

Auburn's 49ers

Stories of the brave men and women
who came
to California for gold in 1849 and
early 1850.

VOLUME TWO

April McDonald-Loomis

Research by John Knox and April McDonald-Loomis
Edited by Diane M. Fishburn

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impregnated with gold
but it is verrey hard to be got.”*

Isaac Annis - 1849

Placer County Historical Society
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Introduction

The general story of the 49er's is well known. In 1848 and 1849, young men, excited by the news of the gold discovery, flocked to California. Initially, the area around Auburn was rich with opportunity. Spanish Flat, near present-day Nevada Street, Rich Flat, near the Gold Country Fairgrounds, and the Auburn Ravine and its tributaries all yielded substantial amounts of gold in the first few years of the Gold Rush.

One of the most common attributes of the newly arrived would-be miners was their propensity to move about following rumors of the next "big strike." As such, not very many 49er's stayed put once they arrived in California and few left a record of their time here.

When we started researching for this project, John Knox and I were hoping to identify maybe 20 forty-niners who came to Auburn in 1849 and early 1850. So we were astonished to find over eighty men and women who came to the Auburn area in the first years of the Gold Rush. Most did not stay but they still left a record of their time here.

Each story is a unique tale about a pioneer who came hoping for gold. Though they rarely found it, many ended up loving California and cherishing the memories of the biggest adventure of their lifetime.

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*Robert & Elizabeth Crow and
George W. and Martilla (Matilda) Crow
Threlkel
1794-1876*

Pioneer Robert Crow and his extended family came West fleeing the religious persecution in their home town in Perry County Illinois. The Crow family were recent converts to the fairly new religious movement called the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints or the Mormons. The family of four sons, four daughters, and two respective spouses, left Illinois in 1846. They were part of the large migration of Latter-Day Saints leaving the eastern states and heading to Salt Lake City.

The Crow's eldest daughter, Martilla or Matilda was married to George W. Threlkel in 1842. They traveled with their two young sons, Milton and James. After a long journey across the Plains and wintering over in what is now Pueblo, Colorado, the party arrived in Salt Lake City in 1847. Before they had even settled in, three year old Milton drowned in City Creek. Within days, Martilla gave birth to a daughter, Harriett.

According to Church history, Robert Crow requested several times to be allowed to travel on to California to search for gold. He was finally given permission in 1849 and by 1850, he and the rest of the extended family were in El Dorado County at Mormon Island on the South Fork of the American River. Robert was logging and George was mining.

In 1851, the extended family moved to Auburn and Robert and Elizabeth bought the Long Valley House on the road leading to Rattlesnake Bar on the American River. The Long Valley House had been built by Hiram Hawkins and Henry T. Holmes in late 1850 to serve the traffic along

the Sacramento - Auburn Road and the road leading to the river.

The Crow and Threlkel families ran the Long Valley House and established a large farm. They were reportedly the first to grow peaches in the area.

The Long Valley House caught on fire from a faulty stovepipe and burned in 1856, the loss estimated at \$3,000. The families rebuilt very quickly and the Threlkel's purchased half of the property in the next year.

Elizabeth Crow died in Utah in 1870, Robert died in California in 1876.

The Long Valley House welcomed visitors who traveled the Sacramento to Auburn Road with the important cut-off to the river mines. It must have been a gay and vibrant spot.



By 1881, though the gold was mostly gone from the area, the Long Valley House remained an important stopping place. It had its own school house. A simple one-room affair, 35' by 20' with a library holding seventy volumes. The school district had about eighteen houses with 125 people. There were twenty-eight students at the school. It was surrounded by orchards of pear, peach and cherry trees.

George Threlkel died in 1900 and Matilda Jane died in 1906, both at the Long Valley House.

During the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s, Long Valley was the hub for a large farming and ranching community with a

grange, 4-H programs and many community activities. Gradually later generations of the Crows and Threlkel's moved away from the home property. During the 1960s the large old Long Valley House was abandoned. According to a descendant, Jane (Van Riper) Misphey, one of her uncles eventually knocked the house down with his tractor and burned the remains. A sad end to an historic inn.

The Long Valley schoolhouse still stands and is used as a community hall.



William Dunlap

1827-1909

Dunlap had an uncommon life before coming to California. Though he was born at Aspen Grove, his grandfather's prosperous plantation in Virginia, he was raised near Independence, Missouri where his father managed a trading post. By 1848, when he was 21 years old, he traveled with his uncle and several slaves along the Santa Fe Trail, hauling provisions to New Mexico. It was a brutal journey. Finally arriving in California, Dunlap only mined for a very brief time quickly moving to agriculture and ranching. He spent several years taking charge of the cattle on the Potter and Moore ranches. It was said that he had charge of most of the American cattle in the Sacramento Valley.

Dunlap and his relatives were known to frequent the racetracks of California and very early on became premier horse breeders. Dunlap owned several prize winning animals including the mare, Lola Montez, who won the first four-mile race on the West Coast and the celebrated trotting mare, Sally Beach. Over all, Dunlap at one time owned no less than five horses holding world championship honors and establishing the bloodline for many famous California horses.

In 1856, he was offered a command and the opportunity to accompany the filibusters under William Walker to Nicaragua. The Walker expedition was intended to expand the territory



where slavery would be welcomed. He turned down that proposal.

As well as raising horses, Dunlap was in business with Stephen Boutwell and James W. Kaseberg and in 1857 they began accumulating what is said to be the largest tract of land in the Sacramento Valley not based on a Mexican grant. It would eventually consist of between 42,000 and 50,000 acres (accounts vary) between Roseville and the Sacramento River. They raised imported Merino sheep known for the high quality of their wool. At one time they were shearing 30,000 sheep yearly.

When he was a bachelor stock baron, Dunlap lived at the Golden Eagle and Capitol Hotels in Sacramento. When he married his partner's niece, Sarah J. Robinson, in 1871, they continued to make various upscale Sacramento hotels their home where Sarah was considered "the center of literary and social life." In 1885 when they moved to Auburn, initially they lived in the Freeman Hotel.

The Dunlap's marriage was annulled in 1894 but both continued to live in Auburn, Dunlap remaining at various Auburn Hotels. Sarah would remain active in social affairs and owned several homes and properties in town. Their son, Boutwell Dunlap, was a noted historian, genealogist, attorney and consul to Argentina.

William Dunlap died in 1909. Sarah was an active proponent of equal rights for women and she was the first woman to run for public office in Placer County. Sarah died in 1920.

R. A. Echols

1825-1850

Very little is known about R. A. Echols, even his first name is unknown. Though he was born in Ohio County, Virginia in 1825, we do not know when he arrived in California only that in 1850 he had already been elected Sheriff of Sutter County. Auburn was initially in Sutter County until Placer County was formed in 1851 from portions of Sutter and Yuba counties.



On June 2, 1850, several men were gathered in William Gwynn's store/saloon/boarding house. The building was located in present-day Old Town, near the present day Maple Street off ramp.

There was some kind of altercation between the Stewart brothers, Samuel and William and Dr. Groves and Captain Scott. The Sheriff arrived and managed to calm things down and the Stewart brothers moved on to the restaurant owned by Pole, Echols & Company. This Echols, likely was R.A.'s father John Echols. The Stewarts continued drinking and Samuel began behaving "in a very disorderly manner, drawing his pistols and endangering the lives of those around him," according to the newspaper account of the time. The Sheriff had evidently followed the men to the restaurant and Samuel took a shot at Echols but missed with his first shot. Both men left the restaurant

and another shot was heard. When the other patrons rushed out of the building, they found Sheriff Echols on the ground shot through his hip. Echols lay dying for two days before succumbing from his wounds.

In the meantime, James Crawford, Echols brother in law, (perhaps making a citizens arrest) took the brothers to the jail, where they were released on bail. The newspaper account related that bail was probably granted because the witnesses were all too drunk to be able to testify against the brothers. Sometime later, Samuel was rearrested and taken to the jail in Nicolaus. One visitor was Major Bailey, an Auburn merchant. The jailor allowed Stewart and Bailey to walk about the grounds and Bailey managed to get Stewart near a horse. Stewart quickly mounted the steed and tore away from the jail. A daring escape. Somehow nothing happened to his friend Bailey for aiding in the escape.

Three years later in 1853, Samuel Stewart was arrested once again and charged with murder. He went to trial but still no credible witnesses could be brought forth. Samuel was found not guilty. Thereafter, both brothers disappeared from the record.

Sheriff R. A. Echols is not recognized as one of the first law enforcement officers in either Sutter or Placer County. It is not known where he is buried.

Frederick Emory

1829-1907

Frederick Emory was a born and bred southerner. He was born on the family plantation, Poplar Grove, in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. The family were wealthy landowners, agriculturists, slaveholders, and horse breeders. Frederick was the 10th of 11 children born to Thomas and Anna Emory. Thomas was a general in the War of 1812 and a member of the Maryland State Senate.



Poplar Grove still stands today.

By age 16, Frederick was living with his older brother's family in Washington D. C. and he followed in the footsteps of his brother by becoming a surveyor. He joined the U.S. Coast Survey. Just like the name implies this was a project aimed at surveying the United States coastline.

When he was 19 years old in 1848, he joined his brother William on the Boundary Commission. This commission was charged with establishing the boundary lines between the U.S. and Mexico after the U. S. gained more than 500,000 square miles of territory as a result of the U. S.- Mexican War. The Commission traveled via

Panama and arrived in San Diego on June 1, 1849. Frederic left the Commission in September 1849.

In 1850, Emory was employed by Capt. John Sutter as a surveyor and land agent. He made fifty dollars per day surveying and received a 10% commission on any land sales he made for Sutter.

In 1851, Emory and several partners leased the second floor of William Gwynn's store in Auburn and established the El Dorado Saloon. It was here that Emory met William Walker. Walker was an attorney and one time editor of the *San Francisco Weekly Herald* before coming to the Auburn and Marysville areas.

It was at this saloon that the "Auburn Plan" was hatched by Walker and his companions. All staunch supporters of slavery, the men planned to create an American colony in Mexico for the expansion of slavery.

In 1852, Emory sold his interest in the El Dorado Saloon to a partner P. C. Rust.

Walker was intent on establishing the state of Sonora in Baja California. In 1853, he set out to conquer the necessary territory. Frederick Emory accompanied Walker and was named Secretary of State. The story of the Walker expedition is long and complicated and not to be addressed here. Emory soon found himself back in California in San Diego acquiring provisions and attempting to garner support for the campaign.

Walker's plan failed and in 1854, Emory and several others were arrested in San Diego for violating neutrality laws. Emory pled guilty and but his only penalty was a fine. He left California and by 1855 was in Leavenworth, Kansas. As a side note, Walker was eventually executed by a firing squad in Honduras in 1860.

Emory served as a U.S. mail contractor in Leavenworth, running a stage coach from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley in 1856 and 1857. He was also a member of the Leavenworth City Council in 1855.

Bleeding Kansas is another long and complicated story not to be addressed here but Emory was right in the

middle of it. At its heart the conflict was whether Kansas would enter the Union as a slave state or a free state. Emory was on the side of slavery. He led a group of men called

"Emory's Regulators." They were an unsavory band of so called "Border Ruffians." Emory's band was known to have participated in a "reign of terror." In their attempt to drive out any settlers with free state sympathies. They attacked other settlers, confiscated property and literally drove people into the streets and onto steamboats and forced them to leave town. In one infamous case, Emory and his men murdered a free state lawyer. One Southern newspaper exclaimed, "All praise to Capt. Emory and his gallant company."

A new Governor of the Territory finally brought some peace to the area and arrested Emory and his band although the men were not held for very long. Emory's band were the last of the "regulators" and by



the end of 1856, peace was finally established. Kansas would finally enter the Union in 1861 as a free state.

In May 1857, Frederick married Emma West Scruggs, the daughter of a prominent Leavenworth businessman. An article in a Northern newspaper noted: "Frederick Emory, the notorious murderer of Wm. Phillips, was married Monday to the belle of Leavenworth - the young lady who offered her hand to any man who would bring her the scalp of an abolitionist."

Frederick and Emma lived in Leavenworth and raised a family where Frederick worked mostly as an engineer and surveyor.

When the Civil War broke out, Emory made his way south. Despite a delay with a broken leg, by 1864, Emory had been appointed by Confederate States President Jefferson Davis, to join General Jubal Early as assistant quartermaster. Emory was said to be among the Confederates who sacked the town of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania where it was reported "drunken Confederates cavorted among the ashes, pillaging freely and robbing citizens of sums large and small."

Emory would take part in one more historical event. According to Emory's own account which does not exactly agree with other historical accounts, in 1865, he was with Jefferson Davis as the war ended. In his application to the Missouri Confederate Home for soldiers, Emory claimed that Davis charged him with loading five wagons with all the archives and gold of the Confederacy. The wagon train was to head to Florida and then to Cuba or Mexico. The wagon train made it as far as Gainesville, Florida. Without further direction, the eight men guarding the wagon train divided up the money, totally around \$25,000 and went their separate ways. Other accounts of the Confederate gold tell a different story but Emory may have played a part in moving some of the treasure.

After a life of adventure, Emory went to live with his daughter in St. Joseph, Missouri. Then he went to live in the Missouri Confederate Home, likely swapping stories

with other old soldiers. He died in 1901. What an adventurous life!

John Frederick Engell

1826-1898

John Engell was born in Schoharie County, New York and came to California in 1849. In the first few years, he mined but soon became involved with the Stony Hill Turnpike Company. This turnpike "was one mile in length, macadamized (compacted broken stone on a well drained roadbed) nearly the entire length." It ran along the Foresthill Divide between the North and Middle Forks of the American River and between Auburn and Michigan Bluff.

The turnpike was originally owned by Dr. John Schott but by 1859, John Engle was the proprietor and toll keeper. Toll roads could be a very good source of income during the Gold Rush years.

Rates of Toll from 1857

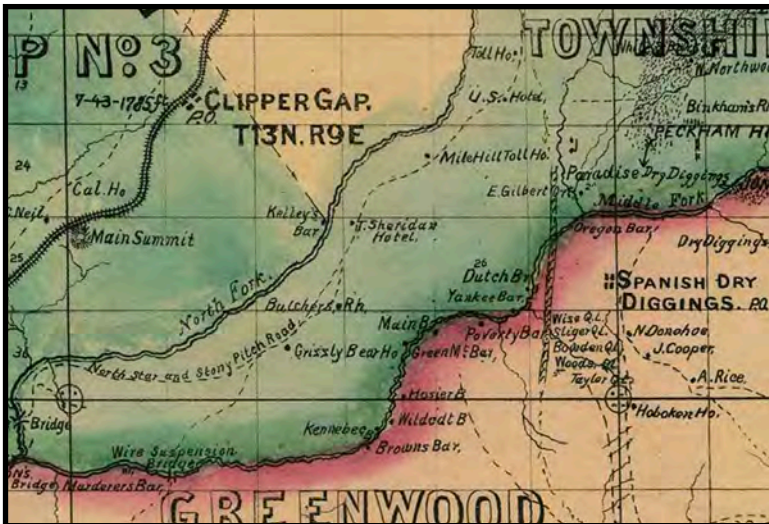
<u>STONY HILL TURNPIKE CO.</u>	
Page 319, May 14, 1857, Minutes Placer County Board of Supervisors Book 1.	
<i>In the matter of the application of Stony Hill Turnpike for the regulation of their rates of toll on motion it is ordered that the following be fixed as the rates of toll for the year ending May 14, 1857:</i>	
<i>For 6 Horse Team - or Team loaded</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>" " " " " " Empty</i>	<i>37½</i>
<i>" 4 " " " " loaded</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>" 2 " " " " Empty</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>" 3 " " " " loaded</i>	<i>37½</i>
<i>" 2 " " " " Empty</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>" 1 or 2 " " " " loaded</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>" " " " " " Empty</i>	<i>12½</i>
<i>Every additional animal</i>	<i>12½</i>
<i>Horsemen</i>	<i>12½</i>
<i>Pack Animals each</i>	<i>12½</i>

Engell would continue to collect tolls from this turnpike until at least 1897.

Rates of Toll from 1859

The rates of Toll on the Stony Hill turnpike fixed at the following rates; one and two animals with loaded vehicle 37½ cents; do. do. empty, 20 cts; 3 animals with loaded vehicle 50; do. do. empty 25; 4 animals with loaded vehicle 75; do. do empty 37½; horsemen 12½ cts; pack animals 12½ cts.

The Stony Hill Turnpike ran through the small settlements around the Grizzly House and Butcher Ranch. Engell lived “near” the two places and was very active at election time always showing up as a clerk, inspector or judge at the polling places at the Grizzly House or at Butcher Ranch. Engell died in Auburn in 1898.



Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild

1827-1918

The men of the Fairchild family were all newspapermen at one time or another and thus left more than the usual number of accounts of their exploits in the California adventure.

Mahlon was born in Oneonta, New York to David and Deborah Fairchild. David started a dozen or so newspapers, ran the paper for a year or so then moved on to

establish a new paper in another town. The papers included *The Ovid Bee*, *The Trumansburg Adviser*, *The Wayne County Democrat* and the *Newark Herald* to name just a few. Several of his children followed in his footsteps including Mahlon.

In 1849, David Fairchild formed the Ganargwa (present day called Ganargua, a creek in Wayne County, New York) Mining Company. Their intent was to bring a coining press to California to press \$5 and \$10 gold pieces into coin. Mahlon accompanied his father. Mahlon was then 22 years old.

The company traveled on the steamer *Crescent City* leaving from New York on March 15, 1849. The trip to Panama was seemingly uneventful but after arriving in Panama City the Ganargwa party separated and the two Fairchilds found spots on the whaling ship the *Sylph* and made their way to San Francisco arriving July 26, 1849.



They quickly made their way to Wood's Dry Diggings (Auburn) on August 2, 1849.

In December, Fairchild made a list of items with their prices purchased at the Wetzler and Sutter store in Auburn.

AUBURN, December 12, 1849.	
Mr. Fairchild bought of Wetzler & Co.	
12 lbs rice, @ 75 cts.....	\$ 9 00
9 lbs meal, @ 75 cts.....	6 75
11 lbs sugar, @ 80 cts.....	8 80
10 lbs cherries (dried), @ 80 cts..	8 00
10 lbs peaches (dried), @ \$1 00..	10 00
2 lbs tea, @ \$1 50.....	3 00
77 lbs pork, @ 80 cts.....	61 60
85 lbs beef (corned), @ 50 cts....	42 50
10 lbs raisins, @ 60 cts.....	6 00
1 lb candles, @ \$2 00.....	2 00
150 lbs flour, 60 cts.....	90 00
	\$247 65
	Paid, WETZLER & Co.

Father and son ran a store in Illinoistown and mined at Barne's Bar.

The Fairchilds were unusually lucky to find a large deposit of gold on Rich Bar on the North Fork of the American River from which they were reported to have taken out thousands in gold.



Rich Bar is only known to be somewhere upstream from Kelley's Bar and below Barnes Bar.

In the early days in California, Mahlon and other members of his family sent dispatches to the family's newspaper. These accounts are rich with details about their adventures in California. Later in life, he would write his memoirs describing his activities in California, Nevada and Arizona from 1848 to 1866.

While in Nevada in 1867, Mahlon married Mary Emma Milan. Mary Emma had a colorful past. She and her family were among the Mormon pioneers who came west to Salt Lake City in 1852. When she was fifteen years old she entered into a plural marriage with one Archibald Hill. They had two children but later she ran away with Squire Newton Brassfield, a non-Mormon man. When they returned to the Hill household to retrieve her children, there was some kind of altercation and Brassfield was arrested.

He was released but within days, he was murdered on the street by an unknown assassin.

The murder and the affair caused a sensation. But by February 1867 she met and married Mahlon. He adopted her two children and they took his name. They would have several more children together.

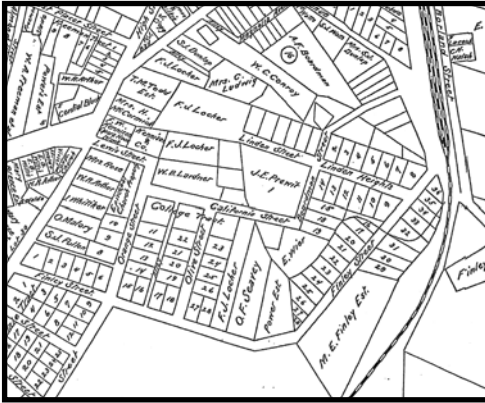
In 1881, Mahlon and his cousin Myron Angel lived in Auburn for several months while they wrote the *History of Placer County* published by Thompson and West in 1882.

Later he worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad in the land and surveying department.

Mahlon died in Oakland California in February 1913, Mary followed very soon thereafter in September 1913.

Caswell Wilson Finley

1803 - 1883



As seen in the map, Caswell Finley and his wife Martha E. (Wallace) Finley owned a substantial amount of property in Auburn and even had a street named in their honor.

Finley was born in Kentucky in 1803 but the family moved to Alabama during his


childhood. Caswell married Martha E. Wallace in 1841 in North Carolina. They moved to Mississippi and had two children with only one surviving. They moved on to Arkansas and had two more children.

We do not know how Finley got to California or if his family came with him initially, but Finley arrived in Placer County in early 1850. He had set up his office as a surveyor in the National Hotel by 1853 and in that same year, he ran for the position of County Surveyor and was elected. The next year he also ran but was defeated. In 1855, Finley was elected Justice of the Peace in Placer County.

Caswell must have been a talented and popular surveyor for his name appears on many deeds and land title in the records of Placer County.

He died in Auburn in 1883. He was known to be a true southern gentleman of honor. Martha died in 1901.

Robert J. Fisher
about 1827 - 1861

ROBERT FISHER,
House Carpenter and Joiner,
IS PREPARED to erect buildings on short notice. He constantly has on hand a large assortment of SLUCE LUMBER, etc.
Undertaking.
 All orders as Undertaker, promptly attended to.
R. J. FISHER.
[n44.v3]

Robert Fisher was born in Baltimore, Maryland. Little is known of his early life. He would have been about

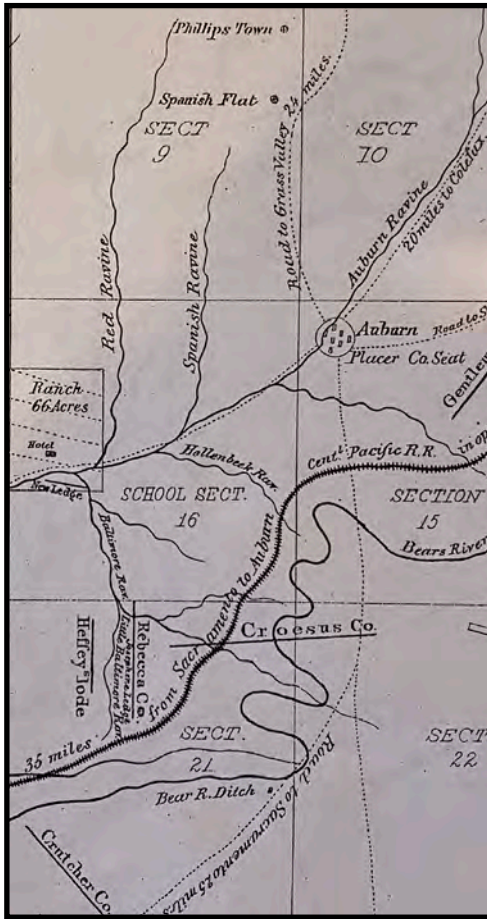
21 years old when he joined the Baltimore Company and made the journey to California. The company arrived in the Auburn area in 1849 and unlike many others, Fisher stayed in the area. He and the rest of the Company mined along the ravines that would later be called the Big Baltimore Ravine and the Little Baltimore Ravine. It is unknown how successful they might have been but Fisher soon set up his carpenter shop in Wood's Dry Diggings, later named Auburn.

For a short time, Fisher was involved with the hotel named the Shakespeare House and he helped establish the local Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the 1860 Products of Industry Census, Fisher noted that he built 26 houses yearly. Unfortunately we cannot identify any of those houses. We do know that he owned and probably built some of the small homes in Chinatown that burned in the big fire of 1855. Besides building houses, he also served as the town's undertaker and provided coffins for burials. Providing lumber for mines and sluicing machines was a large part of his business.

Fisher died in 1861 at the early age of 34 from "the enlargement of the heart."

Big and Little Baltimore Ravines



John Fogarty

1829-1883

John Fogarty was one of the many Irish-born lured to California in late 1849 and early 1850. When he first arrived, he had a store in Michigan Bluff and was said to “be associated with Leland Stanford” when they both lived there. While he moved to Auburn in 1854 and ran a livery stable, he kept trying his luck at mining.

In the mid 1860s when the Central Pacific Transcontinental Railroad came into the area, Fogarty went to work for the company and stayed with them until his death. He was a road master and then was Yard Master in San Francisco.

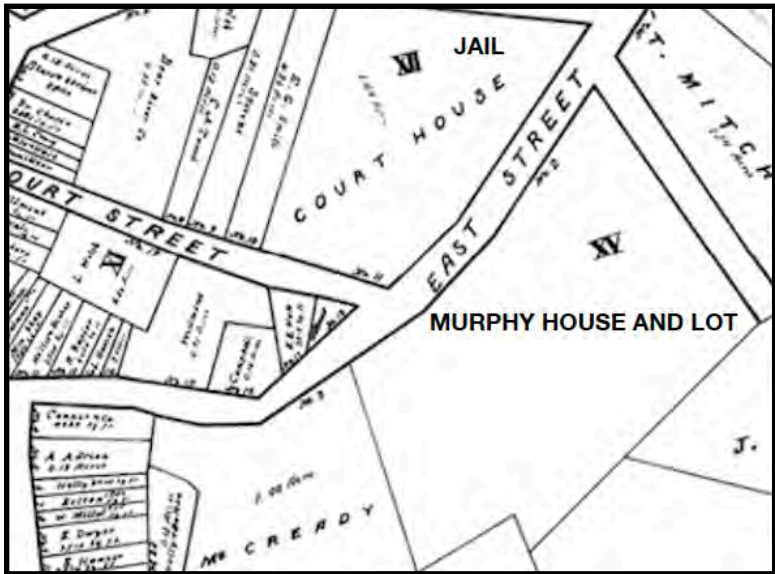
Fogarty owned a lot of property in Auburn some of which belonged to his wife, the widow Ann Duffy Murphy. Ann’s early life story is tragic. She was in California by at least 1852 with her first husband James Murphy and two daughters. They lived in Auburn and had a brick yard on 14 acres just north of today’s Chamberlain Avenue.

In 1858 her husband James was murdered by a neighbor in a minor land dispute. Ann was expecting her third child at the time. The murder of a highly regarded citizen so incensed the community that some 60 to 75 men attacked the jail, dragged Aaron Bracy, the axe wielding black man who had attacked Murphy, a short distance from town and hung him from a tree.

Ann married John Fogarty in 1860. In 1861, their twins, George and Emily Agnes were born. While Fogarty was off working on the railroad, Ann improved the land they owned (including the property of the murderer Bracy) and cultivated a large garden and vineyard.

John Fogarty died in 1883, Ann died sometime after 1900, the exact date is unknown.

The site of the murder of James Murphy



John Pendelton Gaines

1816 - 1879

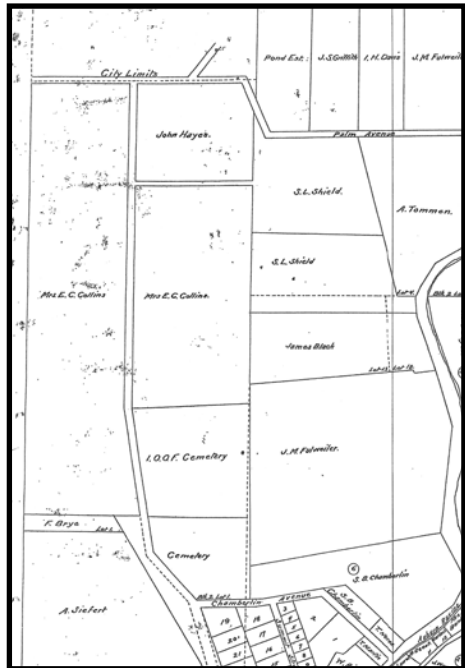
and

James Collins

1821-1891

These two men are united by marriage and by land ownership. Gaines came to California in 1849 leaving three children in Missouri. His wife Ann had died in 1844. Collins also came to California over the Plains in 1849. He had been born in Kentucky but moved to Missouri as a child. It is quite likely that the two traveled together for they both went to mining at Rough and Ready as soon as they arrived in California. When they left mining they both settled on Spanish Flat in about 1851 and established prosperous farms on the Flat near the present-day Auburn post office.

By 1907, the Gaines and Collins property was owned by Eliza Gaines Collins. Parts of the Cemetery property were once part of the larger parcel.



Collins and Gaines also mined on Spanish Flat, which was, in the early days, a rich gold producing area.

In 1862, John Gaines's daughter Eliza Jane made the trip around the Horn from Missouri to California. She likely traveled with her sister Lizzie and brother William. She was twenty years old. Little is known about her upbringing in Missouri after the death of her mother and her father's leaving for California. We also do not know if she knew James Collins back in Missouri but by 1868, when she was 26 and James was 47, they married in Auburn. They had four children.

Gaines bought and sold property around the Spanish Flat area. At his death in 1879 he owned at least 282 acres which his son William deeded to James Collins. The property was sold off over the years, and one month before his death in 1891, Collins deeded the last 160 acres to Eliza. That is the property shown on the 1907 map.

Gaines and Collins were prosperous farmers and early orchardists. Gaines was known to lend money to his neighbors when they were in need.

Eliza Jane Gaines Collins died in 1916 at age 72, an "ideal wife and mother."

Eliza Elliott Gibson

1820 (?) - 1872

Eliza Elliott is one of the most interesting women who came to Auburn early in the Gold Rush. She arrived in the spring of 1850 and was, by the account of John Boggs, one of only two women present at a dance in the Dry Diggings in early 1850.

Eliza, a widow, came to California via New South Wales (Australia) in February 1850. Eliza had been born in Ireland. She had three children and sometimes listed their birthplaces as England, sometimes as Australia and for her son William, she claimed on the 1850 census that he was born in Maryland. On later census rolls, William would state that he was born in Australia.

The family arrived in San Francisco on the ship *Victoria* with the crew in a state of mutiny. Ten men were arrested as soon as they landed. It must have been a miserable trip. The ship was crowded with over 270 people aboard and they were put on half rations as the supplies were running out.

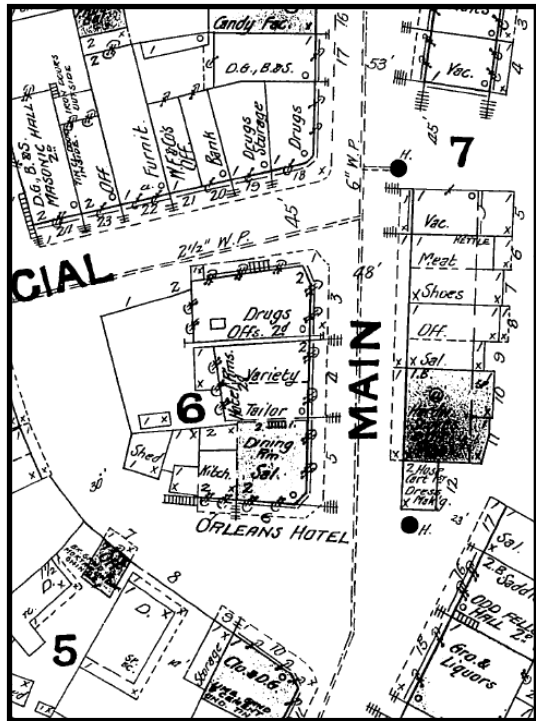
From the 1850 census, it appears that Eliza was here with James Elliott age 18, T. Elliott who was 25 and William Elliott who was 3 years old. Eliza was most likely pregnant at the time as Mary was born in 1850. It is not certain who James and T. Elliott were or how they were related, just that they are listed next to Eliza and William in the census report.

We don't know what prompted Eliza to come to Auburn at such an early date but by 1851 she had a county liquor license and was involved with Hudson House in the Empire Hotel. The Empire was a simple log structure with a frame house used for a dining room and a cook house in the rear.

Eliza held the mortgage to the hotel. For some time in 1854 she ran the Beehive Restaurant and Bakery. The Empire Hotel and the Bee Hive Bakery burned in the Great

Fire of 1855. In 1857 Eliza was the owner of the Orleans Hotel that had been rebuilt by the Gibson brothers after it also was destroyed by the 1855 fire. In 1858, Eliza married Jacob Gibson one of the stone masons who worked on the hotel. By the time of the 1860 census, her daughter Jane or possibly June lived in Auburn with Eliza, Jacob and her other children. In 1861, Eliza took advantage of the “Declaration of a Married Woman” to declare the Orleans Hotel as her property though she and Jacob continued to run it together.

*The Orleans
Hotel in Old
Town Auburn*



The Orleans Hotel burned several times over the years. The last time it burned in 1863, Jacob and his brothers rebuilt it across the street. There it would remain until it was demolished in 1959 to make way for a service station.

Eliza was known for the twenty or so hogs she owned and allowed to roam about town, sleeping on the sidewalks and basking in the sun along the roads. The local newspapers noted that the fire of 1863 “took care of the problem.”

After this fire, Eliza divorced Gibson and moved to Silver City, Nevada where she ran the Sierra Nevada Hotel. In 1867, Eliza remarried Jacob. They ran a hotel and a saloon in Silver City. She would die there in 1872.