# Yankee Hill Historical Society

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P.O. Box 4031, Yankee Hill, Ca 95965

# *Yankee Hill Dispatch*

***This issue of the YHHS Dispatch contains a true story by Harriet Helman Gray written in 1956 about her childhood in Cherokee in the 1890s and early 1900s. This story has never been published and was provided by her grandchildren Jim and Suzanne Gray. Harriet wrote several articles for the Oroville papers in the 1960s. We felt now was an appropriate time to publish this as our general meeting Saturday, October 21st is also about the history of Cherokee. We hope you will join us from 10am to noon at the old schoolhouse on Concow Road. It will be informative and light refreshments will be available. There is no cost to attend.***

Cherokee, Ca    Spring Valley Hydraulic Mine Site

# Cherokee Memories

*A Child's Life in a Vanished 1890's California Gold Mining Town*

*By*
*Harriet Helman Gray*

Harriet Kate Helman (1889 - 1984) photo circa 1895

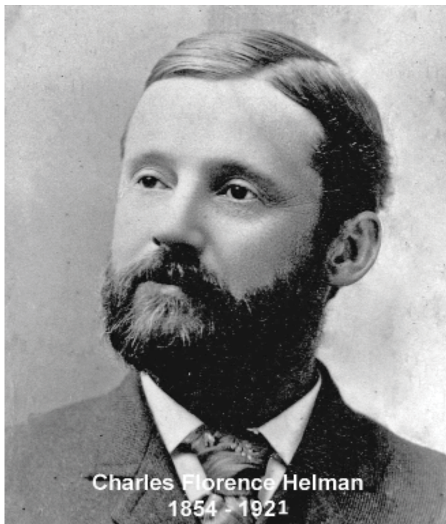
## Introduction

During the time of this story in the 1890s to the early 1900s, Cherokee was a town in transition. Founded in 1852, it remained a small town for many years. Like many early mining towns, it struggled to find water during the summer. In 1870, Cherokee became a major mining enterprise with the creation of an earthen dam in the Concow Valley, which with its many ditches and flumes supplied all the water Cherokee could use.

With the implementation of hydraulic mining in 1870, the town grew quickly. By the 1880's, the huge amounts of water runoff from hydraulic mining was carrying mud and debris into the area's creeks, causing irreparable harm to the surrounding farming community. After many lawsuits throughout the state were filed over hydraulic mining, the end of that type of mining was coming to a close by 1888. Hydraulic mining, while not outlawed, required that all debris be contained on the mining company's property. The Spring Valley mining company, the owners of the Cherokee mine, attempted to buy all the land along Dry Creek running from Cherokee to today's highway 149. The debris soon would overrun that entire area and the mine was closed by 1887.

Several attempts were made to reopen the mine using alternative mining operations but over the long haul, the profits did not cover the costs. By 1890, the population of Cherokee had fallen from 1500 people in its heyday to about 300 people.

The following story is by Harriet Kate Helman who, at the age of eight along with her sister Jessie, mother Georgia and father Charles Florence Helman, moved in 1897 to Cherokee where her dad became theSuperintendent of the mine. It is not clear exactly how long the Helman family lived in Cherokee, but by 1910 they lived in Oroville, Ca. where her dad was Assistant Supervisor with the El Oro & Butte Dredging Company.


Charles Florence Helman
1854 - 1921

By 1910, Cherokee was in steady decline until the 1940s when fire destroyed most of the remaining town. Today, only a handful of buildings remain from those early days: a school, now a private residence; the ruins of the old assay office; the small house that was the home of one of the last school teachers, Mrs. Churchman, which is now a museum; and a post office across the street. The cemetery down the road and the old newspaper articles are the only clue to the size the town once was.

In 1908, Harriet Helman attended the University of California. In 1911 she married Harold Farnsworth Gray. The Gray family lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1920. Meanwhile in 1920, the Helman family lived in Chico, Ca.

Sadly, Harriet's dad passed away from pneumonia shortly after traveling to China in 1921 while working for the Guggenheims as a Mining Engineer. In 1930 Harriet Kate (Helman) Gray and her family moved back to Berkeley, Ca, and later back to Oroville where this story was written in 1956.

Thanks to Jim and Suzanne Gray, Harriet's grandchildren, we are able to publish this story for the first time. It offers a unique look into Cherokee's past from the perspective of a child fascinated by her introduction into a new and diverse culture. We hope you find the story as interesting as we did.

**Cherokee Memories**

My first sharp memory of Cherokee is about figs. My father ushered us through the gate in the white picket fence and pointed to the many fruit trees and the wide lawn. My sister and I ran through the cavernous rooms darkened against the heat. Our voices echoed through the empty house. "Whose room is this? ... Where am I now? ... Look at the writing on this window." Then he opened a door and we moved under a green canopy made by two large fig trees. "This is where I have been sleeping," he said pointing to a cot with rumpled sheets. My mother wrinkled her nose in disgust. "Oh Charlie, what a mess. Harriet, now you and Jessie go take off your good dresses and get to work picking up those figs -- everyone." Some of the figs had fallen the night before and were still smooth and purple. Some had fallen during the week past and were wrinkled and black. Others had been down long enough to be tinged with the red earth on which they had been mashed. Above the ground level, flies were droning and bees hovered somnolently. Over all a faint sweet aroma hung. I was a grown woman and far away from Cherokee before I began to enjoy eating figs again.

Summers, we scraped up figs and fed them to the chickens. And we ate figs ourselves because they were "good for us". Winters, we ate canned figs, sweet-pickled figs, and dried figs because they were "good for us" in winter too. But looking back I put all this in the background of what someone calls the secure happiness of the past.

A child's happiness is in the love his parents give, the companionship of his playmates, his enjoyment of good things to eat and drink, and freedom to roam and explore the world. In some degree, I had these in Cherokee Flat in the late nineties. Having returned after an absence of 50 years, I examine my own childhood happiness and look about me at the happiness of children now. I see that a child's life was crudely different then from what it is now. I also see a core of sameness then as now. The coke, the hot dog, the jungle gym, the family car, and the TV cater to elemental needs that once were satisfied in different but no less satisfying ways.

**Cherokee Mine Superintendent's House**
Sugar Loaf Mountain in Background After 10 Years of Hydraulic Mining

Cherokee in the year of this writing, 1956, is an abandoned town famous in California gold mining history. It is relatively unheard of at present but events are bringing it into the news. A big dam is projected to be built on the Feather River. The reservoir behind that dam will flood highway US40A and the Western Pacific Railroad right of way. On the relocated railroad and highway, transcontinental travelers will pass within less than a mile of Cherokee in the foreseeable future. To date it has not been exploited as a ghost town. It has no museum, no souvenir store, no old miner with a donkey, no Lucius Beebe. But I look ahead to a time when the town as it now is, will be engulfed in the commercial trappings of what an abandoned mining camp is supposed to be in its stage of old age. When that comes, the town as it is now and the town as it was when I lived there and the town that it was in its early days of mining glory will be buried like the earlier and later sites of Troy.

So I go back to save what I can of the past of Cherokee and of my own. And how do I get back over the years? I live on the east side of the Feather River in the Mt. Ida region near Oroville. I go to the West end of our place and look across the Feather River Canyon. Barbed wire and low-hanging jack pine make a delicate screen in the foreground. In the distance, Table Mountain stretches along the horizon. Behind the mountain but not within my sight lies Cherokee, so near, but so far. So near in distance, I can go there in an hour. So far away in the dim reach of memory, I can go there only by slow stages. I have to work my way through a mesh of events and contacts in recent decades. When I do get back to my Cherokee years, the scene is dim unless some association clicks swift as an electronic flash. Then I see a gilded potato masher in some neighbor's parlor or a well-known but long forgotten face. The trigger that sets off this flash may be inconsequential. A white oleander in flower; a dish of Spanish tripe; the cadence of names I have not heard for years, Cheshire, Haggerty, Vinton, Lynch, Waldeyer, Slissman, Sturmer ... Amaral... Or it may be just the voice of an old friend.

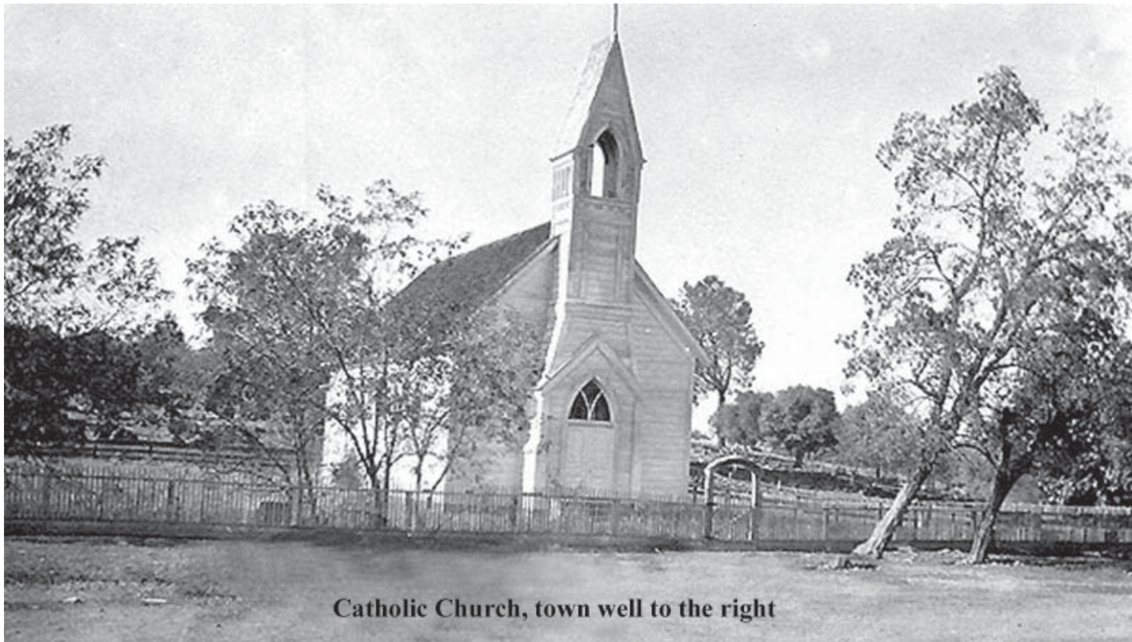
"You remember the Patrice family, Harriet. You remember them of course." I had not heard the word, Patrice, for years but when I did hear it, associations clicked. I laughed. "Oh yes. Pat Patrice used to make sheep's eyes at my sister." Making sheep's eyes was the equivalent of a wolf whistle now, the signal of the questing male. A scene emerged from the fog. My mother by our gate was glaring at a little Portuguese boy of six. My sister was wiping tears from her eyes and sobbing, "Pat Patrice tried to kiss me." Pat stood immune from my mother's anger. He was barefoot. His small overalls were held up precariously by a piece of rope over one shoulder. He had a half-eaten red apple in one hand. He wiped his runny nose with the back of the other hand and smiled at Mama. It was the jaunty, impudent, irresistible smile of the male who has been rebuked but will return to try again. And he did and never quite succeeded.

I am impressed but not surprised that many of my associations are evoked by fond thoughts of food or of the opposite sex. I was not allowed to play with boys. But most of my girlfriends had brothers. The mystery and the forbidden-ness of boys, my mother called them, "dirty little boys", lasted thru all my Cherokee days. I had a feeling I was missing something, I knew not what; in those first weeks before I went to school, I did not even have girlfriends. I was lonely.

In my idle time, I listened to much adult talk about Cherokee's splendid past and uncertain present. I took every chance to wander within the boundaries of my narrow world, and so far as I dared outside it. Cherokee had three known as Upper Town, Middle Town, and Lower Town. My world was Middle Town but I wandered. Actually, I took in more with my ears than with my eyes, but I saw what there was to see over and over. So, I knew my landmarks well. What I overheard, I listened to over and over. But I missed my points of reference. What did they mean? "She's got a broken breast … her father just took his shotgun ... " Or, There's gold in that mountain yet. Someday we'll be able to get it. It was rascality, extravagance,

and slickens ruined this mine. … build a dam ...a mob tried to burn down the schoolhouse … that was in the 80's when the miners were not paid and the mine closed down…

Cherokee is now a mere remnant of the town it was when we moved there in the late 1890's. And when we went there, it was an empty shell of the town it had been in its heyday, late seventies eighties. And those who went there in its days of affluence, saw relics of the early placer days, the foundations of the dance hall and the one old little church. And those that went there in the sixties with the first big strike, found headstones in the cemetery dating back into the fifties. That was the time when hay was baled and cattle pastured on the grassland now a waste bed of cobbles and bedrock.


Catholic Church, town well to the right

Heedless child though I was when I went to Cherokee, I could not escape the feeling that everything was left over from something important and big. Sugar Loaf was what was left of a mountain sliced through the core from lava cap to base. Some of the buildings were unused or put to lesser than their planned uses. Certain hogshead stood unused in Bader's Brewery. Save for a few rooms the Sturmers lived in, the Sturmer House was idle. And the house itself a small replacement for the Sturmer Hotel and Stage Stop of former days. On the wide diggings, many fewer men worked where once they were numerous. The population had fallen significantly from the peak by our time. The schoolhouse once was so overcrowded that some classes were held in Vinton's Store building.

By our time it was not even filled. Even the company barn and corral down at the turn of the dogleg seemed empty with my father's black horse, Nig, and our one cow. And the old timers muttered over and over, extravagance, rascality, and slickens that's what ruined the mine.

Nowhere was this sense of better days and former grandeur more present than in the superintendent's home. The grounds had been planted with every sort of fruit tree that could be expected to grow there, two and three of most varieties, and anise and fennel for spicing pickles and berries. The big high-ceilinged rooms seemed empty with our few furnishings. Some of the rooms we did not even use. The dining room baffled my mother at first. It was a long, narrow room windowed on one end and floored with some hard-to-clean covering she called scornfully, "ingrain carpet". We were given the impression that it had been planned on a large scale for entertaining celebrities. Ignoring its original purpose, we just lived in that room. At one end, we saw the window with this inscription, "Written with a diamond found …. Louis Glass" We children used to run a finger over the writing and marvel that anything could write on glass. And often we walked

down to the store with our eyes on the ground hoping ... looking … Mama put our dining table by this window and near it, our sofa where we dozed away our malarial fever. And we studied and ate and read and did our homework and played casino and checkers in sight of those words. And somehow whether from my fever dreams or from tales told, I got the notion that President Hayes ate there.

The big blue platter of crackled blue and white ware was the focal point of the scene as I imagined it. I did not know what the President had looked like but I did know the platter. It was so large that when we played hide-and-seek my father used to lift my sister up onto the platter where it lay on the top pantry shelf. From below none of us could see her at all. Aside from making it a hiding place in our game, we did not use the platter. We were not in awe of it. We did not fear to break it. But a family of five did not have roasts large enough to warrant lifting the heavy platter from the highest shelf. We referred to it respectfully as the Big Blue Platter because we believed that meat had been served from it when President Hayes ate in our dining room. Even though another version of the Hayes story belies ours, it can never quite take away my childhood feeling of being on a historical ground.

**1882 President Hayes** (far left) **and Gen Bidwell** (far right)

The other version I have from someone who knew a man who was on the President's escort of honor during his tour of Butte County. The Spring Valley Mining Company gave the president and his party a dinner served in or near the old blacksmith shop down in Lower town. They set off one hundred blasts in the pipe clay of the diggings with primers and Judson Powder. General Sherman, who was on the president's staff, said, "That is the nearest I've come to war since 1865." A good story and probably true. It is certainly in the California tradition of the big informal feast and in the Sherman tradition of the pungent remark. And aside from the powder explosions, the occasion may well have reminded Sherman of war in another way. He is on record as believing that war is hell. And a late September day down in Lower town where the blacksmith shop stood may well have seemed as hot as hell to the party in full dress.

Now all I have left of my tie with history is the Big Blue Platter. They certainly used that -- well, almost certainly.

Mistaken though I now know I was about the presidential party in our dining room, I realize that such legends helped me fill those empty weeks before school started. A few weeks without playmates seems a

long time to a child. People in a small mining camp may well be cautious about offering companionship to the superintendent's family. The men had to have business dealings with Charlie Helman and report back to their wives what sort of man he was. The women had to be sure through formal calls that his women folk were not stuck up and apt to rebuff advances. The rumor ran around town that one of them had arrived in white gloves. That must have been my grandmother, Ida. She had been raised in N.Y. and lived by rigid canons of behavior lest the West break her morale. One of these canons was that no lady ever went out without her gloves on both hands. Though the thermometer might stand at 103 degrees and she be on horseback in the Sierra Nevada, Ida wore her gloves. Even my mother may have seemed overdressed in a bonnet by Coughlin's in SF and custom-made shoes on her size 1 1/2 feet. She soon ran down to Vinton's store in her calico dress but summer was almost gone before she was "Georgie" and neighbors dropped in any time. The difference between the first call and the second visit was this. To the offer of a second cup of tea the answer would be, "No thank you, Mrs. Helman I've had a gentile sufficiency." Then, "Thank you, Georgie. It is delicious tea. And how do you make your hermit cookies.?" And during those weeks when the foundations for some tender and lasting friendships were being laid, it seemed to me as though the children were being held away from my sister and myself as if by an invisible leash. Sometimes a caller brought a child along and I, out of sheer self-consciousness, did or said the wrong thing.

One of these episodes stands forth in my mind as an example of the 19th century beware-of-the-goddamn-man principle of sex education. A lady brought a little boy along when she came to visit. He could not have been more than four years old. Inevitably the time came when he had to go. Mama said, "Show him the bathroom, Harriet." The ladies went on sipping iced tea in the shade of the fig tree and forgot us. Half an hour later their gossip was disturbed by sounds of laughter. They rushed to the bathroom and opened the door. And this is what they saw. Two little girls and one little boy, stripped naked, running from end to end of the bathroom as fast as they could run and laughing. The room was a rather narrow rectangle mid-length, the tub ran along one side so that between it and the wall space was narrow for passing. When we passed one another in that narrow passage, our laughter rose to shrieking. We were not touching one another. We were not especially looking at one another. We were behaving with the innocence that babes are supposed to have. But some intimations of forbidden joys were electrifying our nerves. What intimations of perversion, sin, social disease, and degeneration came to those two horrified mothers and one grandmother, decent, gentile, uncommonly respectable women, I can well imagine. I had never seen a male human [naked], not even a tiny baby. And I cannot say I was especially impressed with what I was seeing. The idea had not been mine but I had certainly gone along with it. I was right in line for a scolding. I had a real talent for being wrong and for getting a scolding right or wrong.

Therefore, I was it. I was the older of the two Helman girls. I was the stronger and could stand physical punishment. I was the hostess on the junior level and ought to have had better manners than to go into the bathroom with a boy. I "knew better" than to undress in front of a boy, and that was news to me. The question had never arisen before.

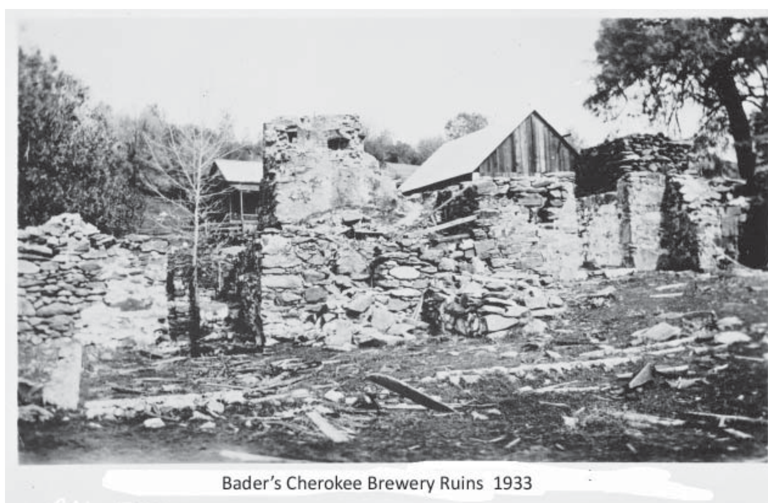
That was my initiation into the beware-of-the-goddamn-man rule of life. Perhaps my ignorance had been prolonged because I had been raised in an almost exclusively feminine 19th century where sex was whispered in front of children. Perhaps I was just merely uncurious or indifferent. But from then on, I had some idea why my mother said that little boys were "not nice". And the rule that little girls did not undress in front of boy, or man, had been firmly impressed on my mind. Actually, I had no occasion or inclination to disobey it. After the storm raised by my misconduct had subsided, my life went on about as before save for the fact that I kept an eye out for some male, man or boy, to make some wrong move. But what the wrong move might be, I had not the slightest idea.

**The Spring Valley Mine company store would later become Vinton's Store. The company's assay office is to the right and is still partially standing. The town butcher shop is on the left across the street. Picture was taken approximately from where the museum is located today. The Catholic Church was located to the immediate left, next to the current museum.**

Not until I was many years older and read the history of the mine did I realize what a burden my father carried throughout those Cherokee years. Sometimes he brought the gold bar home from the office wrapped in newspaper and hid it under his pillow. He had hidden a building brick wrapped in newspaper in the office safe, so solid, thick-sandstone walled, and secure within the walls of the office building. Rumors of a planned theft after the clean-up or just over-anxiety must have prompted him not to trust the usual method of security. But I know that the weight of someone else's gold was heavy on his conscience and shoulders. The bullion, the payroll cash, flumes and ditches from Concow to Cherokee, the big siphon across the West Branch of the Feather River, an epidemic of meningitis threatening, a man with an injured back, the school board election, a fighting quarrel between two of his ablest men: all these or any one of them he carried. But as far as my sister and I were concerned, he was our companion. He was never too tired to dance a little jig when he came home. He enjoyed hearing me practice my violin. He invented practical jokes for us to play on Mama. He trimmed our hair and gave our teeth the cleaning we would have had from a dentist elsewhere. And every night after the lamps were lighted, and sometimes before in the twilight hour, he told us stories and played games to help us over those weeks when we had no real playmates of our own. He may have done all these things consciously to relieve the severity of the endless nagging and severe punishments of the spare-the-rod-and-spoil-the-child era. He may have felt our lack of playmates and substituted the child he had in his own disposition. Or he may have just been having fun because he enjoyed play. But whatever the impulse behind it, this side of his genial German inheritance was a balance against my mother and grandmother, in whom the Celtic blood was strong. They would bicker and nag and quarrel and cry at the drop of the hat. And laugh or sing just as easily. The amount of energy they could hurl from their tiny bodies was prodigious. A holiday, a birthday, a party, anything festive was the

cue to set them off -- or company coming. I think my father liked to see them in action. Sometimes when company was not coming he would say, "Let's play company is coming." Then followed the business of polishing the silver butter dish with a silver cow on the cover, of primping at least fresh hair ribbons and sitting down to the roast beef -- that was not there. Baked heart, pot roast, liver and onions could be roast beef. But if the guest and the roast were not there, at least we were in the festive mood that attends a guest. My father would start to tell his funniest story, just as though we had never heard it. Mama would say, "No, Charlie, it was not Tuesday it was Wednesday." He would wait till she was in the kitchen whipping cream to finish the story just as though the guest were there. She would say, "I don't see why Charlie waits till I am in the kitchen to tell his best stories." Then we would all laugh. Jessie and I would relax. No scolding, much less a spanking, would intrude on the feast. We would have a second helping of dessert and walnuts and raisins from the cluster tied with narrow red ribbon. Someone may say that Jessie and I were enjoying this because we were children easily lifted into joy. But the adults were having fun too. Once on such an occasion I was told to go to the kitchen and feed the dog. I was so bemused with laughter that I gave the dog a T-bone steak that was lying beside the dog's bone. When my mother changed courses, she found me out and came back laughing. I was not scolded, only laughed at by all -- thanks to the presence of the unseen guest.

Most of our games were just the usual ones played with boards, counters, and cards. But we had one game we played only without wits. We called it “Guess Words”. It had one big advantage in that it could be played without light, an important consideration on warm evenings. One of us would give the initial letters of the item to be guessed. The others would start the questioning and the one who got the “Yes” answer could propound the next item to be guessed. The questions would go much as in a current TV program, “What’s My Line”, is it vegetable?” “Has it anything to do with war?” And do not think that it was simple. A string of initial letters can be just as mystifying as the occupation of a woman who trains boxers. There was no limit to the number of initial letters save that they must not represent a sentence. Nouns, adjectives, pronouns -- no verbs and verbs are useful as a meaningful clue. One night I had them all puzzled when bedtime came and they had to give up. This was my poser. H-F-K-B-C, Happy Family, Keg of Beer in Cellar. My father laughed till he had to wipe his eyes. My mother and grandmother were scandalized. My sister thought it was no-fair. But that keg of beer in the cellar was a matter of pride to me.



Bader’s Cherokee Brewery Ruins 1933

We had never had such a thing before nor did we have afterwards. It was one thing that made our Cherokee living special. My father did not care for ordinary beer but when he tasted Bader’s beer, he began to keep a small keg at home. His first attempt to use the bung starter to get the spigot in, resulted in a shower bath of beer over himself and his admiring watchers. After that it was routine and the family thought nothing

of it. Not so with me. When I used the fact in my guessing phrase, I thought it just about as important as A-D-M-B. Or any I used before or after.

One afternoon when I was picking up figs, I began to feel cold and trembly. I moved from the shade to sunshine and the sunshine did not warm me nor did the trembling cease. I was shaking by the time I made it to the sofa in the dining room. Ida saw me and ran for my mother. My mother, nothing surprised, ran for blankets and the red plush robe my father's grandmother had brought from Germany. But not all the blankets in California nor any medicine could have warmed me then. A sip of whiskey warmed my gullet but I could not keep it down. Efforts to control my retching failed as did my effort to control the twitching muscles all over my body. I tried especially with all my strength to hold my teeth together because their chattering set up a dull reverberation inside my skull. As I shook, I felt as though the whole house was shaking too and that I might shake it down.

Neighbors, who had the notion that the first chill anyone ever has is the worst and all the better to watch, drifted in and sat a while. At first, I got some satisfaction out of being the center of so much attention and then I resented it and then I did not care. The first stages of fever brought a sort of dark relief. It was like falling into a warm dark well where I was less miserable than in the chill state -- but not for long. At moments I could glimpse faces of those above trying to help me: to hold my head, to cool my face with damp cloths, or to make a little breeze by fanning me with cloths dripping water. I could hear their voices, "103 ... 104 ... Are you sure you shook that thermometer down? ... 105 102 ... down to 99 ... Now, Harriet, try some of this nice chicken broth Mrs. McCloud sent you."

The little town was still in after mid-night stillness when I came out of the fever dreams in a sweat. This used to be called a wringing sweat probably because someone was kept busy putting on fresh sheets and pads and gowns as much to keep the sofa dry as to make the patient comfortable. They would wring these things over the basin, involuntarily perhaps, and seem to take a certain morbid satisfaction in squeezing out the drops of sweat.

No matter how burning hot you may have felt with the fever, there is no comfort in the post-fever sweat. I was stubbornly disposed to sleep and played hard-to-wake when a voice said, "Now open your mouth ... put this on your tongue ... take a swallow of this nice water ... " Finally, dry again and not-too-cold and not-too-hot, I slept a dreamless sleep. After the fever nightmares when I was floating far above the earth precariously sinking and rising again, I slept a black sleep. My tormentors went away and left me asleep. And then as though no time at all had passed I opened my eyes to bright day. The family were eating a noonday dinner, tongue with tomato sauce, spinach with a golden ring of hard-cooked egg, and baked potatoes drenched with butter. I looked at the food and at the family as one returning from a long journey and said, "What time is it? What day is it?" Mama dropped her fork with a clatter and jumped to me.
Water in and water out. And more than the chill or the fever or the sweat, the dark rusty red color of my urine gave me an unchildlike feeling of apprehension -- as well it might.

That was the primary attack of my first episode of malaria, the episode being a series of attacks every other day until the parasites were under temporary control. After that episode, came a period of latency when another attack might seize me for no apparent cause. But we learned to watch out for days that were a multiple of seven from the end of the first episode. We found that upsets in routine such as going down to the Bay might bring on an attack. But we did not learn to watch out for mosquitoes.

"Mosquitoes like Harriet,'" my mother used to say and point out that I had five or six bites to my sister's

one. So long as we lived in Cherokee, I had seasonal recurrences and fresh attacks when the damn little "unseen guests" in my bone marrow got reinforcements from outside and began their complex life cycle again.

They cluttered up my brain cells with clots of black pigment and enlarged my spleen and destroyed red corpuscles and upset my liver with their burrowing. But by the time I left Cherokee, I had achieved a sort of live-and-let-live state with them and become merely a chronic. The danger of acute episodes seemed to have passed. But there were after effects. Nine years after my first attack, I had a malarial anemia of about one year's duration. Fifteen years after, I had my last clinically diagnosed symptom of chronic malaria when my first child was born. Mosquitoes did like Harriet and that liking led into a long story.

Sir Ronald Ross brought forth his evidence that mosquitoes transmit malaria to man about the time we moved to Cherokee. But at the time, he was given scant recognition in the scientific field, much less in a little mining town behind Table Mountain. We in our isolation were just as sure of our facts as the scientists who doubted Ross. The bad air at evening rising from the stagnant pools in the diggins was the cause of chills and fever, ague, the shakes, or whatever you called it. We had in Cherokee what seemed to be a proof. There were the stinking green-succumbed pools. There were the people sleeping outdoors in hot weather and necessarily breathing the bad air. There were the people shaking, sweating, dosing and blaming the bad air. And they were right up to a point; it was something in the summer air that caused their troubles, mosquitoes busily ferrying from the blood of old cases to the bloodstream of newcomers, the unseen guest …

Regarding all this, one might get the notion that I became a sickly child, anemic, thin, sallow, listless, a typical malaria victim. But that is far from so. Save that in summer I took doses of Grover's Chill Tonic, quinine, calomel, and the violent-acting salts that went with calomel; save that I drank great mugs of horehound tea in winter for respiratory infections, I took little medicine. I seldom saw a doctor. I remained a pink and white skinned child of sturdy build. My father used to put me on the table sometimes and say to a visitor, "Just feel those legs. Isn't she solid?"

I hated that word solid. But I did not have any of the so-called children's diseases while I was in Cherokee and do not recall my schoolmates having them. As I look back, the fact seems somewhat remarkable. But we were an isolated group. Children were not carried here and there in cars, as they are now, nor even in

parents' buggies drawn by the family horse. Not many parents in fact had horses. For the most part, we stayed where we were. We infected, and re-infected ourselves with our own strain of malaria and enteric disorders and common cold. We suffered from those but not from sickness from outside. And to what we suffered, we became accommodated with the mysterious adaptability of the human body. So, we seemed a healthy lot of children with no concern for shots and vitamins, less fear of germs than children have now, and none of atom bombs.

This was not so of infants and pre-school children. The death of a baby or toddler was mourned but not as a thing that should have been prevented. It was just part of life as life was then. Whether or not these very young children had malaria I do not know. But some of them were doubtless born of run-down, overworked, malarious mothers. I recall going through an alley, forbidden to me though that was, I heard a wail inside a shack and peeked in the open door… A year-old child, obviously in need of changing, was crawling on the floor. A little naked girl was standing on a box and about to topple the water bucket over herself. A woman who looked as old as my mother was sitting on the bed holding a wizened day-old baby on her lap. As I watched she tried to rise to help the little naked girl to water but slumped to the floor. I ran home but did not dare tell my mother what I had seen. Next day I heard that Kathleen had lost her baby. The woman who told the story shook her head, "Three babies before she is twenty... and one of them is dead." The way it was said implied that it was sad but not too unusual. No one would have said outright that babies and very young children were expendable but they certainly were expended. Water that flowed for miles through open ditches, open privies and flies, milk, when they had milk, with manure in it.

Even my father, a kindhearted man, resentful of any wrong to a woman or child, could encompass an infant death in one of his funny stories. I was in the office one day and Papa was weighing one of my hairs on his gold scale. Little Joe came in but did not seem to notice the scale nor the hair nor the elaborate play acting my father usually put on when he went through the ritual, picking out the tiny, tiny weight that would balance the hair with a pincher. Little Joe merely stood there looking around the office as if he were half asleep. When my father was through he said good morning to Joe. Then little Joe spoke up as if he were reciting a piece. "Good morning, Mr. Helman. You know my little sees, that leetle, leetle one. Well, she die last night." After my father had expressed his concern, Joe said, "Yes, Mr. Helman. She die, too goddamn bad." This incident became for a while one of my father's favorite stories. He brought the scene off and always got a laugh with his Portuguese accent. I was always confused when he told it. Not about because he got amusement out of the telling of a baby's death. But Little Joe had taken the Lord's name in vain and my father made light of that. Let him straighten it out who can. I was forbidden to take the Lord's name in vain and what was funny about Little Joe doing so? Whatever was comical about the scene I cannot say but I still smile when I think about it. Too goddamn bad.

No one can imagine my great expectations about going to school. I had bounced back to my usual state of health. People embarrassed me by noticing my pink cheeks. But in fact, I was more fit for the physical exertion of play than I was to face the world of playmates. My world had been restricted. My playmates had been few. Two black cats, Tangle Foot and Tar Baby, at the Rising Sun Mine. A fox terrier pup. The dappled grey pony in Eldorado County where my father was pocket mining. In Oakland, there were a few children of my parents' friends, plus a few others we played with occasionally for a strictly rationed hour. That hour seemed to be the limit of time we could play even with children who were screened according to family canons. My folks knew all about their folks. They did not "piece" between meals, that is, eat bread and cheese and candy and crackers from one meal to the next. A deplorable process that ruined your skin and took away your appetite for meals. They were above all "little ladies" by Victorian standards. They said, "Please" this and "Please" that and "Thank you Mrs. Salsbury ..."

And they carried their handkerchiefs and kept their noses clean. They were not quarrelsome, an unforgivable fault. With these children we could play one hour, hardly long enough to get acquainted, much less get into mischief.

Cherokee School circa 1910

But the long hour-after-hour child's play in and out of one another's houses, the freedom to wrangle, sing, fight, wreck toys, and mimic grownup behavior that children enjoy now was forbidden. One of my sharpest memories of Oakland is hanging over our front gate, which was forbidden, and calling to children playing in a vacant lot next door, which was forbidden.

During those first months in Cherokee, children came in once in a while and stayed their allotted hour. But during many hours of the long summer days, I missed the vacant lot where I had watched children play in Oakland. So few children passed along the street in Cherokee, that I gave up hanging over the gate. Instead, I used to go down through the backyard where the horehound grew and stare across the diggings at the men playing the giant monitors. I liked the words "giant monitor". I liked to see the men who from my distance looked so small, directing the massive water spout from the seven-inch nozzle. A six-foot man was a pygmy beside a two or three-hundred-foot long spout of water and several men were needed sometimes to control and aim the hose and nozzle. I liked to watch the water eat away the earth. I could have passed a whole day thus but going down so close to the diggings was forbidden. I got away with an hour's absence sometimes and was not caught. I would watch my chance.

My sister, always delicate, had a bad time with her chills and fever. My father was having his second episode. Even my mother, usually immune to every sickness, was sick. And my grandmother took her turn on the sofa. Her episode was the last of all and least severe of anyone's. She had malaria in her young womanhood and been salivated but the fact may have had nothing to do with the lightness of her sickness in Cherokee. The well were busy waiting on the sick. Fruit was crowding the trees to be processed into pickles, jellies, preserves, and dried fruit. I would be told to do something, do it rapidly, and slip away to the diggings for an hour of dreaming. I was on top of Sugar Loaf, right on the black cap. I was down in the diggings turning the monitor all by myself wherever I wanted it to go, knocking down men right and left.

It was more fun than the time I emptied a case of father's Shasta syphons. I was poking my fingers into the sluices and bringing it, out, coated. with gold and diamonds!

When I would go back to the house, my mother would say "Where have you been? I wanted you. Goodness sakes. Where were you putting your feet, Harriet? You look like you'd been asleep. Set the table now and step lively."

Then one day, after all the weeks of loneliness, I opened our front gate and walked across to school. After that event, something new was continually being added to my little world of family life and dream. I do not recall that my mother took me by the hand and introduced me to my teacher and my new routine or explained my personality quirks. It would have been strange if she had. In fact, nobody thought to care in those days whether a child was happy or unhappy in the educational process or whether he adjusted socially or became a misfit for life.

The day had been awaited ever so long. I had been readied. I was dressed in a neat but not new dress with a high collar, and a white starched apron, my second-best hair ribbons, heavy black cotton stockings, and sturdy shoes. "Pretty is as pretty does" had been dinged into me. Theoretically I would have rather been good than pretty but actually I am not too sure. I had been coached at home in primary school disciplines, reading, writing, and arithmetic, until I was about ready for grammar school. I bad been warned about behavior. Mind the teacher. Be polite. Try to please the teacher. If you get spanked at school, don't come home and tell me. I'll give you another spanking at home. I had been warned again and again to beware of the goddamn man, in home language, the "dirty little boys" who by definition were "not nice". I had indeed been readied but I was not prepared for what awaited me.

My mind, absorbent as a sponge, was full of odd facts as unimpressive to my Cherokee playmates as annotations on Shakespeare's plays. I knew that Rosa Bonheur painted horses; that Charlotte Orday drowned Robspierre in a bathtub; that Margaret Fuller rode horseback in her shroud, I even knew what a shroud was. But I did not know what my playmates meant when they danced around me at recess chanting, "Harriet loves Vergil ... Vergil loves Harriet." I did not at first know that Vergil was the freckled boy in the back of the room by the window. I knew a donkey does not, will not if he can avoid it, get his feet on boggy ground. I'd learned that the hard way riding lead donkey on the Sierra trails. But I did not know that if you swallow a horsehair it will turn into a snake! I had my doubts, but did not dare to show them. And I had no desire to try the experiment just to show them wrong. I was in the melting pot --- Welsh, Irish, German, Portuguese, Scotch. I did not have a very low melting point but eventually I melted. Some of my classmates had been as strictly brought up as I had been. Others seemed to be remarkably free of the restrictions that had galled me at home. They did not say "Pl-ease" and "Thank you" ritually. They had a freedom in speech and action that I had only in my dreams. I was repelled with some aspects of this freedom. At the same time, I was fascinated. I loved to go to school and I hated it ... And every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday I had to open that gate and cross the street to the schoolyard. Some days I would have been glad to have heard those familiar words, "Keep away from the gate, Harriet. You and Jessie play right in your own yard. You must learn to play together nicely. " But most days I could not get across the street fast enough.

The little school where I began my formal education was un-graded. The lower floor was primary school. When you were promoted to grammar school, you simply took your books and walked up stairs. Those who did not go up remained primary scholars until chance released them. So, there were boys downstairs not big enough to work in the diggings but too large for the small desk seats firmly screwed to the floor. They were bored, uncomfortable, and rebellious. Some hand was always waving to go out. One-day Miss Wilson said wearily, 'No. Manuel, you have just been out." Manuel said nothing but in a moment the pu-

pils near Manuel were staring at a puddle on the floor.

The playground where my informal education began was un-graded and largely unsupervised. Playmates as various as myself from Manuel found me green indeed before their store of practical knowledge, true and false. They coaxed me to eat lots and lots of orange rind, so good in the mouth, so disastrous in the belly. I was out next day with violent stomach cramps. Then they had me chew a bitter uncured green olive, the penalty for being the superintendent's daughter. A prissy little girl with long yellow braids and that abominable stiff collar, they took me every chance they had. Some of them hinted at precocious knowledge of sex. I felt soiled in some mysterious way but also frustrated that they knew things I did not. I suspected they were pretending superiority to me and took revenge in the only way I know.

I boasted that I had been a stage dancer in San Francisco. I told them all about life behind the scenes, my beautiful costumes, the praise and applause when I danced. I had plenty of authentic actual detail from having seen the Christmas Extravaganzas for children given at the Tivoli in San Francisco. Other detail popped up spontaneously in my imagination until I could almost believe my own story. All that I suffered from being different in that little school, no more than what anyone suffers from his difference anywhere, I assuaged by a simple device. I jumped to the extremity, the outer margin of difference where my differentness claimed their astonished admiration. There was one thing that worried me about my triumph. What if someone told their mother and their mother told mine.

We were not at the time a church-going, praying, nor Bible reading family but somehow the commandments were held in respect.

Taking the Lord's name in vain was enough to cause my mouth to be washed out with yellow laundry soap; bearing false witness was almost equally bad. But I told my story and I stuck to it and was not caught. It was my first successful sin. I had made a discovery, namely that you can get away with it sometimes.

Some weeks passed before I was able to look at Manuel without a feeling of shame. But slowly an unruly admiration grew for his courage to defy the conventions and the bogey, what-will-people say. I sensed that he had a freedom that I did not have, did not even want. When I told about Manuel's outrageous behavior at home, my mother frowned and said, "Well, I declare ..." My grandmother out of her Irish and charity said, "It takes all kind of people to make a world, Georgie." And her words made a place in my world for the forbidden. I would have burst my bladder sooner than do as Manuel did but there was room in my world for Manuel. And somehow after that the forbidden was never absolutely forbade. Past a certain point was always freedom.

Having been raised under tight restrictions, I naturally admired the more audacious of my schoolmates. The more audacious they seemed to be, the more I could admire their courage. That they had not been raised under my restraints and were not actually being audacious, never occurred to me. And what I admired I wanted to imitate in some degree. During my Cherokee years, I had one big unsatisfied want, a pink fascinator.

What we called a fascinator, was a triangle of lacily crocheted wool yarn with a finger-length fringe on the edges. The point was draped over the hair so that it dipped about the middle of the forehead and the long edge was brought around the neck and looped under the chin. It was about the size of our largest head scarves now but opposite in effect. Whereas our head scarf holds the hair close to the head, the fascinator merely framed it softly. The ones worn in Cherokee were bright pink of the shade we now call "shocking" but my mother and grandmother called it, looking down their noses, "Portuguese pink".

Whenever I brought up the subject of having a fascinator my mother would say, "No, Harriet. You have

that pretty brown hat that matches your blue coat. Then I would say, "Why" and Mama would say, "Because I say so. No." I would let the matter go until I thought she had forgotten about it. Then the dialogue would be repeated. And one day I heard her tell a friend about my longing and the two women laughed heartily about lt. After that I did not ask again but I went on longing. I seem to recall one or two fascinators with spangles on them but maybe my admiration lent bright touches to an otherwise commonplace head covering.

I think a mother of today would have let me have one, although she might have laughed behind my back when I wore it. I probably would have worn it now and then and lost interest after the novelty had worn off. And by now I would have forgot about the matter. But wanting things we do not have, whether it be food or fur, leaves some indefinable imprint on the emotions.

Naturally I transferred my longing for a fascinator to the Portuguese girls who wore them. I admired their black eyes and hair and their dark soft skin and full red lips. I had a schoolgirl crush, a secret to myself alone, on one named Josephine. She seemed to me as beautiful as Raphael's Madonna. There was no sacrilege about my comparison. The print was a recent addition to our collection and to a child's lively imagination points of likeness were obvious. The fascinator suggested the Virgin's head drape and Josephine had a mother quality about her. She was more mature physically than most of my playmates and her arms seemed ready for an infant. For some time, I placed her next to another idol of my school days, my grammar school teacher, Miss Anna McGregor. I admired her because she emitted some electric spark to me that made the act of learning thrilling. For a time, my energy to admire and to emulate vacillated between two poles but eventually Miss McGregor won over Josephine.

Cherokee School 1897
Anna McGregor Teacher

Miss McGregor was not my first teacher. Downstairs in primary school, I sat under Miss Nellie Wilson … sister of Old Alex Wilson. Their father, William Wilson, settled in nearby Oregon City in 1858. Miss Nellie was a gentle woman, an excellent teacher but not heroic in the face of trouble. We could get away with little things and so we often did. When I took my books and walked upstairs, I expected to get away with little things unnoticed as before. And it took me awhile to find out just how different upstairs was from down. The first difference was the roll call. Not by a casual "Here" or "Present" but by a quotation, I had to answer to my name. I used to wait with a mixture of dread and desire. I enjoyed showing off my quotation but feared my quotation might not win a signal of approval. If Miss Anna checked my name off quickly and passed on to the next, I was disappointed almost as much as if she frowned. I could bear disapproval almost better than being ignored. Competition, outlawed now from classrooms, sparked those first moments of our school day. No doubt Miss Anna put her pupils into competition with each other in an extracurricular effort to locate at home, and repeat in class, words representing what someone has called the best that has been thought and written. No doubt also she awakened in the more alert of the pupils a sense of words, their meaning, values, and their spoken cadences. Those few moments were a preview of public speaking courses now given. Miss Anna was a brave woman to make the requirement in a little mining town of a few families, many of them not English speaking at home.

Nellie Wilson

The requirement put a burden on the families. My family would have condoned unfinished arithmetic homework sooner than failure to have my quotation. It could be from a book, magazines, or newspapers but the source was required to be given. Naturally certain favorite quotations were used over and over throughout the year. The real competition came in having something apropos to the season or current events and one not used too recently. And to have one better than Jessie Williams was the desire of the more serious competition, myself among them.

At home, we used to rummage through my mother's small library and through our weekly New York Times and Scribner's. Sometimes we had to fall back on a device of our own. Miss Anna began to notice that my author was often "Wright". One day she said, "Who is Wright, Harriet? I do not recognize the name." I blushed and answered, "Wright is my Grandmother's name. When we cannot find a quotation, she makes up one." Miss Anna was amused but concealed the fact. She explained that when I quoted my grandmother, that was a quotation but not under her requirements, a quotation from print. My classmates felt that I had taken an unfair advantage of them. I was not surprised because I had known all along that I was trying to get away with something. But I was chagrined at being publicly exposed to disapproval. On the other hand, I had enjoyed my moments of approval when I spoke Ida's words. My little grandmother's words had the lilt and cadence and the wisdom and sometimes the wit of the Celts. They had brought the coveted flash of approval from Miss Anna's eyes and no reproof could take it away from me.

Miss Anna was a maiden lady of uncertain age with a rigid sense of discipline that today might be thought too strict for the U.S. Marines. She did not fear competition among pupils and she did not hesitate to let a child know when he was failing. She was, or seemed to me to be, about six feet tall and unprepossessing. Pretty clothes for the teacher would never have occurred to her as an amelioration of the learning process. She wore a black dress of no particular style. When the chalk dust had settled over it and over her grey hair

and masculine features, she gave the impression part of being a woman part granite.

Naturally she made enemies. But she was loved as well as hated. Her pupils, their families and the school board members drew up in almost military formation pro or anti McGregor when the school board elections approached. The town seemed about to split wide open over her teaching methods and discipline and even the personal habits of her family. I overheard the comments and recriminations although I did not understand it all. One of the things most held against her was that she gave too many entertainments. Modern parents and modern school boards would have approved her giving the pupils a chance to express themselves with all that means in the development of personality. But she was a little ahead of her time. Certainly, no modern school board would have approved her teaching methods and discipline. She believed in practice makes perfect; and toward that end used memory drill, repetition, rote learning, and corporeal punishment. She had not the least idea of making learning pleasant, easy, nor fun. She was severe, strict, exacting. Ortegay Gasset would have found in her something to approve in that she believed not in learning much but in learning what was learned well.

I hated her at moments but in the main I loved her for one thing. She loved learning and made the pursuit of it somehow worth the pains. For me she carried a sort of inner light from which I lit the taper I have carried throughout my own prolonged educational process. She gave me my first serious ambition -- to be a schoolteacher. This coincided with my mother's ambition for me. It was soon succeeded by another ambition -- to be a violin player. This coincided with my father's ambition for me. Somewhere along the line, another ambition took over -- to be a writer. And throughout the devious and lengthy process of learning this and learning that with its defeats and petty triumphs, I have depended in some degree on the spirit of Anna McGregor.

* * * * *

Books, long serious magazine articles, after dinner speeches, and everything in humor from vaudeville jokes down to the great American wisecrack are leveled against education as carried out today. Often, I wonder if the critics could have education the old way, would they accept it with all its marks upon it? The inescapable ingredient of the older education was discipline backed by corporeal or mental punishment. Our culture rejects discipline as a means to an end and fears the consequences of punishment.

I am a product of the learn-a-little-learn-it-well education. Even before I went to school, I was under the old method because my mother had been a teacher. Her discipline and punishments were only slightly tempered by her idea of mercy, doing-this-for-your-own-good. And yet I was never unhappy except for the moment of suffering. I bounced right back. I learned the required 3-R's and learned them well. I could read rapidly, understandingly, and with pleasure at ten. I could add, subtract, multiply and divide, speedily. But I could not spell, that is reliably. I could not spell under pressure, even the slightest. I could misspell almost any word in my vocabulary.

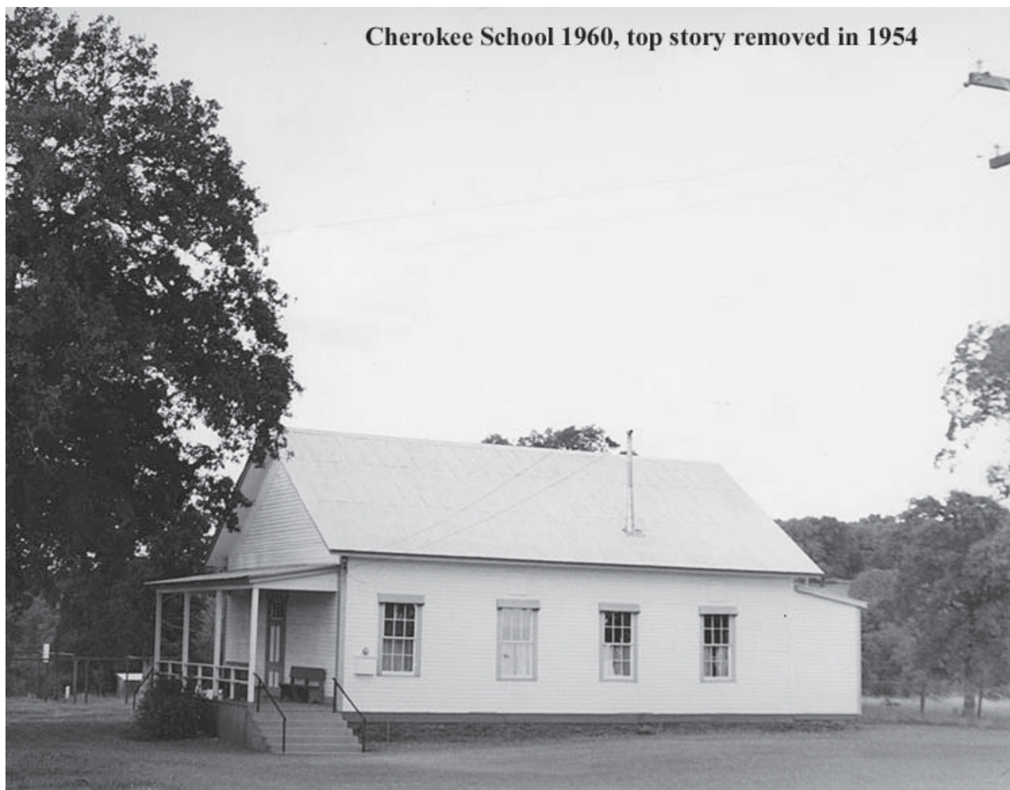
Throughout my life, friendly critics have glossed over this fault, excused or explained it by saying some people have a blind spot for spelling. But they do not say how come I have the blind spot. I have my own explanation.

When I misspelled a word, even in my very earliest attempts, mistakes that would have been smiled at now, I was struck with a ruler and/or made to stand in a corner. In terms of modern psychiatry, traumatic experience came to be associated with the effort of spelling, as well as with other learning processes in some degree. The very act of spelling can still make me tie up to some degree. And so I have it, the good

along with the bad of the older pedagogy.

Nobody can have it both ways. Today a teacher might just as well go out and shoot the president of the school board as be strict and demand that a pupil learns things well. Unless a student is inclined to study and hard work, he can slide through from grade to an AB and really learn only a little and that not very well. Other factors enter in to this problem but these two are almost inescapable. There are too many pupils to teach them well and there is too much to learn to really learn it well. Progressive education cannot be all wrong. At best its products are a Dick Nixon; at worst, a gifted boy waiting on death row.

I have strayed a long way from Cherokee in the nineties. The Cherokee school house now has shrunken in mass but has a younger look if you can say such a thing about a building. When I saw it after some decades of absence, I was quite shaken. Had my memory played me such a trick as to give the building two stories whereas it had only one? I had written about that building and about going up the stairs when I was promoted from primary to grammar school. I began to wonder how soon the truth would catch up with me to my humiliation.



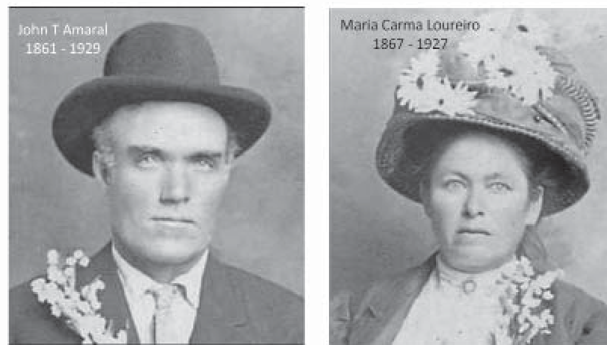

**Cherokee School is now a private residence**

One-day Bob McGregor made an honest woman of me. The building had had two stories then and now only had one.

**People Remembered by Harriet Kate Helman**

In 1890 Cherokee, a town in decline, was still a melting pot of ethnicity. The voter registration records show residents from many countries; Besides the United States, the records show representation from Austria, Belgium, England, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland and Wales. Below are families mentioned in Harriet's story.

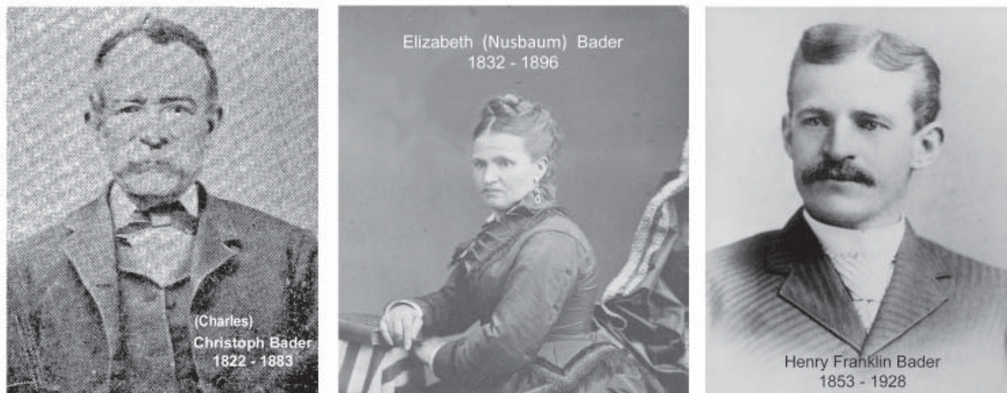
**Amaral Family**



John and Maria Amaral's Wedding Pictures 1887

John Texiara Amaral was born in Portugal in 1861. He emigrated to the United States in 1878. He and his wife Marie were married in Butte County in 1887. From 1888 until 1900 he was a miner at Cherokee. In 1900 he and his wife had three children, Manuel age 12, Marie age 9 and John age 1. By 1910, John T. Amaral went on to become a gold dredge operator in Oroville.

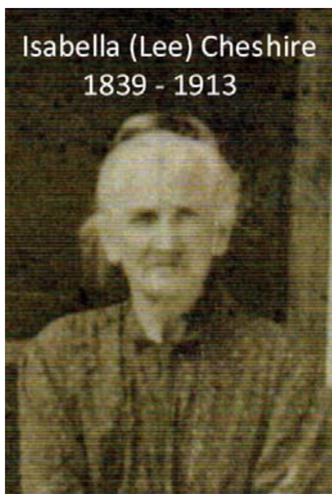
**Bader Family**



Christoph Bader and his wife Elizabeth and their son Henry Franklin Bader

Born in 1821 In Prussia, Christoph Bader emigrated to the United States in 1849. He married his wife Elizabeth in 1851 in New York. Christoph Bader first settled in Dogtown, Butte County, Ca. in the early 1850's where he established a hotel. In 1870, the hotel burned along with most of the town. Soon after, Mr. Bader relocated to Cherokee where he opened a brewery. Christoph and Elizabeth Bader had 11 children between 1852 and 1873. In 1883, Mr. Bader died while in San Francisco. His son Henry Franklin Bader continued to operate the brewery in Cherokee after his death and also was a partner in a dry goods store in Cherokee. Many members of the Bader family are buried in the Cherokee Cemetery.

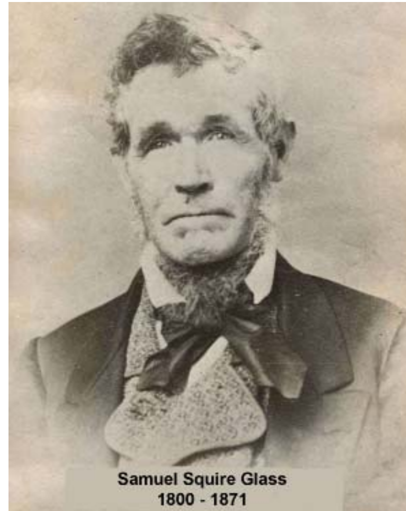
**Cheshire Family**




Robert Cheshire was born in Kentucky in 1829. He married Isabella Lee around 1852. He and his family came to Pentz, Butte Co, Ca about 1885 and later in 1888 they moved to Cherokee where he opened a blacksmith shop. Robert and Isabella had 10 children between 1859 and 1885. After Robert's death in 1898, his son Louis Cheshire, born in 1873, continued to operate the blacksmith shop in Cherokee until about 1901. Louis and the family moved to Oroville where the census shows he operated a blacksmith shop in 1910.

**Cheshire Blacksmith Shop, Cherokee, Ca circa 1900**
Ira Williams, Louis Cheshire, Mr Lathrop, Lew Wallace
Photo owned by Lisette Kroepelin

**Glass Family**


Samuel Squire Glass
1800 - 1871

Samuel Squire Glass came to California in 1849, leaving his family in Delaware. By 1856 he and his family were in Cherokee where he was one of the founders of the Cherokee Mine. Samuel and his wife Susan Glass had five children, one boy and four girls. In 1862 Samuel served as Justice of the Peace for Oregon Township, holding the position for many years. His wife Susan died in 1864 at Cherokee. By 1870 Louis Glass, Samuel's son, had become Secretary for the Spring Valley Mining Company in Cherokee. The following year his father Samuel died. In 1880 the Spring Valley Mine sold for $880,000 and Louis Glass stayed on as the company Secretary. When the mine closed in 1888 Louis moved to San Francisco. Samuel Glass and his wife are buried in the old Oroville Cemetery.

**Haggerty Family**

Richard Michael Haggerty
1885 - 1970
Margaret Doane Williams
1888 - 1974

Richard Michael Haggerty, son of Patrick Haggerty who brought the family to Cherokee in the 1870s.
Richard's wife, Margaret Doane Williams is related to the Williams family on Nelson Bar Road

Patrick Haggerty, an immigrant from Ireland, arrived in Cherokee in the 1870s working as a gold miner. He and his wife Margaret were married at about that same time. Between 1880 and 1887 they had five children. Soon after the birth of their last child, the family moved to Yankee Hill, near the intersection of Lunt road and Nelson Bar Road where Patrick farmed on 80 acres. Patrick passed away on the farm in 1896. His wife continued to farm with the help of her son, Richard Haggerty, until about 1915. Mrs. Haggerty deeded a portion of the land to Richard, forfeited the land patent, letting the remaining land return to the county. Mrs. Haggerty died in 1931 at Yankee Hill, presumably on the land she deeded to Richard. By 1908, Richard had begun working at Las Plumas on the new Power House as an Engine Rigger. Richard's wife, Margaret, is the sister of Butte Williams, the father of Cliff and Norman Williams of Nelson Bar Road.

## Lynch Family

James Lynch, an Irish immigrant born in 1818 and a miner like the Haggerty family, came to California in 1854. In 1858 he settled near Oregon City. A miner by trade, he formed a mining company known as the Irish Company, which was later sold to the Cherokee Mining Company. James Lynch would acquire over 800 acres in the Oregon City, Potters Ravine areas. His sons, James and Michael Lynch, were in the business of raising cattle near Oregon City. Another son, Christopher Lynch, settled in Cherokee where he ran a successful business. Christopher died in 1893 when his wagon overturned and he was thrown over a cliff and suffered a broken neck. The son of James Lynch Jr. of Oregon City, William P. Lynch, also raised cattle, but later turned to investing money in several ventures including ownership in the old Pence Ranch which was converted into a large cattle operation known as the Chico Meat Company. Silos from the meat company, which operated from 1913 until the 1940s, can still be seen on Durham Pentz Road across the road from the site of Pence's home. William P Lynch's twin sisters, Mary and Margaret, along with their sister Kate taught at several local schools: Yankee Hill, Concow and Messilla Valley.

## McGregor Family

Anna McGregor

Anna McGregor, one of Harriet Helman's teachers who had a profound effect on her, was the daughter of Robert (born 1818 in Scotland) and Mary McGregor (born 1832 in Ireland), a miner who came to Cherokee in the 1870s. The McGregor's became active in the Cherokee school system. A cousin, Robert Tyre McGregor, was principal of the Cherokee school in 1900. He and Anna taught for many years in Cherokee. Anna's sisters, Mary and Katie, also taught school in the area. Both taught a year at Messilla Valley school between 1900 and 1904. Anna passed away in 1942 and is buried in the Cherokee Cemetery along with a large number of the family members, including her father Robert T McGregor, Uncle Robert Petrie McGregor and his son Robert Tyre McGregor.

## McCloud Family

Hiram McCloud was born in 1835 in Massachusetts. He came to California in the late 1850's. He and his wife Phoebe had nine children between 1857 and 1873.The family moved to Pentz in 1878 and Cherokee in 1880. Hiram first tried mining in Cherokee and for a short time in 1884 at Big Bend before returning to Cherokee. In 1892 he tried farming, but by the time of his death in1898 he was operating a livery stable in Cherokee. Several of the family members including Hiram and his wife are buried in the Cherokee Cemetery.

**Patrice Family**

Manuel Patrice, born in Portugal in 1850, and his wife, Mary, came to Cherokee in the 1880s. They had 10 children between 1883 and 1899. Manuel was a laborer, probably for the Cherokee Mines. Patrick Patrice, mentioned in Harriet Helman's story, was born in 1892 in Cherokee. He passed away in 1935 in Modesto, Ca. There are several members of the Patrice family in the Cherokee Cemetery including another Manuel Patrice born in 1860, who is a relative. By 1900, the remaining members of the Patrice family had moved to Chico where Patrick Patrice's father, Manuel, died in 1931.

**Slissman Family**

John and Adam Slissman, brothers born in Germany, came to Cherokee in 1867. Both worked as gold miners. Adam moved to Ferndale, Ca and took up farming about 1875. John Slissman remained in Cherokee but by 1885 was a bookkeeper. His son George, born in 1867, was a gold miner for a time but became a musician by trade, eventually living in Southern California. The second brother, Lewis Slissman, born in 1870, moved to Oroville where he operated several movie theaters. The third son Elmer, born in 1877, was a druggist, possibly trained at Fryers Drugstore in Cherokee. In 1898, Elmer operated a drugstore in Truckee, Ca. He later gave up the druggist trade and moved to San Francisco where he was a musician and operated a music store. The boy's father, John Slissman who died in 1904, and their mother, Margaret Lewis Slissman who died in 1897, are buried in the Cherokee Cemetery.

**Sturmer Family**

Mary and Jacob Sturmer

Mary 1843 - 1926 Jacob 1829- 1916

Jacob Sturmer, born in 1829 in Germany, emigrated to the United States in 1860. He married his wife Mary about 1862. By 1868, he and his wife lived in Cherokee where he was a miner. He resided in Cherokee until about 1910 earning his living as a miner. He and his wife had 9 children while living in Cherokee. His daughter, Tillie, married Lewis Slissman, a blacksmith in Cherokee. Another daughter, Susie, married Wendel J. Miller, a very successful businessman in Chico, who was born in Frenchtown near Yankee Hill in 1873.

**Vinton Family**

Thomas Lewis Vinton and his brother George emigrated from Wales. They were miners in Cherokee in 1860. By 1863 Thomas L. Vinton was in the merchandise business. By 1870, George Vinton was a teamster. In 1885, George and his family relocated to Oregon. Meanwhile in Cherokee, Thomas Lewis Vinton had an opportunity to buy the old Cherokee Mine offices when it closed in 1888 and made it a store.

Thomas Vinton passed the operation of the store to his sons before his death in 1910. David L Vinton and Marquis Vinton continued to operate the family store. Marquis died in 1940 and David in 1944 resulting in the store closing. None of Thomas Vinton's children married. They all lived in Cherokee until their death. All the family is buried in the Cherokee Cemetery.

**Vinton family crypts next to Manoah Pence's (founder of Pentz) gravesite in the Cherokee Cemetery. One of the Vinton's two crypts was never finished due to financial concerns.**

### Waldeyer Family

Charles Waldeyer, born in Germany, was in Cherokee mining in 1860. At that time, his worth was estimated at $30,000. In 1880 when the Spring Valley Mine sold, Waldeyer became Superintendent of the mine for the new owners. It is reported he spoke several languages fluently. By 1885, he was a financial partner with Harry Clay Bell in Oroville in a grocery business called H C Bell & Company. Charles Waldeyer continued to mine in the Oroville area. Casella Waldeyer, born in 1872 to Charles and his wife Hester Waldeyer, died soon after birth. She is the only Waldeyer buried in the Cherokee Cemetery. Charles died in 1894 and is buried in the old Oroville Cemetery. The Helmans probably never met Charles Waldeyer but the name would have been a familiar one in Cherokee, especially as he was a former mine supervisor.

### Wilson Family

Nellie Wilson, another of Harriet Helman's teachers, is the daughter of William Moffatt Wilson (b.1832

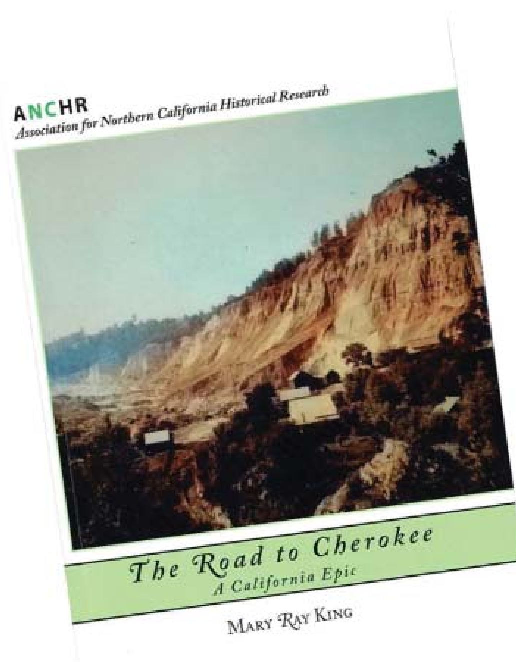
Scotland) and Jannett Wilson (b.1827 Scotland). William and his wife came to Oregon City in 1858. By 1880, the Wilson family lived in Cherokee. The Wilsons had 6 children between 1855 and 1868. Nellie Wilson born in 1868, started teaching in Cherokee in 1888 and taught there for a number of years. Nellie, her father William Moffatt Wilson and mother Jannett along with several family members are buried in Cherokee Cemetery.

## Yankee Hill Historical Society

### Saturday, Oct 21, 2017

10am to Noon at the old school house

A presentation on Cherokee, its history and how it relates to the 2016 release of the historical novel "The Road to Cherokee". Ron Womack and Josie Smith, two of the individuals who worked on the historical introduction and supplied supplemental historical data for the book will discuss Cherokee, its history and how it is incorporated into the novel. The presentation is free!




***"The book is interesting and entertaining. It will appeal to those familiar with local history and those who just enjoy a good read."***

***"As a student of history, I appreciate the historical accuracy of the book and the writing style which brings the characters to life."***

***Named 2016 book of the year by Chico ER, and reviewer Dan Barnett***

Written in the 1940's by the first female attorney in Butte County, Mrs. King passed away before her manuscript was published. In 2015, the manuscript was presented by her granddaughter, Jean Whiles, to ANCHR, the Association for Northern California Historical Research, who specialize in publishing books of local historical interest. This is the first novel ever published by ANCHR. The unique book has been praised by those that have read it as an interesting and engaging story that helps the reader understand Cherokee's history.

**You Do Not Need to Buy a Book to Enjoy This Presentation**

# YHHS Happenings

**Yankee Hill Historical Society Web Page:** You can visit our web page at www.yankeehillhistory.com. The web page has something for everyone, a Theater, a Book Store, past Newsletters and extensive on-line Archives for those who choose to do their own research.

The Book Store on the web page is OPEN! You can pay by check or use PayPal. **Look for our Christmas SALE in November.**

**Oct 21st Annual General meeting** The event is free and there will be a presentation on the history of Cherokee. It will be held at the old school house on Concow Road from 10 to noon. Light refreshments will be available. This will be an informative presentation that you will not want to miss!

Interested in volunteering with the historical society? Our web page has an overview of what we do that you can read under the “Volunteering” tab, We’d love to have you join us! Membership forms are also available on the web page. Check the “About Us” tab to download a membership form.


## Officers and Contact Information

**President:** *Bob Huffman (530) 533-4132*
**Vice President:** *Marji Corey*
**Secretary and Treasurer:** *Debbie Ingvoldsen*
**Directors:** *Jeff Evans, Don Dooling*
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