mastered them!

(What kind of settlement was Grass Valley?)

There was a small settlement here. East of us , the property that joins Franks was the DeLucci estate. Now Gertrude was born near here in Aqueduct City. At least I think she was, but I know that some of her sisters were. Well, after they left Aqueduct City they moved to a house in Grass Valley. And the kids walked up Pine Grove Hill to go to school. And the little boy who was in the first grade when Mama was getting out of school became my dentist in Sutter Creek. Well, the last of the DeLuccis ended their lives in that house across from Gertrudes.

(Did your Dad make a good living mining?)

No. We were poor as church mice. But I realize as time goes by that we were very rich. There was security in our home. My Mother and Father had the greatest respect for each other, and they taught us children the difference between right and wrong. We were far richer than the bootlegger's kids who had fancy clothes. You know, Volcano had 35 saloons in it at one time. Probably had five churches.

...Papa sold the Haverly Mine not long before he died. He had planned to go down to Oakdale and wanted to buy an orchard.

(How did your Papa come to name the mine the Haverly?)

More than likely it was named after a mine he was familiar with in Idaho. And he had a water wheel that he and my brother operated in the winter time. This was on Elsa(?) Creek. It was marvelous. And Papa cast his own bearings. He built the wheel; it was 16 foot overshot. I remember helping dig the ditch on the hillside to bring the water down to operate the wheel.

(Were there any holdups?)

Not here, but the stage from Volcano was another thing. See, that's ~~where~~ where Grandpa would take his gold to ship it on Wells Fargo.

Volcano was the town. Pine Grove never attained the importance that Volcano did. Everything exciting was done in Volcano. My Mother was a young lady, eighteen or so, and ~~we~~ they all went to Volcano for the 4th of July celebration. They had a huge parade and all kinds of things. And we would all end up at the baseball game in Slaughterhouse Field. And they started to play in the pouring rain. So all these charming girls from Pine Grove in the spring wagon headed for home. By the time they got there they were nearly drowned. Now that's another thing! At the foot of Rams Horn Grade, that area over there in Slaughterhouse Field. That's where the Grillo brothers slaughtered their animals for the butcher shops.

...when there was no more gold to be gotten in Volcano the Chinese left. Their graveyard was on the hill on the way out of Volcano to Pine Grove. And the Chinese dug all their people up and took them back to China. No, it was down the Sutter Creek Road a half a mile. On the right side as you headed west.

You know, when my husband was a little boy the Chinese were still mining. And this group of Chinese were down in the ~~xxxxx~~ creek bottom working like dogs. And my husband and his older brother Charlie would gather up a handful of rocks, and the Chinese would give them candy so that they would behave themselves. And for fun, Sara's Dad would go by the Chinese store and he did see them smoking opium. But there was nothing to it; that was their way of life. Their homes were on the left, going on up the Volcano/Charlston road. That was part of Main Street at that time.

There were many Italian miners too. Sara's father was the youngest of those nine boys, you know. The oldest boy was named Tom. He was working for the Italian miners there; In back of the Volcano schoolhouse.

And the Italians got angry at him. They didn't know that he had listened and understood their language. They planned to kill him; they were going to roll a boulder down on him. Well, he got out of there quick as he could, and if he didn't know the language they certainly would have killed him.

Now, when Grandpa had his claim in South Ranch he had a couple of partners. They all had their cabins, and that's where they stayed. And these partners loved to play poker. And they developed the habit of playing poker instead of working. Grandpa would get the wood ready for the evening meal and go to work, and they'd say they'd be up pretty quick. But they'd sit and gamble all day long. So that partnership didn't last to long.

Grandpa found a dead man in Grass Valley Creek. He had a claim there, and in those days you walked regardless of how far it was. And he went to work that morning, and, my God, here on the adjoining claim their friend had been murdered. And he lay there in the sluice box. These guys wanted his gold, and they shot him. He was burried in the upper left-hand corner of the Pine Grove cemetary. Mama said that all the graves in that portion of the cemetary had been violent.

(Frank, tell us about logging here.)

That isn't history; that was just yesterday.)

(Georgia)

It is too. Don't be bashful.

(Frank)

Well. I spent over 40 years trying to learn something about it. When I quit I still had a lot to learn.

(What were the camps like?)

Home Sweet Home! That's what they were like.

(Did everyone live there?)

Nope, they didn't. It wasn't until just before WWII that families were taken in. When I first started working in the woods they were bachelor camps.

(What can you tell us about the way-stations?)

In those days they were called teamster stops. They hauled timber down from the mills---mining timbers mainly. Lockwood was a rip-roaring place. Walter Hale can tell you about that. When Walt was a little boy it was still operating, I think.

(Georgia)

When you're out in the middle of nowhere, and you see a locust tree growing, or a paradise tree, you want to recover it---some old timer lived there once. You could pretty well bet that they came from Missouri too. They loved those Paradise trees.

(Frank)

The teamster stations were pretty wild places. They had a corral to put up the teams for the night, and a place to feed the teamsters, but the main thing they had was a bar. They were hard-drinking, hard-fighting, hard-fisted people.

(Georgia)

I remember the bar in Pine Grove where the teamsters used to stop. And overnight they would stay in Alex Adams boarding house. ...and when the mule teams came up the road, they always had these beautiful bells. My sister and I would climb up on Grandpa's pig-pen roof and watch the mule teams go by. And, of course, the dust would be about ten feet high!

(Frank)

You know, Georgia claims to have seen all the good things in life from the top of Grandpa's pig-pen.

She claims to have seen me coming through Pine Grove in 1927. I was riding a 1924 Indian motorcycle. When she told me that, I told her she had seen all the good things in life.

(Georgia)

I can just see him now; sitting up there so serious.

(How'd they cut down the trees?)

(Frank)

They used a crosscut saw. But you know, I saw one of the first power saws that came to the woods. And it wasn't a success. I saw it demonstrated. That was in 1935. Some guy from Oregon; said he could fall the trees with a gas engine. I was working up out of Kyburz. They had a bunch of Greeks falling timber then, and they didn't want to see that thing work. Figured it would run them out of a job. Anyway, they brought this thing up, and the whole camp sat around to watch this thing work. It was a machine mounted on an old Model A set of wheels. ~~xxxxx~~. Had a big old gas engine, and it actually had a chain saw. They had the bar and chain; they had that idea, at least. But you had to drag it around. It was really clumsy; it took two men and three donkeys to get the thing maneuvered. And that country was rough. Well, they picked out a nice meadow to try it in. First thing, this gas engine didn't want to start. So they fooled around with that. They finally got it running, and they dragged it over there to this tree. And the guys were scared to death which way the tree was going to fall. The guys running that thing were scared to death. They sawed in the undercut, and then got one of the greeks to work the thing. But they wouldn't, so they finished falling the tree with their handsaws. Well, fine, now they had the tree on the ground, and they were going to show them how to buck it. God, rocks were in the way,



and they had to get men to brush the place; it was a mess. Took them forever to lime it up. Well, they spent the whole afternoon and got one log bucked off.

Then the guy started talking salesmanship to the superintendent. The superintendent said, I tell ya, you just load that thing back on your truck and get it out of here.

And I never heard of a power ~~saw~~ <sup>saw</sup> again until WWII. I was up in Oregon then. We had a hard time getting fallers. The war was on, and the young men were leaving. But a guy from Bend came up with a power ~~saw~~ that ran by electricity, from a generator. He wanted to contract falling for the company. He brought it down, and it really worked. But we had so much snow, that you had to use a big dozer to clean out from around the trees. We figured that it didn't really pay off. We gave up on it, and the next spring they came out with a gas power ~~saw~~ ~~similar~~ similar to the ones we use today. It was much bigger, and it used two men. But it worked, and it worked good! This was about 1943. From then on the old hand-saws quit. But the old Swedes, they were the world's best timber fallers, they worked like animals, and they wern't gonna let any power saw beat them! The Swedes would work like hell, but never could beat them. Oh, they would get mad.

(Georgia)

Now I'll tell you a swa-mill story. When Grandpa came here there was a ~~saw~~-mill called <sup>Ruble's</sup> ~~Rubick's~~ Saw-mill. And not very many miles from Volcano there was a rancher named Finlay Goodman. He was sharpening steel in his Blacksmith shop one day, and a spark got in the dry grass and away it went. It swept the country, burned the saw-mill and it went into the Consumnes River. At that time my Father and my brother were working on the state highway. Well, Papa was an old hand

at fires. So he was detailed on a boss position. Well, he and my brother nearly lost their lives. They were back-firing and the wind changed. The fire was a bad one; it swept to the river!

The Saw Mill was right where Inspiration Lodge is.

(Did the logging industry get its start providing timber for the mines?)

Yes.

(Frank)

This piece of property here has been logged several times. It was used for timbers and they also built flumes. And they clear-cut to build the towns.

(Georgia)

As you go down Boardman Hill the house that sits on top of the knoll, that house was built from lumber that Garibaldi cut on the property. They had a ~~saw~~-mill, and they sawed the lumber that built that house. That was Frank Garibaldi. His brother Pete too.

(What were the first mines in the county?)

I'm not sure, but I can tell you this; many a mine was ruined by poor management. That was the case in Papa's mine, the Haverly. He sold it to a person who just ruined it through bad management. ...the Central Eureka was the last one to quit.

(Frank)

I'll tell you who to go see; Frank Arnese. He can tell you a lot.

(Georgia)

Frank Arnese, his father was a miner. Yew, he can help.