



*Drytown Exchange Hotel around 1890, with George Worley Lemoin's name on the sign outside.
The McWayne store is next door.*

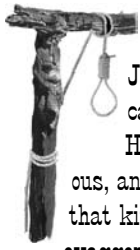
Chapter 1: Amador County — Jackson, Plymouth, Ione, Sutter Creek, Volcano, and vicinity

It is probable that some trappers occasionally visited the lower portions of Mokelumne river, though not often, for the Indians, who inhabited that portion of the country, watched with jealous eye the intrusion of strangers for any purpose whatever. The Hudson's Bay Company had a trail from French Camp to Oregon, which was most of the way through the tules, and of course far to the west of the present limits. As early as 1840, all attempts to raise cattle on the east side of the San Joaquin, had been an utter failure, the Indians invariably driving off the stock and destroying the ranches.

DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN AMADOR COUNTY. In the latter part of March, 1848, a man arrived in Stockton, then called

It does not appear that any number of men wintered here in 1848, though some of Stevenson's soldiers wintered at Mokelumne Hill. The first permanent white resident of which any account can be found is Louis Tellier. [His] first house was a log cabin covered with rawhides; he also had a large army tent which had been used in Mexico.





Joaquin commenced his career in this county.

His exploits are notorious, and like all events of that kind, are multiplied and exaggerated until the clearest sight can no longer distinguish the true from the fabulous. His first operations were to mount himself and party with the best horses in the country. Judge Carter, in 1852, had a valuable and favorite horse which for safety and frequent use was usually kept staked a short distance from the house. One morning the horse was missing. Cochran, a partner in the farming business, started in pursuit of the horse and thief. The horse was easily tracked. Coming to a public house kept by one Clark, he saw the horse, hitched at the door. Going in he inquired for the party who rode his horse, saying that it had been stolen. He was told he was a Mexican, and was then at dinner with several others. Clark, who was a powerful and daring man, offered to arrest him, and suiting the action to the word, entered the dining-room in company with Cochran, and, placing his hand on Joaquin's shoulder—for it was he—said: "You are my prisoner." "I think not," said Joaquin; at the same time shooting Clark through the head, who fell dead. A general fusillade ensued, in which one of the Mexicans was shot by the cook, who took part in the affair, Cochran receiving a slight wound. The Mexicans mounted their horses and escaped, leaving Carter's horse hitched to the fence.



Courtesy Library of Congress

Placer Mining at Volcano. Cleaning up the dump box, mid 1860s.

Tuleburgh, bringing with him specimens of scale-gold, from Sutter's mill. He informed the people there of the recent discoveries on the American river, the specimens confirming his report; whereupon, Captain Weber, catching a spark from the flame, fitted out a prospecting party. The fever was on them; haste and nuggets their watchwords; inexperience their companion, and failure the result, until they had reached Mokelumne river, where the Captain decided to make a more deliberate search, the result of which was the discovery of the first gold found in the section of country, that was afterwards known as the Southern mines. Owing to their more careful search and added experience gold was found north from this river, in every gulch and stream to the American river. Arriving at Sutter's mill, it was decided to commence mining at what was called afterward Weber's creek, near Placerville. As soon as he had got work on Weber creek well under way, he returned to Stockton and organized a party to explore the country south of the Mokelumne river. In a short time they returned with finer specimens than had been found at Coloma. A mining company was formed, which afterwards gave name to Woods creek, Murphy's creek, Angel's Camp, and other places. Then commenced the general working of the "Southern mines," the rush of miners, the immigration which built up the flourishing counties of Amador, San Joaquin, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and the changing of the world's commerce.

The Mokelumne river, the gulches at Drytown, Volcano, and Ione, were mined extensively in 1848. General Sutter and party tried it near the town of Sutter, but he was disgusted with the opening of a saloon near his works, and left the mines, never to return.

MOKELUMNE HILL IN EARLY DAYS. In early days Mokelumne Hill was reputed one of the liveliest places in the mines. It had the misfortune to be settled by a heterogeneous population—Yankees, Westerners, and Southerners, from the United States; and French, German, and Spanish, from Europe; and Chilenos and Mexicans. Death by violence seemed to be the rule. For seventeen successive weeks, according to Dr. Soher, of San Francisco, a man was killed between Saturday night and Sunday morning. Five men were once killed within a week. The condition of things became so desperate that a vigilance committee was resolved upon, which, however, did not continue in existence long. One man who was hung for stealing, confessed, just before his death, to having committed eight murders between Mokelumne Hill and Sonora. He was a Mexican, of powerful physique and desperate character. Shooting was resorted to on the most trivial occasions. Two strangers sat quietly taking a dinner at a restaurant, and talking with each other. A gambler

Placer mining in Volcano, the mine, mid 1860s.



Courtesy, Library of Congress



In the Winter of 1850-51 a party of four or five men were hunting deer in the mountains a few miles above Volcano. Venison being worth fifty cents a pound they could afford to take some risks. One day, while following a wounded deer, Askey discovered a party of Indians, whom, by their dress, he judged to be Washoes, who had the reputation of being much better fighters than the California Indians. They saw him about the same time, and, coming up, professed to be very friendly, wanting to shake hands, which he prudently declined. A conference, mostly by signs, ensued, in which both parties agreed to pursue the deer, Askey taking one side of the hill, the Indians the other. He did not follow the deer far, but made the very best time to the camp that his short legs would admit of. In the morning, reinforced by his companions, he made a reconnaissance in force, and, as he expected, found that the Indians had made an effort to cut him off, the tracks in the snow showing that they had followed him until they sighted the camp. The following day an old Indian came peering about, and, by signs, intimated that the bark and wood set around the hut would keep out arrows. Suspecting him of being a spy, they thought best to detain him until morning, when he was dismissed with an application of a number ten boot to his rear that accelerated his departure.