

The Rediscovery Of Johnson's Ranch

by Jack and Richard Steed*

Nearly every student of western trail history has heard of Johnson's Ranch. References to it may be seen in pioneer diaries, on maps and in books. Though Sutter's Fort was, and is, officially known as the western terminus of the Truckee Emigrant Trail to California, most pioneers regarded "trails end" to be at Johnson's Ranch. During the period 1845-49 Johnson's was central California's first emigrant haven along some 1,000 trail miles west of Fort Bridger, Wyoming. Early travelers imagined it as a virtual Garden of Eden, and expected to bask in its lush surroundings before continuing the short additional distance to Sutter's Fort. That many travelers were disappointed upon reaching that "Eden" is a matter of record. To others, however, arrival at Johnson's was an exhilarating experience; for civilized people were there, and supplies, and plenty of water, and a new life awaited the weary colonizers.

The ranch was a campsite for some important travelers in its heyday. John C. Fremont and Kit Carson camped there on March 25, 1846. Fremont and the army of Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny spent three days there in June 1847, enroute to Fort Leavenworth following the end of the Mexican War.

Johnson's Ranch was short-lived. Like so many other settlements of those early days it sparked to life, flamed brightly for a short time, then fluttered out and passed into history. Today it exists in near-obscurety — ignored by most, and difficult to locate even by interested parties.

**Sacramentans Jack and Richard Steed are both members of OCTA. Jack, the writer, has authored over a dozen hobby-related articles woven around historical themes. His son, Richard, did most of the research for this article.*

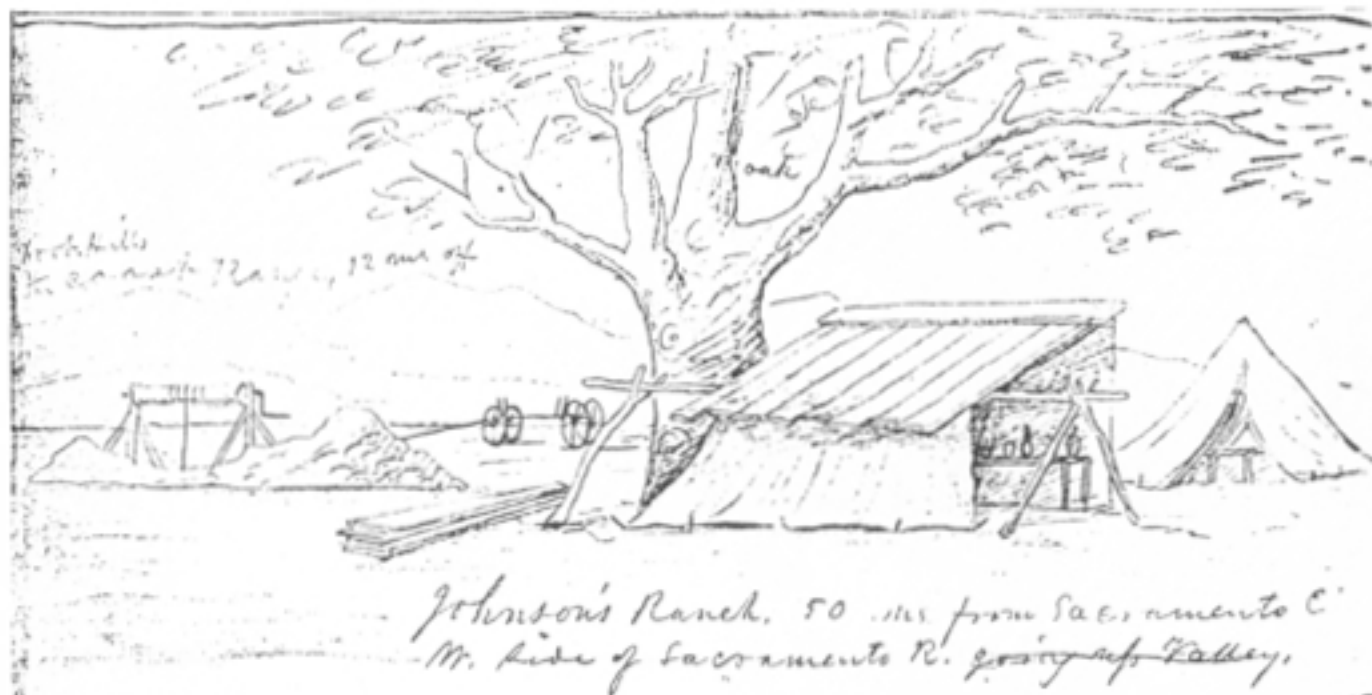
In 1844 a man working for John Bidwell, manager of Captain John Sutter's Hock Farm on the Feather River, discovered gold on the Bear River. This worker, Pablo Gutierrez, then applied for and received a Mexican land grant for some 22,000 acres along that river.¹

Gutierrez did some exploratory work and built a type of rude habitation in the vicinity of his discovery. Soon he told Bidwell of his discovery and the two men set out for the site. Lacking a "batea," a gold pan made of wood, the friends returned to Sutter's Fort to acquire one. Here fate intervened.

An insurrection had broken out in California and Sutter asked Gutierrez to take a message telling of the disturbance to Governor Micheltorena at Monterey. This insurrection eventually would topple the regime of Micheltorena, but Sutter would escape unscathed — at least temporarily. Gutierrez apparently made one safe journey, but while on a second mission for Sutter, he was captured and killed by the rebels near what is now Gilroy, California. Later, Bidwell would state that but for this quirk of fate Gutierrez in 1844, and not James Marshall in 1848, might have precipitated the California gold rush. Sutter, as administrator of the estate, sold the Gutierrez lands at auction. The successful bidder was one William Johnson.

Johnson had journeyed to California from Boston and was by trade a sailor. In pursuit of his work he had come west and recently had been traveling to and from the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. While in northern California in 1845 Johnson heard of the

1. The name "Hock" is from the German word "hoch," meaning "upper."



The controversial sketch made by J. Goldsborough Bruff while traveling in central California late in 1850. It is now

upcoming auction. With a partner, Sebastian Keyser, Johnson received title to the Gutierrez property for \$150. For reasons still unclear, Johnson emerges as the dominant figure relative to the location. At least one publication shows Keyser as becoming a partner somewhat later, but in *Journal of a Mountain Man*, the book printed from the memorandum and diary of James Clyman (1792-1881), Clyman wrote on April 15, 1846: "... got directions of a Dutchman [Nicholas Altgeier] how to steer our course to Johnson & Kizers where those intending to go to the states are assembling. . . ." This and other evidence proves that Keyser participated right from the beginning.

Buildings were erected, using cottonwood logs and adobe, with friendly Indians providing much of the construction labor. In the diary/journal of Edwin Bryant (1805-1869), Johnson's house is described as "... a small building of two rooms, one-half constructed of logs, the other of adobes or sun-dried bricks. Several pens made of poles and pickets surround the house." Though most travelers would continue on to Fort Sutter for supplies, Johnson's Ranch and Crossing effectively marked the end of the long westward trek; for once across Bear River, emigrants had access to any part of central California which best suited their interest. Soon Johnson's Ranch was to play a role in the most famous tragedy ever to befall wagoners bound for California.

On January 17, 1847, two men and five women, the only survivors of the fifteen member "Forlorn

believed to be different from the ranch of William Johnson on the Bear River, which is featured in this story.

Hope" group from the party of George and Jacob Donner, staggered into Johnson's with the news that emigrants were trapped at Truckee (Donner) Lake. It had taken them more than a month to make their way down to the ranch. An Indian runner was immediately dispatched to Sutter's Fort, some forty miles to the south. With Captain Sutter and Alcalde Sinclair guaranteeing wages and providing supplies, in something over a week seven men set out for Johnson's. There they recruited seven additional members and outfitted for the relief expedition.

Cattle were killed and the meat was dried over fires. The hides were cut into strips for future construction of snowshoes. Having no grist mills nor flour nor any type of meal, coffee and wheat were pounded in Indian mortars. The provisions were packed on mules, and within three days the rescue party left Johnson's without a guide, trusting in their own judgment to find the marooned pioneers.

They struck out along the Emigrant Trail until snow was reached. Pausing, they made snowshoes by heating and bending pine boughs, then lacing them with the hide strips. But the snowshoes proved worthless in the soft snow at this spot, and the men found they could proceed better without them. Each man stepped into the track of the man ahead and the party progressed an average of five miles per day. The physically and mentally exhausting journey

2. Under Mexican rule "Alcalde" was a title similar to "Judge."



The Bear River Township map of 1879 clearly identifies "Johnson's Crossing." Each square equals one-half mile.

took its toll, and one-half of the original fourteen men fell out. The remaining seven struggled onward in one of California's most courageous yet virtually unsung examples of man against nature. Sunset on the fifteenth day brought them to Truckee Lake, where they found the survivors of the ill-fated group from Springfield, Illinois.

Inspiring indeed was the heroism of the men who

comprised this first relief party; none of their relatives were among the trapped emigrants, and though paid by Sutter and Sinclair, no one went along to ensure that they earned their pay. Rather, these men were typical Americans of their day; and neither snowstorm, avalanche nor frostbite would prevent them from helping people in need of assistance. This rescue remains a shining example of



Jack, left, and Richard Steed at the pioneer cemetery at Camp Far West, an 1849-52 army post. The 1844 date on the monument refers to the earliest direct route to California

by the Elisha Stevens party, which passed nearby. The rock wall in the background was erected in 1949.

the comradeship of the American pioneer.

To the starving people huddled in their icy camps, the arrival of these men was regarded as no less than an act of Providence. This group from Johnson's was the first of four rescue missions, as Californians rallied to save the Donner Party. After administering emergency aid and resting for a few days, the rescuers began the return trip to Johnson's with twenty-one people, mostly women and children. Three of these were to die enroute. All fourteen of the rescuers returned safely.

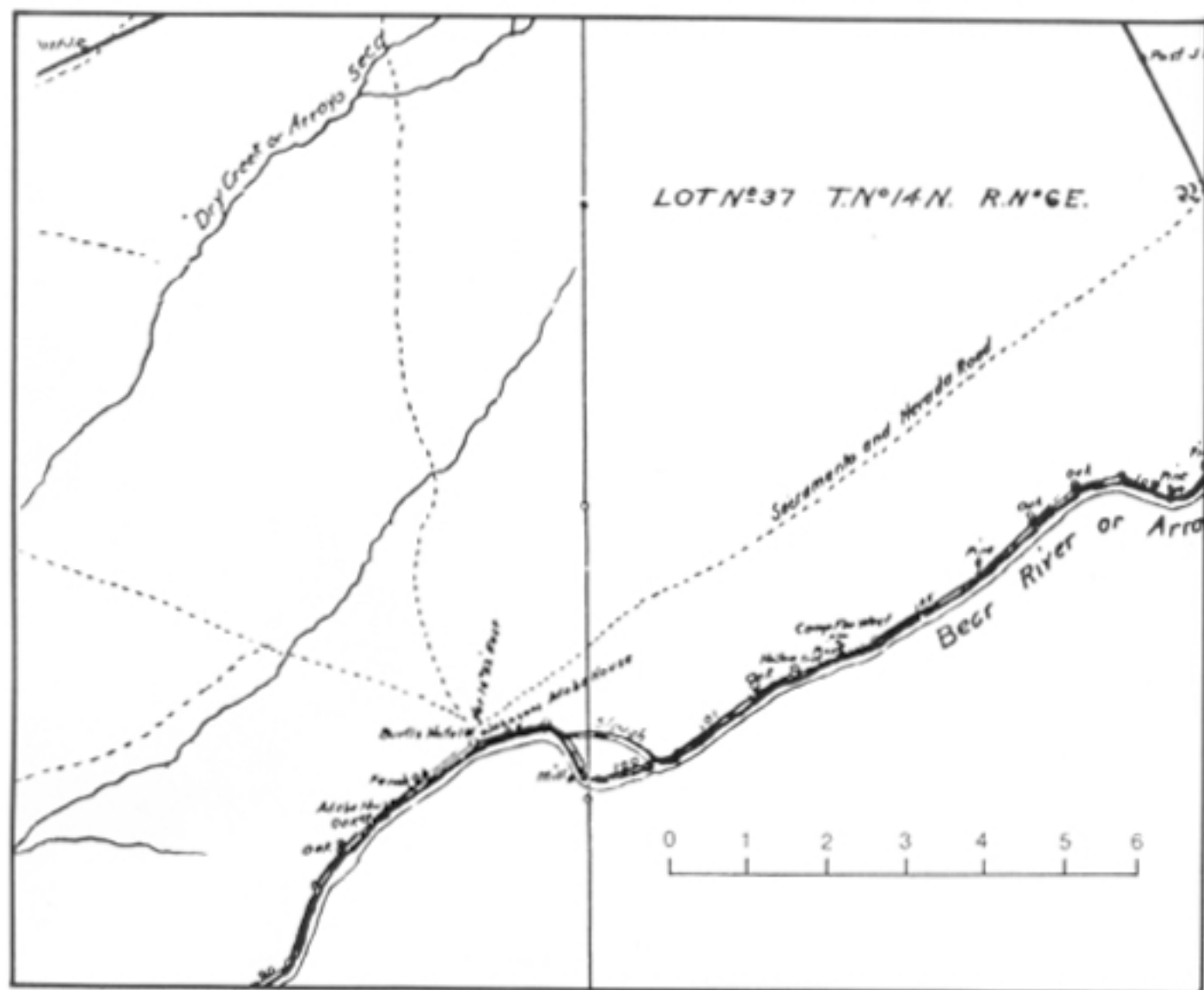
From Johnson's, most of the survivors continued on to Sutter's Fort, arriving to a welcome reception on March 4, 1847. Always kind to travelers in need of assistance, this same Captain Sutter would later be forced from his holdings by people driven by the lust for gold.

Among the Donner survivors was Mary Murphy. Her account of the rescue reads:

"... men from the Fort Sutter settlement reached us six weeks later — those of us who were still alive. We were a miserable lot, sustained mostly by a will to live, and by prayer. On February 19, I was taken out with my brother and twenty-three others. Left behind was my blind mother and my baby brother, Simon.³

"We made a tortuous journey through the snow before we came to the headwaters of the Yuba river, where there were mules to carry us down to Johnson's ranch. My mother later passed away in her cabin amid the corpses of others who had already gone to their eternal rest.

3. Mary, referring to the departure of the Forlorn Hope party, is in error; the relief group arrived about eight weeks later. The actual departure date was Monday, February 22. Seven rescuers and twenty-three emigrants initially departed, but two children turned back, leaving twenty-one, of whom three died.



The 1856 plat of the Johnson Rancho is dated November 1856.

"I stayed several days at the ranch, enjoying the comfort of civilization again, but I never could erase from my mind the sight of the dying people left behind at the lake. Mr. Johnson, a former merchant seaman, had built himself a substantial adobe building and was engaged in cattle raising on Bear river. My older sister had gone to San Francisco and I was without a home, an orphan, and not quite eighteen, when Mr. Johnson asked me to go riding with him one afternoon while he rounded up some horses.

"Knowing I was uncertain of my future, and having fallen in love with me, Mr. Johnson proposed marriage. In June 1847, at the age of eighteen, I became Mrs. Johnson. For several months I was busy serving to all of Mr. Johnson's wishes — doing his cooking and washing and trying to make a home out of a cattle ranch. I knew he was a crude man and I sometimes overlooked many of his faults, but I could not love a man who abused me with the rest of

the ranch hands. He proved to be a drunken sot. Because of that I got in touch with the rest of my family and secured an annulment of my marriage from the church.

"My married sister, Sarah, and her husband, Mr. Foster, were working at the Cordua's ranch a few miles north, at the junction of the Yuba and Feather rivers. There, too, was my older brother, William.

"The superintendent of the ranch was Charles Covillaud, who had come west and crossed the mountains a few weeks before we did. It wasn't long before I was introduced to Charles, and from that moment on, I knew I had fallen in love with a gentleman. Charles and I were married on Christmas day at Sutter's Fort. . . ."

In 1849 Charles Covillaud laid out a town at the confluence of the Yuba and Feather rivers. In 1850 this town was named for his young wife. The present community of Marysville, California is the

namesake of Mary Murphy Johnson Covillaud. Mary was to live for only seventeen more years, but she spent those years in devotion to both her family and her community. Both she and Charles, who were of different religious faiths, are buried in adjoining cemeteries just north of Marysville. Their grave markers are still visible.

Not long after the failure of his marriage to Mary Murphy, William Johnson sold his interest in the property to a group of men. His partner, Keyser, did the same with his share. Historically, Johnson now becomes a shadowy figure. In J. Goldsborough Bruff's diary entry of November 28, 1850 Johnson is referred to as "a clever, enterprising fellow" — in-

dicating Johnson again was in the vicinity of his former property and had met with Bruff, who rested at Johnson's Ranch for a few hours. In 1852 Johnson appears as a claimant for his old lands, but this appeal was denied on November 18, 1856, and Johnson never was heard of again. Most historians believe that he relocated in the Sandwich Islands and remained there until his death.

James Marshall's discovery of gold at Coloma in 1848 caused scores of wagons to appear at the ranch and crossing. A land boom began and the property changed hands. In 1849 Eugene Gillespie and Henry Robinson acquired title to Johnson's Ranch. On October 27, 1849, these men published the



The well at Johnson's Ranch is fifteen feet deep today.



National Archives

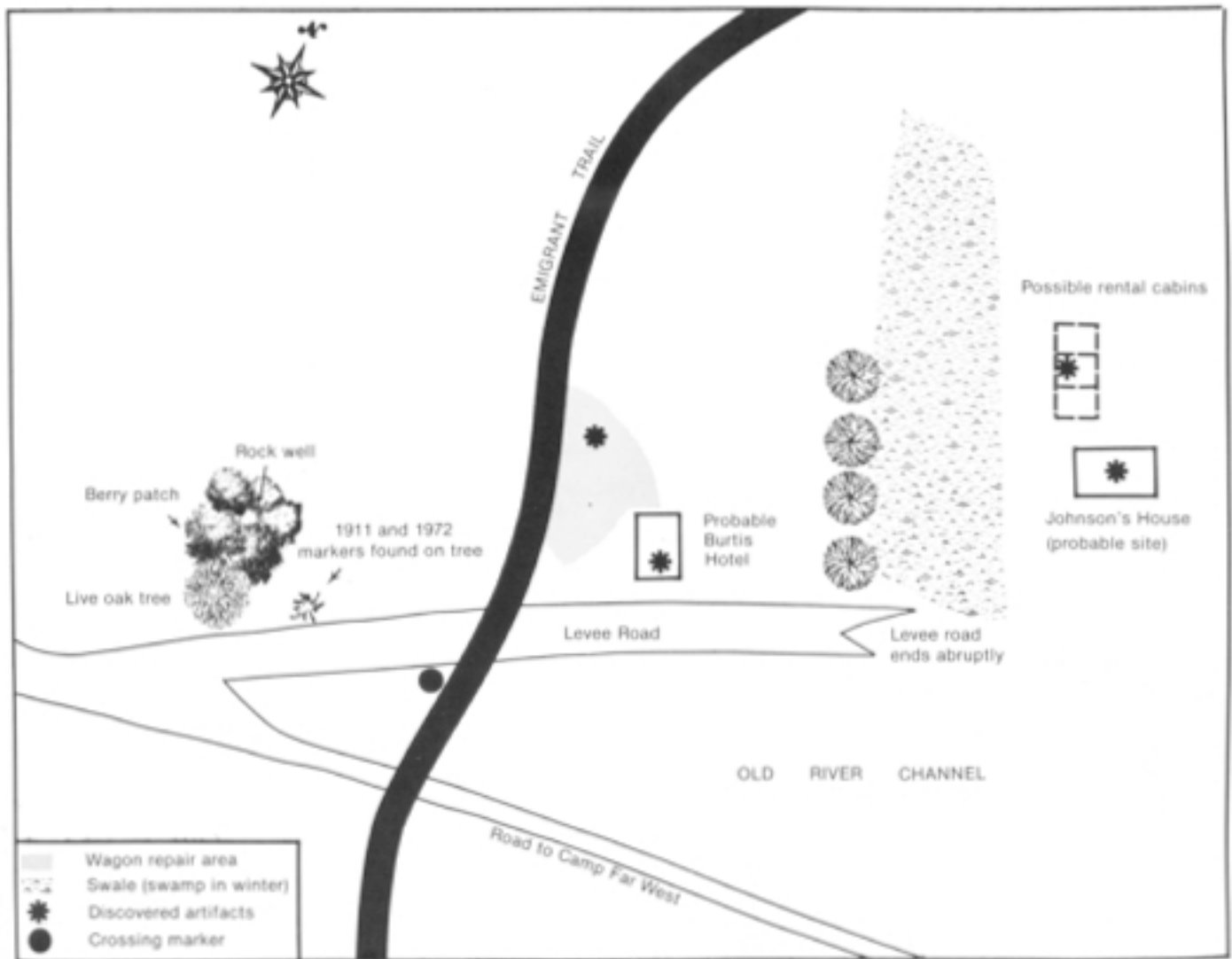
His lonely duty at Camp Far West behind him, Gen. Hannibal Day poses in the Washington, D.C. studio of Matthew Brady.

following advertisement in the *Sacramento Placer Times*:

"Town of Kearny. The proprietors of Johnson's Rancho, in view of numerous applications, have laid off a small portion of it into lots which are now offered to the public. It is situated at the only crossing

on Bear River, surrounded by arable and pasture lands, and is central and nearer than any point to the mines. . . ."

The town was named for California's first military governor, Stephen Watts Kearny. Though a number of speculators invested in it, the town was



Sketch map by Nedra Weatherford, from data provided by the authors.

never settled. Argonauts who came to central California prior to 1848 normally followed the Stevens-Donner (Truckee) route and passed Bear River at Johnson's Crossing. Until this time this was the most popular route available. They were also free to follow the trail blazed in 1846 by Peter Lassen, but this led far to the north, and though easier to traverse, was far longer than desired. Pioneers traveling after 1848 found another passage close by. This was the Carson (River) route, discovered by Mormons attempting to find their way back to Salt Lake City after serving in the Mormon Battalion during the Mexican War. Before long, the Carson route would become the most popular of all trails west.

Those people who came to California by water never saw Johnson's Ranch. Instead, they either disembarked at San Francisco or came upriver to Sutter's Fort, present-day Sacramento. From these points they moved straight up into the hills and

fanned out. Johnson's, being only a stopover and crossing, offered little to the restless breed of American coming west in search of riches. A by-passed Kearny found itself increasingly ignored by settlers. Thus Sacramento, situated beside two large rivers, with easy access to supplies coming by way of ships, became the central point of the mines. But at Johnson's Ranch this coming decline had not yet fully manifested itself and enthusiasm reigned supreme.

Sometime between mid-1850 and early 1851 J. L. Burtis, a settler at Johnson's Ranch, built a hotel near the crossing. Certain of the sources upon which this article is based have failed to differentiate between this hotel and the Johnson ranch house but that the two were separate and distinct buildings there can be no doubt. A ranch house is mentioned in 1846 by Edwin Bryant, and although this might have been a smaller one than that viewed by Mary Murphy in 1847, a Johnson house was in existence

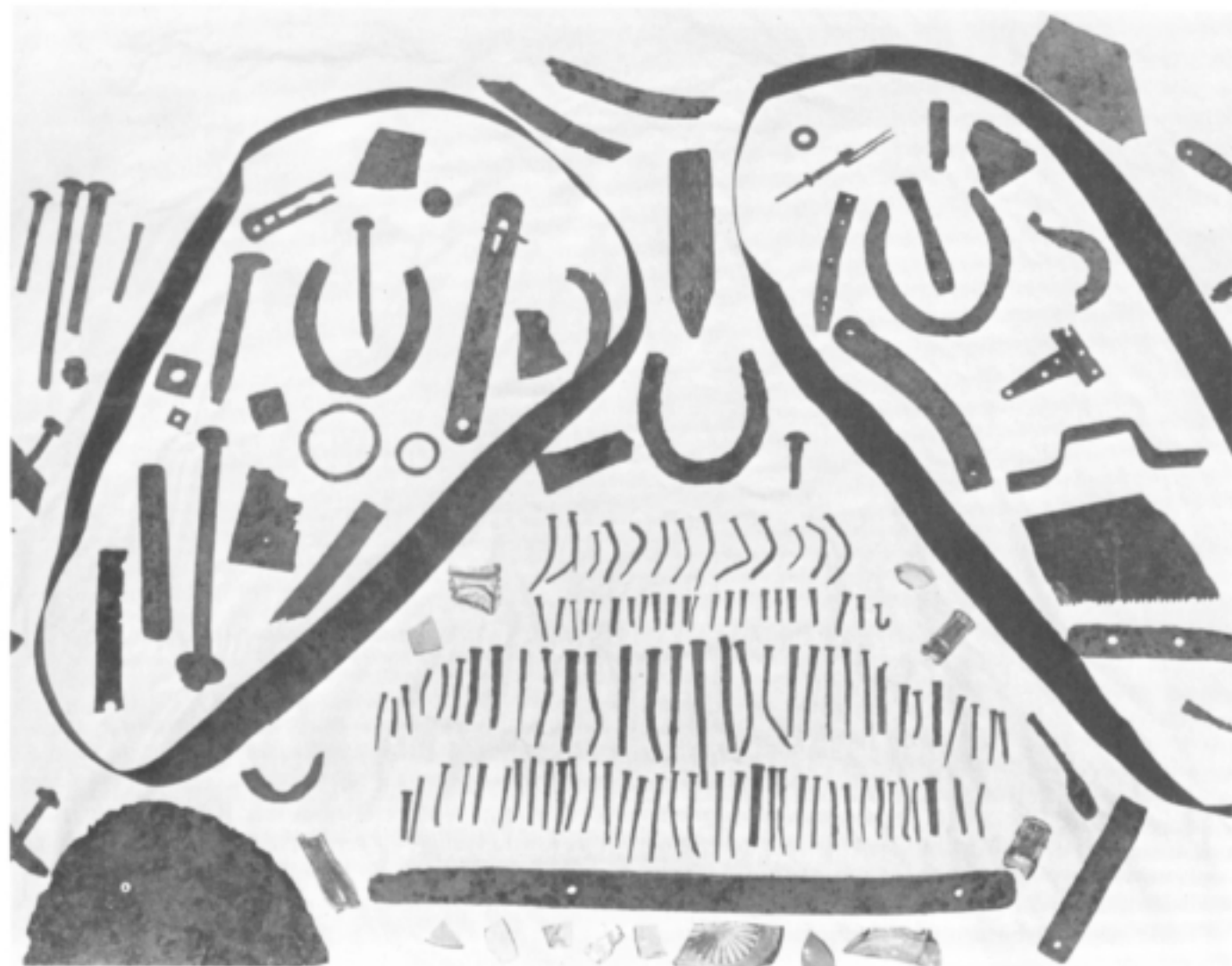
earlier than when Burtis constructed his hotel. Also, the 1856 "Plat of the Johnson Rancho," produced by order of the U.S. Surveyor General for the purpose of finally determining the claims against the property, clearly shows two buildings. One is identified as the Burtis hotel and the other as the Johnson house. Any surveyor who distinguishes between a pine and an oak tree on his map is unlikely to make any errors on the buildings.

In 1850 Claude Chana, a resident of Johnson's Ranch, built a bridge across Bear River. This is the same man who, on May 15, 1848, discovered gold in Auburn ravine, leading to that area's development. Chana also introduced fruit trees at Johnson's Ranch. He thus became the father of the present industry for which northern California is famous.

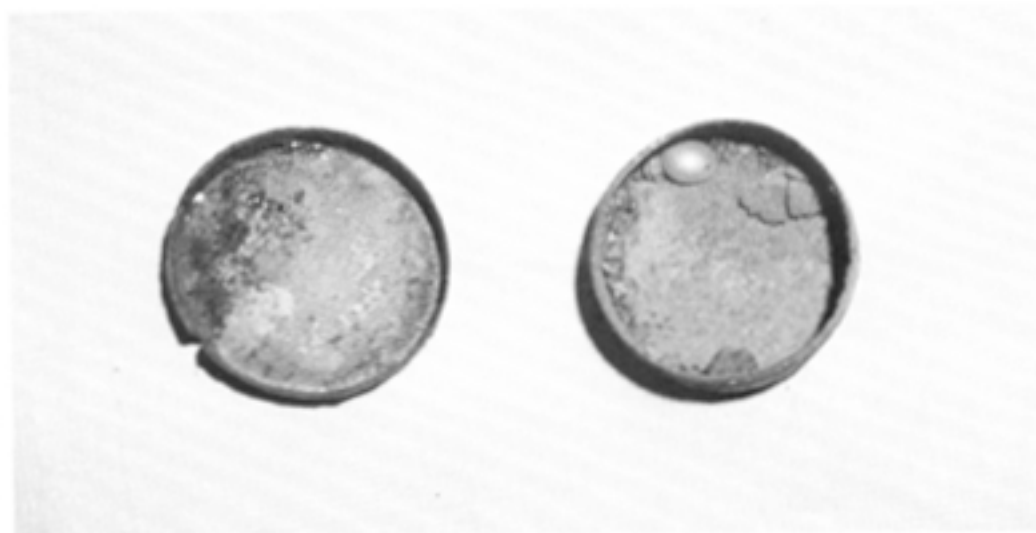
This same eventful year of 1850 witnessed the Nevada-to-Sacramento stagecoach utilizing the crossing at Johnson's. But in 1851 the stage followed

a different route and the area began to fail. Annual floods played havoc; bridges were carried away as fast as they could be built. By 1854 the crossing was infrequently used.

In 1862 an enormous flood which struck central California caused widespread damage at Johnson's. On January 25, 1862, the *Alta California* carried this report: "I've learned from Mr. Wortell, who yesterday came from Johnson Ranch on Bear River, that the damages sustained by the flood in the section are very great. He says the farming lands are covered with sediment and sand, and many cattle have been lost. The Johnson's ranch house, a building formerly occupied as a hotel, but recently as a private dwelling, was swept away." No mention is made here of more than one building, but this report is a secondhand one, so that may account for the oversight. Also possible is that any buildings other than the ranch house were not carried away by the flood-



Some of the artifacts uncovered by the Steeds at Johnson's Ranch.



This metal tin, 1-1/8 inches in diameter and a half-inch deep, was recovered from a depth of five inches. It still contained a drop of mercury, used to amalgamate gold particles.

waters.

Though area residents kept trying for years to tame Mother Nature, it was to no avail. The last bridge was dismantled in 1878 and the area effectively abandoned. The 1879 publication, *History of Yuba County*, comments on Johnson's Crossing and Kearny: "... nothing is left to show except stakes that mark corners of the lots."

The pattern of history had moved elsewhere.

The 1846-48 war with Mexico brought California into the United States in 1850. By 1849 so many wagons were using Johnson's Crossing that authorities of the 10th Military Department at Monterey established an army post at Johnson's Ranch. Cantonment Far West was located on the north side of Bear River, just over a mile east of Johnson's Crossing. Two companies of the 2nd Infantry, commanded by Captain Hannibal Day, were assigned there to protect emigrants from potentially hostile Indians. Contonment Far West only existed for about three years, but its soldiers suffered many hardships. A look into Captain Day's letterbook gives an insight into the miserable conditions under which the soldiers had to perform their duties:

"We hear nothing yet of lumber from below. . . .

"Four deaths already this month. . . .

"... scurvy cases, of which we now have twelve and some others beginning to show symptoms.

"But I am in hopes from the very inoffensive character of these Indians, (save and except their thieving habits) no collision may take place or if it do, shall venture to predict that the white man will fire the first shot.

"I have to report seven cases of desertion within the present month.

"... a recent murder committed in the vicinity by

Indians.

"... I have not the force or ability to send ten bayonets a mile from camp.

"... my broken down scurvy command. . . .

"... impossible in tents to keep prisoners who are not properly ironed. . . .

"... my family requiring my personal attention — while at the same I really can be quite as serviceable to my country in Recruiting, as here in command of less than a platoon."

The above quotations illustrate the futility bordering on despair which accompanied early United States military service. In this Captain Day was not alone; many soldiers were afflicted with despondency while serving at lonely western posts. No less a man than Ulysses S. Grant resigned his commission rather than continue to serve in the West.

Plagued by desertion, disease and drudgery, Cantonment Far West was abandoned about 1852. The remaining soldiers were transferred to other northern California posts. Hannibal Day continued his army career into the Civil War, and on March 13, 1865, was brevetted a brigadier general. Day died March 26, 1891.

In 1853, as soon as it became difficult to recover free gold from land surfaces or stream beds, hydraulic mining debuted in California. This method, by which entire hillsides are washed away in order to uncover hidden gold deposits, caused tremendous quantities of sediment to flow into valley rivers. All rivers were punished, but no river was punished more than the Bear River. A public outcry began at the new town of Wheatland, located some four miles west of Johnson's Crossing. It resulted in the cessation of this type of mining. About the turn of the twentieth century, gold dredgers arrived and further scarred the area. Earthen piles remain to this



This road leads to Johnson's Crossing today. Many artifacts were found on the high ground at left rear, and beyond.

day as a reminder of how quickly man can alter what took nature thousands of years to create.

Unable to resist continued attacks on its natural course, the Bear River sought a new channel to the south, leaving Johnson's Crossing and Cantonment Far West with their pasts. These were indispensable site identifications, given by people who had actually witnessed the dramatic events which transpired there. Over the years, area residents added more markers and fencing. This too was an important contribution, for today a levee cuts through the crossing area, rendering difficult a precise comprehension of the original appearance of the site.

The original 22,000-acre Gutierrez grant has been divided many times since the early days. Even so, a single holding of 2,600 acres is still in existence. It is upon this farm that the historic areas now rest. The owners are aware of the sites and do what they can to protect them. In spite of this, vandals occasionally strike. Cantonment Far West is the most abused site, for the crossing is off the beaten track and is easily overlooked except by those persons with an in-

terest in history of the area.

After two fruitless days of trying, we finally made our way to the sites and met some of the people living and working there. Historians who want to tour the area must first check with the manager of the Horst-Damon ranch, Bill Waggerhauser. Bill, himself a history buff, is a very accommodating host — as long as the owners' rights are respected. Waggerhauser informed us that very few people had ever used metal detectors there. After receiving permission to do so, we prepared to search the entire area electronically. The intention was to either prove or disprove the contentions of past historians with regard to the Crossing and Camp Far West.

There is a tree at the crossing, into which were imbedded markers from 1911 and 1972. Behind it is a mass of berry bushes. A ranch worker informed us that a rock well would be found within the berry patch. Initially, this seemed to be an important bit of information, for a sketch by J. G. Bruff showed just such a well at Johnson's Ranch! The original of this sketch is housed in the Huntington Library, San



Yuba County Library, Marysville

Mary Murphy Johnson Covillaud, survivor of the Donner Party and namesake of Marysville, California. Painting by an unknown French artist.

Marino, California. We finally found the alignment we thought Bruff had sketched from, but were to discover later that our search was fruitless.

Ben Lofgren, a prominent Sacramento historian and OCTA member, is positive that Bruff was in error in his 1850 identification of Johnson's Ranch. Bruff, an accurate recorder of mileage, could never have been twenty miles beyond his journal record in a single day. As he followed the north-to-south Lassen Road into California, it is probable that Bruff met a Mr. Johnson — perhaps the William Johnson — attempting to "set up shop" at a nearby location as he waited to reclaim his land, but Lofgren is certain that Bruff did not stop at the Johnson's Ranch of emigrant trail fame. Instead, Bruff stayed west of the Sacramento River and proceeded from Colusa to Cache Creek and Washington, which lay on the western bank of the river, directly opposite Sacramento.

Lofgren's diligent research evidently has helped us to avoid the perpetuation of the idea that Bruff's sketch was of the Johnson Ranch along the Bear

River.

Near the crossing we unlimbered the detector. The 1856 plat indicated that this was the likely site of the Burtis hotel, but could this be proved? At first glance the ground appeared barren of evidence, but a closer examination revealed rectangular outlines — a sure indication of a building or buildings once having been located here. With our excitement growing by the moment, we began our sweep with the metal detector.

Whatever doubts we may have entertained soon were dispelled, for the results of the detecting operation proved conclusively that something had been built upon this spot, and that wagons had been repaired close by. From this ground we recovered the following:

Over one hundred square nails of varying sizes; a hinge and latch; several wagon-bed braces; two harness rings; a knife tang; a number of carriage bolts and nuts; three horseshoes; a copper rivet; two spikes; a fork; two wagon-tongue pins; part of a saw blade; a portion of an old-design shovel blade; a

number of barrel hoops; many thick pieces of iron cooking vessels; various unidentifiable metal pins, bolts and straps; much broken glass — mostly in soft colors; and countless pottery shards. While digging for a metallic item we recovered, at a depth of four inches, a small wooden peg with a sharpened end. Was this one of the stakes used in 1849 to mark off lots at Kearny? Possibly, but as wood deteriorates at a rate which varies according to soil conditions, and since neither of us are geologists, we were unable to prove this.

Consulting our sources, it was found that C. F. McGlashan, author of *History of the Donner Party*, in 1879 recovered many nails from the Donner camps at Truckee Lake. This proved to us that square nails were "out and about" in early California. The fork we found near the crossing seemed to be identical to one pictured in McGlashan's book.

East of the immediate high ground is a swale; dry in summer but filled with water in winter. Beyond this swale, perhaps 175-200 yards from the crossing, the ground again rises. We moved to this second high ground and conducted a further electronic search. The results showed the location of yet another house, as well as what may have been a number of accommodations for travelers or ranch workers. This second site produced the following items:

A mule shoe; another fork; three horseshoes; two chain remnants; two early belt buckles (one made of brass); a powder flask; a clay pipe stem made in Glasgow (Scotland); an eyeglass case; a pocket knife with tortoise shell handle (thought to be an I*XL Wostenholm made in England); a suspender hookup; pottery shards from Burslem (a suburb of Staffordshire); a small spike; a .50-caliber lead ball; several accumulations of lead; nearly two hundred square nails; and what is regarded as the most illustrative discovery of all: a metal box, probably once containing percussion caps, in which we found mercury (quicksilver) — used to amalgamate gold particles.

The discovery of such a rich vein of artifacts at this site caused us to rethink our conclusions relative to the exact location of the Johnson ranch house. Again using the 1856 plat as a reference, we found that distance from the crossing to the ranch house was approximately 200 yards. The possibility exists that this second location was where Johnson actually lived. It seems logical that Johnson may not have wished to have a bunch of wagons parked right next to his living quarters. The correct answer will have to wait for a proper analysis — something neither of us are qualified to undertake.

We cannot prove that each item recovered dates to



This monument is at the Bear River Crossing, at Johnson's Ranch.

1849, for people moved about for years in the area. But all evidence supports, and none detracts from, this being a locale of considerable gold rush activity; with the area having been abandoned for at least one hundred years. Thus we have concluded: (1) the actual site of Johnson's Crossing has been proved, and, (2) though the ranch was sprawling, with groups of pioneers likely to have camped at various locations in the area, most people stayed near the crossing, and worked on their wagons, rode their mounts, and in general, congregated there.

The search has continued into the fall of 1985, and the following artifacts have been uncovered in recent weeks: two ox shoes; a pony's horseshoe; a trunk key; a compass face; the double-set trigger to a Plains or Kentucky rifle; a .69-caliber lead ball, as well as several accumulations of lead; an army fork with a scalloped handle; two tent grommets; a small oil lamp; heavy metal pieces which when placed together form a trivet; two knives, one of which has the army-type scalloped handle; a pre-Civil War brass eagle insignia; and the usual large quantities of square nails, straps and bolts. The site seems to have an inexhaustible amount of historic items within its

boundries, and this issue of the *Overland Journal* probably will exclude many of the most recent discoveries.

The vicinity of Cantonment Far West was also detected but nothing significant was found. Gold dredgers worked here in the early years, and the army post was destroyed. All that remains is the cemetery which lay close to the camp. In this cemetery are the graves of soldiers who died while stationed at Cantonment Far West. Once, their names were inscribed on plaques attached to the 1911 monument, but these plates have since been

removed by vandals.

That it fell upon two amateur sleuths to be first to prove what heretofore merely had been conjecture concerning Johnson's Ranch, was just our good fortune. Until now, we have regarded the area to be our "secret spot." But the time has come for others to engage in a more detailed examination of the area, for Johnson's Ranch still has its secrets. Though many questions have been answered, other imponderables await a proper resolution. In this effort it seems logical that OCTA members should now take the lead.




This sign is located in Wheatland, some three miles west of Johnson's Ranch.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have given their time, their equipment, their interest, and their encouragement to aid us in our quest at Johnson's Ranch. Some of these helpful people are, in no particular order: Nicole Sellers, William M. Pond, Arthur Moore, Chalmers West, Richard Lane, Dewitt Tarrant, David Steed, Ronald Cole, Sharon Steed, Charles Hill, Jr., Nadine Waggerhauser, and Leroy Deeds.

Historical knowledge is fleeting; it is not inborn. As generations pass it must be retaught to those who follow. Without concerned people like Miriam Griffith of Wheatland, who supplied us with many of our source materials, the total history of Johnson's Ranch and Cantonment Far West might have been irretrievably lost. We sincerely appreciate the aid we received from this kind woman.

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This tree has nearly overgrown an early marker, below, which points to historic Johnson's Crossing. The plaque above was placed in the 1970's by the Wheatland Historical Society.