

# Philbrook



Joyce Jones

This book is dedicated to all those who have gone before us treasuring and preserving the great outdoors. We are all forever in the debt of these early pathfinders.

This is a privately printed book limited to 500 copies of which this is No. 48.

*Joyce Jones*

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My appreciation and thanks go to many friends who gave so generously of their time to make this little piece of history come to life. Through them I had the privilege of sharing their memories.

You are a Friend, and together  
We can give this world some sunshine.

Thanks go to Dorothy Andersen, Bill Attinger, Horace Brakebill, Velma Butler, Isabelle Campbell, W. H. Carter, Barbara Seifert Cotter, Toddy Dahleen, Evelyn Fox, Florence Horne, Freda Knotts, Maxine McCulloch, Darrel McEnespy, Helen Moore, Paradise Fact & Folklore, Cloyd & Agnes Pearce, George & June Petersen, Harold & Chris Richardson, Larry Richardson, Donna & Om Wraith, Mrs. E. O. Wraith.

Special appreciation to Barbara O'Dell Jackson for photographic reproduction of old pictures and the use of some of her own collection.

Edited by Ed Jones & David Jackson

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PREFACE

As in all efforts to gather facts and anecdotes relating to a time and place there will be differences of opinion in the memories of those familiar with the various events.

We regret that it was impossible to interview many more residents of the area. Perhaps at some later date this record may be added to by other interested parties. It is with much pleasure that we learn about the early days by way of the oral history preserved by families.

Efforts have been made to interview some of the people involved who have been active in this area for many years and to research some of the facts. Time dims our memories; each of us approaches an event from a different background and within a different framework. The object catching one person's attention may not be noticed by another individual.

To put a proper perspective on the memories of days past let us consider a family of campers coming to Philbrook Reservoir. The father may be a fisherman who will take note of the conditions of the lake and will watch for a place to launch a small boat. His wife will be scanning the campground, locating the restrooms and looking for a safe swimming area for the children. Teenagers will be eyeing the other young people and looking for trails to ride bikes.

We all see the same place but from a different frame of reference. Let us be kind to one another and together enjoy our remembrances and share our appreciation of all those who have gone before us to blaze the trails for recreation.

## PHILBROOK VALLEY

There is a magnetism which pulls you to the Philbrook Valley with its emerald jewel named Philbrook Lake, nestled among the pines high in the Sierras. The massive peaks of granite which form Sky High mountain on the south slope of Jones' Resort lure you. Add the picturesque, twisted mountain pines and cedars; Philbrook Creek itself or the numerous streams and surrounding high lakes, which are within easy hiking or motor biking distance. In spring and summer you'll delight in the profuse, delicate flowers dressed in all shades of red, yellow, blue, rose and purple. The summer days wear a mantle of intense blue skies occasionally decorated with puffs of clouds. The clearness of velvety night skies laced with stars form the illusion of them being almost within reach. When fall arrives the first frost turns the quaking aspens to brilliant yellow sentinels. On winter days the pristine, sparkling snows invite you to stay and play or merely enjoy in awe. These seasonal changes will call you back again and again.

To find this secluded, inviting playground you head east from the Sacramento Valley town of Chico. Motoring up the Skyway through Paradise you will pass through several small towns which were once important mining or sawmill centers. At Inskip, the site of the historical inn, the pavement ends. From there it is dirt and gravel leading to the Humbug Summit Road and finally Philbrook Road. Although remote and rough the trip is not without its rewards; vistas of pine and fir covered ridges, rock formations, views of distant Mt. Lassen, an occasional deer and an abundance of manzanita.

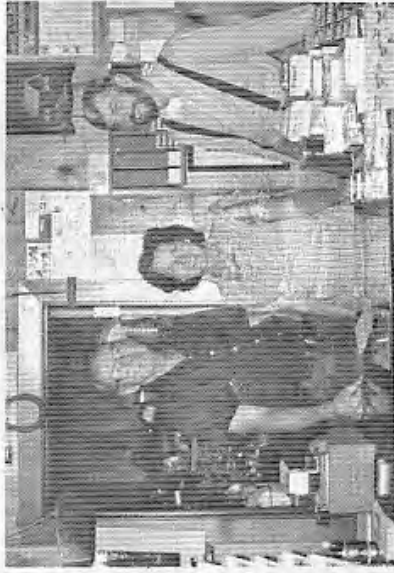
Here is peace and a quiet enhanced by birdsong and the whisper of the breeze through the trees. The air is fresh and pure and most of all there

is space--all around space--to hike, bike, swim, read a book and shed the tensions of life.

Enjoy!



Philbrook Lake as seen from Sky High  
Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson



Ed, Joyce and Grant Jones inside the Philbrook Store at Jones' Resort. Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson

Wishing you the kind of days you will look back on and say, Those were the days, because they were!

#### PHILBROOK LAKE

The beauty of a sky blue lake  
And closely wooded shore,  
Is something that one day will be  
That, that we know no more

Isn't it the grandest thing  
That we have had the chance to live it!  
And having had the joy bestowed  
T'isn't fear one day we'll leave it.

Take with us to our inner self  
To calm the troubled mind,  
Take with us our happy heart  
As other days we find.

There will be days of trouble,  
There will be days of strife,  
But always in our memory  
Are the lake-side days of our life.

For having had the pleasures  
Of nature's finest glory,  
We leave the legacy behind us  
For others to live the story.

The story of beautiful mornings  
Of a mirror-like cabin lake,  
The story of nature's wonders  
For our eyes to absorb and take.

Then too, there is the pleasure,  
Of seeing others grow,  
To repeat the days of happiness,  
That we were fortunate to know.

Those days beside the sky blue lake  
And closely wooded shore,  
No greater joy or legacy  
Could any man bestow.

William Attinger  
1972



Deer in the meadow. Photo by  
Barbara O'Dell-Jackson

Peace is seeing a rainbow and knowing  
Who to thank!

## The High Lakes of Butte and Plumas Counties<sup>1</sup>

Until 25 or 30 years ago, no one had ever heard of the "high lakes". Oh, yes, they were there, but to us who had been enjoying them for these many years, they were just "the lakes". I presume that our new residents on the Ridge, learning that this area was quite remote and at the highest elevation in Butte County, properly named them the High Lakes. During the early part of the century few people had a motor vehicle suitable for travel in this area, with sufficient clearance, four-wheel drive or more than three forward gears.

Leaving the Humbug Road a quarter mile above Chaparral (this was a stage stop three and one-half miles above Inskip which burned long ago) the visitor turned right, descended to the West Branch of the Feather River where a tidy campground (Ritchie's Camp) was maintained by the U. S. Forest Service. Here campers would stand in amazement gazing skyward at the immense ponderosa pines and white firs and wonder why no trees of comparable size were elsewhere to be seen. This stand of trees amidst a second growth was missed by a devastating fire in 1929, which had started at Philbrook and burned west toward the canyon until it was fanned northward by an up-canyon draft, by-passing the grove in the campground area. Jeffery pines and a flat of lodge pole pines, beyond which about a mile and one-half, appeared the first body of water. Thus one arrived at Philbrook Lake, which is a man-made reservoir. (See Map pages 92-93)

Today, as shown by the map, we travel on Humbug Road to Cuddleback Flat. Here a paved road now leaves Humbug and joins the other road to Philbrook. Several

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission of the Paradise Fact and Folklore Assoc. Written by H. L. Brakebill.

summer homes have been constructed along the north shore of the lake and in late summer when the Pacific Gas and Electric Company releases the water to increase the flow into West Branch, boat docks are left high and dry. About one-half mile beyond the Lake is a sharp upward swing in the road to the Philbrook store. After visiting here and enjoying a drink of cold refreshing water coming from a spring by a pipe, heed the advice that I (and I believe the store people also) give you; turn around. I have never seen such a road as this. During the winter it is nothing but a creek bed with ruts two feet deep and boulders just as high.

Return to the other end of Philbrook Lake past the dam and turn to the right where you will be welcomed by a well-constructed wide road, a few small rocks, but nothing serious. On it, turn right, to the east. After about two and one half miles, swing to the right. On the left is the Carr Mine property. Between Philbrook and Lotts Lake, winter snows linger late into spring. High up on the moss-covered fir trunks (north side), the summer traveler will observe deep blazes now and then 15 or 20 feet above the ground as if someone of Paul Bunyan's stature had sunk his double bit axe high up into the tough brown bark. Later he learns that some winter visitor on skis--or in more recent years on a snowmobile--had marked the snow depth.

Having traveled three miles east of Philbrook, you will pass a short distance from the south side of Lotts Lake. Drive slowly and catch your first glimpse of the first natural lake, the deepest azure jewel of the nearly score of lakes in the area. Look quickly, as it is not directly on the road. Lotts Lake received its name from Judge Lott, an influential civic leader during the early days in Oroville. It lies peacefully along the rim of Chips Creek Canyon, and is of glacial origin. A small stream, only a foot or two wide, trickles out of the northeast corner.

Gurgling through a bush-rimmed rocky crevice, the water falls away in a rush down a nearly vertical drop for hundreds of feet into the rugged canyon. A slight movement of the earth's surface here would lower this lake quickly. Lotts Lake has been sound-ed (some 200 feet from the west end) at over 300 feet deep. The Forest Service map shows that the northern shore is national forest, while the southern half is privately owned. Questions rising through the years regarding ownership have been resolved to the extent that a few picturesque summer cabins dot the southern shore.

Beautiful Lotts Lake sits in a bowl of granite. Photo by H. L. Brakebill.



Leaving Lotts Lake, you travel less than a mile over a slight knoll until Spring Valley Lake sparkles ahead of you, a little south by southeast. One of the lakes not named for a person, it glistens in the early sunlight just as it has since the time in geologic history when it too, was scooped out from Mother Earth's changing surface. Nearly round in shape, Spring Valley Lake isn't very deep. This could be called a family lake where, especially on the south side, an improved road crosses an infant stream which is the beginning of Rock Creek. Here vacationing valley children can chase baby trout as they scurry to hide under flat rocks or marginal bushes.

Spring Valley Lake sparkling in the sun. Photo by W. Carter



Rock Creek deserves more description as it begins its journey through gullies, meadows and canyons. Its volume is increased by dozens of tributaries, some calm, some rushing in, until it reaches the North Fork of the Feather River below Belden in Plumas County. Here it plays its part in the state's water system, providing power for homes and factories as well as irrigation water for the valley and noisy cities far below.

From Spring Valley Lake each summer, capable fishermen are able to select their limits of eastern brook trout, beautifully colored--green and red-tinged and firm.

One mile and one-half directly south of Lotts and Spring Valley Lakes, the Rock Creek trail runs a short distance alongside Bear Lake. At this point Bear Lake is very easily missed. Years ago, one-half mile below this section of the trail, I met four men from Oroville carrying a heavy boat. They were much disappointed and very weary. They had been attempting to find Bear Lake and had gone right by it. The trail from the road near Spring Valley Lake to Bear Lake isn't really steep--a 5% grade. It passes through a small meadow. Through the years I have spent many enjoyable hours at this isolated, and to

me, very special lake. A creek flows through the meadow (Henry's Flat on the map) and empties into Bear Lake. The flat appears unimpressive on the map, but upon entering the lake, the creek drops over 200 feet. This lake is a small body only about 75 yards across and nearly round. Here is a sad story; this lake is dying. The soil around it is black, deep and rich. On the shallow east side, various grasses and other vegetation have begun to grow. At a lower level than others of the high lakes, the water here is warmer and tules have rooted and grown. At one time the lake's surface was at least a third larger. In not too many decades it will have become a mountain meadow as many other small ponds have done. The water flows from the lake into Rock Creek.

On the north shore of Bear Lake, the water from the stream flows into a pond through a clump of willows. The fresh water from the creek, and insect life from the vegetation, make this a choice fishing spot. Some of these fish were 16 and 18 inches long, and resembled rainbow in shape, but were lighter in color. People told me that they were native trout.

Returning to our journey to the high lakes from the road at Spring Valley Lake, continue southeast. As the road makes a loop, you arrive at the forks in the road. The right fork turns toward Campbell and Long Lakes, the other or left extends northeasterly to areas marked Lott and Morris. These are not lakes, but are mines at the end of the road. The road really ends; continuing a few more feet would take you tumbling down a drop of hundred of feet into rugged Chips Creek Canyon.

Years ago, a Mr. Hodges lived alone and mined the area. To obtain supplies he walked the long steep trail to Belden on Highway 70. After a short rest he returned up the steep hill, five and one-half miles--a strenuous journey. One June day, "Do Hodges asked Gus Pittman, his son Joe and me, "Do

you folks want some good fishing?" You can imagine the answer. He led us to the northeast corner of Morris Lake, just a few yards down a well-worn trail from his cabin. He unlocked a chain that held an old boat leaning snug against a gnarled tree. The boat was standing on end, an excellent method of preserving a boat during deep winter snows by preventing the weight of snow from crushing it.



Morris Lake - A crescent,  
Photo by Gerald Stephens

Fishing that day was exciting, using Dave Davis spinners. There were very few moments that morning when one of us wasn't playing a fish. The map shows the peculiar shape of Morris Lake, a crescent. Many dead sunken logs were on the upper curve, and I believe that German brown trout were feeding on grubs here. We caught rainbow on the lower curve, where the water was very clear and the rainbows deciding to rise to choice odonatas hovering over the surface. These were beautiful fish, 18 inches and over. Returning the boat, and leaning it back against the tree, we thanked Hodges. He was a kind, friendly and lonesome man. Today he lies in a simple grave near his cabin in the environment he loved best.

We packed our fish in a bank of snow and returned to Stirling the following day. At home we boasted about "how great was the fishing". Several immediately began making plans to spend the coming holiday at



Morris Lake. Two weeks later, over the Fourth of July, 21 of us from town returned to our lucky lake. And in the three days, those 21 people caught exactly three fish.

Back to the journey to the high lakes, having returned down the fork of the road that led to Morris Lake, you take the road sloping sideways toward Campbell, Long, Grassy and Saddle Lakes. Campbell Lake was, fifty years ago, quite different from any of the lakes we have been visiting. At that time many cattle grazed along the flat muddy shore. After sundown one could clap his hands and the lake would come to life. A million or more catfish would be near the surface feeding. A sudden noise and they would startle. The lake seemed to be experiencing a rain storm. Poor little catfish, not over five inches long, competing for their very lives for the clouds of insects that hovered over the surface at sundown. The few emaciated trout also competed, deformed, starved and away from their proper habitat. A 20 inch fish, wrinkled with age would weigh scarcely a pound having had to battle for life in the over-sized mud puddle. The catfish, being so starved, would nibble at even a bare hook. Children from families camped at the other beautiful lakes in the area would catch these little victims of human error and carry them in water-filled containers back to camp. Since mother would not be impressed with their size they would be tossed back into the lake. From this manner of infestation, many of our high lakes have had to be poisoned by deoxygenating the waters of these misplaced fry.

From the map one sees that Campbell Lake drains into Long Lake, Having a wooded shore on the east, a grassy meadow on the opposite bank, clearer water with a channel extending through the center, Long is more inviting than Campbell, and a safe place for children. There is good fishing both early and late in the season.



Campbell Lake with Long Lake in the distance. Photo courtesy of W. H. Carter.

Grassy Lake is at the end of the road. The map has roads shown by a double dotted line, and trails marked with a single dotted line. During the summer of 1941, I spent three months directing a trail crew improving the trail system in this area and working out of Grassy Lake. Just prior to crossing the outlet of the lake I placed a sign reading, "Indian Writing, 1/4 mile". Authorities informed us that the writings on a huge granite rock had been placed there by an Indian Tribe from Arizona during the last years of the 19th century, camping there late one fall. The area of the writings is about 1/3 of an acre in size, gently sloping three degrees in a southeasterly direction.



Indian Picture Writing now very faint. Photo by Don Pickett.

Interpreters decided the Indians had recorded the weather conditions during the period they were there. Exfoliation had obliterated the signs until they were barely visible. A reporter, doing a story for a newspaper, retraced the signs, marking them with white chalk so that they could be photographed. Recently someone told me that my sign was down after nearly forty years, lying beside the road.

RAIN



LIGHTNING



SNOW



Grassy Lake is an example of a vanishing lake, much more advanced than Bear Lake. Only a few small open areas prevent this from being completely covered by vegetation. A few trout remain, but how and where could one cast a line? This lake has a stream flowing from it (known to fishermen as Studhorse Creek) that has quite good stream fishing; the flow is considerable since three bodies of water enter the lake, one of which is from Saddle Lake. Saddle is a beautiful sight, nearly round. A small stream enters it from the east through a small grassy meadow--the whole situated on a picturesque bench from which the lake receives its name. On the northern shore a high rock reflects from the clear, deep (about 30 feet) water. Above the rock, a distant high peak gives this little lake a particularly gorgeous setting.

While stationed that summer at Grassy Lake I would make a five minute walk to fish from the grassy meadow on the east shore of Saddle. I would relax from a day on the trail, my pole resting in a forked stick. Those Saddle Lake eastern brook trout--they wouldn't nibble--they didn't strike--they would just swallow my cluster of eggs and run (that is, if a fish runs).



Long Lake on the Left and Saddle Lake on the right.  
Photos courtesy of W. H. Carter.

The only other lakes that had been stocked at that time were one and one-half miles directly east of Morris Lake--Chips Lakes, one flowing into the other and then down into Chips Canyon. One morning from his cabin at Morris Lake, Mr. Hodges pointed them out to us. Keeping a lone tree that he told us about in our view as we climbed over and around boulders, we located them. But fishing was poor. There were very few fish, and those were large ones because they had devoured the smaller fish. In a situation such as this, lakes are poisoned by deoxygenating the air in the water and then replanting with fry or catchable fish all about the same size.

According to the map, and it is true, the lakes Mud, Murphy and Oliver are only small ponds. They are shallow, often freezing solid during the winter months and not supporting any fish life. Their margins are muddy and grassy, and for the outdoorsman who enjoys a different recreation, the area provides interest. Mama mallards care for their adored squadrons of fluffy offspring, gliding in and out among the bouyant water lilies in shallow little bays, nibbling here and tugging there at tender blades of grass that only yesterday protruded above the water. Cracker-jack or plump hotdog never tasted better to a school

boy than this fare to the ducklings. At dusk during later September and through early fall, the evening flight from the fertile valley fields of Biggs, Richvale and West Gridley whistles overhead as wideon, teal, canvas back and sprig return with their craws bulging with rice. They disturb the tranquility of the pond as they come in to a noisy landing.

Three miles north of Morris Lake, across Chips Canyon, are three small planted lakes: Frog, Saucer and Green Island. At present the only road suitable for vehicles takes off from the Humbug Road, and some lakes are reached only by trails. There have been two thoughts voiced by lovers of nature in regards to roads. One group desires to keep this a "primitive area", limiting its use through the difficulty of travel and thus keeping the region more naturally wild and beautiful. The other body wants to improve the roads so that more persons may utilize and enjoy the offerings of the high lakes.



Sign on the High Lakes Road. Photo courtesy Don Picket.

### Mrs. Coin Knotts

Mrs. Coin Knotts met me at the door of her pleasant home at West Lindo Avenue in Chico. She lives in what was once the home place for the Petersen family. I found Mrs. Knotts to be a very gracious, articulate lady and this is the story she related to me.

"My grandmother on my mother's side was a Lynch by marriage and a Meline by birth. Grandmother Meline was the only Meline born in the United States, the other family members were born in France. Her next older brother, Joseph Meline, mined on Philbrook Creek and had a beautiful little cabin similar to a Swiss chalet. The Lynch side of the family included Bill Lynch, who was head of the Diamond Match operation at Stirling City. He was a cousin to Grandfather Lynch and also the administrator of the Lynch estate.

Grandfather Christopher Lynch was born in Ireland and at fourteen years of age went to sea as a cabin boy. Somewhere along the way, it is assumed, he jumped ship and landed in San Francisco as many others did in the early days. The next reference finds him mining at the forks of Little Butte Creek.

My mother was born in Oregon City and at about four years of age the family moved to Cherokee. The Lynch family was to have a family reunion in Paradise in June of 1983 and a relative visited me previous to this with family albums and documents. Among them was even the particulars of grandfather Lynch's will.

The Philbrook area was named for a family named Philbrook but I don't know what they did in the area as they never constructed any housing that I know about. I'm sure they didn't stay

any length of time. One time, however, the Philbrooks came back attempting to trace the Philbrook name.

When my family first arrived at Philbrook around 1877, my mother was about four and one-half years old. She told me she remembered the family was able to go as far as the West Branch of the Feather River where the road ended. From there on she and her older-sister rode in what were called meat sacks balanced on each side of a very gentle horse. The two older children rode horseback and Grandmother Lynch carried a babe in arms. The family cookstove, which was a treasured item for the summer camp, was placed upside down on a gentle mare to make the trip into Philbrook Valley. It was quite an operation to bring everything on up from the West Branch for the summer cattle camp. Those who ran cattle on the summer range drove them up from the valley, camped all summer to supervise them and then drove them down in the fall.

Apparently that first summer the cabin pictured was built to house the family. It was located in what is now the lake basin but at that time it was a lush green meadow along Philbrook Creek. Also that first year, according to my mother, Grandfather Lynch and two hired men constructed a road down to the West Branch from Philbrook. They also stocked Philbrook Creek with small trout that they transported from Fish Creek in containers of some sort. There was a large waterfall between the West Branch and Philbrook Creek which the fish were unable to scale. My mother remembered that the children were not allowed to fish the creek for three years, until the fish became established.

Some of the other families who ran cattle in the area at that time were the Crowells and the Joneses. Hannah Crowell was Mr. Jones' sister and she still retained her Welsh accent. I always remember that she wore voluminous skirts and rode her horse side-

saddle. She rode a rather small horse. Because she was quite a sizeable lady with those flowing skirts, I always expected the horse to tip over but of course it never did.

My mother related that Hannah Crowell asked Grandfather Lynch for permission to use his cattle corrals to hold their cattle. He granted her permission with the stipulation that when the cattle were moved out all the fences would be put back in their original condition. Apparently this wasn't done but the next year she again wanted to use the corrals. My mother didn't think much of the fact that Hannah had failed to keep her part of the bargain so she released all the Crowell cattle and drove them off. I remember seeing Hannah Crowell many years later and wondered if she remembered what my mother had done with the cattle.

The Terrill family drove cattle from Oroville to the summer range at Philbrook. Besides their cattle interests they maintained a store and a hotel. Their building was of two stories with the store on the lower floor and the rooms above used as a hotel. They also had a post office, (or at least you could get your mail there), a cabin or two which they rented out in the summer, and a livery stable. These were located above where the dam is now. There were quite a number of people coming and going then; some were miners and some were cattle people. Freight wagons came in periodically with supplies.

Every Saturday night the fellows would come down from the Sky High Mine to socialize at the Terrill's Hotel where there would be drinks served. Sometimes we would hear them in high spirits calling back and forth to each other as they wound their way back up the mountain to the mine.

One time they had what they called Ladies Day at Gordon Graham's Sky High Mine. They were doing

what they called a 'clean up', and the ladies were invited to take part. The ladies used whatever was available to pick out the little flakes of gold. These included hair pins and sharp sticks. My mother got a small vial full which then amounted to two or three dollars. My brother, George Petersen, was a very small child at the time so Gordon Graham carried him piggy back down from the mine to the valley. Years later when George was a grown man, Gordon Graham would relate how he had carried George down the mountain.

There were many mines in the Philbrook section of Butte County at that time. There were Butte King and Butte Queen, which were gold mines and a silver mine at Lotts Lake, according to my mother. One time we went to one called 'Cash Entry' and I'm not sure whether it was 'Cash' or 'Cache'. At that mine we saw a small boy watching us out of the window of a cabin and we learned he had been at the mine for three years so he had not seen any ladies for a long time.

The first year the dam was built, about 1907, the dam washed out. Some of the boulders you see on the West Branch were washed down at that time. My uncle, Sewell Van Gooden, worked on the first dam. He recalled it was all done by horses with fresnos or scoop shovel type equipment. It was his opinion that since it was rather late in the season when some of the soil was scooped up it was already partially frozen and didn't compact very well. There was a caretaker on the site who was supposed to release the water from the spillway if conditions looked threatening. Apparently in February there was a warm rain or just unseasonably warm weather and the dam was unable to hold the extra water. In any event, it gave way and this caused flooding all along the waterways and proved to be very serious for Oroville and Gridley.

In 1925 the dam was rebuilt and many of the buildings had to be moved as the lake formed. I

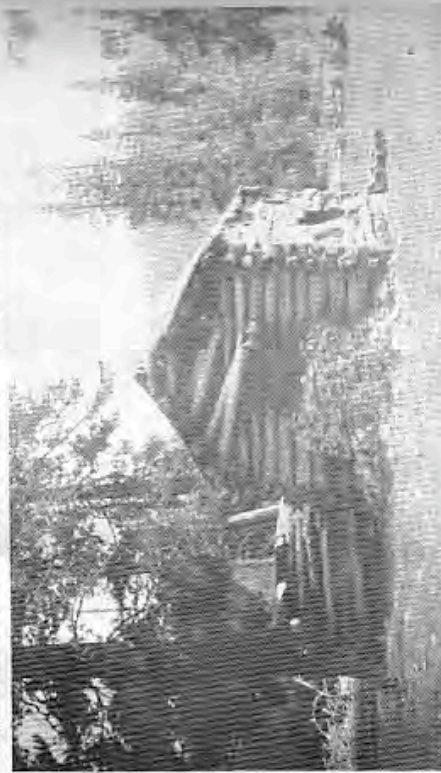
remember in the area where the Forest Service had a campground there was a man and his Indian wife who sold fishing supplies and rented boats. I think they had a rather limited amount of other items for sale. They had a little boy and by then I had married and had a baby boy also. Whenever we would ride down to the lake our baby would fall asleep and be tucked away out of sight. The Indian lady would always be walking back and forth, back and forth, and finally I realized she wanted to see our baby. When she looked at my son, she said he was the whitest baby she'd ever seen. Of course, since he was blond, he did look very white.

After my brother George married, he and June had the place which is now known as Jones' Resort (formerly Willing's Resort). The two redwood trees in the upper meadow were planted by June Petersen. My father always believed that to celebrate a particular event, one should plant a tree and so June carried on that tradition. The lumber for those early buildings at that location was taken from the Petersen home place, which was a two-story home on West Lindo Avenue in Chico. All the reclaimed lumber was hauled to Philbrook. The old green cabin on that property is no longer there but the storage shed still stands.

The old cabin had bear tooth marks on the knotty pine cupboards, up about six feet, and also on the outer door. The bear entered and ate a two gallon container of shortening and sixty pounds of dried prunes all in one night. We often laughed about that bear with sixty pounds of prunes in his system tearing through the hills.

Later with our two children, we planned a trip to the Petersen cabin. We decided to take them on a real campout before going to the cabin. When I was a girl we always passed a nice area in a Tamarack grove as you came down from Morris Lake.

My father often said, 'Wouldn't this be a nice place to camp?'. But we were always scooting home and didn't get to camp there. This was the place my husband and I took the children and set up a proper camp and did all the traditional things. We had a campfire and cooked our meals over it and slept out under the night sky. The next morning my husband went fishing at Rock Creek. June and George and their son, Bob (with the mule, Molly) were somewhere in the area. My son, Allan, took a shovel and went off on his own. He was about five years old. My daughter and I were doing up the breakfast dishes when we heard Allan screaming. Of course, we started running toward him while trying to figure out what could be the trouble. We found him up to his neck in water in an old prospecting hole about the size of a bathtub. After we had pulled him out, calmed him down and sat him in the sun to dry, an elderly gentleman came by on horseback. His name was Elias Jones and he took on the task of filling up the dangerous hole with Allan's shovel. I don't know what he was in the area for at the time but we have always appreciated his concern and helpfulness."



The Petersen cabin which sat in the lake basin. Picture taken in the early 1900's. Courtesy Petersen family.

### George Petersen

One of the earliest travelers to Philbrook Valley is George Petersen and I had the privilege of talking with George in the stone room of their cabin at Philbrook. That room has a lovely fireplace, in front of which is a tiger skin rug. Usually June has brought lilies or some other flower from the valley to sit in the sunlight on the window sill. Out that window one sees the many sizes and shapes of trees in the forested area around the cabin. The following are but a few of the many memories George has collected in over seventy years of Philbrook summers.

"My grandparents originally ran cattle in the valley and I can remember coming in with my mother when I was about three years old in 1906. At that time our cabin was located in what is now the center of Philbrook Lake. It would now be covered with about fifty feet of water, assuming that the lake is about sixty feet deep. At that time Philbrook Creek meandered through the little valley and a small summer community was fairly busy with the mining ventures of that day. I also remember the old hotel which was in the area now covered with water. The hotel was mainly for the people of the country; miners and cattlemen of that time. All along the way from Chico and over through the Humbug Valley there were hotels or inns for the overland traveler and most of them had livery stables for the horses, which were the only means of travel then. There was a hotel at Coutelenc, one at Powellton, a couple at Inskip, one at Chapparral and various others scattered through the Humbug Valley on the route to Chester. These were located at intervals of about five or so miles along the way. The old hotel here at Philbrook was moved before the dam went in. It sat at its new location unused for an awfully long time after the dam was built. People just pulled lumber off of it as they wanted. It sat on the north

shore about where the old campground was but there is no sign of it now. There were a few other cabins, one of which was built by a Mr. Frank who grazed cattle in here too. It was located in a flat area alongside the spring that feeds into Philbrook Creek just below the present day store. It was beside the jeep trail which was the only route to the 'high lakes' and that ridge was called 'Frank's Grade'.

I also remember that there was a store located where the Philbrook dam face is now. It was moved when the dam was put in and operated for some time below the dam.

Johnnie Thompson from Thompson's Hotel over at Powellton used to run a meat wagon into the valley for the miners and cattlemen. Mr. Thompson would stop at all the hotels and any camps along the way to sell fresh meat and maybe some other supplies to them. Other old freight wagons were pulled with three or four teams of horses and they had a chain that ran down the full length between the teams. When the horses came to a corner they were trained to step over the chain and pull so that the wagon wheels would not hang up on the corners of the road which had many sharp and dangerous curves. When the road straightened out again they would step back over the chain in line again. The wagons were also equipped with bells so that they could be heard by other wagons on the road.

Some of the families that I remember from those early times at Philbrook were the Wards, the Terrills, Hannah Crowell, Jim Duffy, Katy Robinson, Mr. Graham, Judge Lott, Joe Meline and the Ford Family who ran the hotel at Chapparral. I've known five generations of Fords. The ones who ran the hotel were great, great, grandparents and related to the present Fords who have a cabin at Philbrook.

The fellow named Jerry Trapp was a small, wiry

little man. He was very old and since I was a small child he seemed even older. I remember that the fellow had a peculiar white eye and now I know that it was probably a cataract. Anyhow, the story goes that he was gunning for Judge Lott because of a dispute over some wages. I don't know how the matter was settled but Judge Lott was thought to be particularly scarce at that time, not wanting to encounter Mr. Trapp.

The dam was put in about 1906 and it washed out that same winter. They were moving the dirt for the dam with horses and fresnos and it took an immense amount of dirt but the water over-ran it with the snow run-off, raged down the West Branch and caused a flood at Oroville. June and I were reading an obituary about a man who had been carried up in a tree as an infant by his mother during an Oroville flood. The man's age and the time of the year check out with the time of the flood from the dam washout.

I was only a small child but I remember that old man Graham carried me up the mountainside when the miners had ladies day. All the ladies were allowed to scrape for gold on the bedrock. You could see the gold and Mrs. Terrill had trowels and she managed to get quite a bit. My mother and sister picked up particles and put them in a vial and I thought it was about twenty dollars worth but my sister says it wasn't that much. This was at the old Sky High Mine and was just gold on the surface. At that time the miners could use the hydraulic method of mining and in the spring they brought water in over a dirt flume which is still in evidence along the face of the mountain. The miners had a lingo all their own and once when I shared a meal with them, I heard them say 'please pass the strawberries', well, I thought I would like some of those also, and so asked for some only to discover that this was the old standby

of the mining meal--beans.

There were a number of mines being worked at that time. Besides the Sky High Mine, there was Carr Mine, Butte King and Butte Queen. If you hike up around the high lakes and off the beaten paths you can see evidence of prospector holes having been dug. My mother knew which were real mines and which were just prospect holes that were used for investment purposes. The Carr Mine is the only one still being worked and at one time it was really producing gold in quantity.

My mother told me that she and her sister took two Frenchmen, who came in and asked her father where there was a good prospect for gold and he pointed up to Carr Ridge. She and her sister loaded the Frenchmen's dunnage up and took them up there. That was nearly a hundred years ago and that mine has been worked nearly constantly since that time.

From 1906 until 1926 the mining seemed to run out and most of the cattle grazing also. However, my uncle, Mr. Van Gooden, ran stock in Philbrook and at that time it was just like having your own private park. The fishing was tremendous with the limit being fifty trout and of course, other game, such as deer were plentiful. I have really fished this area over the years. Fishing was so easy those days that we would throw them back. We weren't nearly as good fishermen then as we are now. About this time I began courting June and were married in 1927.

June and I spent the early summers at Philbrook in a cabin at what is now known as Jones' Resort. That cabin was built out of the lumber from our home place in Chico where my sister now lives. The cabin was knotty pine and had a long sleeping porch on it. About 1938 the property was purchased by Leo Willing and then we leased a lot from P G & E and began to build another cabin. We started the main cabin about

1938 and by that time we were parents of three boys. We then decided to add on what we call the stone room. This is made entirely from the native stone that is so plentiful here. It is a beautiful room but it was really sort of comical because we didn't know anything about masonry. We just picked stones with flat sides on them because we didn't know how to cut them. Once in awhile we would take a sledge hammer and bounce it off a large rock and take what we got out of it. The children had the task of gathering rocks every morning and then afternoon was play time. June was in charge of the fireplace and it was built right along with the walls, otherwise the concrete would leak out. We had leveling lines all around and once in awhile we'd prod June to hurry up as we couldn't proceed unless everything was done on a level at a time. We would put up a rick of rocks a day and pour the space full of concrete. On the window sills we used a flat type of rock, a sort of slate. The windows had to be put in right along with the wall and the first one was a real chore as we set it in whole. Later we learned we could put the bottom in and it had a little metal fin so that after it was secure you could insert the window and that was much easier. I got the pattern for the joists and rafters from A. J. Lucas and put those up myself. When the stone room was all completed we saw an article in a magazine outlining how you build with stone. We found we had done everything right even though we learned as we went along.

About 1937 we got into water sports with an aqua plane. The gals sat around for a couple of seasons waiting for us fellows to break our necks and finally, it looked like so much fun that they decided to try it. We've been at water sports ever since. We bought water skis about 1949 and according to the instructions you were to start by standing on the bottom of the lake in about two feet of water. We found that when the boat took off you



would go about thirty or forty feet and you would still be on the bottom. So we figured it out for ourselves. The fellow who wrote the instructions must have been interested in a purely journalistic effort because you couldn't make his instructions work. I guess we have taught probably 1500 or more people to water ski over the years at the lake.

My most unforgettable experience is hard to pick out as there have been so many. However, one in particular stands out in my memory. There were several fellows with me on a duck hunting trip up at Campbell Lake. There were four ducks down, three close to the shore and one far out in the lake. One of the fellows shed his clothes and insisted on swimming out for the birds. I told him to just get the close ones and the other far out one would drift in later and could be retrieved easier. But the swimmer threw the three close by ducks onto the bank and promptly took off to get the far bird. He reached the duck and found himself too tired to return and started screaming for help. I ran around looking for a suitable stick to tow him to shore with and struck out to help him. I managed to calm the man and make him turn over on his back and hold on to the stick like a good fellow. He did, and I towed him to the shore. He was extremely exhausted, cold and of course, frightened as we all were. It was really a sobering experience for all of us and the extremely cold weather contributed to the problem.

Of course, no story would be complete without a bear tale or two. We've had our share of bear sightings over the years. We used to rig up a line out back attached to a box with choice, smelly garbage in it. This line ran into the house and was connected to a bell that would ring when something disturbed it. Then when the bell rang, everyone would pile out of bed and on hands and knees, with flashlights, we would crawl out to where we could get a good look at the bear. There would be maybe ten or twelve people

in camp all crawling around the house with cameras and flashlights.

One time June had brought a new cover up for the water cooler, which was outside the cabin. In the morning it had a big gash in it. She was exclaiming about the bear and our son, Bob, who was sleeping outside, showed us the bear prints on his bed. The bear had landed on the bed and because it had springs on it this added some height to the bear's leap and he went down the mountain side on his rear much faster than he had planned.

We had winter time adventures also. One time we skied in from Stirling City and spent the night at the Inskip Inn, then went on the next day. We went along cross country fashion but on regular Alpine skis so whenever we came to a downhill slope we would fall off as we were too inexperienced to guide them and miss the trees. One other time we walked in with the Moores from Inskip and ran into new snow. The fresh snow was about a foot deep in the beginning and one of our party had a pair of snowshoes which we used to break trail. We were all in pretty good condition but by the time we got to the dam we had become pretty desperate. However, we made it in to the cabin, out of pure necessity, I guess. Other winter fun was when Leo Willing had his snowcat and he would pull us along behind it on skis. When the snow is ten to fifteen feet deep you can go all over and not worry about the stumps or rocks. One time Leo brought a group in to stay in the store building during a winter week end. It took many hours to get there. Then we had to get into the building by an upstairs window as the snow was so deep.

Another time we came in over the snow with the Ambauers in an old Star automobile which was converted into a snowmobile of sorts. We ran into a bank and twisted and bent one of the axles. We ran

the tracks off at least a dozen times. We finally built a big fire and put the axle in it and got it red hot. Then we put it on the floor and beat it out straight and put it back on the car again. Needless to say it worked.

One winter June and I and some other family members came in during the snow season and we had to dig down to the second story window in our cabin. When we shoveled the snow away from the window we had to pitch it up and over our heads and it got to be so high we couldn't pitch it any more. We finally got inside and found that the water had backed up under the roof flashing and ran down the wall by the fireplace. There it had frozen into a solid sheet of ice on the stone wall. We shoveled off the roof as much as we could to lighten the load."

George & June Petersen  
Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson.



Two Good Samaritans,  
George & June taking  
Christmas dinner to  
Grant Jones, winter  
1982. Photo by Jones



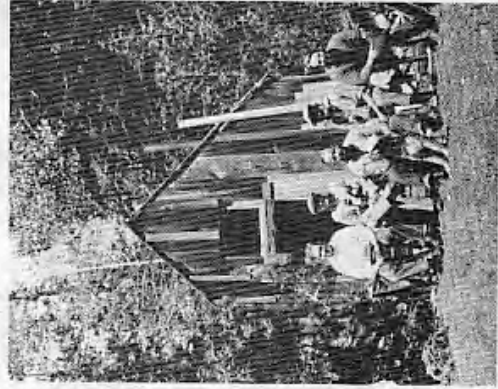
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### The Wraith Family

After we had enjoyed a pleasant Sunday Brunch at the home of Donna and Om Wraith, we were allowed to share in the many memories of the Wraith family's many seasons at Philbrook Lake.

"It was roughly about 1933 or '34 that my family began camping at the West Branch of the Feather River. Everyone who could would move up to the mountains during the summer to escape the valley heat. My dad, E. O. Wraith, was a game warden and could work from the mountain area as well as from the valley so he moved the family up to the mountains where we camped out for the summer. It was while we were camped at the West Branch that we became acquainted with George and Kate Petersen. The next summer we went on into Philbrook and stayed in a little cabin just below where the Petersens had a cabin. It was located near the old jeep road just at the base of the hill and if you look carefully there you can still see the old foundation stones. It is right along the road that passes an immense dead pine tree just before you get to the store. The cabin was perhaps ten by twelve feet and very rustic and had a shake roof. We stayed in that cabin for three or four summers.

The old cabin where the Wraiths stayed in the early years. The man behind the dog is Om Wraith. Photo by Mrs. E. O. Wraith.



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In that same general area was the Frank's cabin, located along a small stream in a little grove of cedars. The Franks ran cattle in Philbrook and the high lakes and at certain times of the year it was just like a roundup with saddles thrown over the pole fences and cowboys and horses galore. This was also a regular stopping place for automobiles as by the time they got this far, the radiators would be steaming; or perhaps they had already tried to make the grade on up the ridge, attempting to get to the high lakes and they would come limping back with flat tires or broken crankcases or other damage. At some time or other you would meet everyone either coming in or going out.

My dad wanted to get down around the lake where we could all enjoy the water. Dad persuaded P G & E officials to set aside some lots for cabins and so they surveyed a few on the south shore of the lake. The lot where Moore's cabin stands is the one we originally leased. We had a tent house, which was a wooden platform with a wall tent over that, and several umbrella tents for guests. We enjoyed the lake camping for several years and then dad got transferred to Bakersfield and he didn't know whether he would ever be back in Butte County so he gave up the lot and Clyde Moore wisely took it over. Doctor Wallas Smith was involved in the sharing of that lot also.

Some of the Wraith family on the south shore in front of the tent house on the lot where the Moore cabin now stands. Photo by Mrs. E.O. Wraith.



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In the years that we were there we all enjoyed water sports a great deal. Dr. Smith had a boat as did Cecil O'Neil and Cecil's brother, Barney. The O'Neils were involved in racing outboard motors on the Sacramento River and also had a hydroplane. One time when we were all sitting around eating lunch, Dr. Smith looked out to see his boat slowly sinking into the lake until only the bow was still showing. He had his large boat up there because it would pull an aqua plane board (this was before skis). When they had docked to come to lunch they had forgotten to replace the drain plug in the bottom of the boat and it had gradually filled with water. The log which was used for a dock at that time is still a part of the Moore's dock.



Om Wraith and some of the family. Photo by Mrs. E. O. Wraith

We lived in Bakersfield for about four years and returned to Chico in 1942 or '43 and of course, my dad tried to get another lot at Philbrook Lake. He found, however, that there were none available and no plans to survey any more. He talked to P G & E about the area on the north shore where our cabin is now and was able to convince them to survey five more lots. These are the ones leased by the McCullochs, Diepens, O'Neils, Andersens, and ours today. Most of the people who built cabins had been coming up here for years and most of us knew each other.

The Diepens originally had a cabin at Lotts Lake but it was always so hard to get in and out and it had no water etc. Dad met them when they came by Frank's grade on their way to Lotts Lake on their honeymoon.

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Dr. Wallace Smith built the cabin that is now McCullochs. It was a prefab built in Chico and and trucked up to the lake in sections and put together with the labor of some college students.

Dad was always on the lookout for materials to use at the lake so when he saw the cores of plywood mill logs being thrown away at the Redriver Lumber Company in Westwood, he realized he could use these to build a cabin. These were what remained after the sheaths of wood had been peeled off the four foot long logs to make plywood and they were usually about six or eight inches in diameter. They gave them away for firewood just for the hauling. For the price of gasoline and the rental of a truck to haul them to Philbrook, he secured enough cores to build several structures. This took many trips over the Humbug Summit road into Philbrook where we had a huge mountain of them stored in the meadow waiting to build. Dad always had a lot of friends and he conned most of them into spending their vacations at Philbrook to help him construct a cabin. Most of them were game wardens and were just rough carpenters but one man named Booth had actually been a carpenter before he became a game warden. They did a pretty good job of building. Dad wanted the cabin as close to the water as possible and actually when the water is really high it is only about a foot off the piers. Since that time people are not allowed to build so close to the water.

Every year he would try to add something to the place so the next year they built an ice house. It was twelve by twelve feet and it had outside walls of the log cores and inner walls of chicken wire covered with cement. The spaces between the walls were filled with redwood bark for insulation. He then got a door, probably from one of the Kilpatrick stores that was closing. It was a walk-in type ice-box door, very heavy. Then the ceiling was also insulated with redwood bark which besides being good

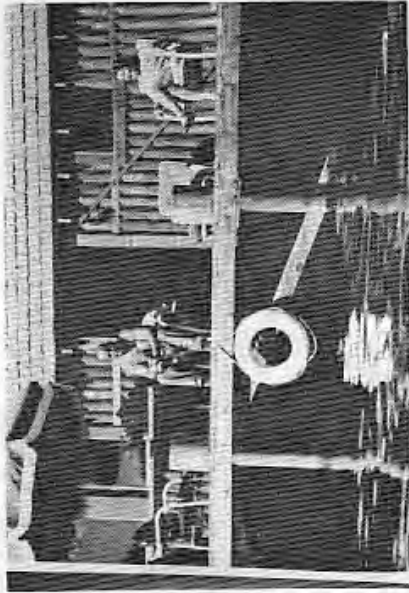
insulation is also very good nesting for the squirrels.

An annual chore or pleasure, depending on how you look at it, was to walk in to fill the ice house. This was done when you could drive almost to the dam but when the snow drifts were still plentiful and close by. You carried your lunch and a shovel and spent the day shoveling snow in the door while someone else, who had been persuaded to join the fun, would trample it down and pack it so that it would remain through the summer months until Labor Day.

My dad was a very gregarious person and loved to have large groups of people up at the lake. The ice house would look like a modern day supermarket store room with crates of lettuce and tomatoes, summer squash, melons, etc. perched on the snow. He really enjoyed the raucous games of pinochle that were always held in the evenings and the good food that was served up to large numbers of friends and family.

When Donna and I took over the cabin, after my dad died, we carried on the tradition of filling the ice house in the spring for a few years but we weren't able to be up there for long periods of time and the refrigerator was ample for our needs, so we ceased to round up people for the trek in over the snow.

The other cabin on the lot is now my brother Saxon's. My dad's brother funded the building of that cabin as he used to enjoy being at the lake and he was also an avid pinochle fan. I remember when we were putting on the roof and Sax was nailing down the shingles. He had just broken up with a girl friend and was feeling rather mournful and was hampering in time to the song 'Mona Lisa, Mona Lisa', which is a rather slow beat. My dad suggested he try shingling to 'Yankee Doodle' and hurry up the job, but it didn't do any good.



E. O. Wraith (On) and his wife, Clem, on the dock of their cabin at Philbrook Lake. Photo Courtesy Mrs. E. O. Wraith.

The next building constructed was the bath house. It has a cement floor and has dad's initials and the date, 1951. It has a bathtub with a shower and a basin and toilet and it had pipes that were hooked up to the cabin range with coils for hot water. I finally cut off the hot water because the family and guests would stand under the shower endlessly, instead of jumping in the lake, and then wonder why the septic tank was full. The fixtures in the bath house came out of our home in Chico when the bathroom was remodeled. The handles on the basin were brass and had the H and C in porcelain and we didn't realize that they were antiques until we came in one year and they had been taken.

Donna and I have four children and my brother, Saxon has nine, so when we all got together there would be a crowd. Dad just loved to have all of us there even though it sometimes drove him wild. We had bed springs that were laid out in the meadow to put sleeping bags on. There was always room for everyone.

Philbrook is a very special place for children. I remember when I was small and we stayed in the little cabin up by the Petersens. Bob Petersen's

grandfather had built him a full sized tepee out of cedar bark slabs, just like the California Indians used to build. We played in that tepee for hours at a time.

Bob also had a mule which we rode around. Someone told Bob that it would go faster if you bit its ear and so we tried out every suggestion and had great fun. When we were small it was rather scary to listen to the cattle in the woods and down around the willows, because there were so many of them and they had bells on the lead cows.

Many of the lake traditions were begun by my dad. Bill Attinger has a habit of taking an early morning dip in the freezing lake water. Dad used to do this every morning too. He would dive in, let out a war whoop that could be heard across the lake, swim out about ten strokes and back ten strokes and then towel down with a rough towel. He was always after us to join him, but no way. We didn't want to leave our warm sleeping bags. We like to watch Bill but he's getting a little slower every year. Now he sometimes sits and smokes two cigarettes before he dives in and we figure he is hoping someone will volunteer to take over the tradition.

Another tradition started by my dad was the annual Fourth of July display over the lake. It's always done over water but I keep expecting the Forest Service to clamp down because of the fire danger. Years ago it was all very taboo and dad should have known better but his high spirits got the upper hand. In the winter he worked down in the rice fields where they set off what they called duck bombs. This was a thing like a mortar that had two charges about the size of two soft balls and when the fuse was lit and dropped into the mortar it would make a really tremendous boom, and go way up in the air where it would boom again. These were used to scare the ducks out of the rice. Each Fourth of July he would sneak out

Mrs. Clyde Moore

I talked with Helen Moore in her pleasant Chico kitchen where she was making almond roca for her family's Christmas, and I can tell you it is delicious, Helen remembers.

"Our first Philbrook trips were camping excursions beginning about 1937. About 1938 the E. O. Wraiths gave up their part of a leased lot which they had with Dr. Wallace Smith and he asked us to go partners with him. About 1940 we contracted to have the cabin built but it was just a shell with a fireplace. Later Dr. Smith purchased another lease lot across the lake and this left us the only ones involved in the cabin. We now can sleep large groups. My four children, Diane, Joyce, Jared and Karen and the sixteen grandchildren all enjoy it.

We also had an ice house built with thick insulated walls for food storage in the summer. In those days we had no propane refrigerators or stoves. We cooked with wood or kerosene and our lights were gas lanterns or lamps.

It was to fill the ice house that George and June Petersen and Clyde and I attempted to walk in early one spring. We were all in good shape and knowledgeable about the outdoors, so we drove to Inskip where we stayed the night. Around seven the next morning we started out to walk the twelve miles over the snow. The men carried what fresh supplies we needed in backpacks. I remember we had four steaks, four baking potatoes and fresh eggs. We had one pair of snowshoes between the four of us and the plan was that we would take turns wearing the snowshoes with the snowshoe-equipped person leading the way breaking trail for the other three to follow. This way we thought we could pack a trail. After we had gone some good distance the snow was fresh fallen and became powdery and soft and wouldn't pack at all, so it became an

endurance hike. Since I was the shortest person, I floundered the most in snow almost up to my waist, sinking down with every step. We all got wet to the skin. We had hiking boots, but of course they were not waterproof. Well, it took us about ten hours of very hard effort to make it to our cabin. I don't know how we kept going; there was no choice but to go on to shelter. I couldn't get out of bed by myself the next morning. We stayed about four days, mainly so that we could recover from the strenuous experience. We had our steaks and baked potatoes and June and I sat on the snowbanks by the dock and made homemade ice cream in a crank freezer.

We got the ice house filled with snow so that both families could use it in the summer and by September we would still have a chunk of ice left the size of a dishpan.

All the memories of our many years at Philbrook are happy fun times with our families and friends. Even though we had comfortable cabins, we would pack into the high lakes and back country with the mule, Molly, just for the sheer joy of camping in the great outdoors with our children.

It is so satisfying to me to watch the grandchildren savor Philbrook and the surrounding lakes with an enjoyment equal to those early days."

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This time like all times is a very good time, if we but know what to do with it.

I guess another aspect of Philbrook is the friendships we have formed and the good times shared with many of them. None of these things can be replaced in our memory."

Charles Keplinger - a frequent visitor to the lake. Photo by Dorothy Andersen



#### The Richardsons

Harold Richardson and his wife, Chris are not newcomers to Philbrook. One lazy afternoon at Philbrook Harold related some incidents from their early day at the lake.

"We used to come up from the Bay area to camp at Philbrook about 1935 or so. The road from Paradise to Stirling City was a very twisting and winding road. From Stirling City on it was so dusty in the summer that if you stepped from your car you would go into the dust over your shoe tops. At that time the train that hauled logs and lumber out of the mountains was still running. Also there was an old watering trough at the Inskip Inn which I remember because it used to have trout in it. Here you could cool off your radiator and slack your own thirst.

When we first started camping we used an old 16 by 16 army tent which had sides that could be rolled up in the warm weather. We used a fifty five gallon drum with the side cut off and with a piece of steel plate across it for a stove. We also had an empty cable roll that we set in the center of the tent. The tent pole went through

this and stabilized the tent while serving as an inside table.

My brother and I would bring the wives up and leave them with the children for a week or two at a time. It was so remote then that sometimes two or three weeks would go by and you wouldn't see a soul. If you were expecting some family member or friend to join you and heard a car approaching, you could almost be sure it would be them.

Our biggest problem was the bears who were very camp wise. This was because they were sometimes hauled up from Yosemite when they became troublesome to the park. Those bears would bite holes in the cans of fruit or juice and suck the contents out and toss the can away. Most everyone who camped out at that time would nail an empty crate or wooden box to a tree to be used as a cooler for food. However, you couldn't leave any meat, especially bacon, in the cooler at night as the bears would tear it down and eat it. By accident one time we left an alarm clock on the outside table and found that the bears would leave the food alone. Evidently the ticking frightened them.



Rich and Chris Richardson in front of their cabin. Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson

forward to many more of these happy times shared with family and friends at Philbrook."

### The Dahleens

At a picnic table under the tall pines at the Dahleen cabin, Toddy Dahleen reminisced about their years at Philbrook.

"It was quite an isolated place when we first came here camping because of the condition of the road. You had to get out and move rocks and it was terrible to drive because of the steepness and the many switchbacks. We started coming here when our daughter, Marcie, was about two years old and we camped for five years before we got the cabin. When we first started camping our campsite had to meet certain conditions; our friends wanted to be near fishing, I had to be far from poison oak and, hopefully, no snakes, and we wanted the water to be warm enough for the children to enjoy. Philbrook seemed to satisfy all our needs. I guess it was about 29 years ago when the Petersens called us one day in San Jose. Hank was off call at the clinic and when you are off call no one disturbs you for any reason whatsoever. June finally made them understand that it was not a medical problem but was about a cabin that he wanted. Anyway we finally got the message and were able to buy the cabin. It was odd because while we were still camping we would go out in a little boat from which we could see the upstairs window of this cabin and it intrigued me and I wanted it so badly. It has been just marvelous. With four children and their guests all through the years we have never heard the old refrain: 'Well, what can we do now?'. It is just fabulous what good times they had.

We used to go into town about every ten days to get the main supplies but the small things we would

One time I brought in six steaks for our weekend meal. They weren't cheap at that time either and I put them in the outdoor cooler. Since Chris had informed me that the bears had been coming around at night, I prepared for them. I parked the car where I could turn the headlights on the bear if he dared to bother our cold box holding the steaks. Just for good measure I put my loaded shotgun close by. About two o'clock in the morning Chris awakened me with the news that the bears were nearby. I barreled out of bed, grabbed my gun and ran for the car. I turned the lights on the cold box but the bear, who was standing on his hind legs with his nose pressed up against the screened cover of the box, didn't want to leave. I then fired my gun into the air and at this the bear swiped at the box and sent it flying in all directions. Then he proceeded to eat all the steaks before he could be persuaded to leave.

That same night Leo Willing trapped a bear up at his place. The trap had a big chain on it which fastened around a tree. That chain wore the bark off the tree for a distance up the trunk equal to the length of the chain, where the bear had fought to break free. Leo shot the bear at daylight.

We were able to get a lot from P G & E which our friends, the Petersens, had heard was available and we built our cabin ourselves. We have always spent a great deal of time here. Chris and I both love to fish. When the fishing was real good, we were glad to see other campers arrive as we would give them our fish so that we could go fishing again.

Our children, Jan and Tom and their families have also enjoyed the cabin. One summer our granddaughter Susan, caught a 25½ inch German brown trout. All of us have wonderful memories of fun times and the good friends we have made up here. We've pitched a good many games of horseshoes and enjoyed some gourmet meals, cooked by Jan's husband, Bob Neves. We look



get from Leo at the store. Sometimes Leo would take orders for us and pick things up in town. Of course, we always paid him a percentage more for this service and Leo always complained about the tires and road conditions. We're third generation here now, and my children's children can now go up to the store with their friends.

When we were still camping my husband and a friend built a raft and we put a little motor on it. We put a camp cot on it to sit on, because if we sat on the raft we got sloshed with water. One night, as we were rafting, this lovely mohogany motor boat came by and we could hear their voices over the water. The owner, Mr. Lang said, 'I told you it was a raft'. Across the lake it looked like we were sailing around the lake on a camp cot!

One year we had a luau on the shore at the lake, and most everyone around the lake at that time came. The water had gone down some and the docks were sticking out here and there, but we had a huge bonfire on the lake beach. We all dressed in costumes and we had a table spread amply with good food. We had friends visiting from Italy and the only places they had gone to in the mountains were plush resorts where everything was done for them. They could not believe all the fun and they just loved it. They had never seen a bonfire but the interesting thing to us was that they knew many of our old songs like, 'There's a Long, Long Trail' that we sang around the fire. The two of them slept on one cot that night so it was a very different experience to them.

As we've gotten older some of the sociability has kind of gone out but not the friendships. We used to make great things of birthdays and that sort of thing, but now we just have a card and a glass of champagne. We don't know a lot of the people that are here anymore and we used to know everybody. It

is just wonderful that we have begun to get together again at the potluck for the cabin people at the store.

Our friends and people that come here never want to tell anyone else about Philbrook because they want to come back where it is uncrowded and you have so much privacy.

One year David Seifert, our neighbor, was working on his thesis for college on chipmunks. My friend, Fuji and I would drive him all over the mountains in an old fire truck pickup that was four wheel drive. It was a real challenge to get behind the wheel because it was so huge and high off the ground. We would take David over to Hawkins Flat to catch chipmunks and go back for him in the evenings. That was a summer of chipmunks but each summer it is one pleasure after another."

Maxine McCulloch

In January when the fog hung low over Chico I was a guest in Maxine's home. It was easy to forget the foggy day as she reminisced about her Philbrook experiences.

"It was our custom to drive up to the lake at the first sign of spring to see how the cabin had weathered the winter snows. This was about Memorial Day and we could usually get almost to the dam and hike the remaining mile or two. Sometimes we would walk along the shoreline of the lake, if the water wasn't too high, and avoid the snow drifts; or we walked over the drifts and across occasional spots of bare ground.

One spring, Charles, our son, Duff and a friend Ray Griffin went to Philbrook to check on the cabin with the expectation of returning to Chico in time

for dinner that evening. They didn't come back and it got later, much past dinner time. Finally about 9:30 I called another friend, Eric Bathen and we decided to go and see what had happened to keep them so long.

It was a black and stormy night with a driving rain pelting against the windshield of the car; the kind of night that is more fitting for Halloween than mid-May. Our trip ended on Philbrook Road when the headlights illuminated a station wagon blocking our way. Charles had left the car when the wheels became stuck in a large culvert. Our alarm rising, we got out to walk by the beam of a flashlight through the rain and over soggy snowdrifts toward the cabin. Finally the light shone on a sign nailed to a tree in front of Wood's cabin. My confidence in my ability to find my way evaporated when I realized that I had passed several cabins, including the Griffin's without being aware of their location. From the Wood's cabin it was an easy task to locate our own cabin and as we stomped our boots off on the porch, Charles called out, 'Don't plan on staying here, we're using all the covers'. But they let us in and sympathized with our dripping wet condition. Relieved to find them safe, we listened to their story about getting stuck in the culvert and all the efforts to get the car out. When darkness fell, they realized that they would have to stay the night in the cabin and they then rummaged around in the cupboards for something to eat. Last year's supplies consisted of pancake flour, canned beans and spam. Duff, who was about twelve years old at the time, and who would have turned up his nose at any of these at home, had eaten so much that Charles and Ray didn't really get enough to eat.

At daylight the next morning we ate the peanut butter sandwiches I had brought along for our breakfast. We then decided that Eric and I would head back to town to tell the other family members that

everything was all right. However, when we returned to our car we found that we were also stuck, much to our dismay. At this point Charles and Ray decided to hike the three miles back to the store for help. They returned with Leo Willing, who with his snowcat pulled the cars out to firm ground and we all returned to Chico unharmed.

Of course when the ice went off the lake and the water warmed some there was a lot of water skiing. At first it was the Petersens and the Moores with small boats and then when the skiing got so popular, the number and size of the boats increased. There were some weekends when we just didn't go out in our small fishing boat because of the waves.

One time Charles, Mary Osterloh and myself hit a wave at the wrong angle and it flipped the boat over. It was really an eye opener to see how quickly a boating accident can happen. At times we had been going our in the boat without putting on life jackets. This accident showed us that there isn't time to plan how you are going to react in an emergency. I remember how relieved we were to hear each other's voices after we surfaced as we couldn't immediately see one another. I had always worried about the propeller cutting someone if we did capsized. That day Charles had on a heavy parka with in inner lining and we were surprised to see that it was really torn up where the prop caught it as we overturned. We later talked with other friends, Joe and Eulenne Moser, and that same weekend they had flipped their boat. Joe Moser told us that their son was with him and the boy couldn't be found after the boat had upset. After a futile search, Joe then dove in under the boat in desperation and there was his son in the air bubble beneath the overturned hull.

As the water skiers became more skilled, ski jumps and a slalom course was marked off with inner-tubes anchored down in the water. The jumps were about five feet high and it was exciting to see the

skiers soar over them. It was always fun to watch George Petersen ski while sitting in a chair on a flat disk or when he skied backwards. Jim Petersen was the barefoot water skiing champion and also Larryne Lucas skied with him. In those years there were many young people in the families at Philbrook and they practiced skiing all the time it seemed. Then, as now, George was often teaching someone to water ski and he is a good instructor with lots of patience.

One very funny incident on skis was at a party at Nels and Dorothy Andersen's. Many of the guests were skiing and when Dorothy's turn came, she appeared in a zany costume. She had on a big-brimmed picture hat, a black spanish shawl with long fringe, and a full length skirt with flounces all the way from waist to hem. She also wore black, fingerless, elbow length, evening gloves and sported a purse dangling from a black strap. She held a long cigarette holder like they used in the twenties as she sashayed back and forth on skis around the lake, and we all just roared with laughter.

We enjoyed so many good times at our cabin. Along with individual family parties there were the fun times back and forth across the channel with the friends who lived on the south shore. One time the neighbors fixed up a large, three-foot high letter "A". I think it came from an old Coca Cola sign, and it had red lights all around which lit up. They rigged up to a battery and put it in a boat. After alerting all of us along the shore, they set it adrift at night toward Attinger's on the south shore accompanied by appropriate music.

Another practical joke that we witnessed was when a cow was sent over to the Attinger's on a motor propelled raft. Charles and I were sitting out on our deck in the late afternoon when he spotted the raft putting across the lake with a cow sitting on it. All

of a sudden the raft came to an abrupt halt as the motor died. We promptly jumped in our boat with the camera and when we came abreast of the raft we saw that the front of the cow was John Ginno and the rear of the cow with the tail caught in the prop was Ernie Ely. I guess they finally managed to paddle the rest of the way across.

We all used to sing around our campfires but most of the singing went on across the channel at the Keppel cabin. Charles happened across a Spike Jones laughing record which he thought would be great fun to play in the pauses between songs when a campfire sing was in progress. He had an old battery operated record player and when he got everything set up, we sat around in the cold evening air waiting for their songs to come to an end at which time we would start up the laughing record. However, they evidently couldn't hear it or they launched into another ballad too quickly, as we spent all evening trying to intercept their song fest with laughter, but to no avail.



The Cow on a raft - drawn from snapshot by Maxine McCulloch as the photo was too poor to reproduce. Sketch by Joyce Jones.

Another fond memory is of Suzanne Ely and my husband, Charles, flying kites from our boat. Whenever there was a windy day you could expect Suzanne to come by and ask Charles if he wanted to fly a kite over the lake with her. Of course, you couldn't fly one anywhere else, because of the trees. But it was an unusual sight and one that is not easily forgotten.

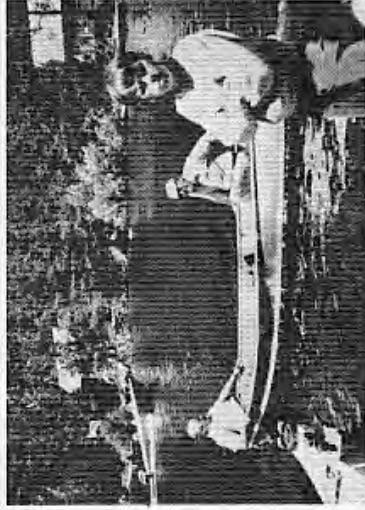
One year there was an odd grass that grew in the lake. It was just thick in the water out on the point beyond our cabin. It wasn't reedy or like seaweed but was a long grass that grew about to the surface of the water. When the lake went down in late summer the grass was about three feet tall. Our daughter, Liz and son, Duff with their friends, the Schroeder children made huge bird nests out of this grass. They played by the hour in these grassy nests. We never saw this particular grass again. It only appeared that once.

Sadly, we sometimes saw another side of vacation time because Charles was often called on in emergencies. One accident was a dislocated shoulder, a very painful and severe injury. Charles had a sedative along to help the injured man while he set the shoulder. He was then taken to Chico for further medical attention. Another time a small child ran through a campfire barefoot. The fire apparently appeared to be out but under the ashes were live coals. His family brought him to our door in a wheelbarrow for Charles to dress the burns.

We have always felt so fortunate to have a cabin at the lake. When we heard that Dr. Smith wanted to sell his cabin, Charles got a map from Om Wraith. Om drew it on the back of an old envelope. Later when Charles told about going to see the cabin he said he couldn't believe there could be a lake at the end of that dusty, windy road. But, upon seeing the lake and cabin, he was excited about it and went right back to town and put down

a deposit. The Wraiths were our neighbors in town at that time and we have always enjoyed being next door to them at the lake too.

Now when we have our grandchildren with us at our cabin, we can see another generation of children who will share our memories. My granddaughter, Olivia, came running in the past summer to tell me that Terry O'Neil had given her permission to play in the tree house which had been built for his three daughters who have now outgrown it. And the beat goes on. . . ."



Jack Schroeder, Charles McCulloch & Bobbie Hamilton at Philbrook. Photo courtesy Maxine McCulloch



Charles McCulloch, Joe & Eulenne Moser- Photo courtesy Maxine McCulloch

## THE STORE

The Philbrook mountain store at Jones' Resort was built by Al Schenken for Leo Willing in 1953. Mr. Willing had decided the area needed a store offering supplies, cold beer and Saturday night dances. The number of families forming the lake community of cabin owners was growing, along with the numerous camping groups who liked the setting.

The chief sore sport of that time for Leo was the murderous road conditions over which he was compelled to haul supplies. These have improved somewhat, but it is wise to drive a pick-up or four wheel drive vehicle during the early summer or late fall when there are apt to be mud holes either from spring snow melt or fall rains.

Old timers still recall good times enjoyed on those Saturday night get togethers and claim you could hear the scratchy old juke box almost to the West Branch crossing down the road apiece. The store has been in continuous operation except for a period of about four years before the Joneses reopened it in 1976. It still carries cold drinks picnic and fishing supplies but the dances are no more. Activities revolving around family recreation and outdoor life dominate the Jones' idea of resort life.

Catching your eye as you park by the store is the log bench flanked by two rough hewn log faces. These were carved by Charlie Morgan, a camper with a vivid imagination and a noisy chain saw. Pulling open the screen door sets the cow bell clanging to summon Mrs. Jones, who usually tends the store. Stepping inside one encounters a warm, homey atmosphere sometimes enhanced by the smell of baking.

Various articles of memorabilia invite inspection. Old bear traps, a cross cut saw, gold pans

and canteens hang on the walls. Nestled between the rafters are handmade snowshoes. Across the heavy beams cross country skis await the return of winter snows.

One of the most valuable items obtainable at the store is not stocked on the shelves. No prices are listed for how to find the location for hunting for sparkling quartz crystals, the sites of old gold diggings in this part of the Mother Lode country, or how to get to Rock Creek or many other small but productive fishing streams. Back-packers request permission to leave their cars parked by the store while they explore the miles of trails around the many high lakes. Some of these are Lotts, Spring Valley, Morris, Campbell, Long and numerous others named and unnamed. The Pacific Crest Trail meanders within one and one half miles of this spot in the Sierras. The lakes and gurgling streams are fished for german brown, brook and rainbow trout.

Motorists will find a supply of motor oil, transmission fluid, patch kits, and brake fluid. Even the loan of a tire pump is available where a simple breakdown can soon become an emergency miles from any services.

A well equipped first-aid bag outfitted by the late Charles McMulloch, M.D., is kept on hand for those simple injuries which sometimes occur. More serious accidents require a trip to Butte Meadows to alert the emergency medical team and the forest service people. These situations, if life threatening, necessitate evacuation by helicopter to the hospitals in the valley.

The store has become the focal point for all types of information and help. As far as they are able, by both equipment and common sense, the owners try to meet the needs of campers and outdoorsmen.

## THE OLD SAWMILL

The old Belsaw one-man sawmill was originally set up in a meadow and the first lumber cut was used to build a structure to contain the mill. This Belsaw was a second-hand mill and the serial number 7735 shows that it was an extremely early model. It was powered by a Cletrac engine and with that rudimentary equipment logs were sawed into lumber to be used by Leo and Florence Willing as they developed the cabins and store buildings.

The sawmill building itself was constructed by Howard Tunison and his crew on weekends in the 1940's. Mr. Tunison was Florence Willing's brother and was at that time the owner of the Chico Cabinet Shop.

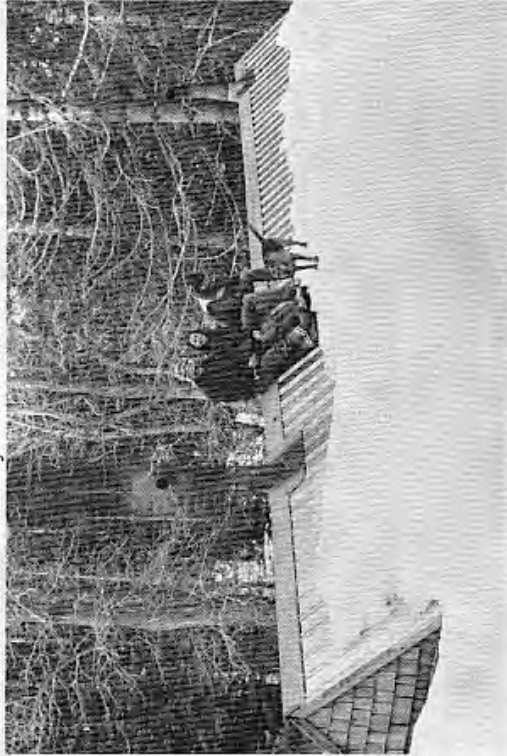
On the weekends when the Tunison crew was building the mill, Leo and Florence fixed meals for all the men involved in the project. These were set out on a table made of lumber and saw horses in the meadow.

When the mill was operating Leo and Florence sawed the logs and then carried and stacked the wet lumber in the drying yard where the sun did the final drying. This mill cut lumber for three cabins, a store building and the so-called power house. Even the knotty pine used on the interiors of the cabin and store was sawed here and then hauled to the planing mill in the valley for its final finish.

In 1980 the sawmill was restored by Grant Jones, the grandson of Mr. Willing. A Dodge pick-up engine was converted to do the job of the old Cletrac power plant. New ways were built for the saw carriage and the saw blade was taken to the valley by a friend to be hammered and tempered. Finally amid flying saw-dust and the whine of the blade as it bit into the first log, the mill was again in operation. By trial



The Philbrook store at Jones' Resort as it looks in the summer time. Photo by Grant Jones.



The same building in the winter of 1983 after some of the snow has melted. Those on the roof are David Jackson, Lynn Rice and Grant Jones. Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson.

and error the correct settings were determined. The first hefty timbers were used to reinforce the old mill building long in need of repairs. Other lumber was used for picnic tables and repairs and the slab made wood for the campfires and cabin heaters.

The mill had withstood many snowy winters and at one time even took a tree through its roof. However, the deep snows of the 1983 winter took such a heavy toll that it had to be demolished because of the danger involved in trying to repair and reconstruct the badly damaged building.

Ed Jones & his son,  
Grant as they seek  
to restore the old  
Belsaw mill. Photo  
by Barbara O'Dell-  
Jackson



At last it runs!  
Photo by Grant  
Jones.



## THE WIZARD

A granite cliff stands stark and cold  
against a wintered sky,  
And shelters some weathered cabins beneath  
the icy winds that try

To chill the marrow of the bone  
To freeze the vaporous air,  
That swirls from the lips of the mountain man  
Who rules the forest there.

Early he rises and stokes his fire  
and boils a cup of grounds,  
Downs a breakfast, straps on his skis  
and heads for his morning rounds.

Outside his door his hawk-sharp eyes  
catch the flick of a weasel's tail.

And the prints of a deer mouse etched in the  
snow at the end of a bloodstained trail.

A chickadee sings from a perch on a limb  
in hopes of a handout today,

And the doe by the pond turns up her head  
and trains her ears his way.

As he trudges along on his way to the lake  
a dazzle of diamonds he sees,

In the form of snowflakes they gather their  
weight and bend down the boughs of the trees.

He knows he's here to stay for awhile  
as he sucks in the fresh mountain air,

Striding along he pauses to watch  
the sunrise first dim light--then glare.

Checking the lake cabins and finding them sound  
he shouts a good morning to all,

And answers a loon from the far side of the lake  
and a Canadian goose from the fall.

Whistling now he picks up his pace to his  
cabin with a smile he remembers,

The rising dough, the browning crust of bread  
baking over the embers.

There's chores to do there now he knows  
more wood to chop, more tasks to do before yet  
Heavier snows. So quickening his pace  
he glides along and soon he's back to his cabin  
And pond.

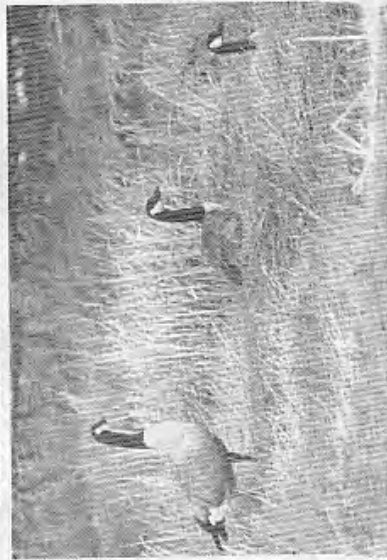
Deep bites his axe and the wood chips fly as  
he splits yet another tree,  
And he crushes a beer can with a sinewy hand  
as a camp jay watches from his knee.

The quickening light fades slowly first then  
drops out of sight o'er the hill and his fire burns  
Low in the wood burning stove and  
the animals outside are still.

On one knee now he prays at the side of his  
bed,  
For this day and many others.

And I know by the sights and the sounds  
through this day  
That his feelings are also his brother's.

By David Jones for his brother  
Grant Jones at Philbrook



Canadian Geese at  
Philbrook. Photo  
by Barbara O'Dell-  
Jackson.

Have you ever longed to live an adventure where  
you were almost totally dependent upon yourself and  
your ability to cope with a kaleidoscope of events?  
Well, meet Grant Jones, who has for the past three  
winters lived that life.

When Grant was a young lad he read the book  
"My Side of the Mountain" over and over again. This  
was the story of a young boy who lived many months  
alone in the forest. Grant's desire was to somehow  
live an adventure of a similar kind. How fortunate  
for him when the opportunity presented itself at  
Jones' Resort.

At the end of Philbrook Road is the Jones'  
property at an elevation which causes it to be  
isolated by heavy winter snows. In spring as soon  
as the road is passable the owners arrive to open  
the buildings and several times have discovered  
the store had been broken into by thieves.

Grant decided to stay on the place during the  
winter months to insure the security of the build-  
ings and also to have the opportunity to live his  
dream of self-sufficiency.

Over the summer months the building was winter-  
ized by insulating the sleeping loft. A good supply  
of food was stashed on the shelves and a woodshed  
close by was filled to the roof with pine and fir.  
Propane for cooking, gasoline to run a small gener-  
ator and many other supplies were stored. Grant  
wondered if there was anything he was forgetting  
that he would need desperately. He later remarked  
that he was actually relieved when the first big  
storm isolated him. He realized that to worry was  
futile. If he didn't have something it was too  
late and his mind was at rest. He'd just have to  
improvise. The final touches were a battery



operated Citizen's Band radio and a twelve volt television.

One might think the TV was an unnecessary luxury. But the satellite pictures of the weather were extremely important. Then there were times when blizzards were raging and Grant was forced to stay indoors and the TV lessened the boredom.

The radio proved valuable during the late fall and winter giving him much needed contact with the world outside. Friends at various points in the valley such as the Charlie Morgans at Yuba City, Steve Petersen at Forest Ranch, Harold Richardson at Paradise and the David Jacksions at Toad Town were a few faithful monitors of his radio call several times weekly.

A surprise of that first winter's stay was the number of hardy people who came in over the snow to visit for a few hours. Grant found that there were only a couple of weeks when he did not have anyone to talk with. Cross country skiers were numerous. Some of the lake cabin owners had snowmobiles and came in for a weekend and occasionally shared a meal with him. A snowmobile seemed clearly to be needed for bringing in supplies and to make travel much easier. However, that first winter Grant skied a great deal gradually building his endurance. By March when Ed and Joyce Jones skied in to enjoy some of the winter with him, he had been covering 25 miles at a time in his cross country travels. The senior Joneses brought additional supplies with them. Barb and Dave Jackson drove them in as far as the snow would allow. They then made caches in the snow for the supplies as there was more than the three could back-pack in on one trip. In all the three Joneses made three, six mile round trips to get the fresh meat, vegetables, eggs and 50 pounds of dog food to the building. Babe, a spaniel and Leslie, a german shepard-labrador mix, were the faithful canine

family friends and Grant was glad to tackle the job of packing in the extra food for them.

The next winter a snowmobile was purchased and the following year another larger model. This allowed Grant more mobility and he soon constructed a sled to pull behind one to carry supplies. Helpful friends arranged by radio contact to bring in what he needed as far as they could drive. They would be met by Grant with the sled to take things on in to Philbrook.

Then came the winter of '83 with snow of record depths and back to back winter storms. With all of Philbrook Valley in winter's icy grip, it became a battle to survive and to try to save the buildings, if possible. Nearly every day it was shovel, shovel and more shovel. Preparing for the winter had included building on a porch which was left open on the south end so that one could step out the kitchen door and have a place to begin to shovel steps when the snow became very deep. So the first thing every morning after a fresh snow was to cut steps up and out of the porch shelter. Then it was additional work to keep the paths to the woodshed and generator shed open. When the building began to creak with the snow weight it was time to relieve the weight on the roof by taking off layers of snow daily. Shovel, shovel, as much as the back could endure.

In the intervals of time not taken up fighting the elements, the business of taking care of the necessities of living were carried on. A few of these were baking sourdough bread once a week and washing out clothing every day or so. Sometimes the wash would accumulate and that would entail using the wringer washer and two galvanized wash tubs. Then where to dry it? It was necessary to string lines around the living quarters and to build fires in both heaters. Sometimes to hurry the drying Grant would set up a fan to circulate the air. The fan could blow while the generator was running to



recharge the batteries which in turn supplies the power for the radio and TV.

Sometimes an item would be needed from one of the storage buildings such as a piece of pipe or a plumbing fitting to repair a water line broken by freezing. That trip to the shed to get a part would use up an hour or two by the time the door was shovel-ed free of snow so that the building could be entered. Then a search among the boxes of plumbing articles for the right piece. A return trip through the snow to the cabin, crawl down through the trapdoor under the sink, lie on the icy cold soil and patiently fit the pipe together with numb fingers. A job that would take 20 or 30 minutes in the good old summer time can take all day in the dead of winter.

Once during the winter when the windshield of the Nordic snowmobile was broken by a falling tree limb, Grant decided to mend it. Gathering together some strong nylon thread, a large needle, a cigarette lighter and needle-nosed pliers, the process was begun. In order to secure the polyethylene shield back together, it had to have holes made in each side of the broken area. This was done by heating the end of the needle red-hot with the lighter. The needle was then held with the pliers to burn a hole in the plastic. After some seventy holes had been made it was sewn back together with nylon thread in a lacing pattern. It was a long and patient process, but when something breaks you have to fix it. You can't go down and buy another.

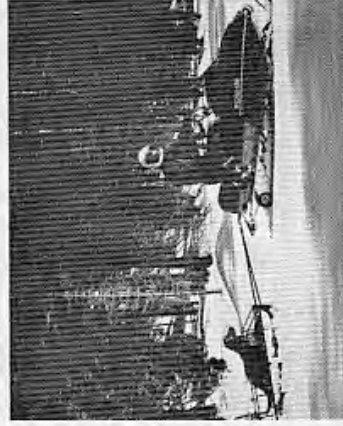
One of the routine jobs of a winter's stay is having to dig out the snowmobiles after a snow storm. At times four to five feet can fall overnight and one can look out in the morning and see absolutely no sign of a lump indicating where a snowmobile has been parked under that fresh white mantle. Most daily accumulations during storms is only a foot or two, but experience has proven that extremely deep snow



Grant Jones as he looks in the spring sans beard. Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson



You keep the window open by shoveling a tunnel. Photo by Barbara O'Dell-Jackson



Even the dog likes to ride. Grant Jones and Leslie by the Moto-Ski. Photo by Grant Jones



can pile up in a 12 hour period.

There are times after a heavy snow when it is soft and powdery making it impossible to get around except on snowshoes. The ones used by Grant are the old handmade variety, measuring about five feet in length and webbed with leather thong. Even with that broad base, Grant would sometimes sink knee-deep with each step. Sometimes Grant was unable to lift his snowshoe to take another step because of the weight of one of the dogs on the back of the snowshoe. The two dogs had learned how much easier it was to follow along in someone's tracks rather than make their own.

Trips away from the building by snowmobile are planned for with the ever present thought of a possible breakdown or similar emergency. It was necessary to carry spare sparkplugs and tools. A shovel was a necessity along with a couple of small pulleys and a tow rope. Then for personal safety; a space blanket, canned fuel, matches, an aluminum kit with cup, candy or dried fruit and of course, warm clothing. Woolen socks, gloves, insulated underwear, woolen cap, helmet and goggles and a snowmobile suit insured Grant's warmth. He also wore insulated snow boots.

During the winter of '83 there was a near tragedy at Grant's doorstep. There were friends visiting at the resort that day, who had arrived earlier on snowmobiles. As Grant went outdoors for more wood he heard his name called. Returning to the kitchen he asked if the visitors had called to him and they replied that they had not. Grant then returned outdoors and climbed to the top of the snow steps where he could see the approach to the building. As he watched someone pitched face forward into the snow about 100 feet down the slope. The dogs had sensed the appearance of a stranger and raced down the slope to the inert form, barking

directly in his ears, but he did not move. Grant summoned the others and they picked the youth up and put his feet under him forcing him to walk with their aid to the building. It was obvious that he was suffering from exposure and exhaustion. His hands were completely white from his wrists down and he was incapable of speech. He was not dressed warmly enough for winter conditions. When they had stripped his wet clothing away and wrapped him in warm blankets and fed some warm fluids to him, he told his tale. He and two companions had started up the Humberg Summit road in a four wheel drive vehicle in snow. They became stuck and ran out of gas at Chaparral about seven miles from the Jones property. After spending the night in the pickup, the young man decided to hike to Philbrook to his family's cabin. Cold and suffering from hypothermia (which surely was a factor in the error in judgement he made) he kept moving toward the Jones' Resort where he was sure there was help. He just barely made it!

Upon hearing that two others were stranded in the pickup, Grant called out on the radio to notify Search and Rescue. The next day Grant and another friend took the youth out to Inskip by snowmobile. It took all that day with the two men taking turns breaking trail through fresh snow to get approximately 12 miles to safety.

One shudders to think what would have happened if Grant and his dogs hadn't been outdoors at that particular minute. The young man was at that point incapable of any more effort to save himself and that night it snowed more than two feet. The next morning there would have been no indication of his presence as the snowmobiles cut fresh tracks down the slope.

One of the things Grant learned very early in this solitary existence was that one does not travel or leave his shelter during storms. The morning after a night long storm the fresh glistening snowfall and

Christmas mantled trees are beautiful beyond words. It is easy to lose sight of the savage forces which produced this beauty.

Grant would advise anyone heading into the mountains to educate themselves as to what to wear, what to carry for an emergency and most of all, never leave a vehicle unless help is but a short distance away. Preparation and knowledge both summer and winter can avert many disasters. Unless one is as experienced as Grant, he'd better be prepared. Philbrook Valley in winter is not for the novice.

Christmas-like snow-mantled trees at Philbrook. Photo by Grant Jones



Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled,  
And that made all the difference. R. Frost.

Catfish Eight Feet in Length:  
Weighting 1000 Pounds Sought in Lake

Chico Record, July 15, 1927 Reprinted in its entirety:

"Nobody ever saw Paul Bunyan, mythical logger of the north woods, who combed his beard with a pine tree and dined off a thousand griddle cakes made with a steam shovel for a flipper. Nobody ever saw Babe the Blue Ox, Paul's companion, that measured seven axe handles between the eyes.

But seven eye witnesses have seen mammoth catfish in Campbell Lake, 35 miles beyond Stirling City, that would have gladdened Paul Bunyon's heart.

Paul Bunyan had big ideas, for he was a big man. He invented logging after which he hauled whole townships down to his mill where he logged them off. Lumberjacks sit up nights still spinning yarns about Paul's exploits but Paul never saw a catfish eight feet long that weighed 1000 pounds.

Planted in 1873--

Up in Campbell's Lake in 1873 somebody planted some blue channel catfish. Some say it was Meade Thomas of Table Mountain who planted the fish and others claim that Judge Lott was responsible.

Since that time, especially in the last 20 years, strange tales of mammoth cats have circulated in Butte County. Huge catfish in the Mississippi are captured so frequently that it is a common occurrence and the meat from the gigantic fish is sold in steaks. Whether the catfish in Campbell's Lake are of the Mississippi species or whether the fish have waxed huge and fat from their isolated life in the mountains, it is certain that reports from widely diverse sources indicate the presence of a super fish in them there hills.

Families living in the Chico district are now plotting against the big fish. Two attempts have been made against them during the last year but without success. Last summer a party of Butte County people counted seven of the huge fish, but had no proper equipment to take them from the water.

#### Out for Fish--

This week a party consisting for the most part of the same people went to the lake armed with hooks ranging from six to twelve inches, rope line and oil drums for floats. The floats were used to counter-act the strain on the rope should one of the huge fish take the hook baited with a whole beef heart and make a break for freedom. The lake was muddy from melting snow and so turbulent that fishing was impossible. The party, however, plans another attempt at the fish within the next few months when conditions are expected to be ideal.

Confronted with the evidence of seven eye witnesses even Game Warden, A. J. Stanley is beginning to place credence in the report that some unusually big fish are in the lake. The warden, who at first scoffed at any suggestion that there might be super catfish in Campbell's Lake, learned of the huge size attained in the Mississippi and Congo River species and admitted that there might be something to the rumors.

Frank McEnespy, rancher on the Honey Run Grade, first saw the fish last summer when on a fishing trip.

#### Rock Moves--

Noting a huge bulk just under the surface of the water, he said, he was about to step on it to cast his line from it under the impression it was a rock.

And then it moved. He called his friends and seven of the huge fish were counted, according to their

story. The fish are said to be as wide as Ford automobiles at the head and range from five to seven feet or more long. Some allowance must be made for the magnifying qualities of the water, but even at that there must be some pretty big fish there.

Those who first saw the fish last summer are Frank McEnespy, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Brown, Miss Ivy Horning, Frank Horning, Miss Fern Dalrymple, and two girls now living in Stockton.

Those who made up the party seeking the fish this week includes Mr. and Mrs. Warren Clark, Isaac Bailey and Son, Archie Bailey, and Miss Juanita Bailey, a daughter; Miss Marie Tartar, Miss Evelyn Matthews, Mr. and Mrs. Frank McEnespy and son, Darrel McEnespy.

And that is the epic of the big catfish.

Readers of The Record who may have information of the big fish taken from Campbell's Lake or other bodies of water in northern California are invited to send their information to this paper."

### The Big Fish

An interview with Darrel McEnespy who supplied the preceding article from the 1927 Chico Record about the big fish in Lower Campbell Lake (Now known as Long Lake).

"I was about 14 years old at the time my Dad, Frank McEnespy and I and all the other people in the party saw the big fish. The paper said it weighed 1,000 pounds but my dad, who was a pretty good judge of weight, estimated it to be about 800 pounds. We saw several in the water. Their feelers were about the diameter and length of a shovel handle and their mouths were huge and out of proportion to their bodies. They would go down in the water and you could see the mud boil up from the bottom and they would come up in another spot and lie near the surface. The lake water was always murky, not clear as it was in the other Campbell Lake, and it couldn't have been more than 40 or 50 feet deep.

Of course, we were all hot to catch one of those huge fish. On our second trip in we had three, 15 gallon barrels for buoys and 12 foot leaders of 1/4 inch cable and 6 inch hooks, baited with beef hearts. We figured on letting it float out in the lake and if we hooked one it would sink but eventually it would come back to the surface. On this second trip we met the game warden, A. J. Stanley who was camped between Lott's Lake and Spring Valley Lake and he and my dad had quite an argument over our fishing equipment. He said he would have dad arrested for using a set line. But what we were using was a floating line. Well, we went on in and set up our camp at Spring Valley and we tried for the next three years to catch one of those monsters but no luck. They simply would not bite anything we tried.

About 1943 my first wife, Nadine, and I went up to the high lakes to see some range land that we

had heard Kathryn Campbell was going to give up. Since I was in the cattle business, I thought I would look it over. Nadine was an avid fisherman and we were standing on a ridge about 125 yards above the lake where we could look down on it.

It was a partly cloudy day and we were standing in the cloud shade but the lake was bathed in sunlight and she saw one of those fish about four feet long. She had always scoffed at the story told in my family about the huge fish seen in 1927. Of course, she was wild to try and catch one but her luck was no better than ours.

The California Fish and Game Commission later poisoned the lake to kill the fish prior to replanting with trout and no remains were ever reported. We thought perhaps the bear could have eaten them. Warren Clark who was on the trip with the original group, said he heard that an Oroville man caught one weighing 400 pounds, but it was never confirmed.

People claimed that Judge Lott hauled the Blue Channel catfish to this area in water barrels from Missouri. In Missouri the channel catfish do get very large.

The story in 1927 was also carried in the Sacramento Bee but the Chico Record copy is the only one I was able to secure."



### Boys Snowbound At Inskip Are Unhappily Rescued \*

"Paradise 1963: The rare adventure of two boys who got snowbound at Inskip in last week end's storm ended in disappointment for them Sunday when they were rescued from their happy predicament.

Snowbound were Butch Richardson, 14 and his 6 year old brother Ray. They are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Doc Richardson who run both Inskip Inn and Doc's and Bert's place in Magalia.

Their adventure began Friday afternoon when Bob Hollis, an employe of the Richardson's took the boys to Inskip. Mrs. Richardson was planning to go up that evening and get things ready at the inn for the snow crowd, so Hollis returned to his home in Stirling City.

The Richardson boys, their mother explained, attend school in Stirling City and when they spend the week ends at Inskip either she or Hollis stay with them and bring them to Stirling City on school days.

Last Friday the boys made themselves at home at the inn. Then came the snow, great bushels of it. Soon neither Mrs. Richardson nor Hollis could make their way to Inskip.

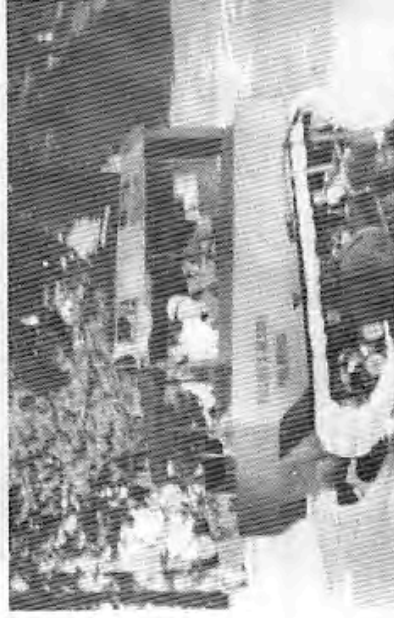
There was plenty of food plus plenty of firewood. Butch, whom Mrs. Richardson described as 'very capable', took over and aided by Ray sat out the storm Friday and Saturday. By Saturday there was over four feet of snow on the ground.

On Sunday, Leo Willing, who runs a resort at Philbrook but spends much of the winter at Stirling City, managed to get his snow Weasel up to Inskip.

Earlier Sunday Richardson and Dick Shadduck, also of Magalia, attempted to drive up to Inskip but only made it part way. Shadduck, who took along his skis, said he would attempt to ski the rest of the way.

Richardson turned back to Stirling City and contacted Willing who fired up the Weasel. The two men then started back up the hill and overtook Shadduck who had become bogged down in supersoft snow about 200 yards from where Richardson had left him. The trio proceeded in the Weasel to the inn without further trouble.

Apparently the boys were not overjoyed to see Leo Willing drive up, because according to Mrs. Richardson, "They were very unhappy to have to come back to Magalia and have to go to school the next day. I guess they thought they'd have an extra vacation out of it".



Leo Willing in his snow weasel in Philbrook. Picture from Willing's photo album.

\* Reprinted from a newspaper article published in Paradise in 1963 and preserved by Mr. Willing.

### Grandpa Wraith's Driving

Another legend at Philbrook was created by E. O. Wraith and it concerns his driving expertise. Mr. Wraith never really had a vehicle of a type that was practical for the mountains, according to his children. It was just a regular low hung touring car and he would take it up to the high lakes and just beat the heck out of it and never let the road conditions deter him from going wherever he wished. He was an extremely fast driver and liked to see how fast he could make it from Chico to Philbrook. The best time was made on the return trip to Chico because it was mostly on the downhill grade and he claimed his best time was clocked at forty five minutes. At that time there were all those switchbacks going up and down to cross the West Branch of the Feather River and there wasn't any such road as the Skyway. The route between Paradise and Chico was Neal Road.

Mr. Wraith's granddaughter, Janet, was with friends on her way into Philbrook one weekend, when just beyond Inskip they noticed a cloud of dust across the canyon. As they closed the distance between the two cars they could see the other car just barreling around the curves amid dust and flying gravel. Janet's friends commented, "Who is that idiot?". Janet had to admit that it was her grandpa and as he flew past them amid the flying gravel, she called out "Grandpa!-- Goodby, Grandpa!"

### The Bear Who Came to Dinner

Cloyd and Agnes Pearce and their children and grandchildren spend many weekends in the trailer at Jones' Resort. One quiet summer evening, in the trailer adjoining theirs they heard their granddaughter Valerie and her girl friend screaming frantically. Agnes couldn't make out what the girls were so hysterical about but she finally convinced them to run over to her trailer where they could calm down.

When the girls regained their composure they said they were sure someone was walking on the roof of the trailer and even was trying to get in through the roof vents. Valerie knew what it sounded like to hear someone walk on the roof because she had been inside when her father, Lee Pearce had been on the roof to clean it. Of course, a person on the roof at that time in the evening was highly improbable, but the girls spent the night with the older Pearces.

In the bright sunshine of the next morning, Cloyd investigated the evidence next door and found that the visitor had been a bear. The girls had fixed sloppy joes for supper and the fragrance had enticed the bear to climb a nearby tree, walk firmly over the roof where he proceeded to try and remove the roof vent to get at the delicious smell. His ambling walk across the roof had sounded quite human-like and the girls became very frightened.

Cloyd was able to determine that the bear had exited by sliding down the trailer awning. What a slide that must have been--it collapsed the awning.

It all took on a comical aspect and now is one more experience to tuck away and retell around the evening campfires.

## The Bears

Those who come to Philbrook to camp and vacation sometimes have a bear tale to take home with them. One such incident occurred within the Wraith compound in the summer of 1982. The Om Wraiths took two grandchildren and a nephew with them to their cabin. The nephew was from New York and the Wraiths were aware of his mother's fears for him to be in the mountains, even without bears. During this visit the Wraith children were sleeping on the porch of Saxon Wraith's cabin. The adults were soundly asleep inside, that is, until Om was awakened by the unmistakable sound of an animal rummaging around among the cans of garbage. Sure enough upon investigation a bear was found to be searching for goodies in the family bag of garbage left on the porch. Concerned about the children Om shined a light outside and threw a stick at the bear in an attempt of frighten him away. Well, he moved all right, but right up a tree where he sat huffing and puffing and making funny grunting noises right over the top of the sleeping children. Finally because of the light and noise he came down the tree and ambled out onto the dock. Om still wasn't satisfied that he was the proper distance from the children so he tried throwing a rock at Mr. Bear. This caused him to make tracks but alas, up another tree again over the children. About this time Pat, Saxon's wife, came to the door to see what the trouble was. Now Om called to the youngsters to run to his cabin and run they did--it was not necessary to call them twice. The remainder of the night was spent inside the crowded cabin with the adults.

In the bright light of day, as the children related their adventure of the previous night, Grandmother Wraith added to the tale. She had heard something padding around her cabin in the meadow and wisely went to her door and pulled the

latch string to the inside. The latch was of the type that could be pulled open if a bear (?) should catch his paw in it and that would enable him to walk right in. Something like the tale of Goldilocks.

That same summer, (now called the summer of the bears) Om was out walking on his way to inspect the new P G & E campground when he saw what he believed to be a dog loping through the woods. Upon closer inspection he decided it was a bear and began to look for a tree to climb. Then he caught sight of another gentleman running parallel to the bear down the road. He supposed the fellow was running for a cabin or maybe a tree but no, it was George Petersen and George asked, "Isn't it great, which way did he go?". While most of us would seek shelter upon sighting a bear, George was intent on getting a better look at that noble outdoor creature. After spending nearly 80 summers in the Philbrook area, George knows when to run and when to seek a cabin or other shelter.



One of the bears who rang the bell inside the Petersen cabin as he helped himself to some goodies. Photo by June Petersen.

### Mining in the High Lakes Area

Mining was an important occupation in this part of California during the late 1800's and early 1900's. All the mines were operated during the winter. Miners tried to get all the provisions for the winter months hauled in during the summer. It was a back-breaking, grueling job to get the supplies to the campsites over rugged and rocky terrain. Sometimes it was necessary to bring in supplies during the winter months in spite of all the foresight and planning that had gone on in the spring before. Winter time hauling was done by horses pulling sleds over the snow. The horses wore snowshoes made of iron plate, ten to fourteen inches in diameter and clamped on the horses's hoof. The winter mining was the rule because of the need for ample water to use in sluice boxes.

In these years there were probably about 90 to 100 miners working at the various mines located around the perimeter of Philbrook Valley. The main mines operating were Butte King, Westcott, Carr Mine and Sky High Mine.

Carr Mine was owned and operated by S. R. Carr and George Carr. S. R. Carr operated the mine from 1880 to 1890, George Carr operating it from 1890 to 1912. It was later owned and operated by George Cozart and Company from 1920 to 1925, and then by a Mr. Bick from 1925 to 1927 and finally by B. Taylor and Smith Bros. from 1931 to 1936. In the beginning it was only a deep tunnel into the mountain to enable the miners to get to the alluvial gold bearing gravel. This was the type of operation that was used during the 1940's and 1950's when the mine was owned by John Jonas.

The present mining procedure on Carr Ridge is a far cry from early "pick and shovel" type of operation. Now the digging is done by huge tractors

and loaders which dump the gold bearing soil and gravel into a complex series of machines. Here the soil is tumbled, broken up and sorted so that most of the rocks are removed. Finally the gold or concentrate is separated by the use of water in a long sluice box. Because of the large amount of water needed in such an operation the water is directed into holding ponds to be pumped back and reused for washing or sluicing more gold bearing soil.

Most of the gold taken from this mine in early years was rough gold. There is a story that around the turn of the century, a huge nugget was taken out of the mine that was the shape of an old time flat iron. It was said to have been worth about \$2,000 at that time.

Carr Mine has been in almost continuous operation since the late 1800's and has changed hands several times since Mr. Jonas operated it. At present it is under the operation of the Gexa Mining Co.

The Sky High Mine was owned by George Braden and Gordon Graham and was in operation from 1908 to 1916. Sky High is located about three miles east of Lake Philbrook. This mine was a hydraulic mine where the hillsides were washed away with a heavy stream of water, then the mud was run through sluice boxes to recover the gold. This mine produced about \$300,000 in gold. If you hike into the area you can still see the huge piles of tailings from that mining operation. Hydraulic mining was finally prohibited because of the destruction to the environment.

The Westcott Mine was owned by Mr. Westcott and operated from 1885 to 1910. It is a "hardrock" mine, a quartz type in which a shaft is dug into the ground to extract the gold embedded in the rock. This mine is located about two miles from the lake.

Butte Queen and Butte King Mines were two separate

mines but were only about 100 to 150 yards apart. They were owned by separate companies, one was by George C. Perkins. they were in operation from 1880 to 1910. These were both placer mines and were considered to be very rich. Each mine ran a long tunnel completely through the mountain, side by side, separated only by a road between them. they are located two to three miles southeast of Sky High and five miles from the dam at Philbrook.

Hawkins Mine was owned by E. H. Hawkins. He started working it in 1904 and it was still being mined in 1959. This mine was located on the West branch of the Feather River.

Lotts Mine was owned by the late Judge Lott of Oroville. It was in operation from 1880 to 1888. It was a huge quartz mine. Lotts Lake and the surrounding area was also owned by Judge Lott and was decded at his death to the Native Sons of the Golden West.

The area around Lotts Lake and on the ridge is called the Gravel Range. In this region there are about thirty lakes, some of which are Morris Lake, Spring Valley Lake and Saddle Lake.

In the summer of 1980 Philbrook Creek suffered serious sedimentation from the operation of Carr Mine which resulted in its closure for some time. It is being reopened with numerous restrictions by the County to prevent this problem from re-occurring.

\*Material supplied in part by Barbara Seifert Cotter

### Chaparral House

Chaparral House was an Inn located on the Humbug Summit between Inskip and Philbrook Road. In the early days this was an important stage stop between the Humbug Valley and Chico. At that time there were stops every five or ten miles which would be a good day's travel by horse or by stagecoach. It had a hotel, a store, a livery stable and a butcher shop. Chaparral House was used by cattlemen and miners on their way into Philbrook Valley and for those travelers who continued on to Chester. This inn was owned by Allen T. Coon and operated by Jerry Ford and his wife, Maggie. Mr. Ford operated the hotel until his death in 1904 and Mrs. Ford ran it until 1916.

Nothing is left at the location except an open meadow with a nice spring and the cattle loading pens along the road, which are on occasion still used.

From the time Mr. Ford first settled in Chaparral until 1907, he and his family lived there all year long. A record of the deepest snowfall was 22 feet on the level in 1890.

During the winter the mail was delivered by a carrier on snowshoes. A man would carry the mail from Powellton to Lake Almanor. It would take one week to travel this route and one week back. There would be two men, one going into the mountains and one returning in the opposite direction at weekly intervals. Only first class mail was delivered and it was carried in a leather bag which weighed about 40 pounds. Snowshoes worn by these men were from twelve to fourteen feet long, actually more like cross-county skis of today. If any mail was for the Philbrook settlers, it was picked up by a man at Chaparral and taken to Philbrook and surrounding area.

The owner of Chaparral House, Allen T. Coon,

was engaged in hauling freight into Philbrook at one time. On one such trip into the mountains with freight, Mr. Coon looked down beneath the wagon seat and saw a hand groping about for his money bag. Not about to let a thief make off with his cash, he rolled backwards onto the man and they began to wrestle about in the wagon bed. The wagon continued to be pulled along the road by the team in the absence of any commands from the driver to stop. After a lengthy tussle, which ended with the men falling off the moving wagon, the thief got away into the timber and Mr. Coon began the long walk to his destination, presumably to the next inn. There the horses were reclaimed and the journey resumed with his purse still intact.

The Coon family owned property on Grizzly Creek and also an area known as Milkhouse Flats. Mr. Coon became an employee of the Elias Wallack family at Yellow Creek where the Wallack's had a hotel, sawmill and laundry house. Because Mr. Wallack was in poor health Mr. Coon became guardian of these properties.

History is uncertain about the naming of Coon Hollow. Whether it was named for an animal or for the family named Coon who settled there is unknown. We rather imagine that it was named for the Coon family as it was the custom for places to be tagged with the name of those who lived there.



Chaparral House in the 1950's  
Photo courtesy Isabelle  
Campbell.



Chaparral House about 1900. The man on the front porch holding baby is Jerry Ford, Sr. The baby is Mae Ford. The largest of the two boys standing near front of the building is Roy Ford, age 8, the smaller boy is Jerry Ford, Roy's brother. Lady standing to the right of the main door is Roy's mother. Photo courtesy Evelyn Fox.



The old milkhouse in  
Humbug Valley. Photo  
by Butler

## SODA SPRINGS

A pleasant side trip while you are vacationing in the Philbrook Valley is a visit to the Humbug Valley and Soda Springs. Leaving Philbrook you travel back to the Humbug Summit road and turn right toward Snag Lake and the Lake Almanor area. As you enter the Humbug Valley you see a pleasant green pastureland with grazing cattle and scenic mountains. The one outstanding house in the area is the old Andrew Miller homestead which is a large white house situated back on the hillside on the left side of the road. There is a side road which leads to the old Humbug cemetery in the rear of the place. One of the grave markers tells a sad tale of the loss of three children within a period of a few weeks. On down the road, within sight of the Miller house is Soda Springs. It is located on the Yellow Creek road and there on a plaque you read that the Dotta children were victims of a diphtheria epidemic. The plaque story is reprinted in this booklet by the courtesy of Velma Butler who had made a copy.

The Soda Spring is an interesting place to pause and reflect. If you plan to travel to the spring, it is fun to bring along a package of lemonade or Kool-Aid, sugar and a container with your picnic supplies. You will find your lemonade is delicious as the water has a carbonated quality to it, hence its name Soda Springs. The Indians and white settlers both valued it for stomach troubles.

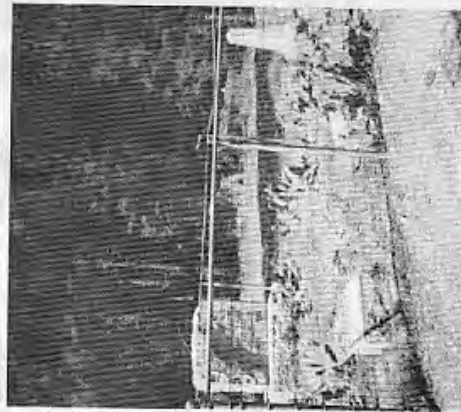
Across the road from the Soda Springs is a small marker pointing out a trail up the side of a ridge. This trail takes you to a large rock outcropping on the top of which are many round holes made by the Indians grinding their grains. From this vista point you can overlook the valley for many miles. One can imagine this was a striking feature that appealed to the Indians--a place

to watch for game or for the return of the hunters.

If you wish to make a loop back to Philbrook you may catch the Humboldt Road which leads you to Butte Meadows. There you travel east to the Humbug Road and then Philbrook Road.



Soda Springs in the Humbug Valley on the right. Below on the left is shown the Indian grinding holes. On the right below is shown the Humbug cemetery. Photo courtesy Velma Butler.



## HISTORY OF HUMBUG VALLEY SODA SPRING

Courtesy of Velma Butler

"Waters of this spring have been used by white men since the early 1800's and by the Maidu Indians for generations before. Medicinal value has been attributed to its waters and present day visitors will find it makes delicious lemonade. The rocking in of the spring's basin was done in 1903 by Frank L. Miller, son of Andrew and Lydia Miller, who had six children, all born in Humbug Valley. In cooperation with the Plumas County Historical Society, Pacific Gas and Electric Company has restored the spring and constructed the facilities here for public use.

Andrew Miller, an emigrant from Bavaria, settled here on a homestead in 1850, engaged in farming and stock raising, and became the valley's earliest established citizen. A post office was authorized in 1860 and Miller became postmaster. In 1860 and again in 1896 he was elected Plumas County Supervisor, and in 1874 he was appointed receiver of the U. S. Land Office in Susanville. The family remained in the valley through the winters and he made trips in on snowshoes.

When roads first opened up the mountains to public travel, Miller built a large hotel, barns and a store. A summer resort serviced by stage lines soon developed and as many as 250 camps were located in the area at one time. At the time of his death in 1903, Miller had increased his land holdings to 2400 acres. The family sold to the Oro Light & Power Co. a predecessor of Pacific Gas and Electric Company, in 1908, when most of the valley land was acquired for a reservoir site. They reserved a parcel above the old hotel site on which in 1909 they built the big white house in view on the hill.

In the late 1850's Elias Wallach built a water-powered sawmill at the lower end of the valley, and several years later Plummer R. Welsh erected a steam-powered sawmill at the north end of the valley. Welsh also established a dairy and stock ranch, and built a hotel here. In 1867 Henry Landt deeded land to Christian A. Lemm, which a century later is still operated as a ranch by the Lemm family on the western side of the valley.

Little remains visible of the Humbug Cemetery down the hill west of the Miller home. There Antone Dotta and his wife are buried with four of their children, who died of diphtheria in 1877. At the foot of the mountain on the west side of the valley can be found the big springs where the major source of Yellow Creek flows out of rock formation. About a half mile south of this Soda Spring at the marker at the side of the road are Indian mortar rocks where the Maidu squaws gathered to grind their seeds and dried grasshoppers.

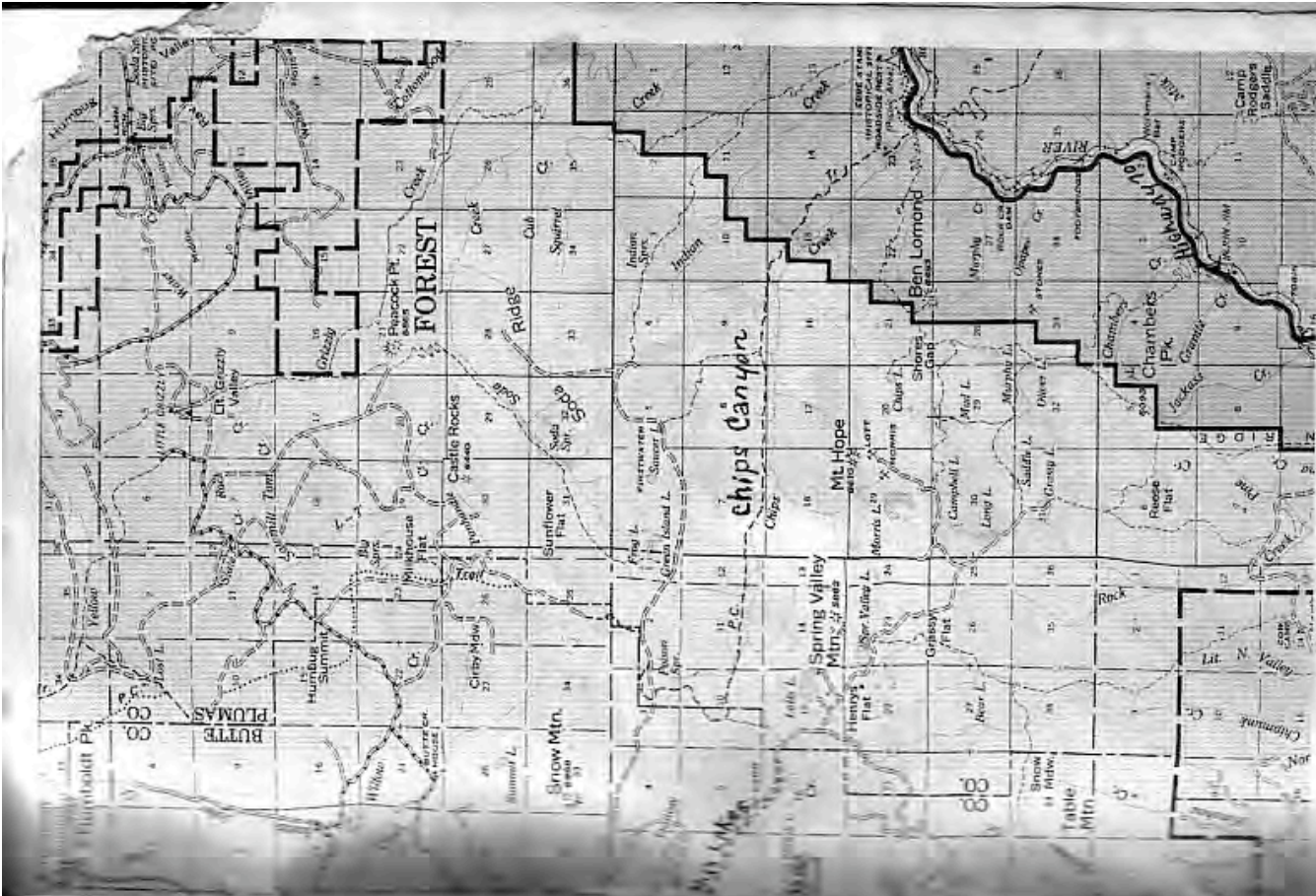
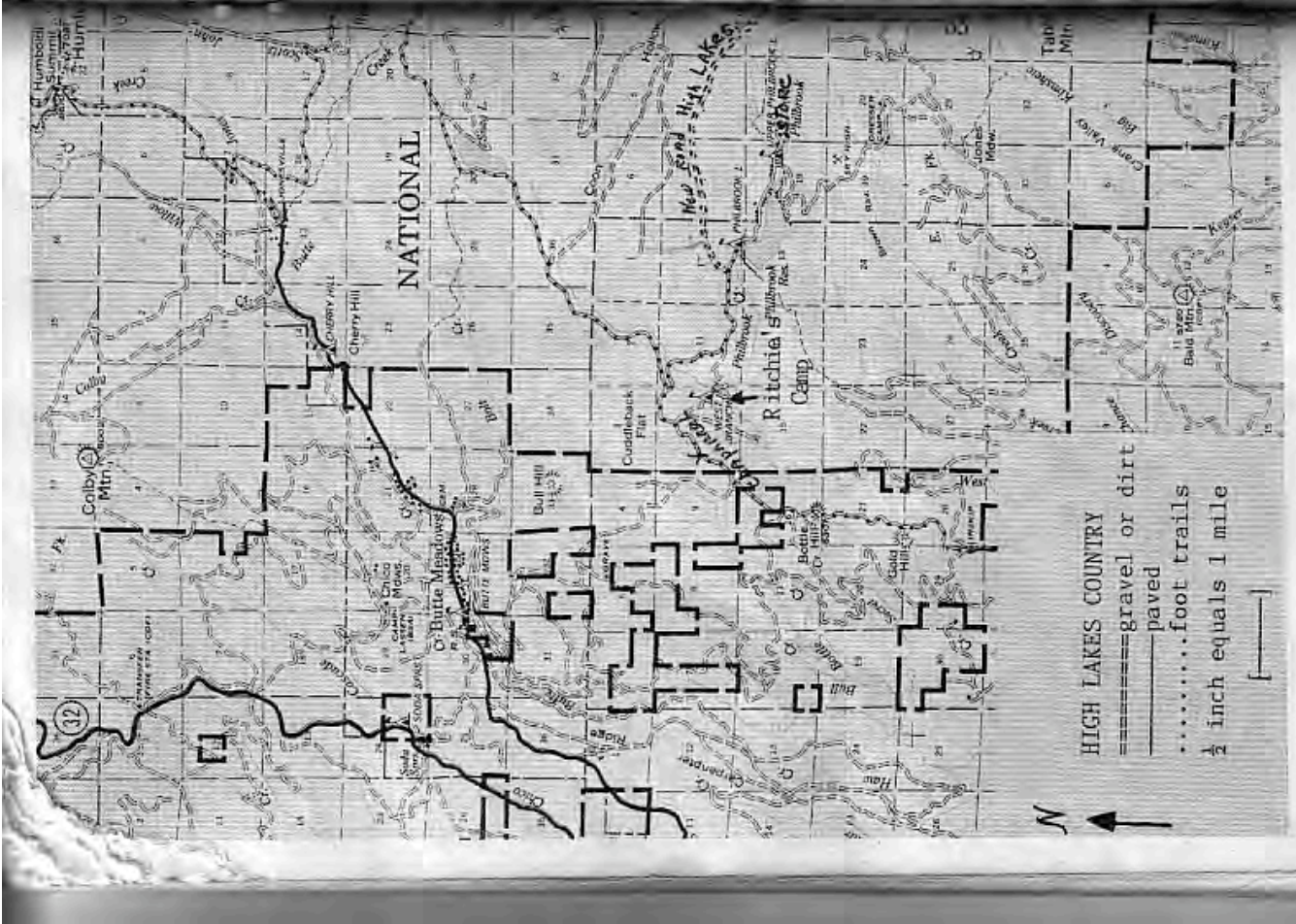
Though many tales are told, it is said that the origin of the name Humbug was obscure, even in 1850.

This interesting spot is being preserved by P.G. & E. Co. with the cooperation of the Miller family, Plumas County Historical society and other people interested in the history of this valley."



The Robber's Roost on the Humboldt Rd.  
Photo by Joyce Jones





FOREST SERVICE LOCATION POSTER

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

Ø Tack indicates location of poster bearing S  
 Distance  $3\frac{1}{2}$  chains to corner of  $W\frac{1}{2}$  sec. 17.  
 Posted by DK Date 6/2/71

This yellow marker tells you by the nail hole that it is located near the marker for the quarter corner between sections 17 and 18. The full square represents 36 square miles or a township. Sometimes the marker or poster shows only a section or two. These are located on section corners and wherever a boundary line crosses a road. By relating these to a Forest Service map you can easily tell where you are within a half mile or so.

Watch for them as you hike through the forest and practice reckoning your location on the map. If ever you become lost this is a good skill to have. The four granite peaks known as Sky High on the Jones' Resort are good markers also. Remember the Philbrook Store and Jones' -Resort are directly below them.

Enjoy a bright Sierra Sun as a cloudless  
Day is born,  
And crispness cools the air, to welcome  
In the morn.  
No smoke or noise to greet us, as when traffic  
Starts its flow;  
No evening news disturbs us as stars  
Begin to glow.

Come journey to our mountains, with high lakes  
Pure and deep,  
To Chips Creek's granite canyons where  
Walls are rough and steep;  
Where Lotts Lake's hidden outlet creeps softly  
Through the brush  
Before down the rugged gorge it  
Gives a mighty rush.

Perhaps you slowly ponder  
Why Plumas bows to Butte,  
Why Chico Folk, and up the Ridge, all  
Choose the Humbug route?  
Wheeling down the winding Feather,  
Forty M.P.H. at least,  
How can one see this wonderland?  
No road leads from the east.

Horace Brakebill