

**PLACER COUNTY HISTORY 1882 excerpts pages 67-68
(describing the life of the first gold miners in Placer County)**

The mines, or diggings, opened in the Auburn Ravine by Claude Chana, in May, were not likely to remain neglected. Mr. Samuel Seabough in his sketches of the "Beginning of Placer Mining in California" says: "In the 'Dry Diggings' near Auburn, during the month of August, 1848, one man got \$16,000 out of five cart-loads of dirt. In the same diggings a good many were collecting from \$800 to \$1500 a day". The region soon acquired a name of "North Fork Dry Diggings", and in the summer or fall of 1849, when the settlement became more concentrated and stores were established, was given the appellation it now bears—Auburn. (. . .In the summer of 1848", says the "Placer County Directory" of 1861, "the principal tributaries of the American river were explored by a company of Oregonians and rich prospects obtained upon almost every bar, as far up the Middle and North Forks as they proceeded. . . ."Early in 1849, the system of washing the auriferous dirt with the common rocker was introduced upon the middle fork of the American River, and was regarded as a great improvement in gold mining. . . .During the summer, settlements were formed in many parts of Placer County, including Auburn and Ophir in the foot-hills; Rector's Bar, Stony Bar, Oregon Bar, and Poverty Bar, on the middle fork; and Barnes' Bar on the north fork of the American.

. . .During the winter of 1849-50, the population of the now rich and populous Townships five and six consisted of Dr. Todd and three or four companions at Todd's Ranch; Yankee Jim and his companions six in number, at Yankee Jim's Dry Diggings near where Forest Hill is situated; six young men, one of whom was named Lewis near the head of Mad Canyon; two men at Birds' store and about thirty persons at Stony and Rector's Bars. The whole white population amounted to not more than fifty persons.

. . .The rains, which had set in towards the last of December, continued to fall almost constantly until the second week in February, covering the mountains on either side of the stream to the depth of four feet with snow, blocking the trails, and so completely destroying every trace of them. . . .To add to the hardships of the little settlement of pioneer river miners, they not only had not comfortable house in which to live, but ere the winter was half gone, their supplies of pork, flour, coffee, sugar, salt, beans, etc were totally exhausted. . . .

(Note: Many stories such as this, are related in detail in the 1882 Thompson and West "*History of Placer County*" and the 1924 Lardner and Brock, "*History of Placer and Nevada County*."