

# Big Bar & Pulga, Feather River Canyon

Presented by the Yankee Hill Historical Society



# The Early Settlers

The earliest inhabitants in the immediate area were native American, later referred to as the Pulga Indians. There were various Indian tribes all along the North Fork of the Feather River. It was not that uncommon that miners would live with Indian women and in some cases start their own families.



Mollie Cayanne 1869 -1958

Mollie and Maggie Cayanne were the daughters of a French miner named Joe Cayanne. Their mother was an Indian woman named Annie Wa Deh



**Maggie Cayanne 1872 - 1952  
And her Daughter in Law Bernice Clark 1938**

Mollie would become the wife of Henry Christian Gramps and Maggie the wife of David Edward Gramps, brothers who mined in the Pulga area.

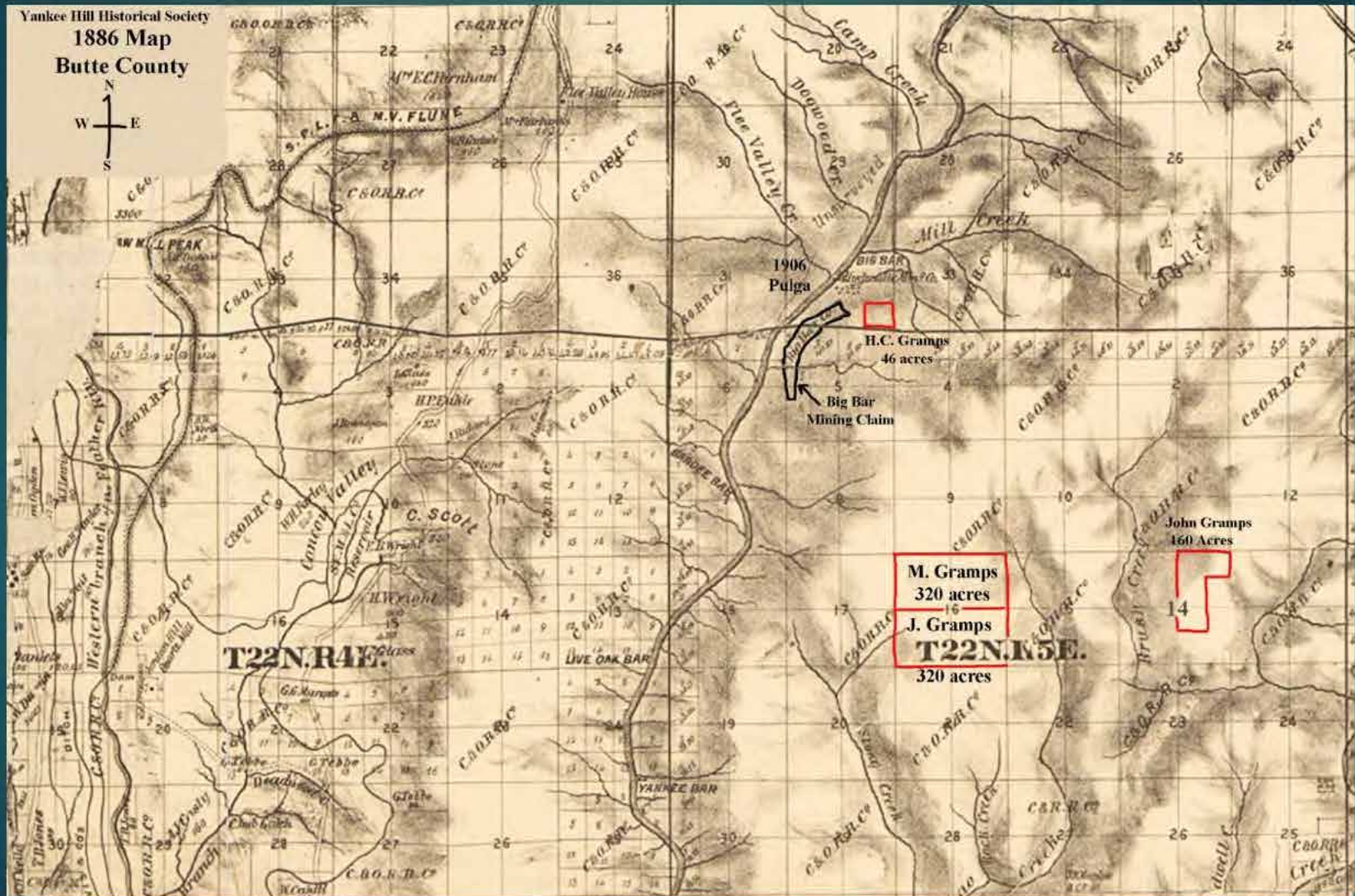
# Gramps Family

- ❑ Christian Grambs arrived in the United States In Jan 1843 aboard the ship Hudson from Bavaria
- ❑ He settled in Cherryridge, Pa where he farmed. In the 1850 census the last name was spelled Gramps rather than Grambs.
- ❑ His son John Grambs came to California in the early 1850's arriving at Big Bar in 1855. He would mine in the Big Bar area until his death in 1903.
- ❑ John's brother Martin Grambs appears to have come to California after 1860.
- ❑ Both brothers registered as eligible for military service at Yankee Hill in 1863

# Gramps Family Mining Operations

- ❑ John Gramps never married
- ❑ Martin Gramps married Eliza (Elizabeth?) Jenny, a full blood Indian from the area about 1865
- ❑ Although the Gramps brothers had been mining in this area since the 1850s, there were no formal mining claims filed with the county until 1874
- ❑ In 1876 a group of Oroville investors set up a large claim adjacent to the Gramps claim on the North Fork of the Feather River known as the Big Bar Hydraulic Gravel Company
- ❑ The Gramps Brothers would sometimes take in partners on their claims. Harry Ginder (1847-1922), a miner from Pulga, did share a claim with Martin Gramps in 1882 on the North Fork of the Feather River near Dogwood Creek

# Big Bar 1886 - The Gramps Family Homesteads



# Martin Gramps Children

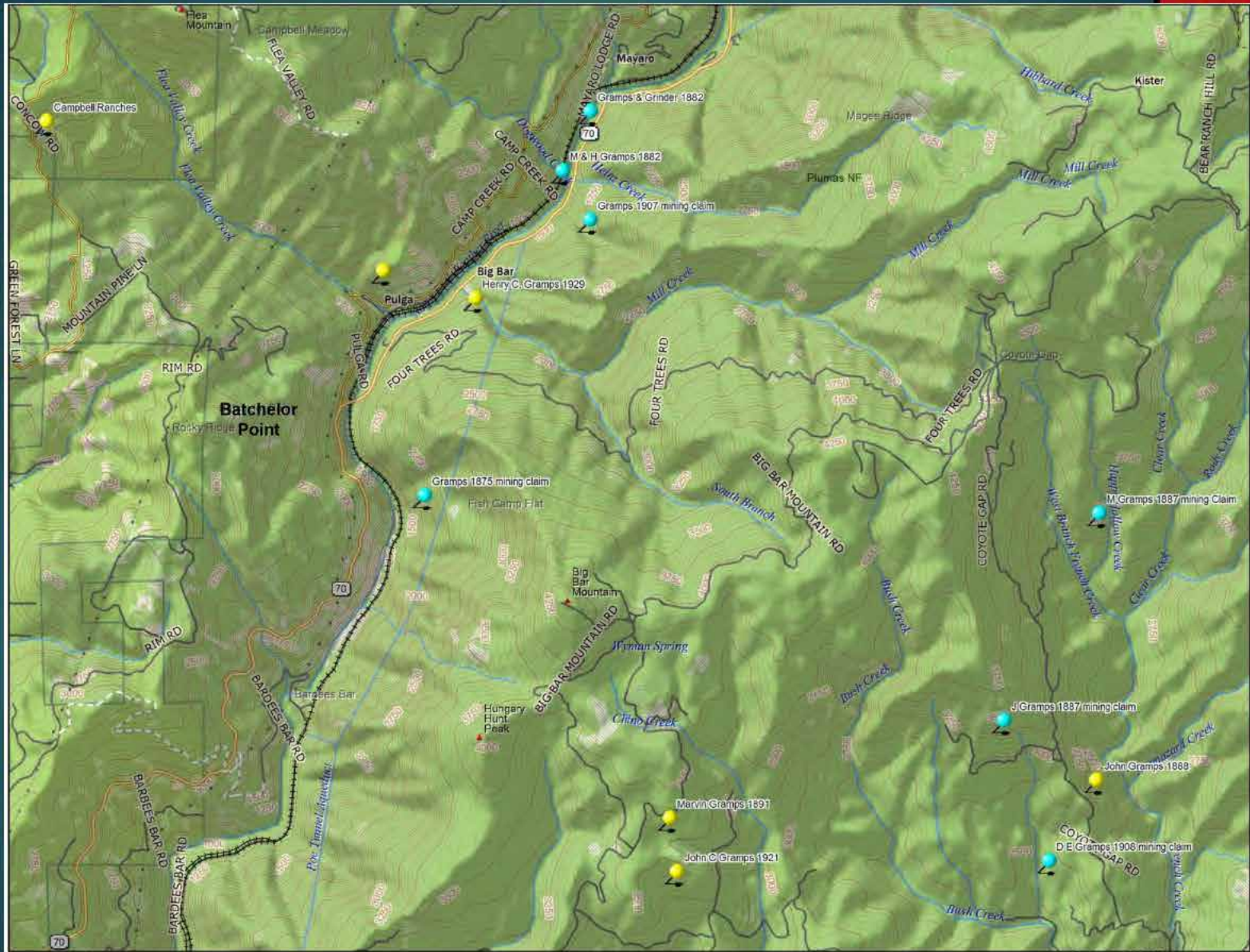
- ❑ Two of Martin Gramps' children married Native American women from the French Creek area.
- ❑ David Edward Gramps (1864-1927) married Margret (Maggie) Cayanne (1872 -1952)
- ❑ Henry Christian Gramps (1867-1943) married Mollie Florence Cayanne (1863-1958)
- ❑ Margret and Mollie Cayanne's father was Joe Cayanne, a miner in the area in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s from France. He married an Indian woman Annie Wa Deh.



# Gramps Family Land patents, Homesteads

- ❑ In 1888 John Gramps filed a Homestead for 160 acres near Brush Creek up the hill
- ❑ In 1891 Martin Gramps filed a Homestead for 160 acres near Upper Stoney Creek
- ❑ In 1921 John C Gramps (David Gramps' son) filed a land patent for 160 acres adjacent to the Homestead filed by Martin Gramps on Upper Stoney Creek
- ❑ In 1929 Henry Christian Gramps filed a Homestead for 46 acres on the North Fork of the Feather River
- ❑ Mining claims were also filed near these holdings

# Pulga and Vicinity



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● Mining Claim ● Homestead

TM  
MN (14.0°E)

Scale 1 : 50,000





# The Railroad is coming!

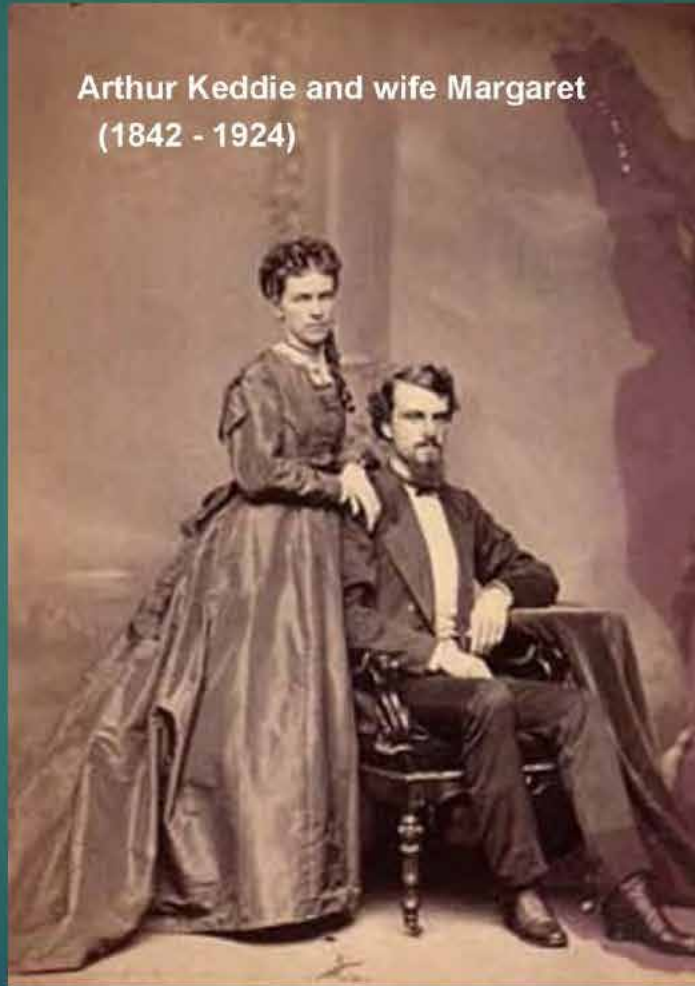
*Eventually* 1867-1910

- ❑ Arthur Keddie was a Canadian who came to California and settled in Quincy in 1864
- ❑ In 1867 he surveyed a route for a wagon road from Quincy to Oroville. He traveled down both the Middle Fork and the North Fork of the Feather River looking for the best possible route
- ❑ Upon completion of his survey, he recommended the North Fork of the Feather River as the best route. The cost was estimated at \$150,000. He noted it would be a good route for a railroad as well
- ❑ Talk of the wagon road was dropped and the railroad became a new priority

# Arthur Keddie

## Surveyor Plumas County

Arthur Keddie and wife Margaret  
(1842 - 1924)



# Northern California Mining Company

- ❑ Quincy tried to fund the venture by passing bonds but the taxpayers would not approve it because they carried a 10% per year interest rate for 20 years
- ❑ The effort to finance a railroad would continue until in 1902 when the Northern California Mining Company was formed and started buying up mining claims along the Feather River Route
- ❑ At one point they had over 200,000 acres tied up
- ❑ William H. King, the founder of Pulga, was in charge of managing these claims on the North Fork of the Feather River
- ❑ Lumber and mining people started questioning what was happening and it landed in court. In 1909 half the claims were declared illegal because they were never worked or improved in anyway.

# Western Pacific Railroad Company

- ❑ In 1902 the Western Pacific Railroad Company was also formed
- ❑ In 1905 they started surveying their own route for a railroad thru the North Fork
- ❑ During this time in 1904 William H. King was establishing a company town at what would become Pulga
- ❑ Eventually the Western Pacific acquired the assets of the Northern California Mining Company
- ❑ The railroad decided to follow much of Arthur Keddie's route proposed in 1867 along the Feather River
- ❑ The route was completed from Quincy to Oakland along the Feather River in 1910

# The First Western Pacific Train 1910



# The Railroad Is Here! – 1927 Tour Book

## From San Francisco

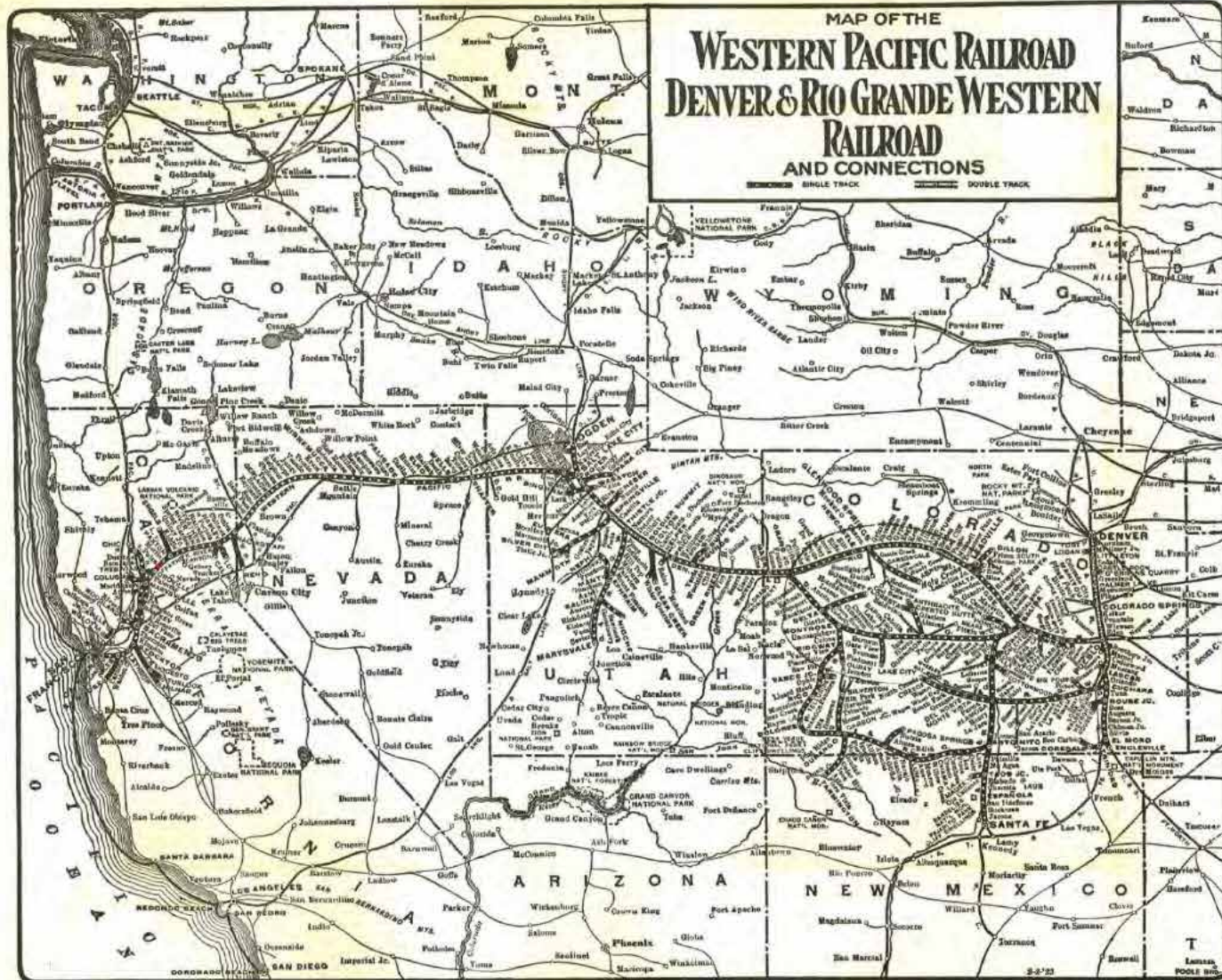
*Along the line of the WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD*



*FEATHER RIVER CAÑON ROUTÉ*

## To Salt Lake City

# San Francisco to Salt Lake



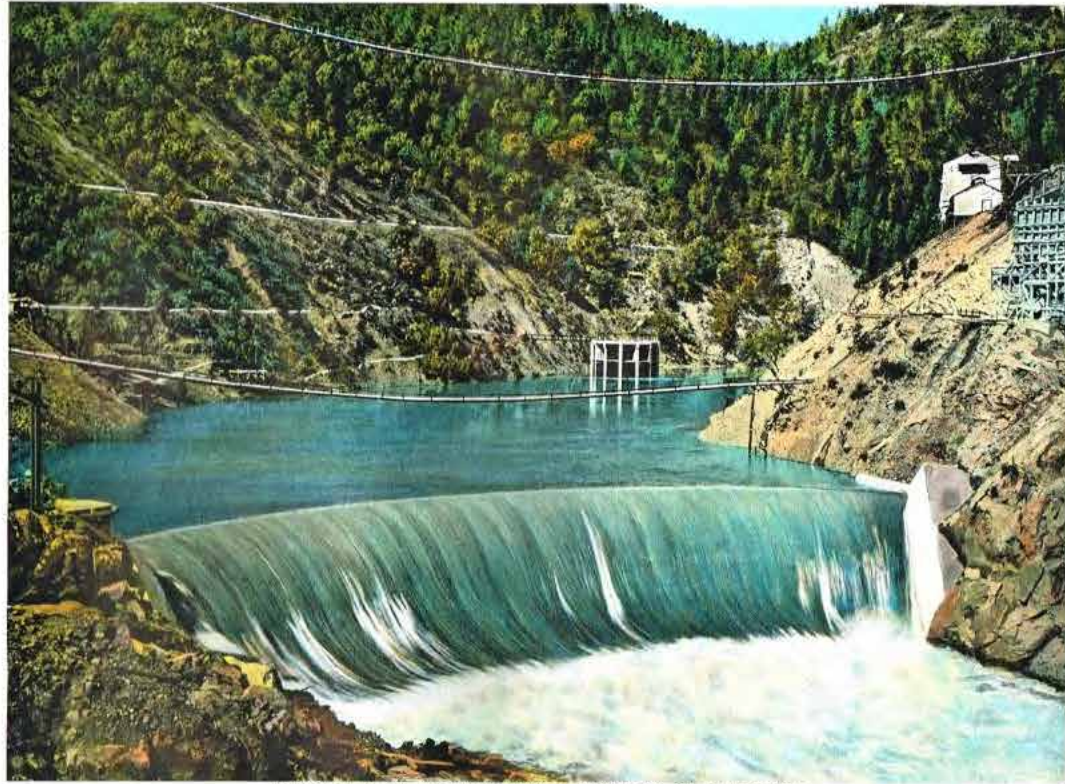
# Big Bend Powerhouse



"LAS PLUMAS PLANT" GREAT WESTERN POWER COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA.

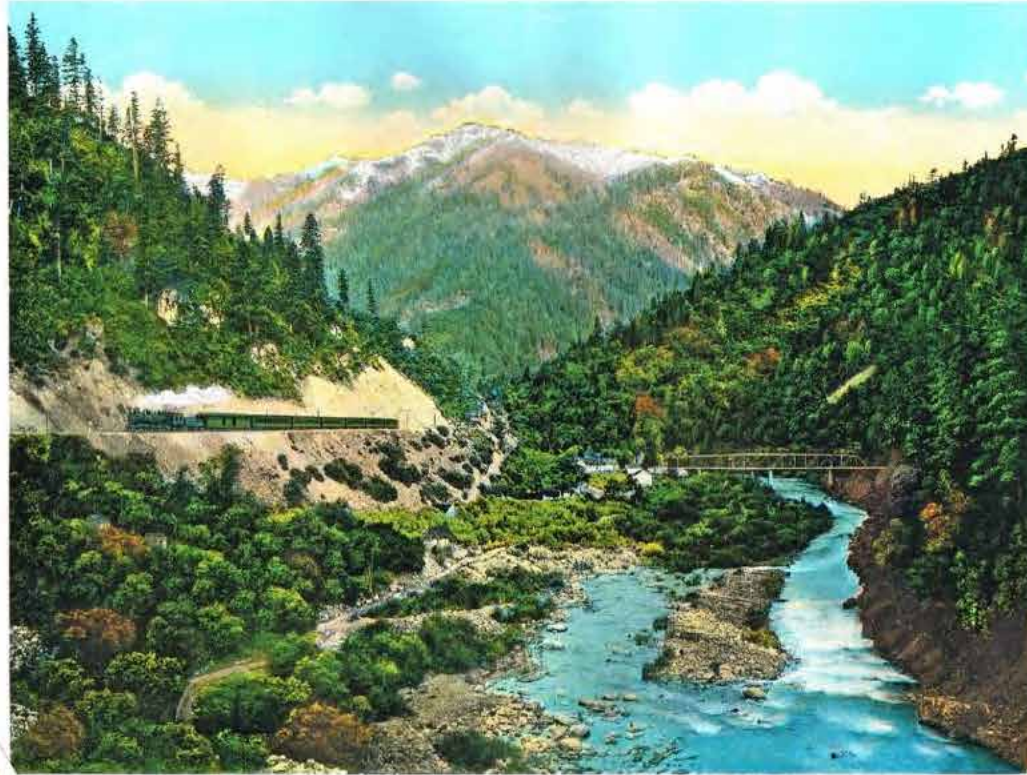


# Intake



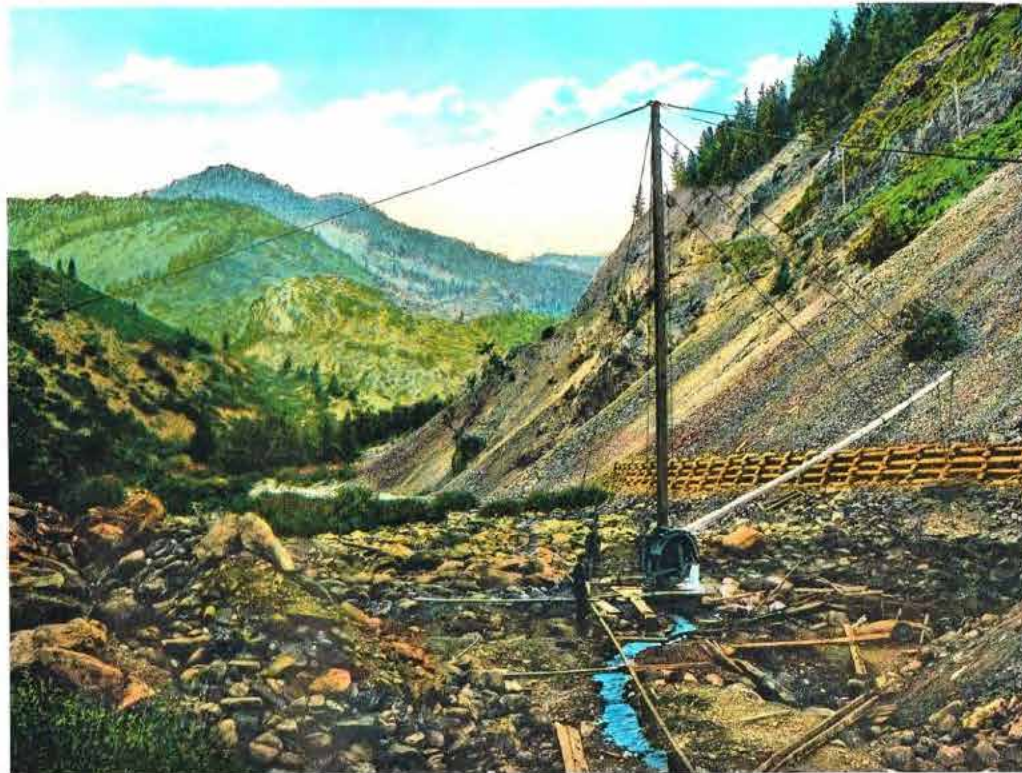
INTAKE, GREAT WESTERN POWER COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA.

# Near Belden



BEN LOMOND PEAK AND FEATHER RIVER, LOOKING TOWARD BELDEN, CALIFORNIA.

# Rich Bar



PLACER MINING NEAR RICH, CALIFORNIA.

# Pulga In Pictures



Early Big Bar school attended by Mrs. Batchelor, Kings, Woods and Gramps.



Big Bar school, Pulga.

# The King Family, Early Big Bar/Pulga History

- ❑ William King used the site of Pulga as his operating point in 1904 (originally the site was called Big Bar)
- ❑ In March 1906 a post office was established. There was already a Big Bar post office in California so the name was changed to the Pulga post office.
- ❑ In 1909 the first school was built. The building was built by Henry and David Gramps
- ❑ A company store was set up which King later purchased in 1912
- ❑ In 1914 William H. King filed a Homestead for 61 acres; he was now the sole owner of Pulga
- ❑ The railroad continued to call the train depot the Big Bar station until 1916 when it was renamed the Pulga station. They had the same problems the post office had 10 years earlier with freight being delivered to the wrong Big Bar station

# The King Family with Friends 1930



King Family and Friends in Pulga  
Circa 1930

# Dalton & Sarah Reynolds

The Reynolds family operated a store in Pulga and lived up the hill near Flea Valley on their ranch



1930 Pulga  
Dalton & Sarah Reynolds

Family photos courtesy of Ernie Reynolds who grew up in Pulga. Ernie's grandparents to the left.



Ernest and Sally Reynolds

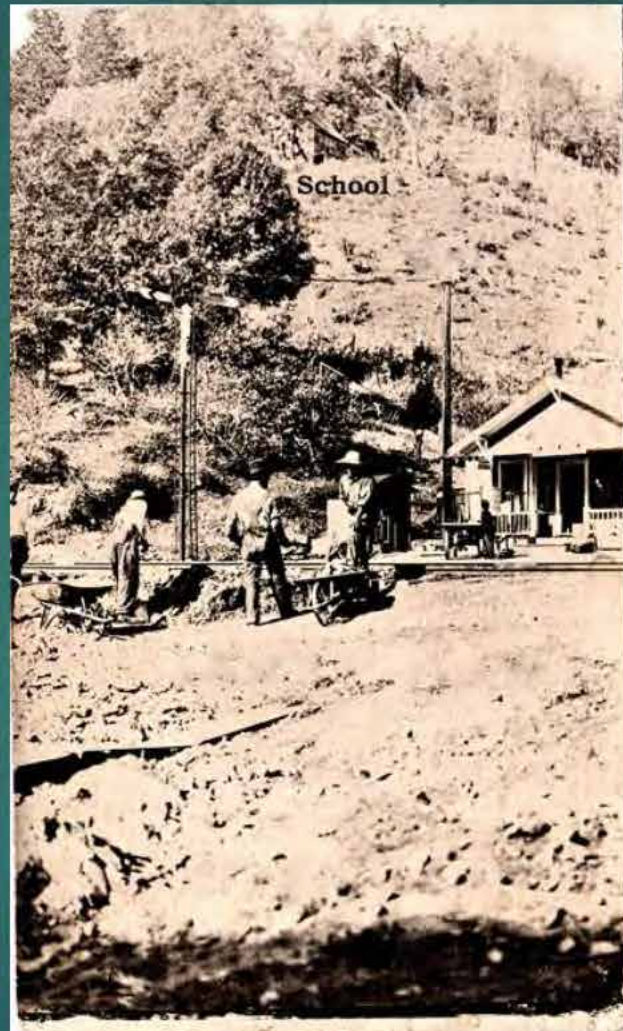
# Pulga 1915



Pulga 1915



# Big Bar Depot Circa 1915



**Big Bar (Pulga) Station circa 1915  
First school on the hillside**

# Pulga Train Station, Harry Ginder sitting

Pulga Train Station, Harry Ginder sitting was a miner by trade



# Pulga Station circa 1940's

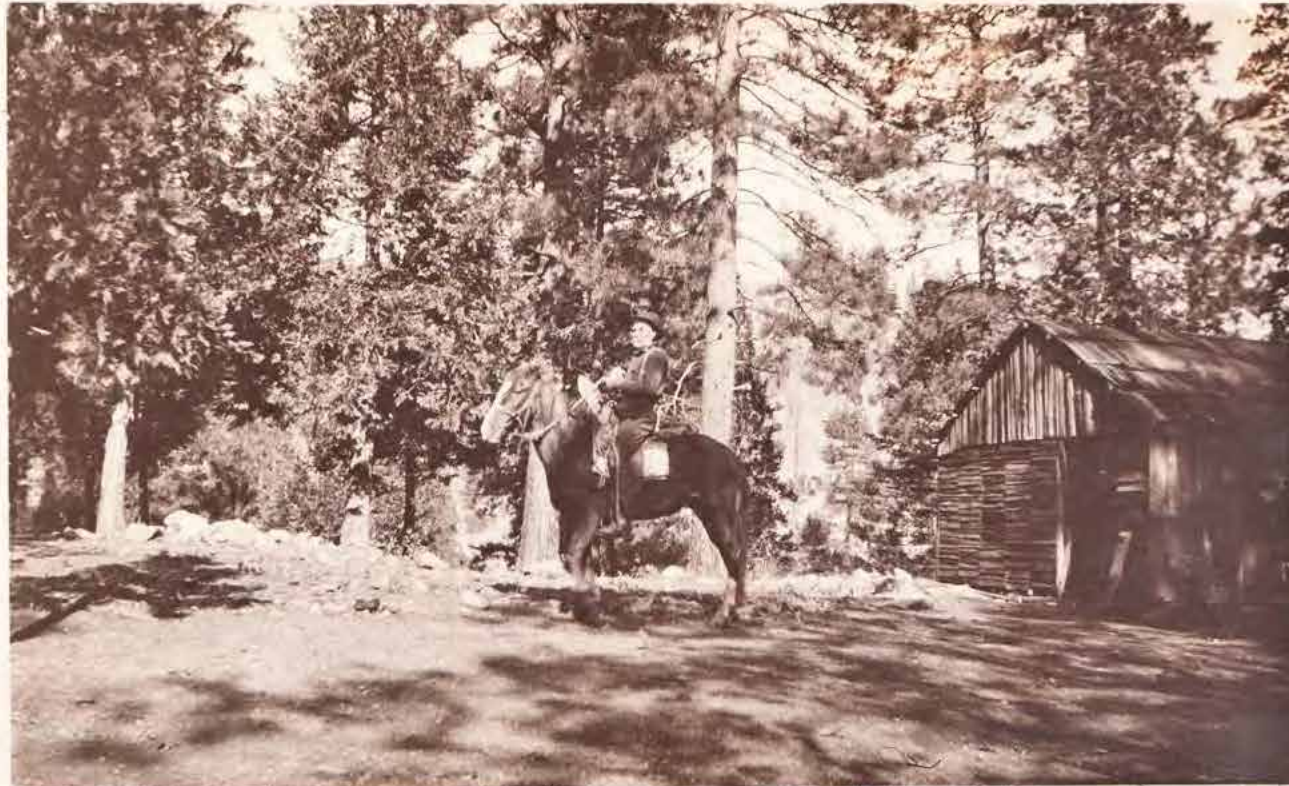


# Reynolds Ranch Up The Hill, 1916



Reynolds Ranch in Flea Valley Above Pulga 1916

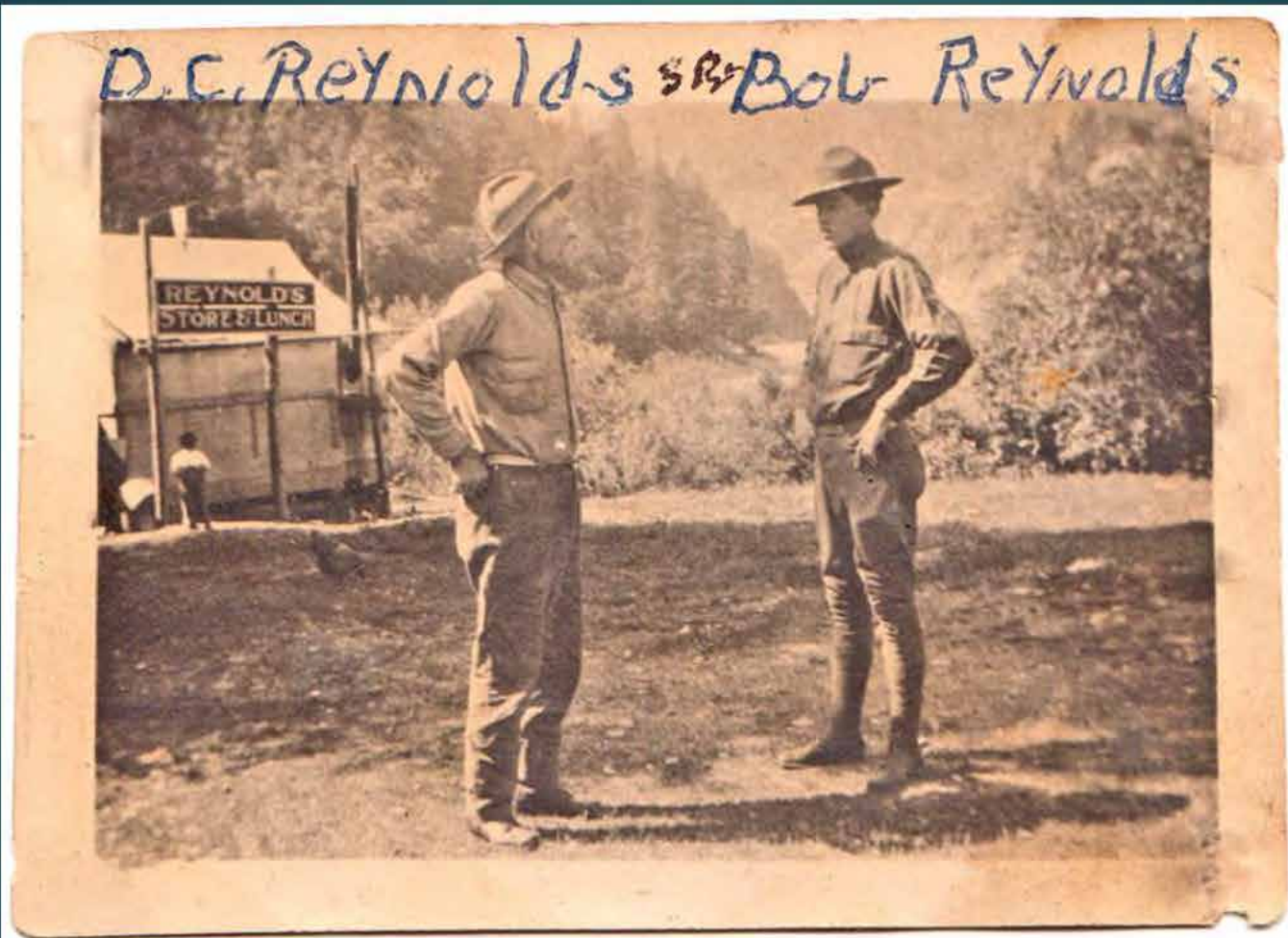
# Dalton Reynolds On Pet At The Ranch



*Pappa on Pet - Pulga Ranch (Dalton Reynolds)*

Dalton Charles Reynolds on Pet, Pulga Ranch

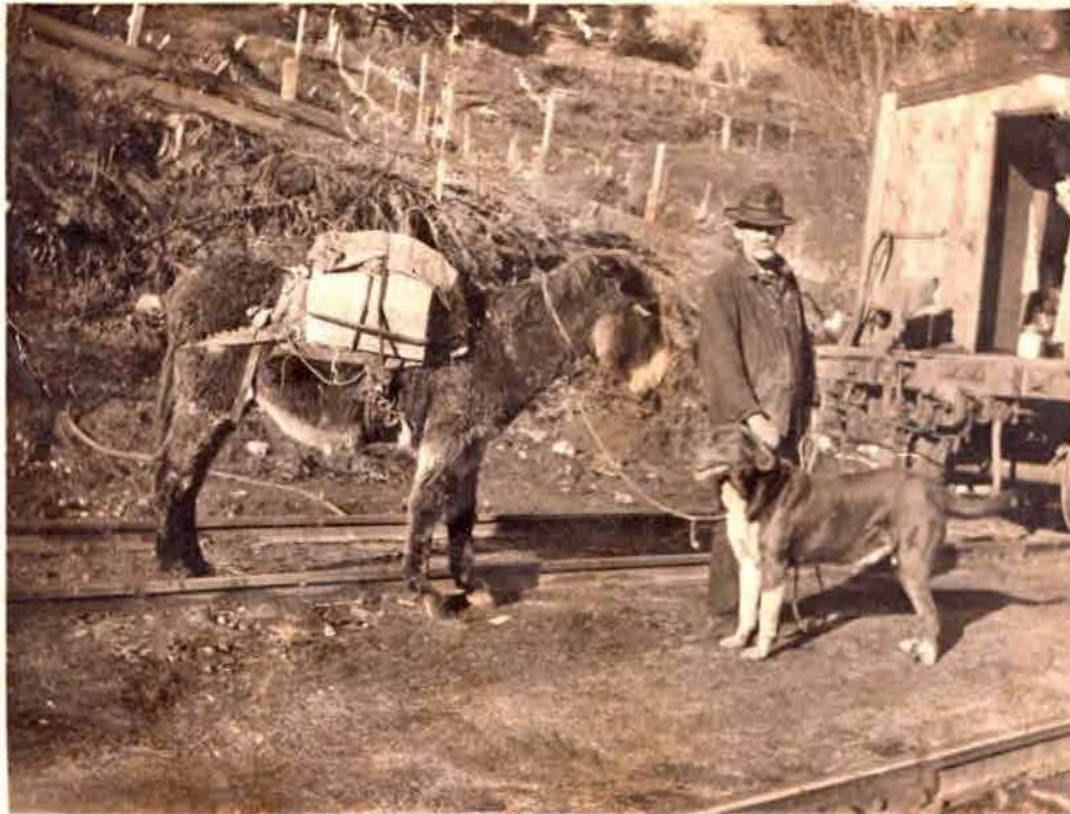
# Reynolds Store in Pulga



**Dalton Charles Reynolds Sr. and Son Bob Reynolds - Circa 1917  
(1861 - 1929)**

# Dalton Charles Reynolds

1861 - 1929



*Dalton Charles Reynolds*

Dalton Charles Reynolds 1861 - 1929

# Gramps Family & Friend



Martin Gramps, French Louie, Harry, Johnny, Henry, Dave Gramps,



# 1917, French Louie and Martin Gramps



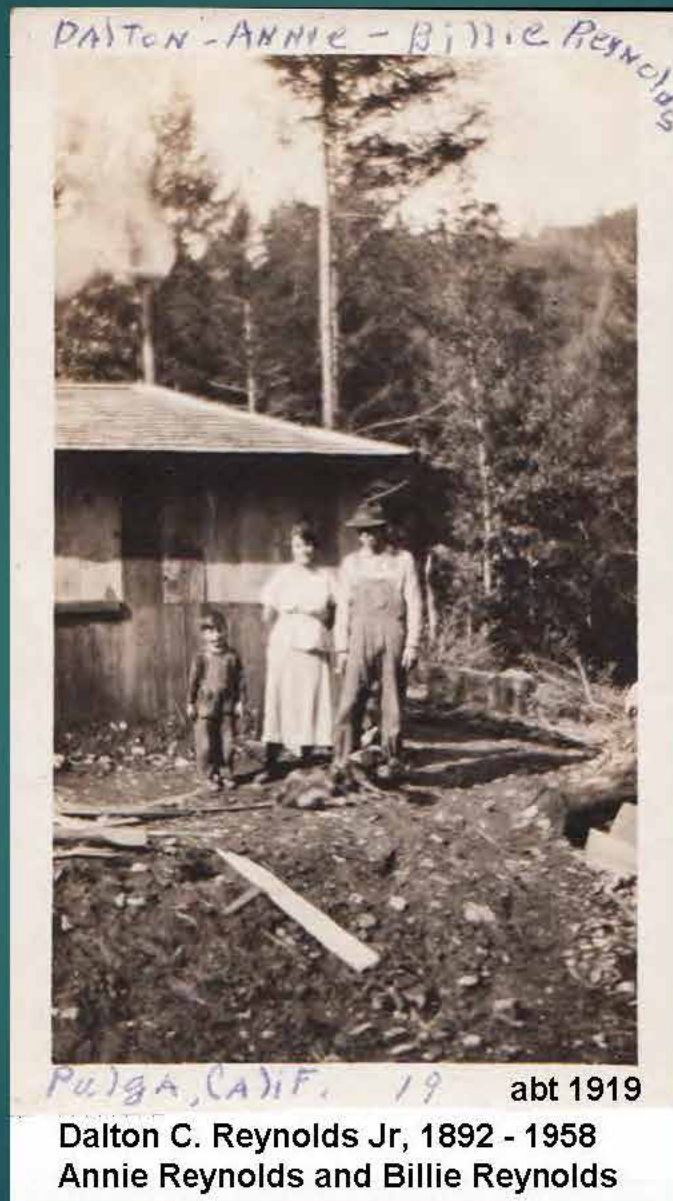
French Louie and Martin Gramps, Pulga 1917

# The Town in 1917



Pulga 1917

# About 1919, Dalton Jr, Annie & Billie Reynolds



# Fishing the Feather River



1924 West Branch Feather River, Bartee Bar  
Corbett Gramps, Daltie Reynolds, Harry Gramps

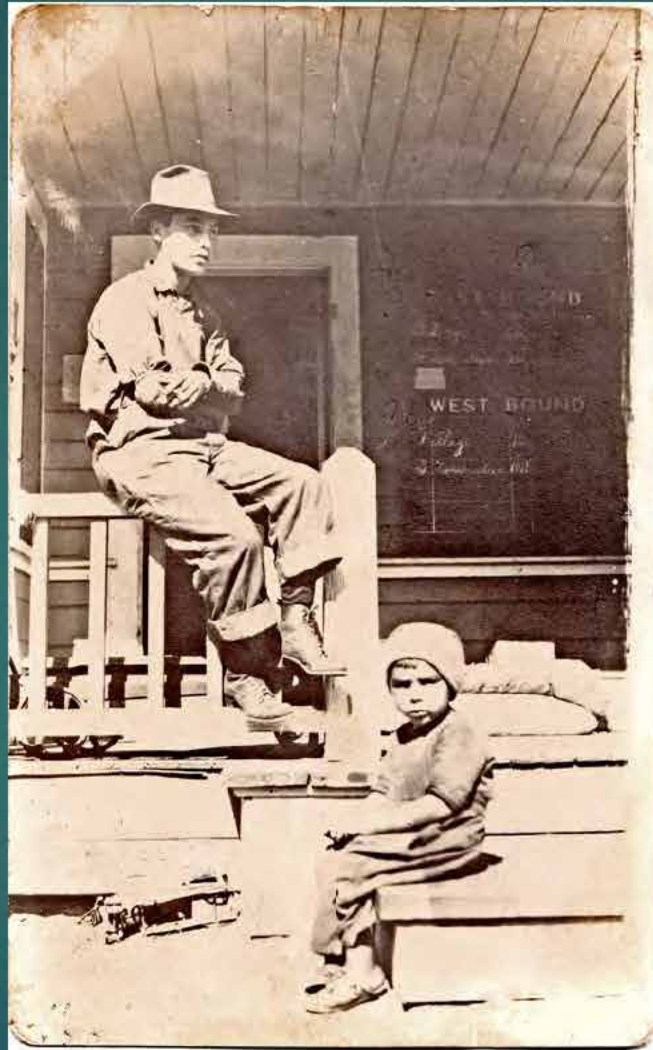
# Waiting For The Train 1917



Waiting For The First Train At The Pulga Station

# Waiting At The Station

## Dave Gramps & Elsie King



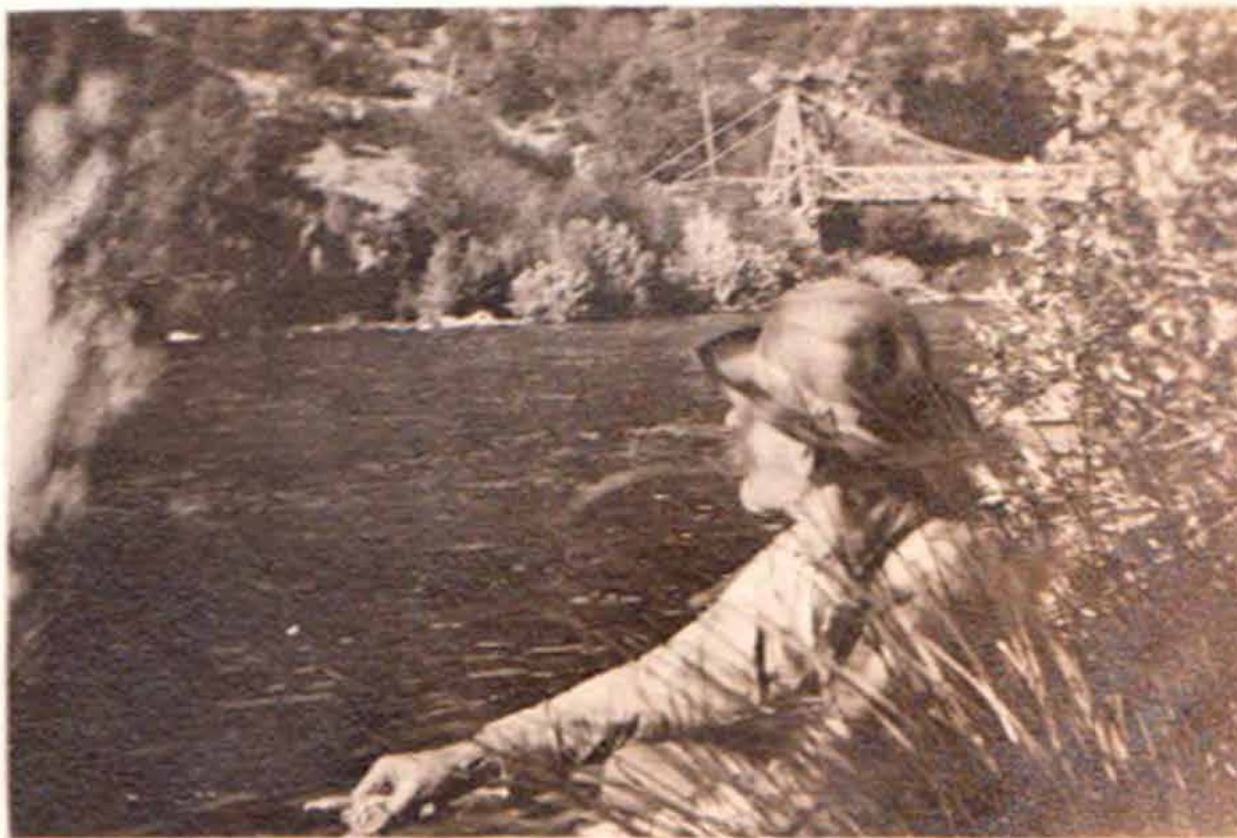
Dave Gramps and Elsie King 1916

# 1917 Lillian King

Pulga 1917  
Lillian King



# Dalton Reynolds Sr. And The Bridge



Dalton C. Reynolds Sr., Pulga, Old Bridge in Background



# An Early Bridge



Early Pulga Bridge

# 1927 Dalton Reynolds with Grandchildren



Dalton C. Reynolds Sr. with Grandchildren, Pulga, Circa 1927  
Left to right, Charles, William, Richard, Dorothy Reynolds

# Pulga 1929

## Dalton With Billie Reynolds



**Dalton Charles Reynolds and Billie Reynolds**

# Bill Wood Family

Laura Marie Gramps



**Bill Wood  
and His Wife  
Laura Gramps  
& Their Ranch**



Willie Johnson's Cabin,  
Dogwood Creek 1979



# Dixie Johnson

Dixie Johnson's Place Flea Valley



Oroville Mercury June 9, 1949

## Famous Indian Known to Many Dies at Age 80

*Full-Blooded Concow,  
He Lived His Life in  
Woods and Mountains*

DIXIE JOHNSON, famed tracker who could read the footprints in the woods as others can read print, died at midnight last night at the home of Thomas Melvin in Paradise. He was 80.

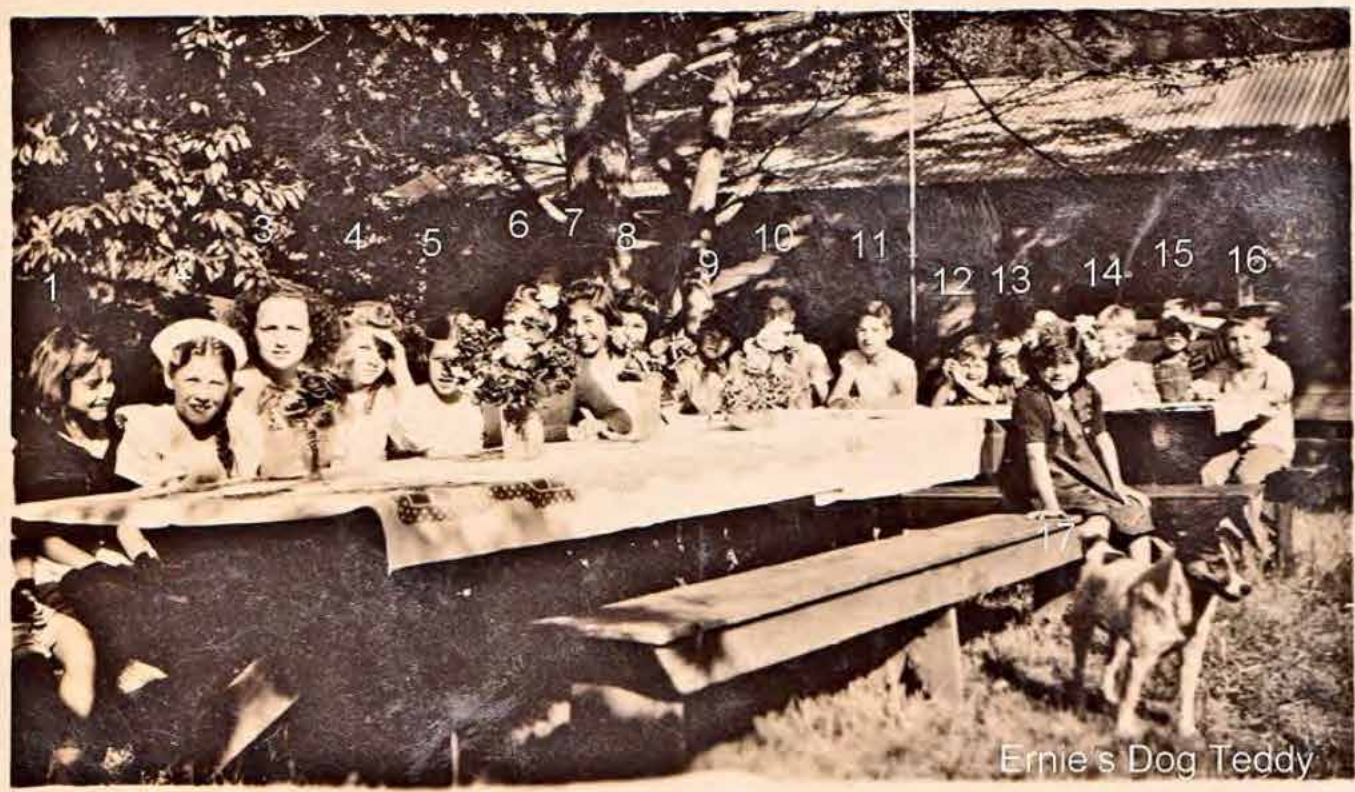
Mr. Johnson, a full-blooded Concow Indian, has lived his entire life in the mountains surrounding Oroville and Paradise, and has long been known as the nemesis of hold-up men who start out on foot through the forests.

During the past 30 years Mr. Johnson was not often in the lime-



DIXIE JOHNSON

# Pulga School Class 1940's



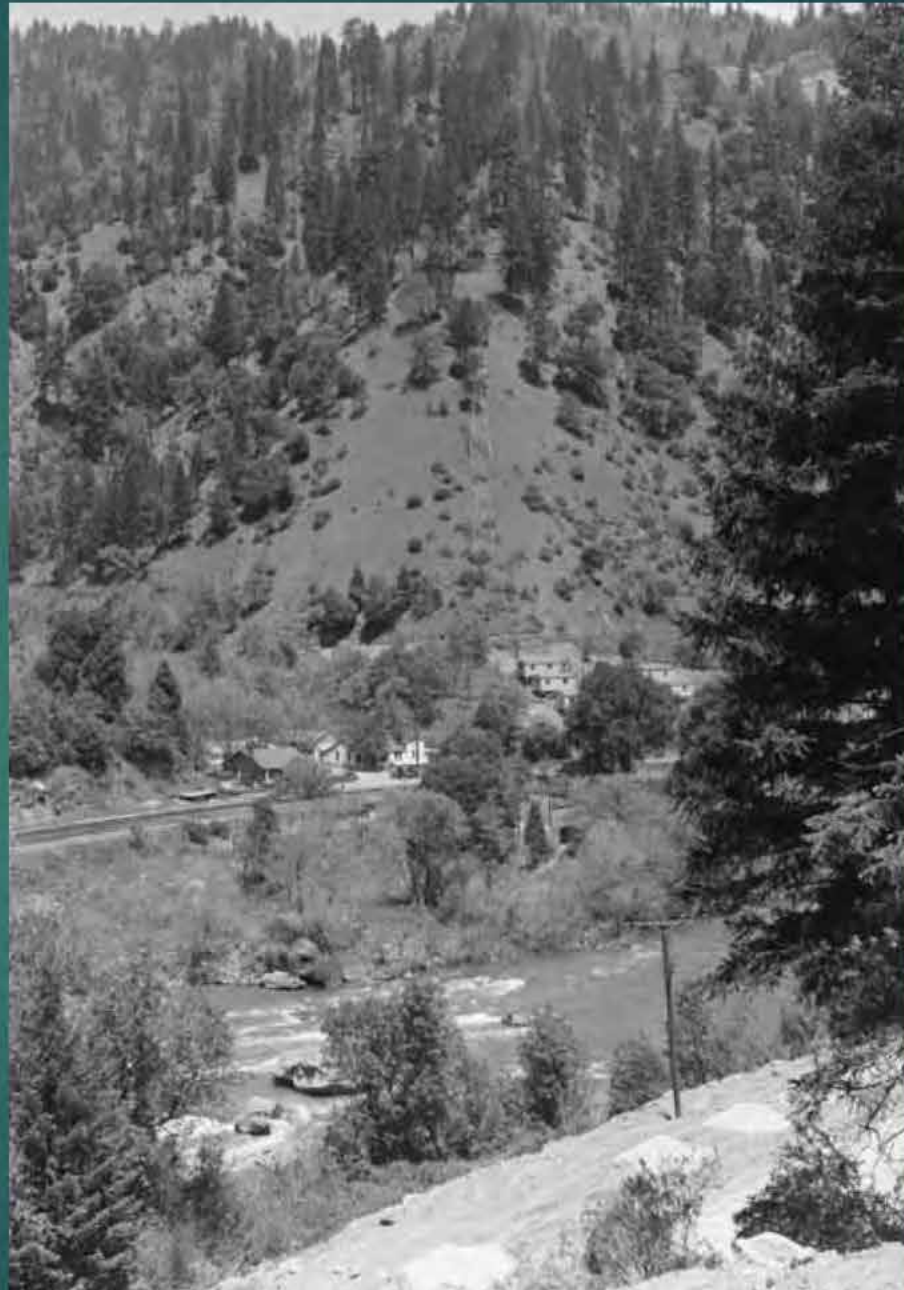
Ernie's Dog Teddy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Dorothy	Shirley	Jacqueline	Shirley	Betty	Anita	Sally	Diana	
Gramps	Gill	Cabbitto	Sapp	Reynolds	Reynolds	Gramps	Gramps	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Millie	Don	Ernie	Greg	Davie	Bruce	Frank	Sammy	Helen
Gramps	Cabbitto	Reynolds	Reynolds	Cabbitto	?	Reynolds	Brunelli	Reynolds

# Pulga 1948

The railway came through in 1910. The easiest way to reach Pulga was by train. The highway would follow later in 1926.

Photo taken from across the highway. Notice the tall buildings on the side of the hill to the right. This was where the teacher lived. Main street Pulga is just below to the left.





# Cal Trans Station & Gramps Home 1953



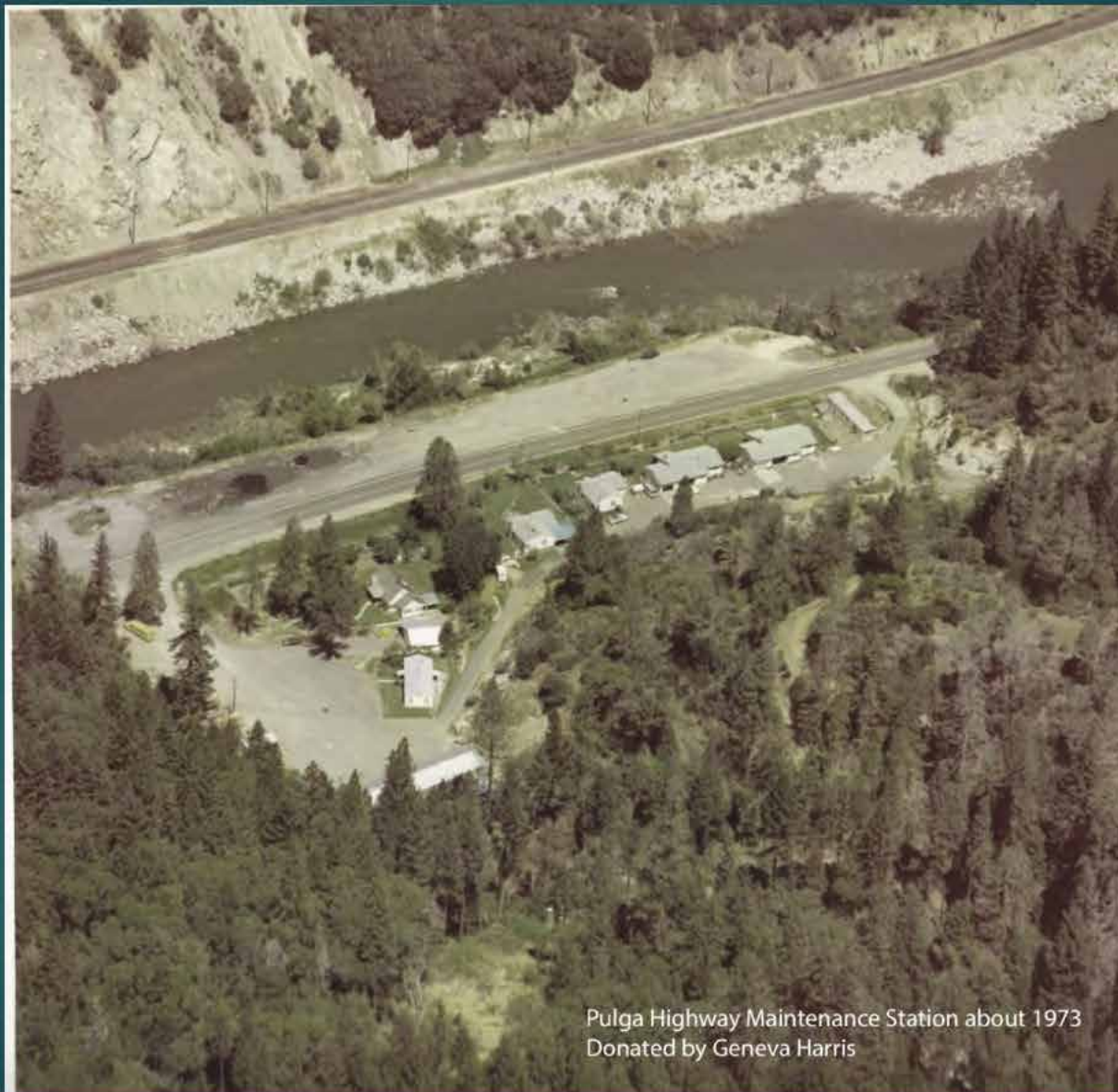
Gramps  
Family  
Home

House still exists in 2015

# Pulga Winds Down

- ❑ In 1936 the Feather River Highway was completed. Crews working on the railroad, the highway and PG&E power plants had kept Pulga's economy going
- ❑ In Feb 1960 the Pulga post office was closed
- ❑ At the end of 1965 the Pulga school closed
- ❑ In 1970s Mary Ann (McClain) Schooner, Mary Edna (King) McClain's daughter, started an artist colony at Pulga at one time numbering 60 people
- ❑ In 1986 Mary Edna (King) McClain passed away in Pulga
- ❑ In 1994 Lorraine Paloma and Fred Leidecker buy the town of Pulga for \$200,000 and create the Mystic Valley Retreat
- ❑ In 1997 a major flood occurred at Pulga; part of the road washed out and several cabins were damaged which were condemned.
- ❑ In 2010 Mary Ann (McClain) Schooner passed away in Southern California
- ❑ In 2015 the town was sold to the current owners

# Cal Trans 1973



Pulga Highway Maintenance Station about 1973  
Donated by Geneva Harris

# Jeff Evans Pictures

Early 1960's



Pulga State Highway  
Maintenance Station

# Pulga Maintenance Station

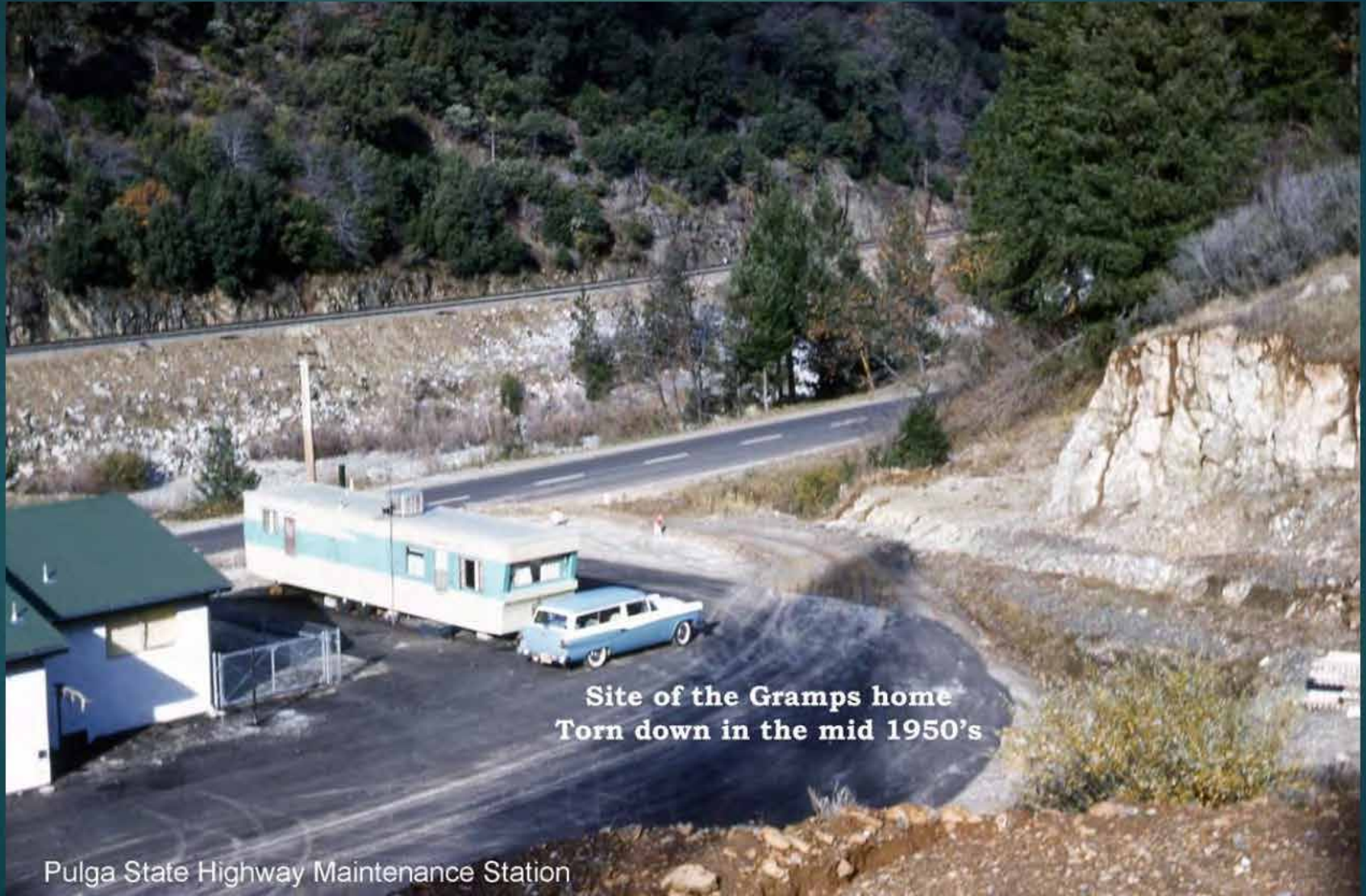


# Pulga Maintenance Station



Pulga State Highway Maintenance Station

# Pulga Maintenance Station



Site of the Gramps home  
Torn down in the mid 1950's

Pulga State Highway Maintenance Station

# The Flood 1960's



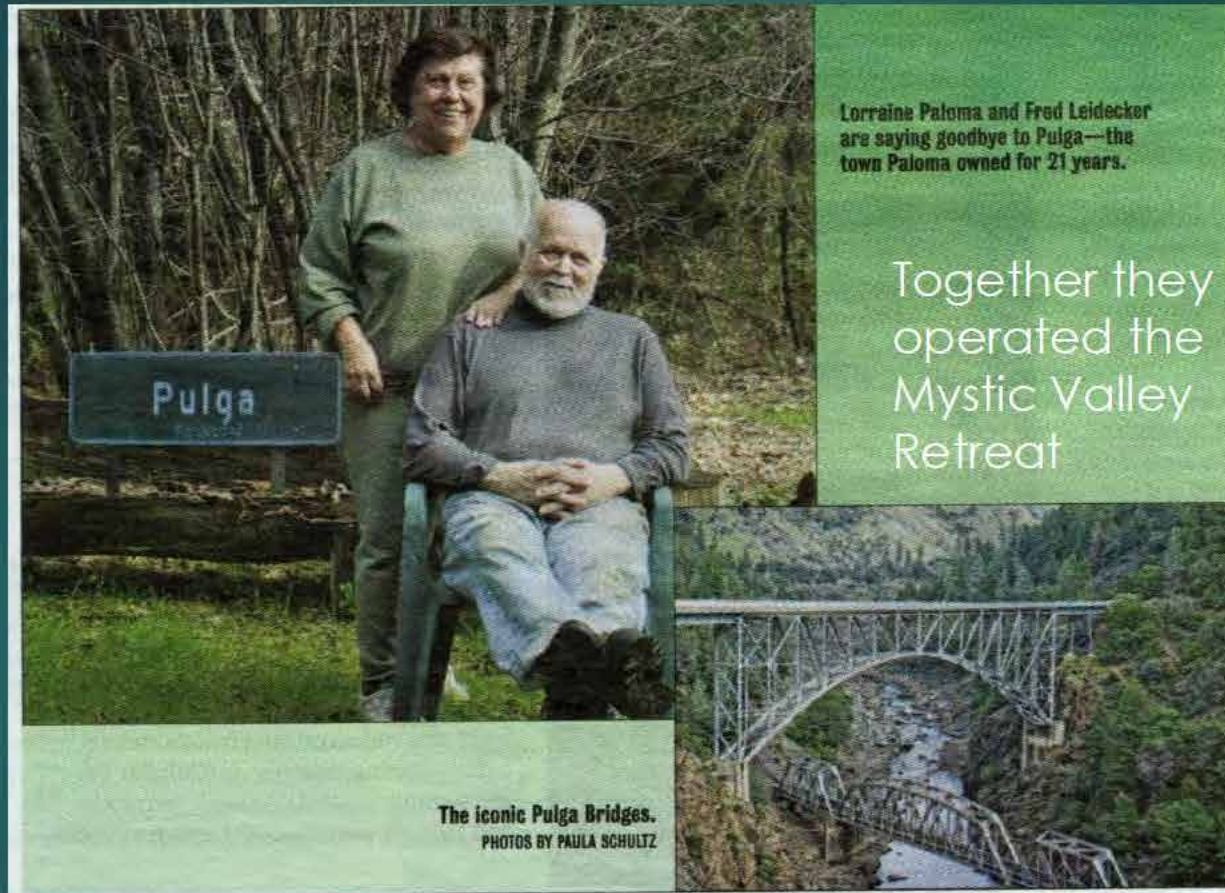
Pulga State Highway Maintenance Station



# After The Flood



# Pulga Sees New Owners in 1994



After being in the King Family's possession since 1905 the town was sold for \$200,000 in 1994 to Lorraine Paloma. She and Fred Leidecker lived there until Feb 2015 when they put the town up for sale, moving to Oroville, Ca.



# Long Live Pulga!

In 2015 Pulga was acquired by new owners who are committed to bringing Pulga back as the charming community it once was!

For More Information Visit [Pulgatown.com](http://Pulgatown.com)