

Cherokee And The Concow Dam



Cherokee, Ca Spring Valley Hydraulic Mine Site



Concow Dam

Cherokee 1853 – 1870

In 1853 Sol Potter, a school teacher from the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma along with several students discovered gold in Butte County and named the area Cherokee.

Others soon came to the area and averaged \$20 to \$50 per man per day.

In May 1854 a Chinese miner picked up a 2 lb specimen

In August 1854 a post office was established

In Nov 1854 a daily stage was started that left Marysville at 6:00 am and arrived in Cherokee at 3:00 pm, stopping in Ophir, Thompsons Flat, Oregon Gulch and Spring Valley

In April of 1860 a 57 ounce nugget was found at Spring Valley, located between Cherokee and Oregon City

In June 1861 a diamond worth \$15 was found in Cherokee at the mining claim of Mr. Pierson


Dec 27, 1862 Butte Weekly Record

BALL AT CHEROKEE!

—

Wednesday Eve., Dec. 31st.

—

 THERE WILL BE A COTILLON PARTY
at OAK HALL, Cherokee Flat.

On Wednesday Eve., Dec. 31st. 1862.

The Public are invited to attend.

WM. A. GRIMES, Proprietor.
Cherokee Flat, Dec. 24th.

By 1862 Cherokee was a growing community

We Need Water!

In 1863/64 there was a severe drought in Butte County. Cherokee lost many of its residents because there was no mining without water

Mining at best was a winter operation, even during the good years in Cherokee because of the lack of water

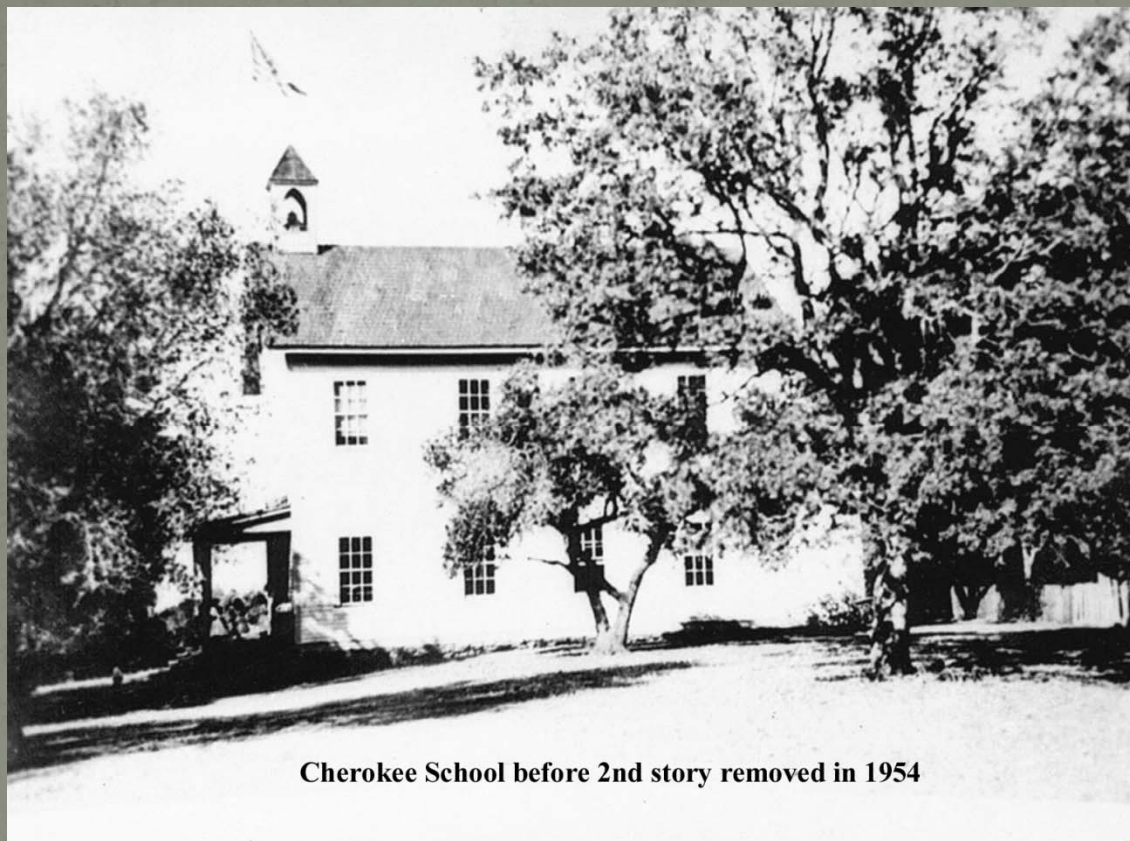
In March 1864 there was a stabbing at Vel Goode Saloon in Cherokee when two men argued the merits of Abraham Lincoln

That following month in April, two mine owners for the Horris and Cherokee mines got in a fight over water rights

In 1865 the people in Concow were scared by the murders by Indians of the Workman family at what we now call Camelot

In 1866 there was talk of possibly buying the land from the Concow land owners and building a dam to supply water to Cherokee. It would be several more years before any action was taken

The first school was built in 1858 and by 1864 it had 70 Students. The school burned down in 1866. A new two story school was built nearby



Cherokee School before 2nd story removed in 1954

In 1866 more diamonds were found in Cherokee by Mike Maher.

In Jan 1866 Assemblyman Smith showed two rings made with diamonds found in Cherokee. So far 20 to 30 diamonds had been found

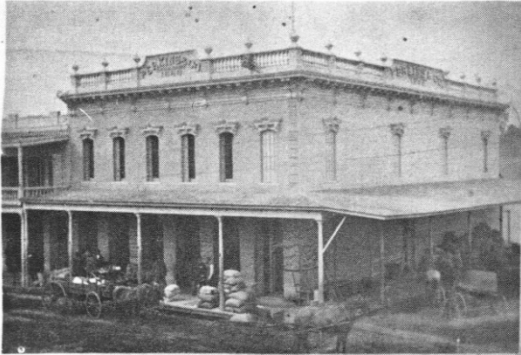
In 1868 John Lewis took over operations for the stage to Cherokee still running a daily stage out of Oroville

In Feb 1870 an article was in the Oroville paper about the mines in Cherokee sitting dormant this last winter due to a lack of water

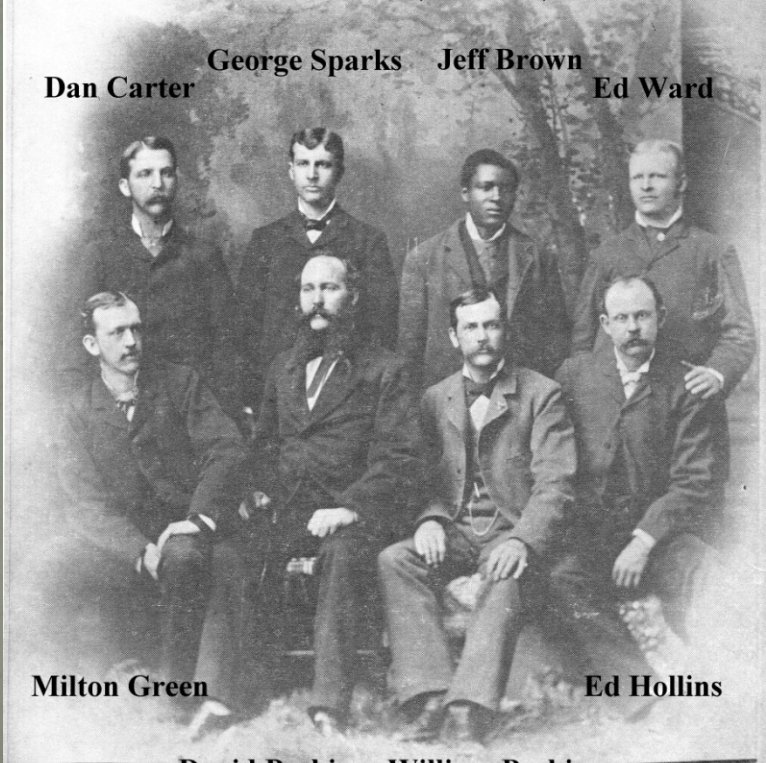
In April 1870 the Spring Valley Canal and Mining Company was incorporated with \$800,000 in capital stock at \$500 per share. The offices were in San Francisco. George Perkins, who operated a dry goods store in Oroville and was a major shareholder, would later become Governor of California.



George Perkins
1839 - 1923



Perkins Store, Oroville, Ca



Dan Carter **George Sparks** **Jeff Brown** **Ed Ward**

Milton Green **Ed Hollins**

David Perkins **William Perkins**

Hogan

*Kusel's Building,
Oroville, Cal.*

1870 Brought New Hope

In June 1870 the road to Cherokee was being improved so 30" iron pipe could be brought up for a new flume from the Concow Valley

Landowners in Concow Valley were approached about buying their property. G.G. Marquis and Robert Workman sold their property, over 360 acres. The Mullen family was able to keep their property which would become lake front property after the dam was built.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

OPPOSITION STAGE LINE!

OROVILLE AND CHEROKEE!

JOHN McELDOWNEY, Proprietor.

THE UNDERSIGNED WOULD RESPECTFULLY announce to the citizens of Cherokee and surrounding country, that he has established a Stage Line between Cherokee and Oroville, and will hereafter run a fine Concord Coach over the above line daily.

Parties wishing to leave Cherokee in the morning in time to connect at Oroville with the cars for San Francisco, can be accommodated by leaving their orders at the hotel early in the evening.

Will merit a liberal share of the traveling public.

(Cherokee, March 26, 1870.)

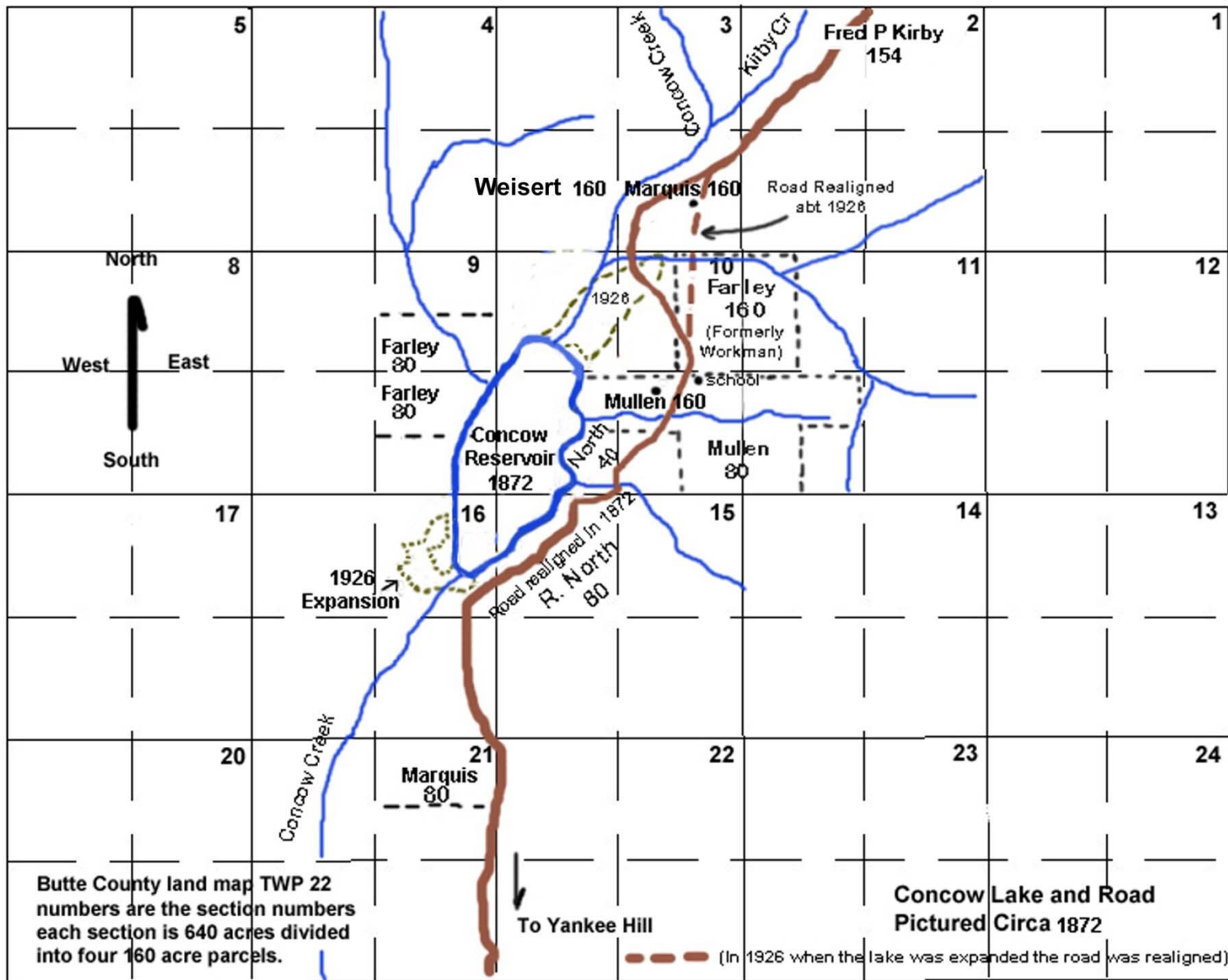
The Concow Valley Becomes a Major Contributor to Cherokee's Future

The Concow Valley had been home to the Koyoongk'awi Indians for hundreds if not thousands of years.

The first white settler in the Valley was in 1852. His name was Doctor A.W. Thompson and he settled on 160 acres of land just above the current Concow Campground extending to Hoffman Road. He used Indian labor to plant crops.

In the next several years several 160 acre tracts of land in the immediate area also settled. It was these early settlers who named the valley Con-Cow Valley.

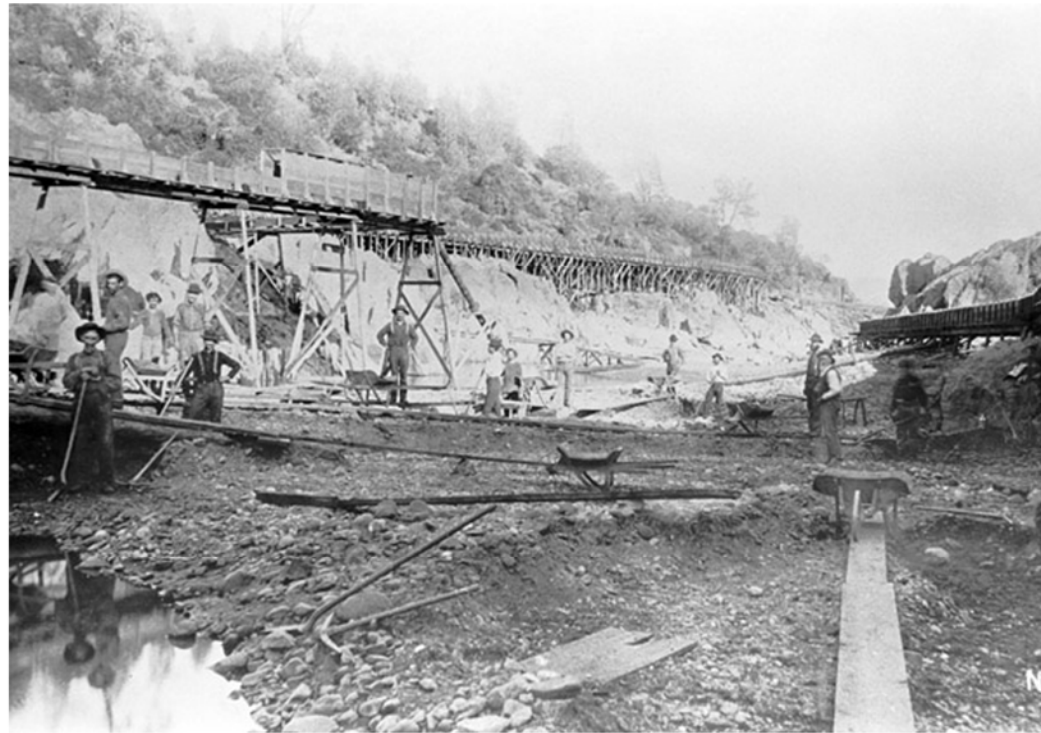
About 1855 Charles Mullen and his son William Mullen settled on 160 acres of land that is now the Concow Campground. William Mullen would later buy out A.W. Thompson so the family owned 320 acres.



Oct 1870 pipe is being laid and ditches built from Concow to Cherokee

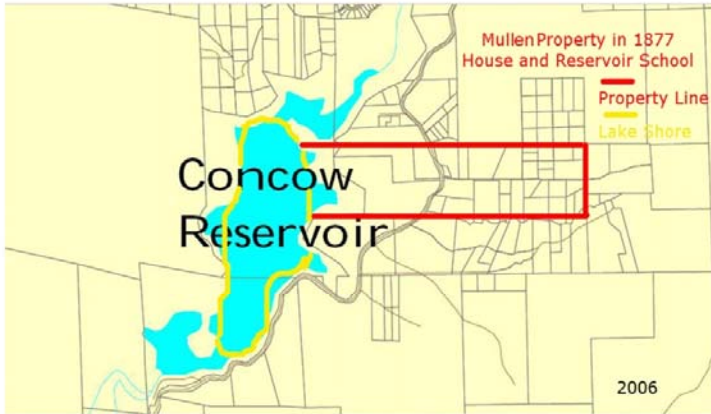
Dec 1870 10 car loads of pipe arrive in Cherokee; there are 200 plus Chinese in the area

Dec 24th 1870 the pipe from Concow to Cherokee is tested

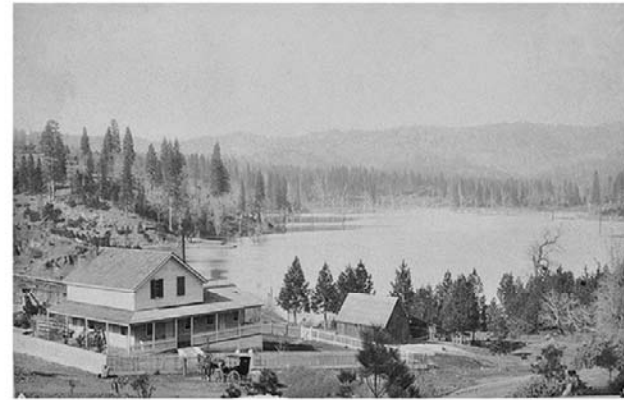


Spring Valley Mine, Cherokee, 1870's

The cost to build the 80 foot high earthen dam, dig ditches and lay 87,000 ft of iron pipe when finished in Dec 1871 was \$80,000. The path of the water was from Concow Lake to Yankee Hill and then down to Cherokee, crossing the Feather River 60 feet above the water via trestle.



2006 Property Map with overlay from 1877



Mullen farm 1858 -1886 (Concow hotel)
Built approx 1871 - Burned 1899

1877 Butte County Map



Reservoir School established 1880
Essie (Grubbs) Mooney Teacher (circa 1910)





In 1870 it was reported the water nozzles would throw water 800 ft with 150 lbs of pressure



Placer Mine

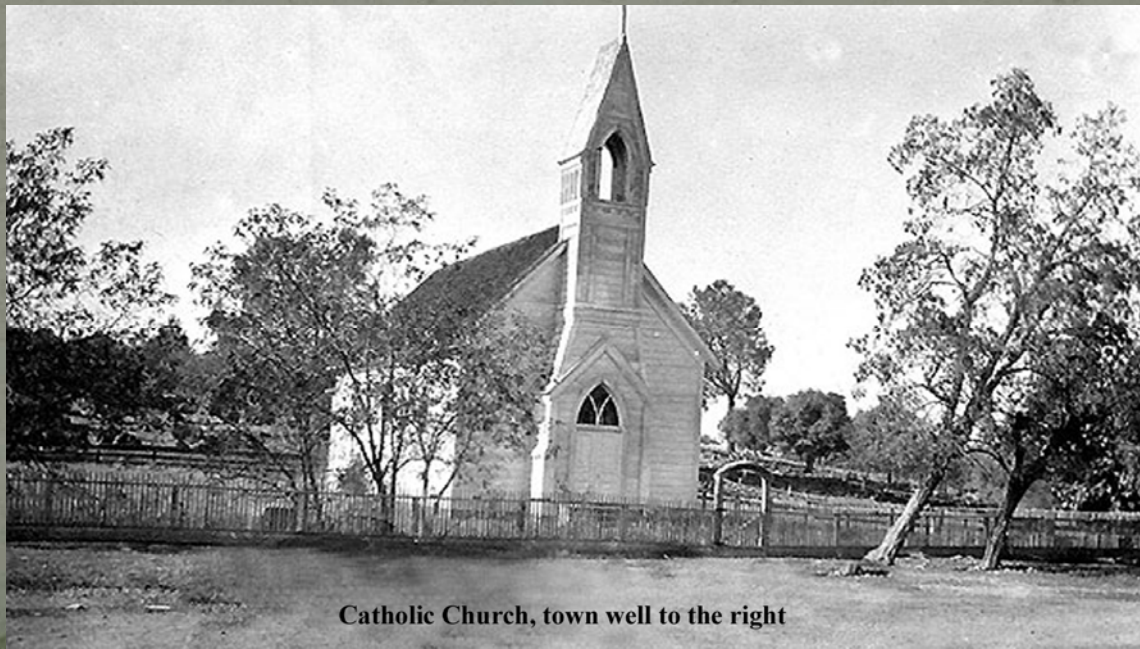
Lee Townsend

Cherokee Sees Rapid Growth

Over the next ten years businesses begin to spring up including two hotels, a brewery, a bakery, an IOOF hall, a church, several saloons and a new cemetery. The Spring Valley Mine Company builds an assay office and a store. In Oct 1871 the mine was sold for \$1,200,000 to an English concern; in 1875 the mine was recapitalized and valued at \$5,000,000.



Spring Valley Mine Offices, Cherokee 1880's



Catholic Church, town well to the right

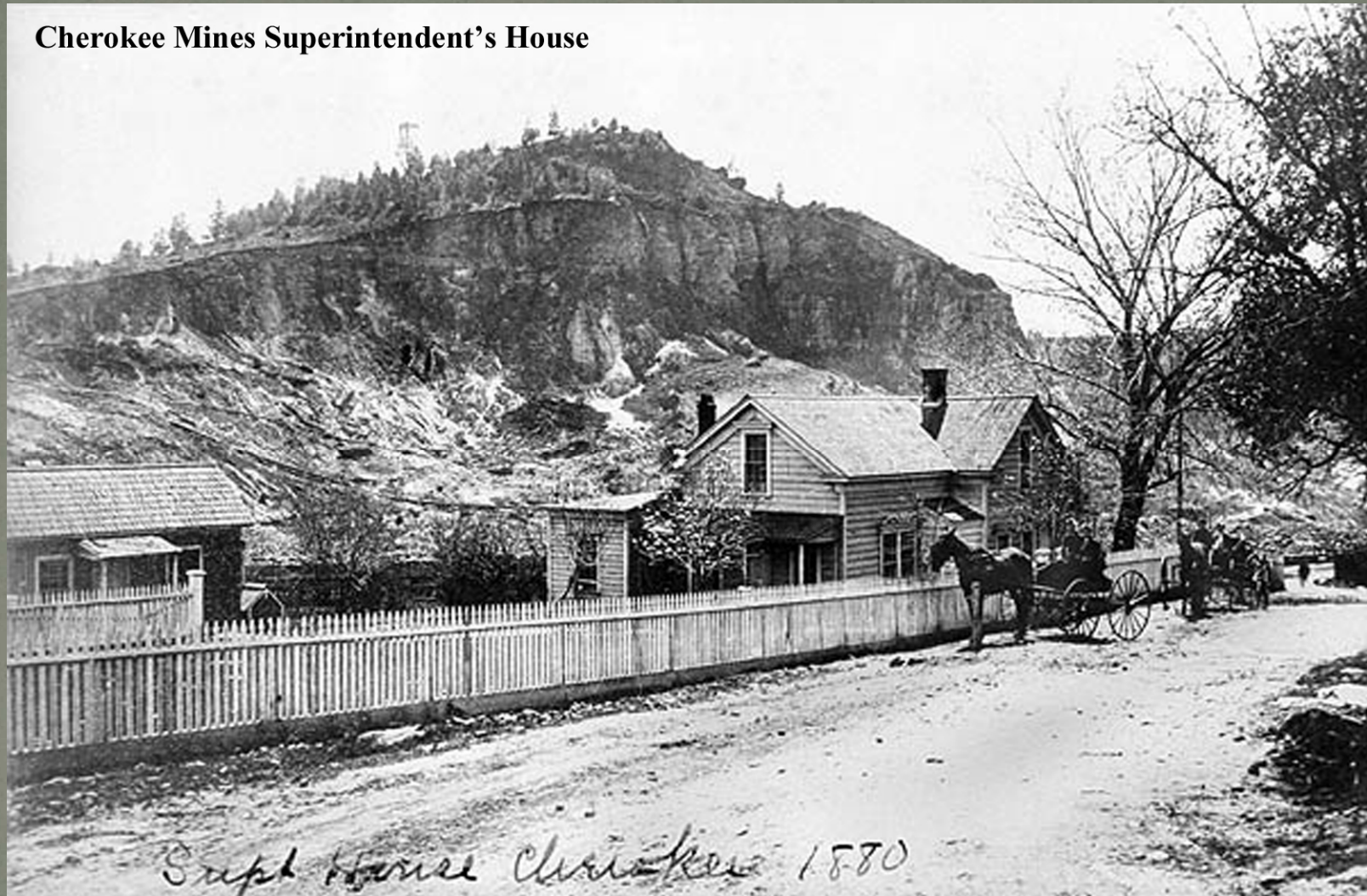


IOOF, Table Mountain Lodge, Cherokee

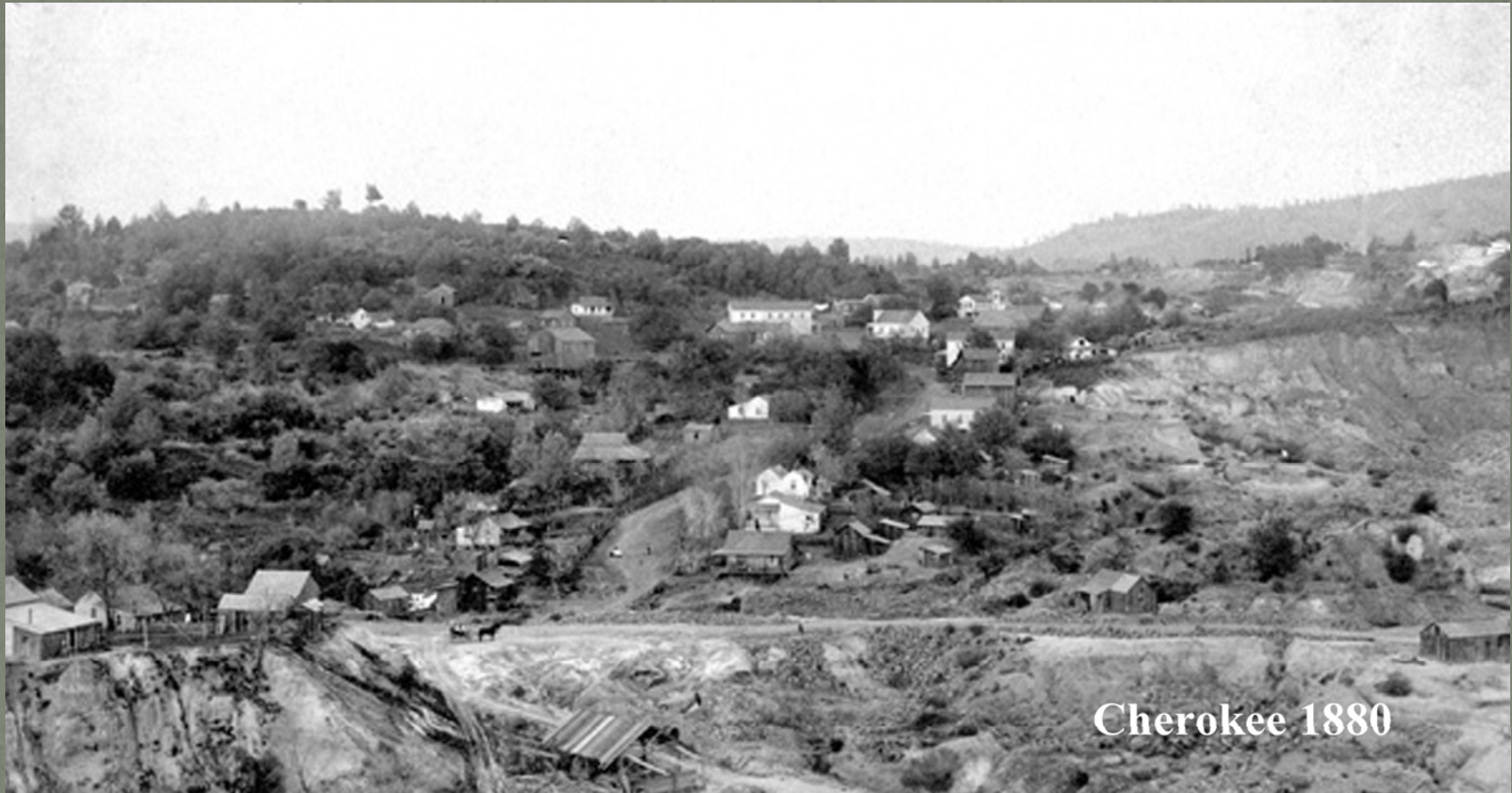


Charles Bader (1822-1883) Cherokee Brewery Ruins 1933

Cherokee Mines Superintendent's House



Sup't House Cherokee 1880

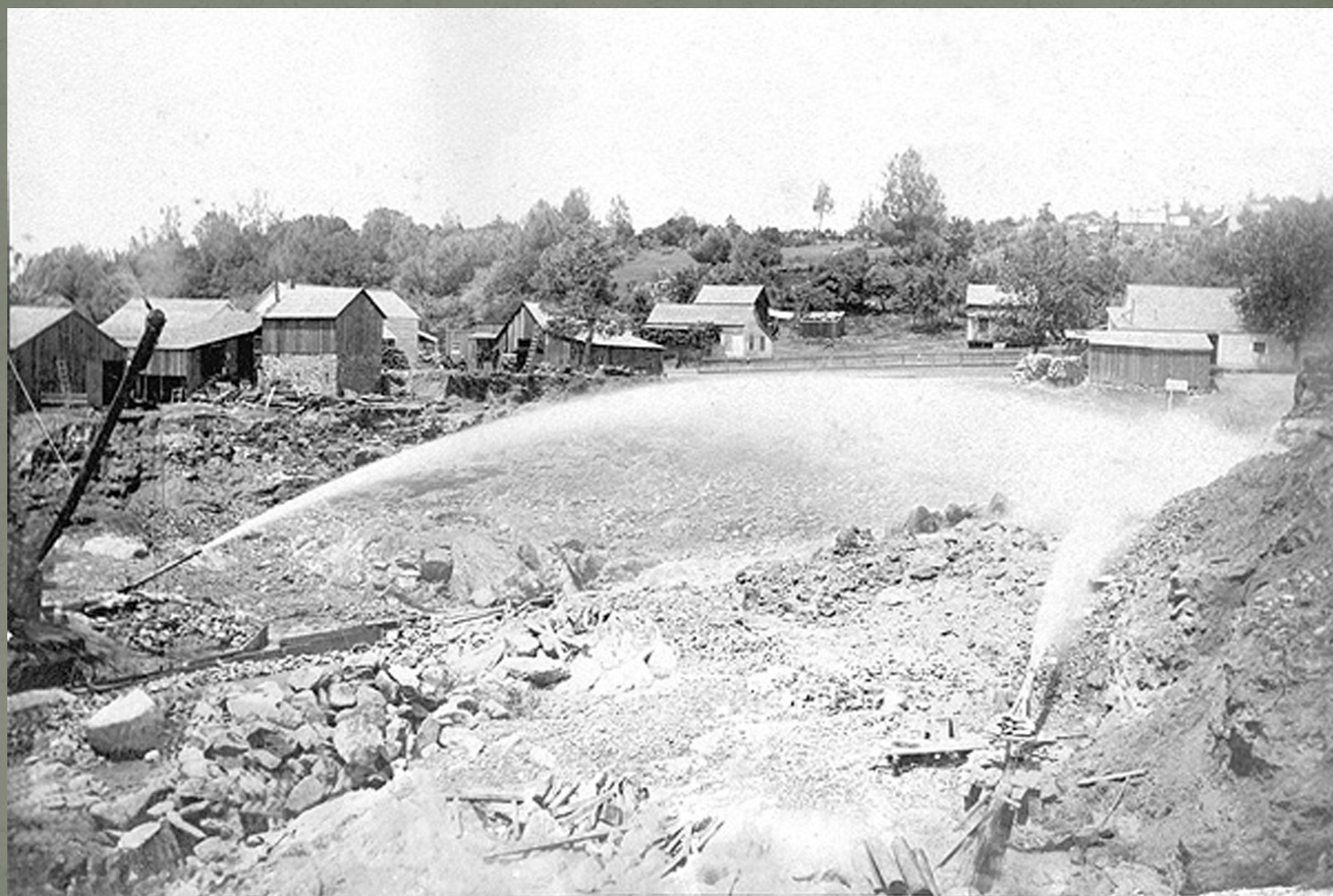


Cherokee 1880

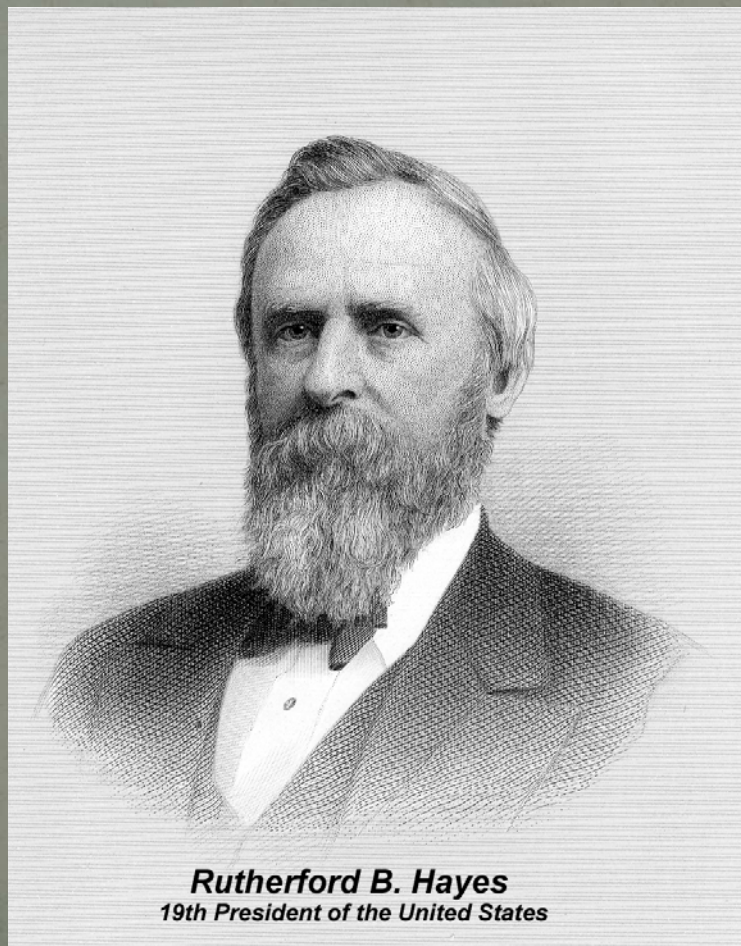
Hydraulic Mining Was a Messy Operation

Large rocks were piled in the immediate area and mud and silt was sent into the rivers





In 1880 President Hayes, who was staying with Gen. Bidwell in Chico, visited Cherokee with his wife. It was reported that because of severe wind when they arrived, they were so covered with dirt and dust you could hardly make out who they were. The lunch arranged by Gen Bidwell arrived by wagon after they left as the driver got lost.



Rutherford B. Hayes
19th President of the United States

In March 1881 the Spring Valley Mining Company purchased the Cherokee Flat Blue Mountain Gravel Mining Company. The company was renamed the Spring Valley Hydraulic Gold Company.

In April 1882 an article appeared in the papers about a new tunnel by Spring Valley company that started a year ago, 10 x 10 and 3000 feet long. That same month the company could not make payroll because of heavy expansion costs so the miners threatened to strike.

In 1882 farmers were looking to sue the Spring valley Mine because of damages to their water supply. One such suit was for \$40,000 due to three years of crop failures.

In 1882 the North Bloomfield hydraulic mine was sued in US Circuit Court over damages to local water supplies.

In 1885 Cherokee had 800 residents with 500 working at the mine. The average wage was \$2.50 per day. Telephone service reached Cherokee that same year.

In June 1885 J.H. Hogan a photographer in Oroville took various pictures of the Cherokee mines and Concow Road along with a beautiful picture of Lake Concow.

In August 1885 the Spring Valley Hydraulic Mine announced they had solved the debris problem by building 40 miles of canal stretching to land located near Marysville that they purchased to hold the fill. They ordered a special dredger built in Stockton to keep the canal clear. The total cost of the project was \$700,000.

In 1887 the mine was shut down by the owners because of financial problems and the recent lawsuits, which resulted in restrictions on deposits from mining operations into rivers and lakes.

Attempts to reopen the mine would occur every couple of years but were never financially successful.

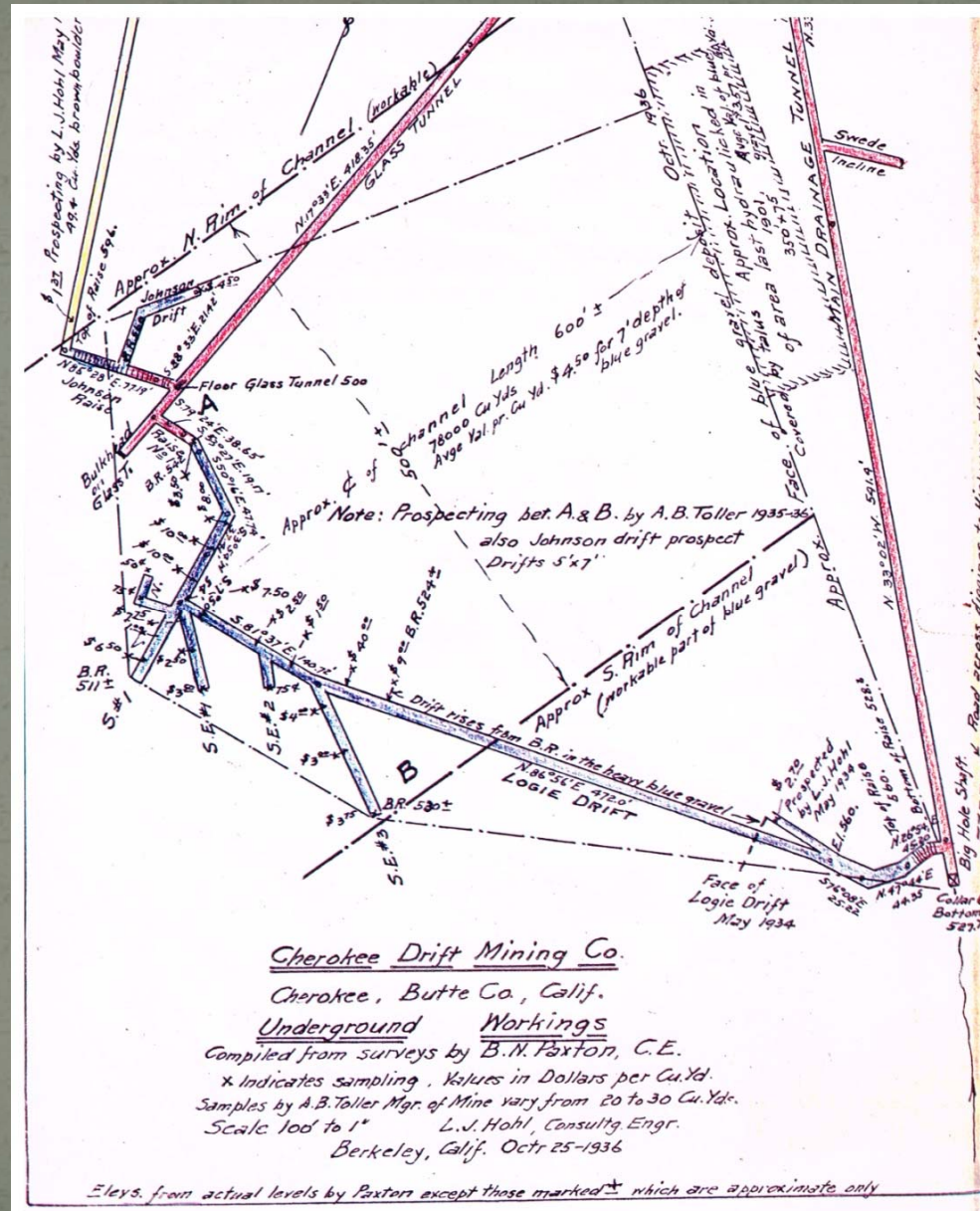
In 1896 the mine went into foreclosure.

It was estimated that the gravel at the mine was still worth \$5 to \$10 per yard. Cherokee had an estimated population at that time of 273 people.

In Feb 1900 the mine was sold for over \$250,000 to a group of Pittsburgh and Washington capitalists. It was estimated at the time that \$13,000,000 had been taken from the mines.

Mining Operations at Cherokee Later Shifted from Hydraulic Mining to Drift (Tunnel) Mining

1936 Map of Cherokee tunnels. Map indicates samples tested with ore values ranging from 75 cents to \$40 per cubic yard



1903 The Concow Dam Fails for the Third Time

In Feb 1902 Concow Lake and the ditches were sold to Bay Counties Power which later became part of PG&E; the earthen dam at Concow failed the next month in Mar 1903. At the time the dam failed, the lake water was reported to be backed up three miles. The wooden bridge at Nelson Bar was destroyed by the rush of water.

The dam had failed twice before, once in Jan 1872 two months after the dam was complete and again in Jan 1873. Timber from the 1873 failure ended up in the Feather River near Oroville. Costing \$80,000 to initially build the dam, the repair costs in 1873 were \$60,000.

Apparently the 1903 failure did not completely empty Concow Lake as it was reported some water was still available to run mining in Cherokee. The excess water was sold to Magalia Ridge so the farmers in Concow, Yankee Hill and Cherokee had no water for irrigation. There was some talk of the local farmers trying to repair the dam so they would also have water.

In 1910 it was reported that the reservoir at Concow had two 55 foot tall dams (25 feet shorter than the original construction).

In Jan 1922 there was an article in the papers about a cement dam being built at Concow to supply water to the Thermalito Irrigation district.

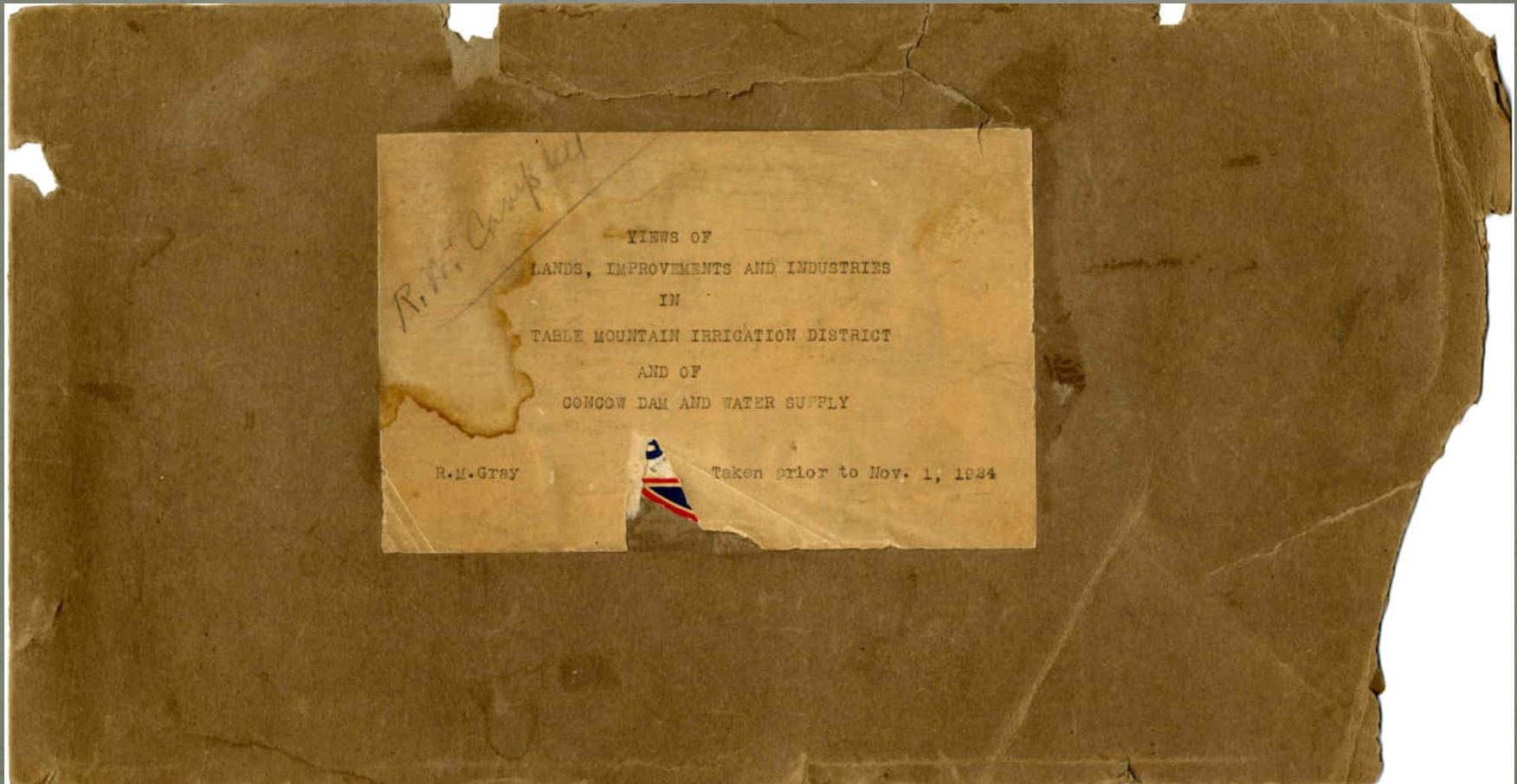
In Jan 1923 an article appeared in the Oroville papers about a bond issue which was approved by the Thermalito Irrigation District to raise \$270,000 to finance a water project. Part of the money was to build a cement dam at Concow Lake and repair the ditches. Thermalito purchased the dam and ditches for \$10,000. The lake would be known in the future as Lake Wilenor. The intention was to let the water flow thru the Lime Saddle and Coal Canyon Power Plants; PG&E would pay \$4,000 (per year) for the water. (Thermalito claims they only wrote a check for \$1.00 for the dam, perhaps future income from PG&E was applied to the purchase price?)

In August 1924, Yankee Hill farmers protested the diversion of water from Yankee Hill to the Lime Saddle Power Plant.

On August 29, 1924, the last bucket of cement was poured for the new dam at Concow. The dam is 90 feet tall and 350 feet in length and holds 8200 acre feet of water. It was felt the dam would be full the following spring. The water would flow thru the old Cherokee ditch and on to Lime Saddle. The dam cost \$120,000 to build.

Table Mountain Irrigation District Photo Album 1924 to 1926

Robert W. Campbell's copy, this album was assembled some time in 1926 as the photos of the dam construction are not in order and the last date shown is winter 1926. Ralph M. Gray was the photographer; in 1920 he was listed as a civil engineer with a canal company





1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 32b

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 13b
Caption: Toe of Dam



1924 Concow scrapbook Image #11a



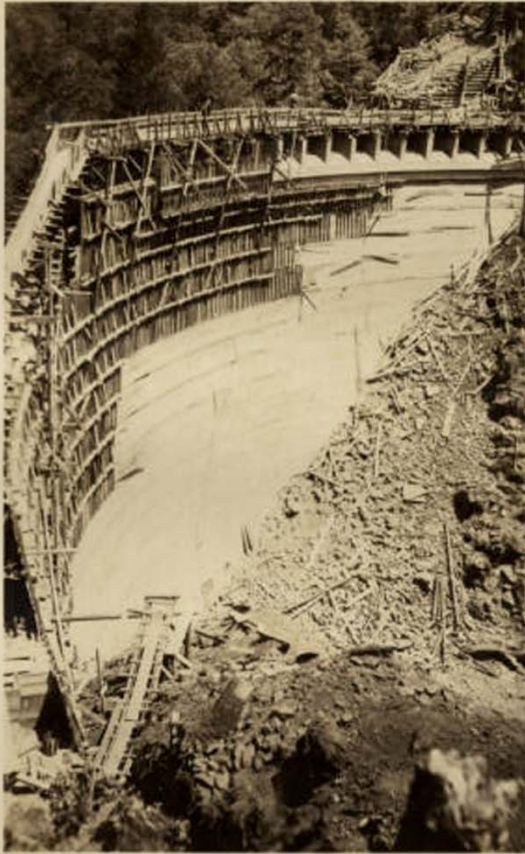
1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 11b



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 5



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 7

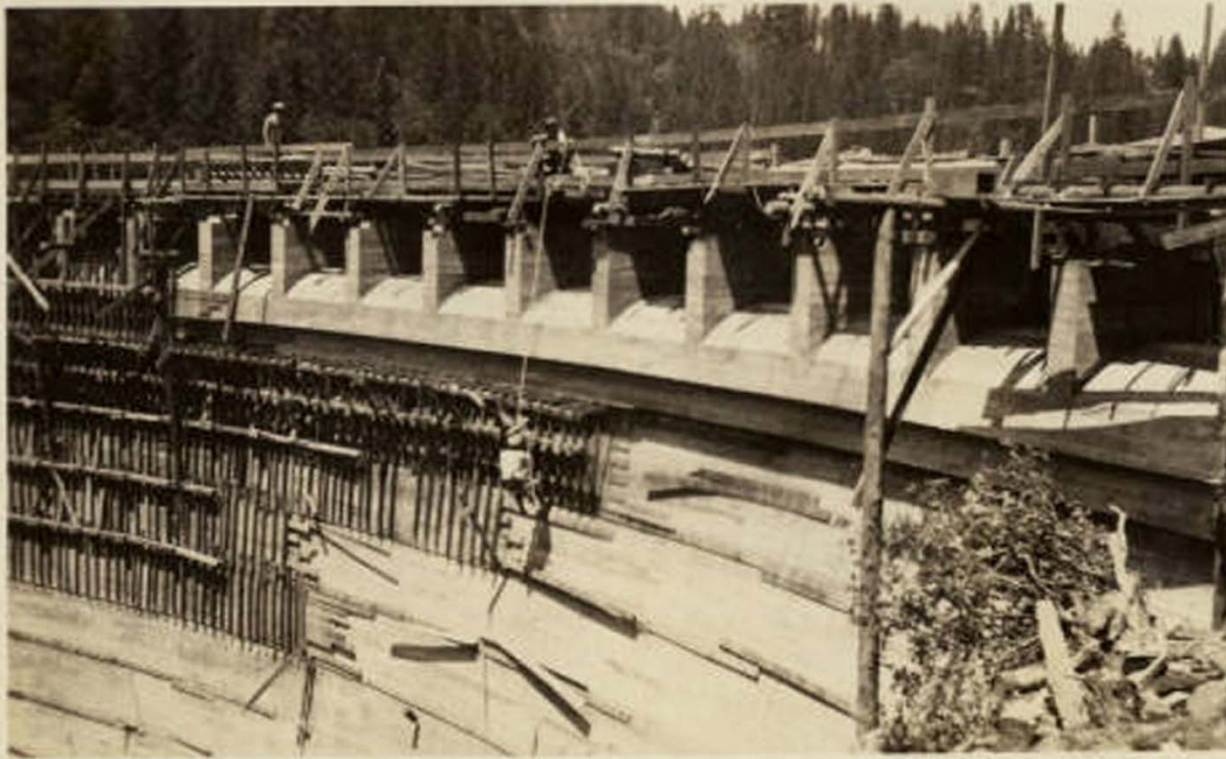


Concow Dam



1924 Concow Dam scrapbook Image 8

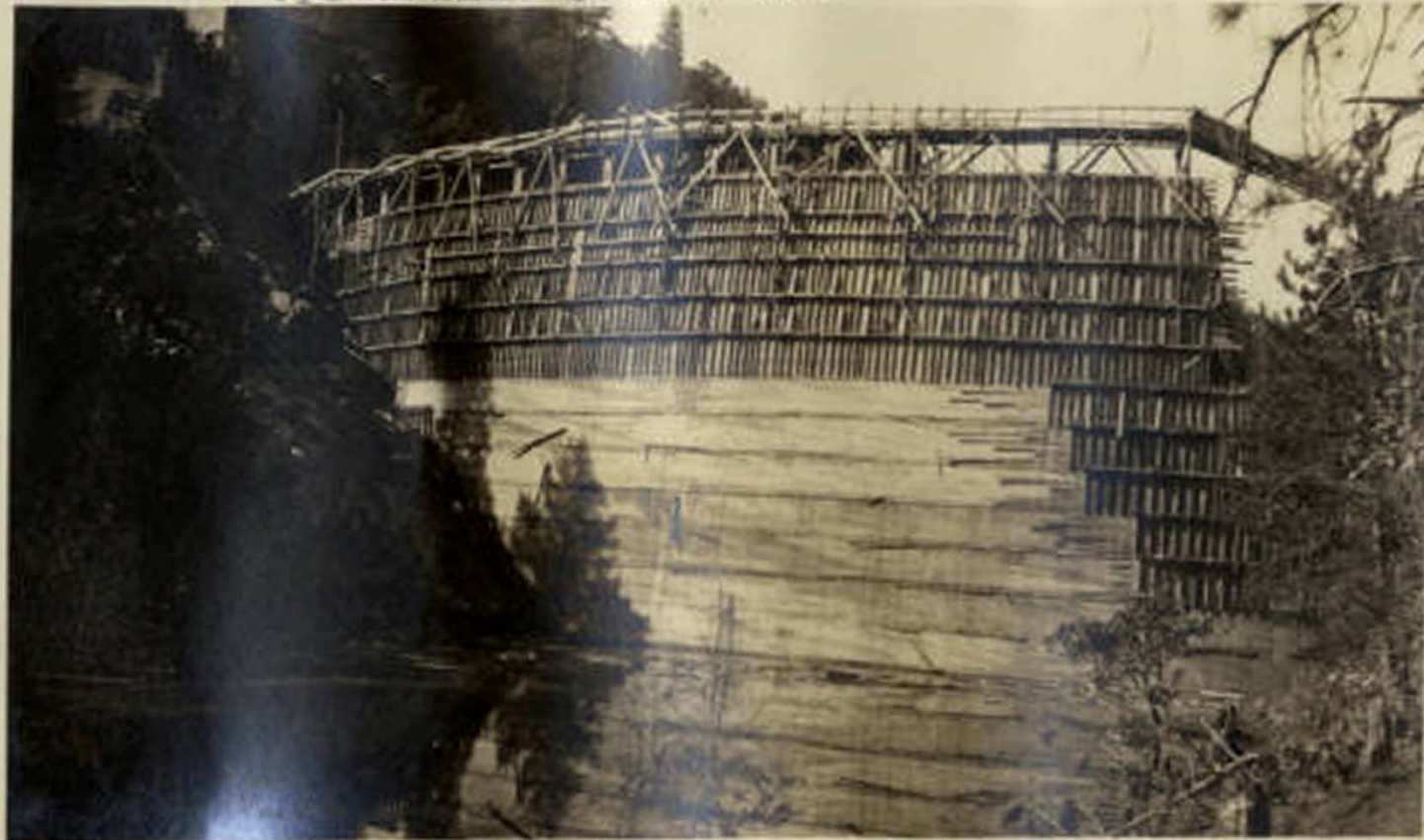
spillway



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 9

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 10

Upper side Concow Dam



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 6



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 18



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 22b
Caption: Diversion Dam Storage dam in background



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 23



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 26a
Caption: Head Gate to Spring Valley Ditch

Head Gate to Spring Valley Ditch



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 26a
Caption: Head Gate to Spring Valley Ditch

Head Gate to Spring Valley Ditch



Rock wall replacing
old flume
Wall to be concreted



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 27b

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 27c
Caption: Measuring Flume and Spillway



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 28b
Caption: Welding West Branch Siphon pipe near intake



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 29a
Caption: West Branch Siphon looking East Across the Canyon



1924 Concow Dam Scrap Book Image 29c



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 30c
Caption: Wilenor Ditch



Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 30b Caption: Wilenor Ditch



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 33b
Caption: Miocene Ditch





1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 34a

Caption: Enlarged by T.I.D. and T.M.I.D. P.G.&E. - Miocene Ditch

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 34b
Caption: Kunkle Reservoir - Intake to Lime Saddle Power House





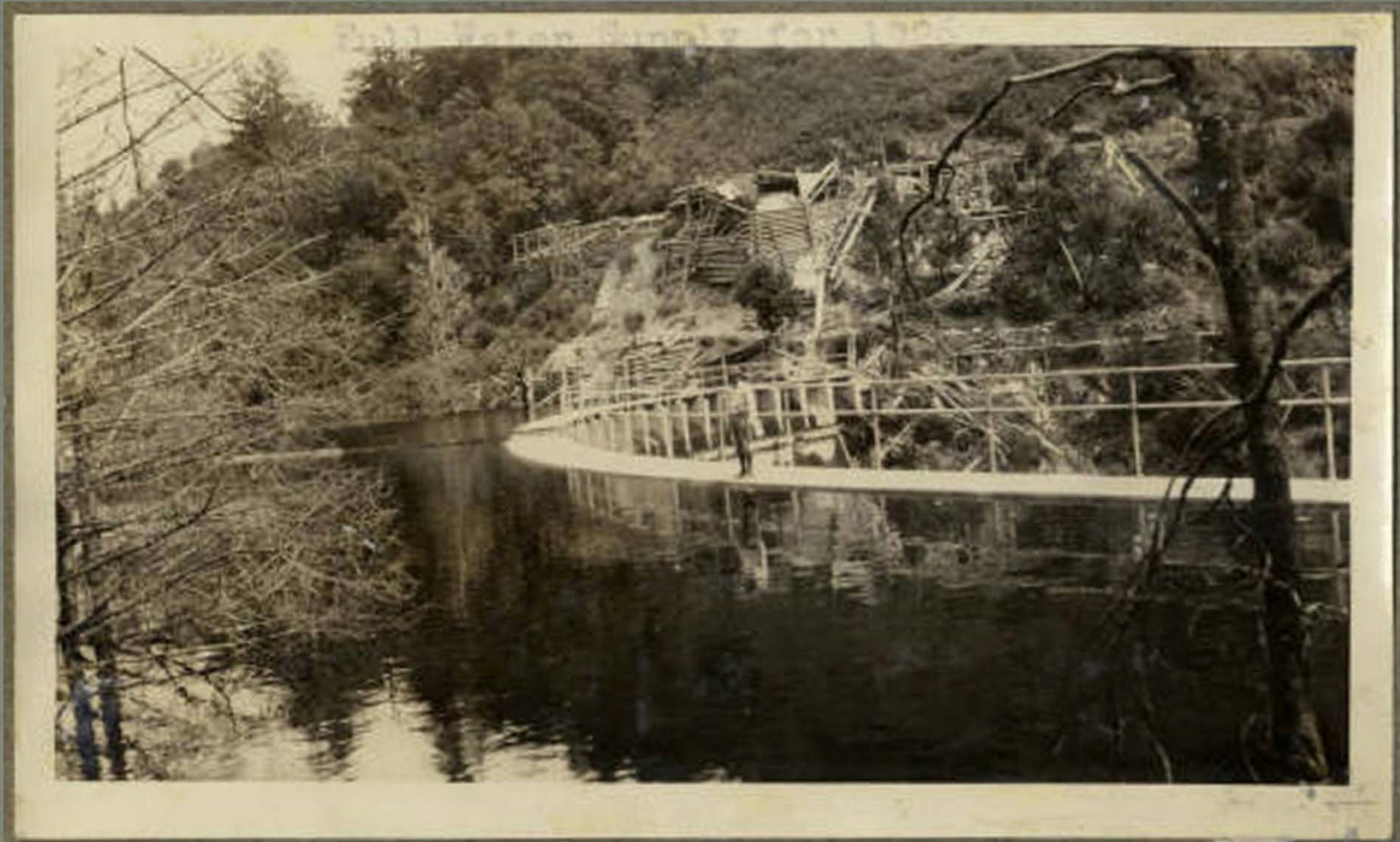
T.M.I.D. Water Supply Liberty Ranch Weir

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 36a
Caption: T.M.I.D Water Supply Liberty Ranch Weir



T.M.I.D. Water Supply - Liberty Ranch Weir - 1924

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 36b
Caption T.M.I.D. Water Supply - Liberty Ranch ? ?



1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image 4a (Caption: Full water supply for 1926)

1924 Concow Dam Scrapbook Image #19
at the time Concow Road was on the same elevation as the dam

Concow Dam as seen from County Road.





The dam is inspected by the state every two years

Thank You!