

Joe Beek (? - 1968), author of "The Story of Hidden Valley," was the original developer of HV. A short biography of Beek may be found in Fern Sayre's "Saga of Hidden Valley," which is available in the HVCA website "Historic" feature. Beek wrote this account and distributed it to residents in 1960.

THE STORY OF HIDDEN VALLEY

By Joseph A. Beek

Evidences as to who were the earliest inhabitants of Hidden Valley are still to be found in the numerous grinder holes in the rocks along the stream, and other spots where the Indians made their camp grounds. A few pestles have been found throughout the Valley and one girl, as a result of painstaking effort, dug up 320 beads. These Indians, known as the Maidu Tribe, were named by the miners "Digger" Indians. It appears that until a little over a hundred years ago they were the only permanent residents of the Valley.

Fern Sayre, who did some research into the history of Hidden Valley, developed the fact that the trail between Sacramento and Auburn ran through the Valley. A well, over which has been built a small well house near the north end of the Valley, supplied the water for those who traveled up and down this trail. About 1850 it was made into a road, traveled by a stage which ran between Sacramento and Auburn. A man by the name of William Gregory is credited with starting the first freight and stage line through the Valley at about that time. Later William Gwynn took over the operation and advertised tri-weekly stages, the fare being \$10.00 from Sacramento to Auburn, but for the down hill run from Auburn to Sacramento only \$6.00. The trip consumed ten hours and the principal stop was the place at Hidden Valley known as the Union House.

The first record of permanent white residents in the Valley indicates that one John Curtis homesteaded the land in 1854, and it was he who built the Union House, which was the depot of the coach and freight line. This old house burned down in 1905, and a two-story building was erected in its place, the Valley being used as a pasture for horses and cattle which were the property of a Mr. Miller.

In 1914 Samuel Laird bought the Valley for mining purposes. The son of Sam Laird, Fenn Laird, is at this time (1960) operating a service station in Loomis, and relates that forty-five years ago when, with a team of four mules and a Fresno scraper, he was

excavating part of what is now known as Oak Lake, he dug up a lot of bows, arrows, pottery, Indian beads and other artifacts which the Indians buried when they left the Valley in 1854.

Martin Ludwig, of Auburn, bought the property from the Lairds in 1915 and used it as a pasture until I purchased it in 1949. I first saw the Valley in 1919, and in 1929 received permission from Mr. Ludwig to camp and fish along the stream. It did not seem necessary to ask permission to bathe in the two deep pools on Mr. Ludwig's property, nor to apologize to the feminine members of the bovine species for the lack of conventional bathing paraphernalia.

The two-story house which was built earlier in the century housed a family of four whose names are unknown to me. A young man in the family, however, was engaged in the business of trapping skunks, which profession he did not need to announce audibly to anyone so unfortunate as to be standing within six or seven feet to leeward of him. The house burned in a brush fire in 1935, and the little shanty left standing in a corral was not adapted to residential purposes. This little shack, which stood where the Quackenbush residence now stands (lot 161) was built of redwood shiplap, some of which was salvaged in 1950 and is still stored in the attic over the Habitat at the end of the Community Association garage.

The same year that the house burned, the Valley was invaded by a man who had in his employ some ten beefy Amazons who, without the aid of any power saws, cut down the live oak trees and reduced them to firewood. The clumps of live oak saplings which are found throughout the Valley today - some of them as much as twenty feet tall - have sprung from the stumps of the trees this malefactor and his muscular specimens of femininity cut down.

The Valley, consisting of 240 acres, was purchased from Mr. Ludwig in 1949, and 130 acres lying to the south of it were bought from Mr. Joseph Mooney a little later, making a total of 370 acres in Hidden Valley Subdivision. The property purchased from Mr. Mooney is that which is now Unit 4 and part of Unit 3 of the Subdivision. It is interesting to note that Mr. Mooney was born and reared in the immediate vicinity of Hidden Valley and attended the old Franklin School, long since burned, which stood on land near the Folsom-Auburn Road about a mile northeast of Lakeview Hills Subdivision. Mr. Mooney is a Cattleman of the old school, and a man whom it is a pleasure to know.

The stream flowing through Hidden Valley was known to the miners as Miner's Ravine. For some strange reason the miners

applied the term "ravine", which is usually thought of as a valley through which a stream flows, to all the little creeks in the neighborhood. A ravine, strictly speaking, is a place through which water flows, which is larger than a gully but not large enough to be described as a valley. It seems most appropriate that this stream should be called Miner's Creek (which flows through Miner's Ravine), so in the interest of specific definition, we have called it Miners' Creek. The water in this stream was filed on for irrigation and for recreational purposes in 1950, and the diversion dam built which impounds the water known as Cottonwood Lake. A number of excavations which the miners had made were combined into one, which has been designated Oak Lake. The unsightly piles of sand and gravel were leveled off and soil spread over them to form pasture land. The small ponds, two eastward and three southward of Cottonwood Lake, were pits excavated by the miners. Here again the mounds of sand and rock were leveled and the pools enlarged, joined together, and converted into ponds.

Among interesting features of the Valley are the traces of Indian habitation, the great variety of plant life, the numerous birds which make the Valley their home, the fish, the frogs and turtles, the "colors" (gold) which may be panned along the creek, the canals made by the miners who used the spring freshets for placer mining, and the grade of the old Sacramento, Placer and Nevada Railroad Company, commonly known as the Auburn Branch Railroad. This railroad was built in 1858, and trains ran through Hidden Valley over a hundred years ago. The grade for this railroad comes in at the southwest corner of Hidden Valley Subdivision, and may be followed from Lot 139 to Willow Lane, which is built upon the old railroad grade, past the Hintzman residence and on north between Lots 152 and 153. From there on it may be followed, bearing a little east of north to a place where it leaves Hidden Valley at Twin Rocks Road near Lot 44. Some of the culverts installed on this railroad are still functioning. One of them, about fifty feet from the corner of Lot 160, comes under the old railroad fill from a pond on the south side and carries a stream of water the year round.

Another interesting feature of the Valley is the vein of glistening white quartz which makes its appearance in the Community Association property westward of Lot 80. A trail has been opened to this quartz deposit from the old railroad grade. It branches off at a point a little north of the north end of Oak Lake. A fill made by the miners in the early days creates a pond of considerable size at a point westward of Lot 72 and about one hundred feet east of the railroad grade.

While the improvements were being made to Hidden Valley, one plan was to develop this pond into a lake to be known as "Lake of the Woods". However, the subdivider was better equipped with dreams than with funds, and this project would have cost some \$10,000, which the bank from which he borrowed his money did not seem eager to lend, so the project was never carried out. Members who are interested in exploring the woods east of the railroad grade during the rainy season may find themselves in sympathy with the dream that could not be realized.

At numerous places, especially in the southern and central portions of the Valley, remains are still to be found of the ditches and dams which the miners made in their efforts to capture the gold which lay hidden in the soil. I have tried to preserve these remnants of the early days wherever possible, remembering that they were built not with tractors and bulldozers, but by men with shovels or, at best, an occasional team with two-horse slip. Their existence today is reminiscent of the hardships, the hopes, and the fortitude of those courageous people whose voices and whose shadows still haunt the verdant areas of the home of our dreams - Hidden Valley.

Written in 1960