

County of Nevada

State of California

Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission
Application for Registration of Historical Landmark

Name of proposed landmark - Kneebone Ranch and Cemetery

Location - Near the Kneebone Homestead site south of old Spenceville Road. GPS
coordinates 10S 0651809E X 4331984N, WGS 84

Name of applicant - **Karen Hill, on behalf of the Kneebone Family Descendants**

Address - [REDACTED]

Home or work phone [REDACTED]

Name and address of owner upon whose property proposed landmark

is located, if owner is not applicant_ 14936 Spenceville Rd. Penn Valley,
California 95946

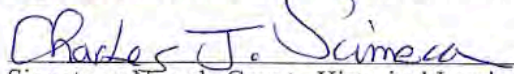
The State of California, Fish and Wildlife Department, consents to this application and authorizes the placing of a plaque or marker on site, with the understanding, provided by the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission, that under California Public Resources Code 5029, sections (f) and (g), the registration of the Kneebone Ranch and Cemetery by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors as a Nevada County Historical Landmark has "no effect on the right, title, or interest in the property" so designated.



Signature, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

5-5-2025

Date



Signature, Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission

5-5-2025

Date

Charles J. Scimeca, District 4 Commissioner

California Public Resources Code

5029. (a) The commission shall, within 90 days after the approval by the director of the issuance by the commission of an historical resources designation for an individual property, submit to the county recorder for recordation, and the county recorder shall record, a certified resolution establishing the historical resources designation. For historical resources designations approved prior to March 15, 1993, the commission may submit for recordation, and the county recorder shall record, a certified resolution of historical resources designation.

(b) Any local agency, or unit thereof, shall, within 90 days of an historical resources designation by the local agency or unit for an individual property, submit to the county recorder for recordation, and the county recorder shall record, a certified resolution establishing the historical resources designation. For historical resources designations made prior to March 15, 1993, the local agency, or unit thereof, may submit for recordation, and the county recorder shall record, a certified resolution of historical resources designation.

(c) The resolution shall include the name of the current property owner, the designating entity, the specific historical resources designation, and a legal description of the property.

(d) The recorder shall index the recorded resolutions of the commission or local agency, or unit thereof, listing the respective agency as the "grantor" and the current owner as the "grantee" for that purpose.

(e) For the purpose of this section, the term "historical resources designation" means the California Register of Historical Resources and any local historical resources designation resulting in restrictions on demolitions or alterations.

(f) This section shall have no effect on the right, title, or interest in the property identified after March 15, 1993, which is acquired by a bona fide purchaser for value between the time of designation of the property as a historical resource and time that the designation is recorded unless the purchaser had actual knowledge of the designation.

(g) This section shall have no effect upon the title to any property that is subject to this section.

Brief history and description of proposed landmark

(attach additional sheets as necessary)

Joseph Kneebone, Sr. came to California from Cornwall, England in 1867, acquired this 1,595-acre ranch near the historic town of Spenceville and started a very successful teaming business. Together with his sons, Andrew and Joseph Kneebone, Jr., they drove 20 mule team wagons, using a “jerk line” to one lead animal, from the 1860s to 1890s from Wheatland to Virginia city, following the old Henness Pass Road.

Joseph’s wife, Mary Ann Reed Kneebone, arrived at Spenceville in 1871 with three of their children, William, Joseph Reed, and Esther. The eldest child, Andrew Reed Kneebone, remained in England to complete his education. Andrew, born in England, arrived at Spenceville in 1875.

On the hill overlooking the Kneebone Ranch are buried five of the original pioneer Kneebone family members: Joseph Kneebone Sr., wife, Mary Reed Kneebone, Joseph Kneebone Jr., Richard Kneebone and Mary Kneebone.

(Note: the description above is also the proposed plaque language once it is approved by the Landmarks Commissioners and the Nevada County Board of Supervisors).

Historically significant aspects or properties of proposed landmark

Joseph Kneebone and his sons epitomized the early teamster transportation and ranching of the 1860s through the 1890s in Nevada County that figured prominently in the development of the Northern Mines and in the growth of commerce, agriculture and the surrounding towns. Joseph Kneebone and his sons left a significant legacy in Nevada County’s history connecting teamster transportation to the Northern Mines and to the Comstock Strike in Virginia City, utilizing the Henness Pass Road and the historic covered bridge at Bridgeport.

The Kneebone families of Spenceville and those of Bridgeport are closely connected by commerce and lineage. They tell the story of pioneer emigrant success and regrettably, American tragedy as well.

How will the landmark be protected and maintained

The plaque is being funded by the descendants of Joseph Kneebone and Mary Reed Kneebone, with oversight of the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission. Designation of the homestead and cemetery as a historic landmark, through public awareness and cooperation between the State of California and the County of Nevada will help protect it from future vandalism and neglect.

Bibliography. Cite or attach available books, records, articles or other materials pertaining to the proposed landmark.

Books and articles:

Bal, Peggy: **Pebbles in the Stream**, Easter Publishing Company, Chico, CA 1979

Brower, Maria E. : Gold Rush Towns of Nevada County, 2006, Arcadia Publishing, page 85

Parker, Lane and Smith, Kathleen: **Saga of Smartsville (Collected Stories of George Rigby)** Comstock Bonanza Press 2014

Scimeca, Chuck: **Over the Henness Pass Road, Barons & Risk Takers**, You Bet Press 2020

Ward, Christopher A.: **Cemeteries of the Western Sierra**, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston South Carolina, 2016

Thompson and West: **History of Nevada County**, Oakland, CA 1880

Historical or civil records: (e.g., ownership, assessments etc.) See attached.

Other: (e.g. photographs, prints or drawings) See attached.
Photographs and newspaper (articles attached)

A photograph of a handwritten signature and date on a light-colored background. The signature is written in dark ink and appears to be 'Kane L. H.' followed by a large circular flourish. The date '9/29/23' is written to the right of the signature.

Applicant's signature

Date

=====

Research

Research for this application was compiled by Chuck Scimeca, Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commissioner, District 4, with assistance from Karen Hill the great great granddaughter of Joseph Kneebone Senior.

This completed form and all related documents shall be sent to the:

Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission
Attention: Chairman
P. O. Box 1014, Nevada City, Cal. 95959

Attachments and related documents may be submitted in electronic format.

An application must be considered solely on its historic or architectural merits and not for commercial gain, political benefits, or other non-historical reasons. An individual Commissioner can advise and counsel an applicant, but all applications must be considered by the full Commission, meeting in regular session.

Nevada County Historical Landmarks Process

Landmarks & Process

Process

The process of registering a Nevada County Historical Landmark begins with an application from the current owner of the property on which the proposed landmark is located. You may download the [Historical Landmarks Commission Application \(PDF\)](#), or send a [request through email](#), or by writing to:

Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission
P.O. Box 1014
Nevada City, CA 95959



Research

By completing the application, the property owner authorizes the landmark request and the Commission to proceed. The Commission will then research the proposed landmark and verify its historical accuracy. The Commission will also evaluate the proposal against the various criteria to determine a property's historical significance.

Evaluation

The Commission's evaluation is informed by the historic registration guidelines issued by national, state and private commissions. As examples, the Commission looks for sites that are historically rare or unique, (e.g., last of its kind), significant, (e.g., played important role in historical event) or superlative (e.g., oldest of its kind).

Proposal & Acceptance

If the Commission is satisfied that the proposed landmark meets the registration criteria, it will present a proposal to the Board of Supervisors recommending that the landmark be designated officially as a Local Point of Historical Interest.

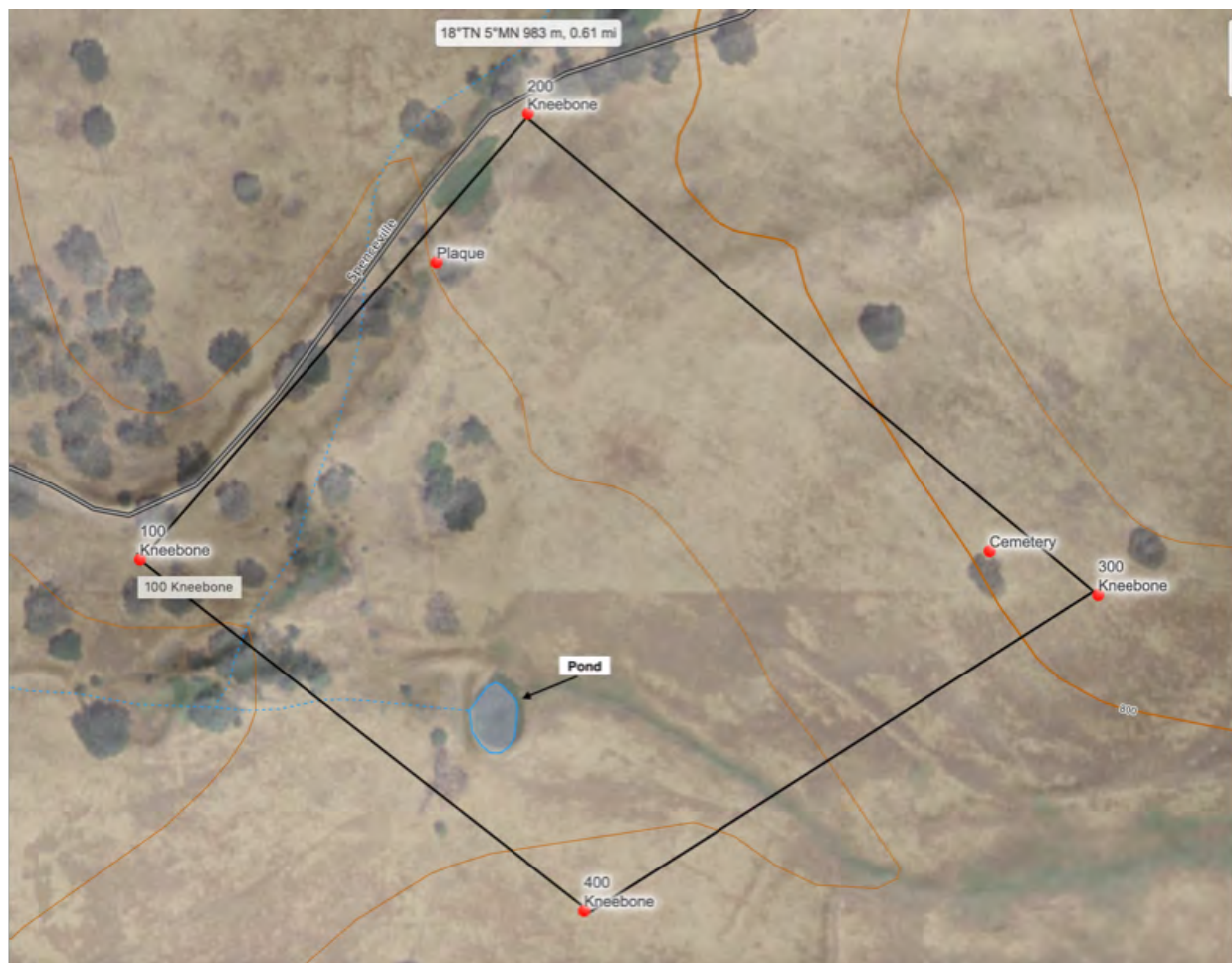
If the Board accepts the recommendation, it will pass a resolution containing the official designation. For some property owners, receiving the County's designation is the first step of a process that may include seeking state and national recognition.

California law requires the Commission to notify the Nevada County Recorder within 90 days after a property has been designated as having an historical landmark. The County Recorder must then index the Board resolution, listing the Commission as "Grantor" and the current owner as the "Grantee."

Plaques or Markers

This law has no effect on the property title and is recorded for information purposes only. After receiving their designation, many property owners erect a plaque or other marker commemorating the designation. This is not a requirement of the registration process, and is customarily paid for by the property owner.

Kneebone Homestead, Area of Historic Significance



The following GPS corner coordinates on the map above surround the historic areas lying within the polygon, show the proposed plaque, the Kneebone cemetery and pond (where Richard Kneebone is believed to have drowned in 1876). The corner Coordinates 100, 200, 300 and 400 hundred are outlined to show the general area of the homestead which includes several historic features, such as the remnants of outbuildings, barns, rock corrals, pond, cemetery, irrigation and do not imply, create, hinder, or restrict the landowner's use of the property in any way.

100 Kneebone 10S 0651584E 4331848N, 200 Kneebone 10S 0651734E 4332026N
 300 Kneebone 10S 0651962E 4331841N, 400 Kneebone 10S 0651762E 4331713N,
 Kneebone Cemetery 10S 0651919E 4331858N, Pond 10S 0651725E 4331788N
 Future Family Plaque, 10S 0651699E 4331967N.¹

Legal Description Kneebone Historic Site

¹ Coordinates are in datum WGS 84 UTM UPS.

**EXHIBIT A
LEGAL DESCRIPTION
KNEEBONE RANCH HISTORIC AREA
WITHIN THE
SPENCEVILLE WILDLIFE AREA
NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

ALL THAT PORTION of the West half of Section 30, Township 15 North, Range 7 East, M.D.M., Nevada County, California, **BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:**

BEGINNING AT A POINT from which the West quarter corner of said Section 30, a 2 1/2" aluminum cap set in a rock mound stamped per U. S. Surveying Instructions including RCE 17403, bears South 83°25'06" West 171.19 feet; **THENCE FROM SAID POINT OF BEGINNING:**

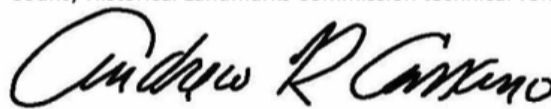
1. North 40°47'33" East 765.58 feet;
2. Thence South 50°11'32" East 963.18 feet;
3. Thence South 57°57'14" West 779.15 feet;
4. Thence North 52°08'57" West 734.10 feet to the Point of Beginning

THE HEREIN DESCRIPTION is based on resource grade GPS survey data and the basis of bearings is the California Coordinate System Zone II, NAD 83, Scale Factor 0.99991489. Distances are grid distances.

THE HEREIN DESCRIBED AREA is not a real property boundary, but rather a subarea within the Spenceville Wildlife Area that is historically significant based on the pioneer occupation by the Kneebone Family.

THE HEREIN DESCRIBED AREA is graphically depicted on Exhibit B, attached hereto and made a part hereof.

THE HEREIN DESCRIPTION was prepared by me based on GPS Survey Data provided by Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission technical volunteers in January 2025.

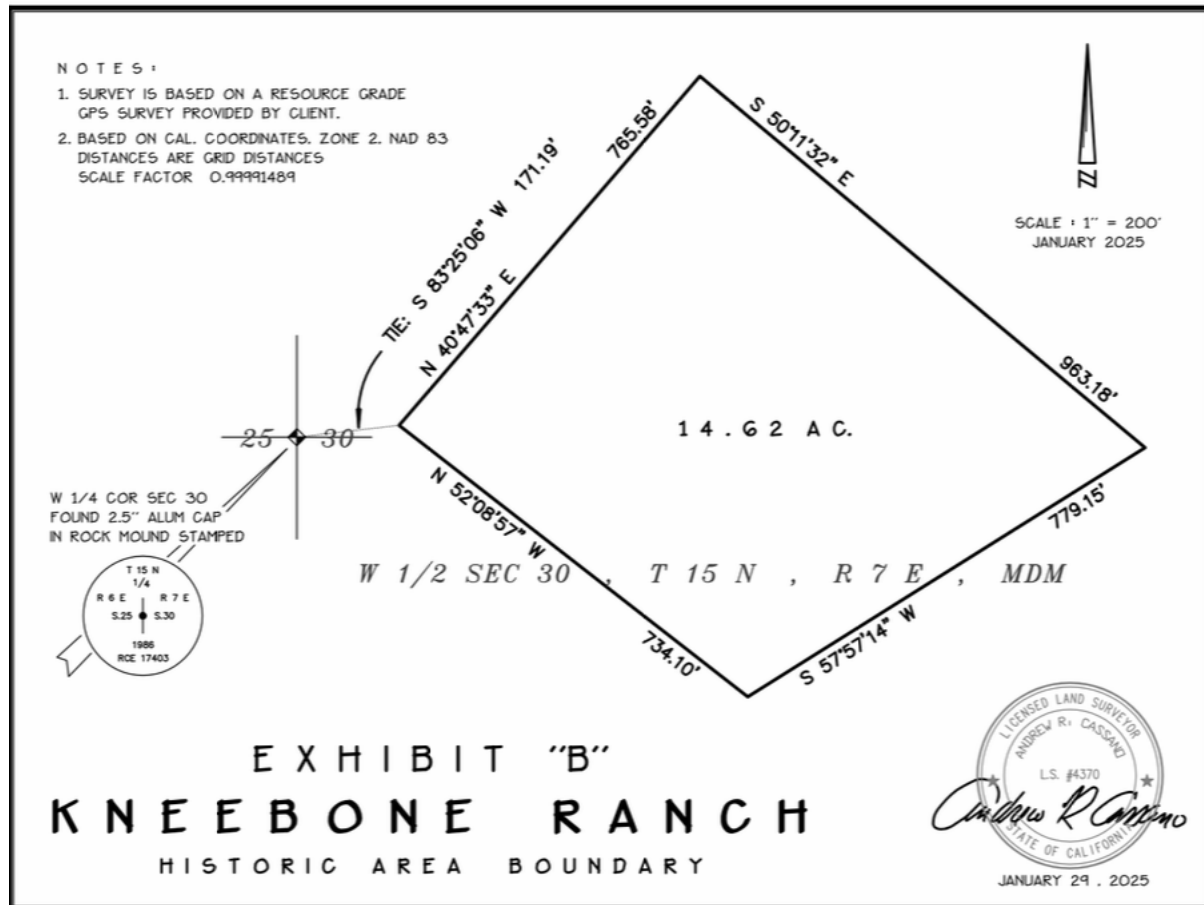


Andrew R. Cassano, PLS 4370

01/29/25



Exhibit "B" Kneebone Ranch Historic Area Boundary

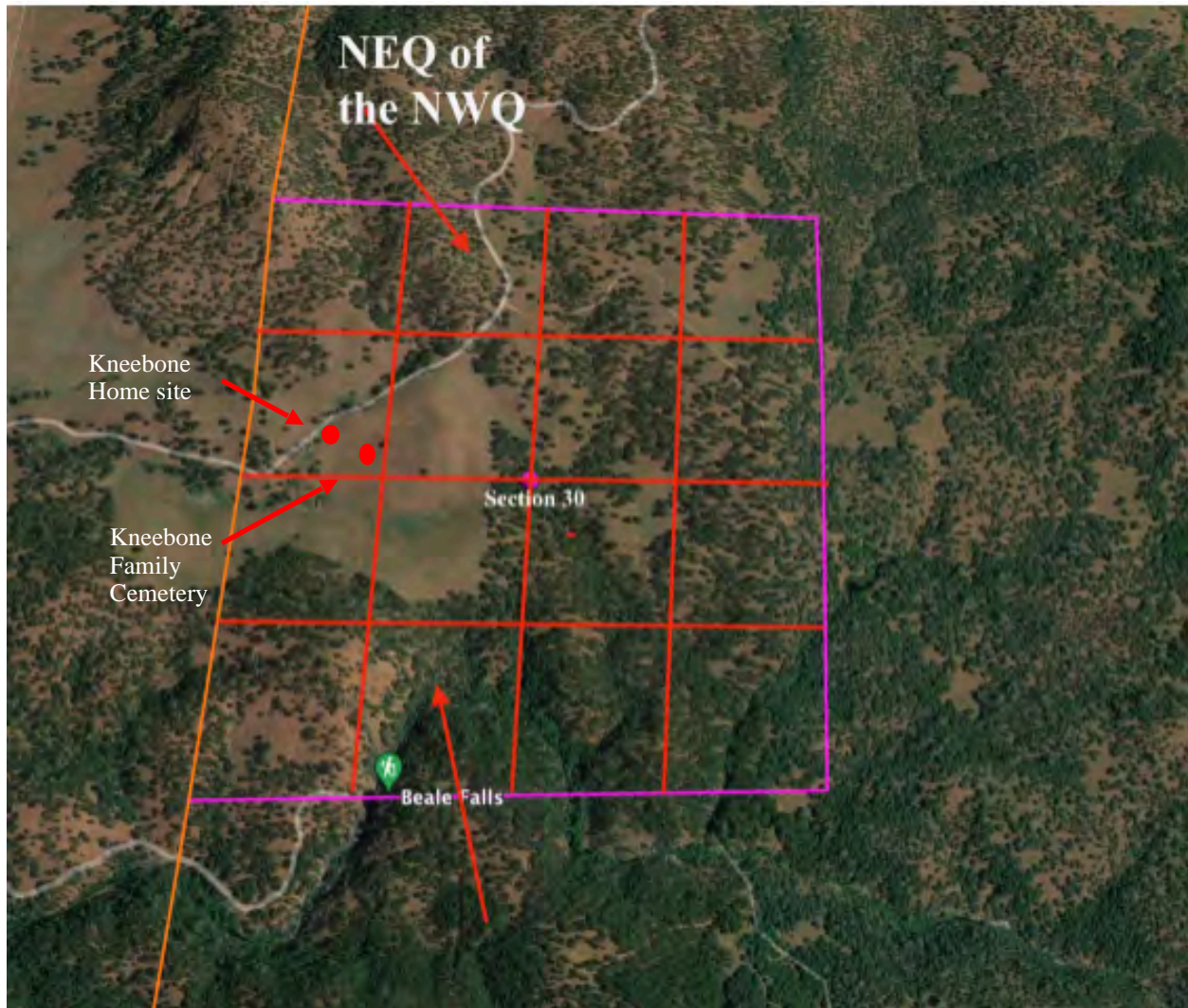


Maps

The map below is an aerial view of a 160-acre section to give a feeling of the topography surrounding the Kneebone Ranch and Cemetery. The two 10-acre parcels noted by the red arrows are two of the early patent parcels allocated to Joseph Kneebone Sr., Patent Accession Number, CA1660. A copy of the patent

document is on page 13. The two red circles are the approximate location of the Kneebone home site and cemetery.

Beale Falls indicated on the map, original name Fairy Falls, was within the property owned by Joseph Kneebone Senior.



2

MAPS

² Aerial map and grid lines provided by Mike Kochis, Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commissioner.



3

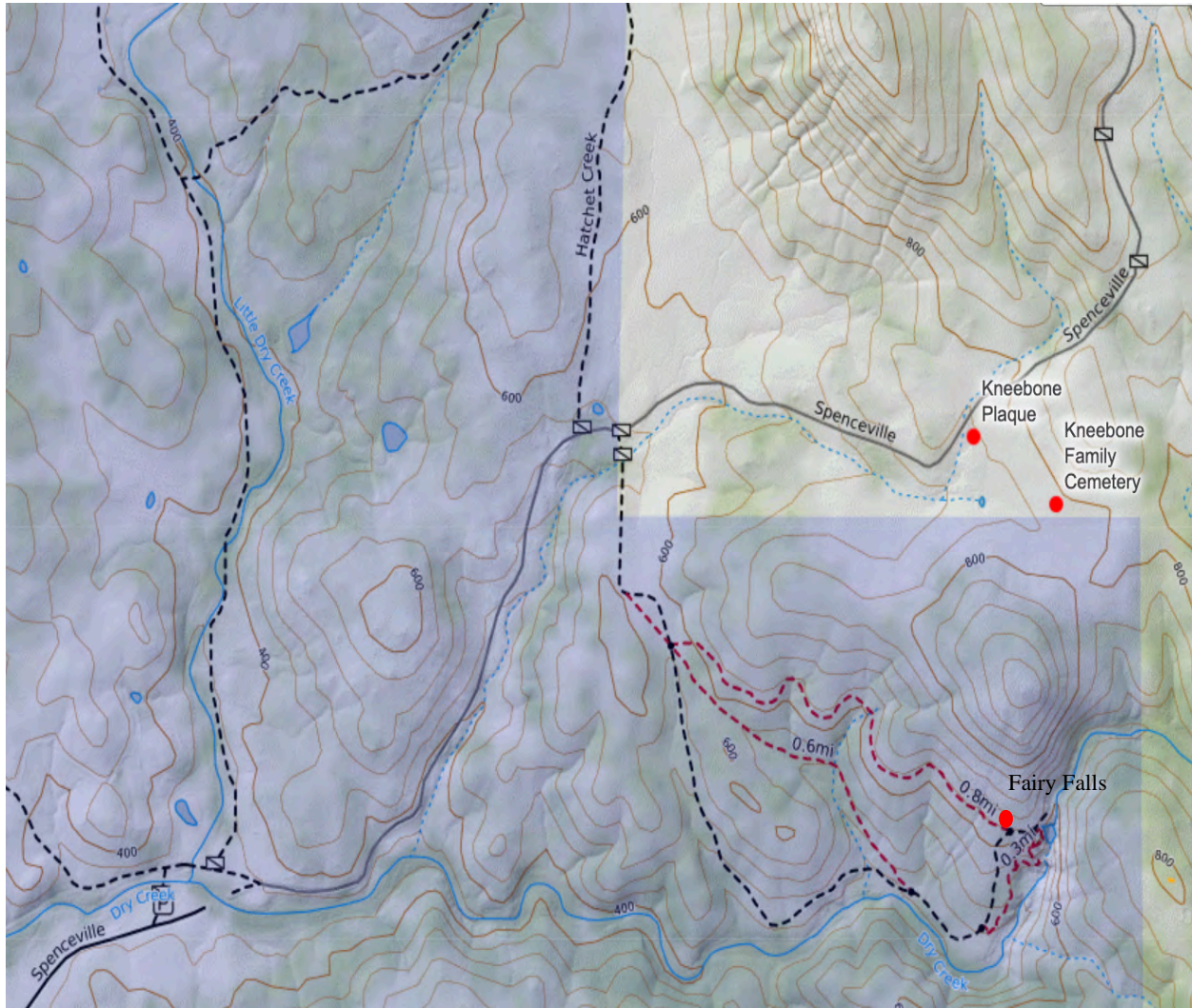
The Lidar⁴ map above makes it possible to view the likely home site of Joseph Kneebone, indicated by the two red arrows pointing towards the rectangle of the probable site. It is interesting to note that when consultant Torben Ericksen and I hiked out to the Kneebone ranch home site we observed a deep hole in the ground at the location shown in the photograph pictured here.

We believe the deep depression observed, which is now filled with debris, underneath the collapsed structure is the probable cellar of the Joseph Kneebone home site. Three field surveys were completed Nevada County Historical Landmark Commissioners in May and June of 2023 locating several period artifacts which support the historic homestead designation.

³ Red arrows indicating home site provided by Mike Kochis, Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commissioner

⁴ Lidar is commonly used to make high-resolution maps, with applications in [surveying](#), [geodesy](#), [geomatics](#), [archaeology](#), [geography](#), [geology](#), [geomorphology](#), [seismology](#), [forestry](#), [atmospheric physics](#),^[6] [laser guidance](#), airborne laser swath mapping (ALSM), and [laser altimetry](#).

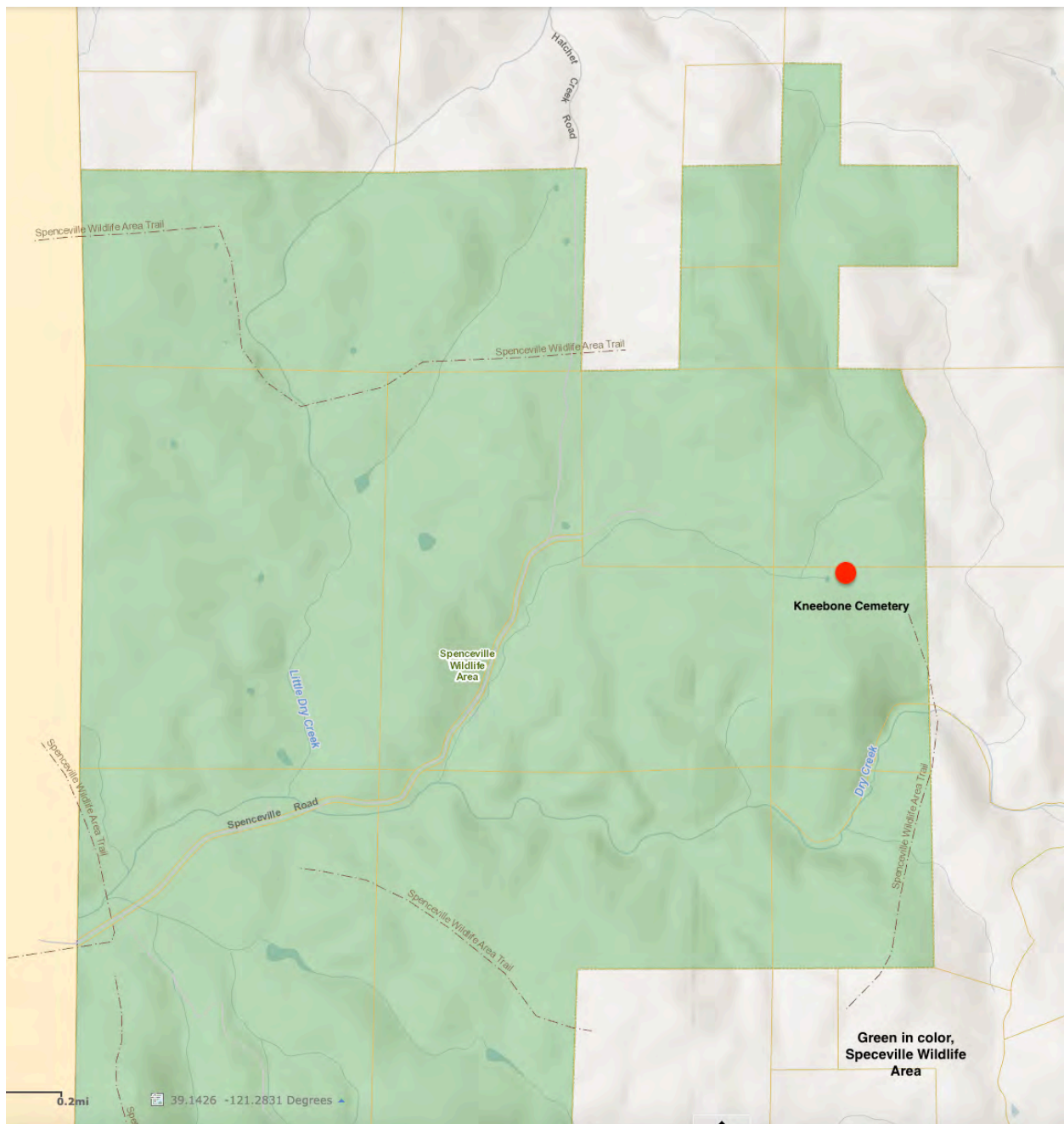
MAPS



The map above shows the location of the Kneebone Ranch home site and proposed plaque designated by the red circle.● The Kneebone family cemetery is designated by the second red circle located a few hundred yards up hill from the home site. The third red circle is the popular destination for hikers, originally part of the Joseph Kneebone Ranch.

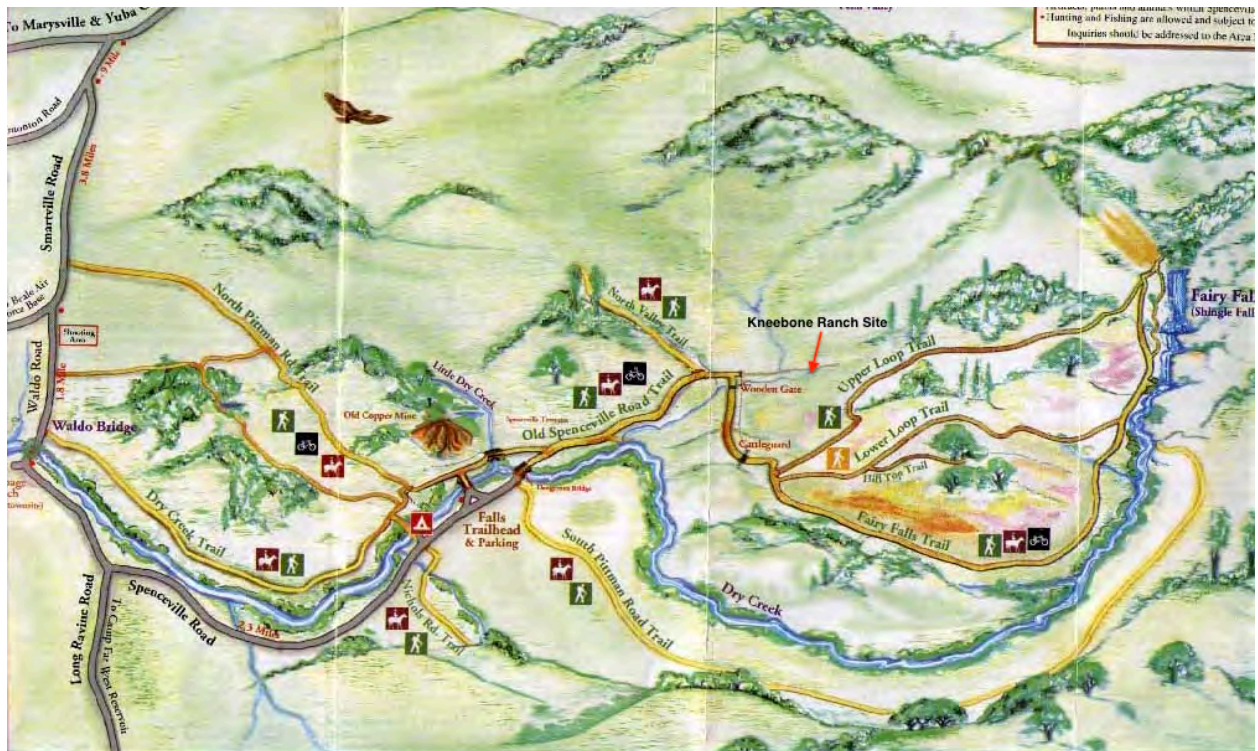
The rectangular boxes on the map with the diagonal slash designates gated roads and trails.

MAPS



The Spenceville Wildlife Area, California Department of Fish Wildlife was created in 1966 from land acquired from the federal government. Additional property was added in 2004 with the acquisition of the Robinson Family acreage that included the historic Joseph Kneebone Ranch and Cemetery.

MAPS

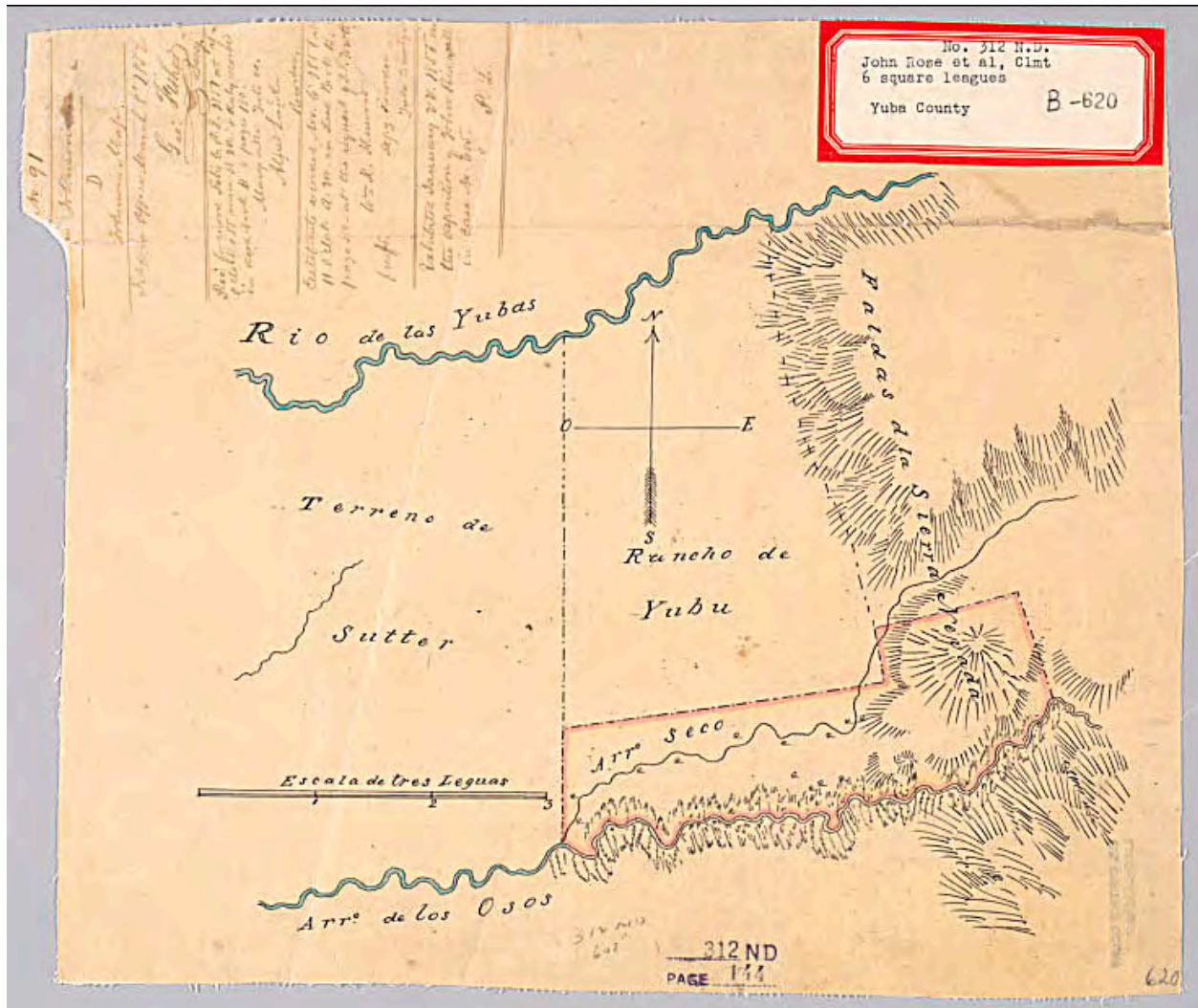


5

The Spenceville Wildlife Area. Note red arrow on map (Kneebone Ranch Site).

⁵ Map is courtesy of the Friends of Spenceville a nonprofit support group.

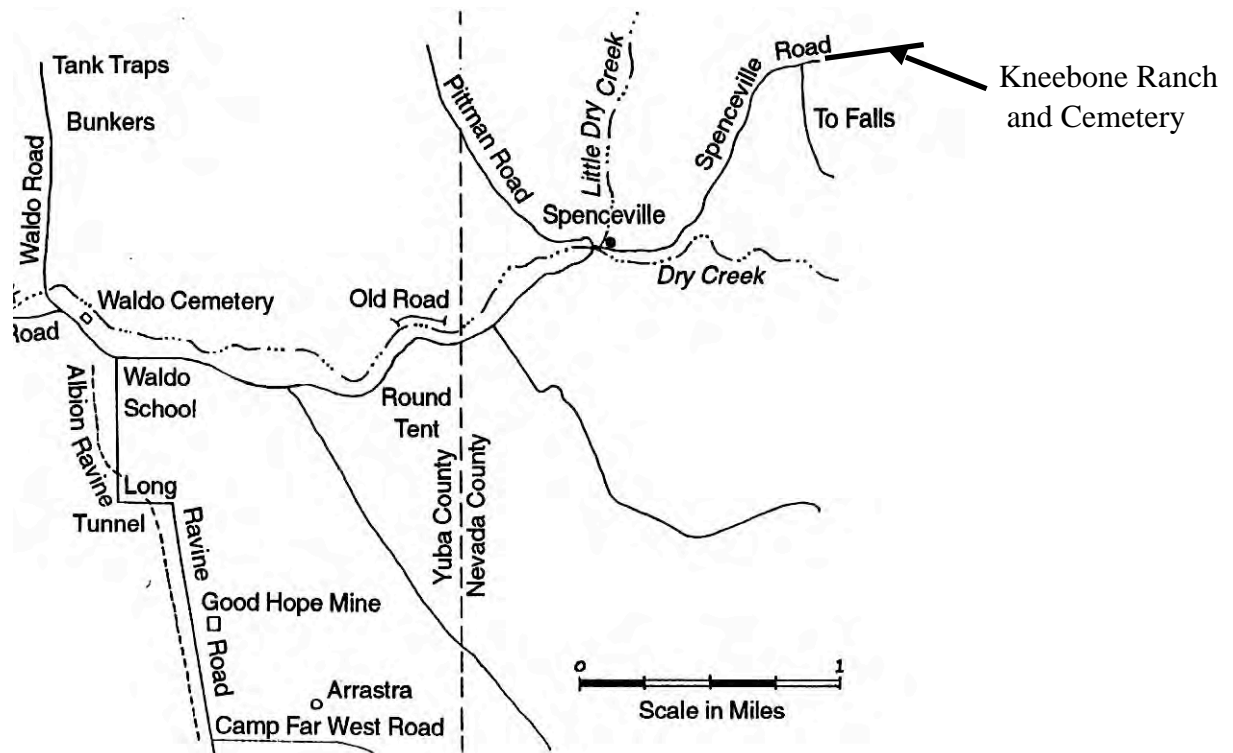
MAPS



The Spenceville area was originally included in the Mexican land grant granted to John Rose prior to the gold rush. The land grant was called “Rancho de Yubu” which was approximately 16 square miles. Note “Arro Seco” on the map, translated, means “dry stream” or Dry Creek, which runs through the heart of the Spenceville Wildlife Area.⁶

⁶ Meals, Hank, **Yuba Trails and Tales (Spenceville)** <http://yubatreadhead.blogspot.com>, 2018

Spenceville Area Map & the Historic Kneebone Ranch



The Kneebone Ranch and Cemetery shown on this map is located one and one-half miles east of the old town of Spenceville. The ranch was developed by Joseph Kneebone in 1872.⁷ The trail to Beale Falls (known as Fairy Falls prior to World War II)⁸ shown at the junction of Spenceville Road is one of the main attractions at the Spenceville Wildlife Area.

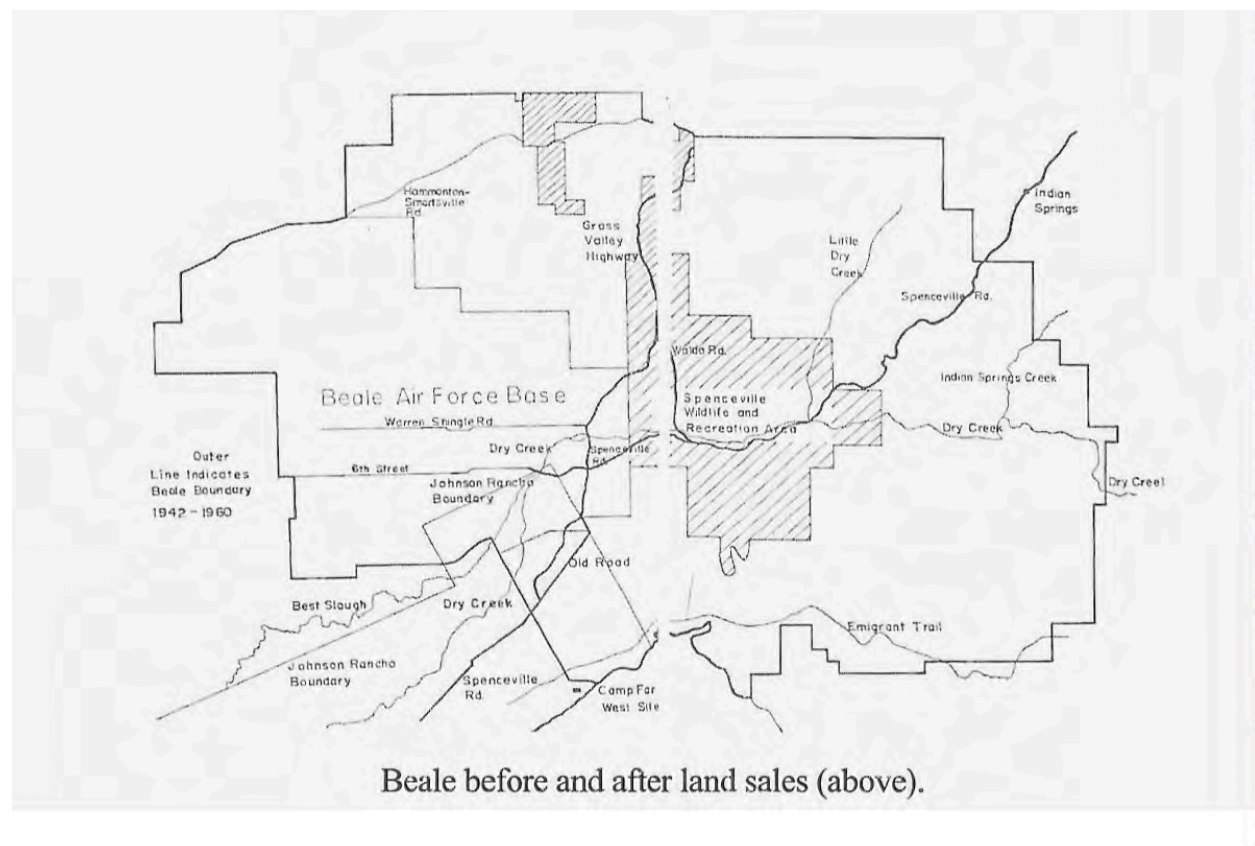
If the visitor continues straight ahead going past the gate, instead of turning right to the Beale Falls, it is only a short distance to the Kneebone Ranch historic site. The historic Kneebone Ranch being in close proximity to the Falls trail junction will add an additional opportunity for the visiting public to enjoy.

⁷ Thompson and West: **History of Nevada County**, Oakland, CA 1880, page 222

⁸ Bal, Peggy, *Pebbles in the Stream*, Nevada County Historical Society, 1993 page 27

By 1890 Joseph Kneebone had increased his historic Kneebone Ranch holdings to 1595 acres, which included Beale Falls then known as Fairy Falls.

Camp Beale Established June 1942



With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 lives of the ranchers and farmers who were located in the Spenceville area forever changed.

The War Department used the government's right of "eminent domain" to acquire 86,000 acres of their land in Eastern Yuba and Western Nevada Counties. In June of 1942 Camp Beale was formed. Purchasing agents for the government promised landowners they could re-purchase their property at the same price after the war. As time would tell, this did not actually happen. Most of the pioneer ranchers could not afford to buy their property back when a smaller portion of what was

taken was finally put up for sale years later in December of 1959. The land went to the highest bidders forcing out the ranchers who could little afford the price.⁹

Legal Documents (pages 15-22)

| Land Patent Details | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|------------|---------------------|----------|--------|
| Accession Nr: CA1660__377 | | Document Type: | | State Volume Patent | | |
| State: California | | Issue Date: 11/10/1882 | | Cancelled: No | | |
| Names On Document | | Miscellaneous Information | | | | |
| KNEEBONE, JOSEPH | | Land Office: Sacramento | | | | |
| US Reservations: | | No | | | | |
| Mineral Reservations: | | No | | | | |
| Tribe: --- | | | | | | |
| Militia: --- | | | | | | |
| State In Favor Of: --- | | | | | | |
| Military Rank:--- | | Authority: April 24, 1820: Sale-Cash Entry (3 Stat. 566) | | | | |
| Document Numbers | | Survey Information | | | | |
| Document Nr: 2530 | | Total Acres: 132.67 | | | | |
| Misc. Doc. Nr:--- | | Survey Date: --- | | | | |
| BLM Serial Nr: --- | | Geographic Name: --- | | | | |
| Indian Allot. Nr: --- | | Metes/Bounds: No | | | | |
| Land Descriptions | | | | | | |
| State | Meridian | Twp – Rng | Aliquots | Section | Survey # | County |
| CA | Mount Diablo | 015N - 007E | Lot/Trct 1 | 30 | Nevada | |
| CA | Mount Diablo | 015N - 007E | NE¼NW¼ | 30 | Nevada | |
| CA | Mount Diablo | 015N - 007E | Lot/Trct 4 | 30 | Nevada | |
| CA | Mount Diablo | 015N - 007E | SE¼SW¼ | 30 | Nevada | |

The documents on the **following pages 16-21**, are copies provided by the Nevada County Clerk-Recorder, doc #53/263, Deed of purchase by Joseph Kneebone for the

⁹ Cross II, Coy F. 9th Reconnaissance Wing Historian, From the Stone Age to the Space Age: A History of Beale AFB. A US Air Force publication, pages 57-59.

Homestead of Sarah Quigley 1877 and Homestead Declaration of Joseph Kneebone 1890, document # 5/402. This documents land totaling 1595 acres.

Joseph Kneebone purchased for \$1500 in 1877 the homestead of Sarah Quigley (deceased) of some **685 acres** from James O' Brian, deed recorded on March 30, 1877 Nevada County Clerk's Office.

Joseph Kneebone filed for a Homestead by consolidating the following; US patent 1882 for **132 acres**, Us patent 1883 for **132 acres**, Deed from the Central Pacific Railroad 1881 **66 acres**, 1882 Central Pacific Railroad **80** acres, and a deed from Andrew Reed Kneebone 12-13-1884, paid \$3500 for **910 acres**. The homestead was signed by Joseph Kneebone and declared on March 1, 1890.

half of the first part the full sum of Three thousand Dollars in Gold coin less what ever sum the said Chas Porter shall subscribed for stock of the said Deadwood Mine, but all the stock that the said Porter shall subscribe for, shall be considered, as gold coin in part payment of the said Three thousand Dollars, if the said F.B. Lynnington his heirs or assigns shall pay or tender the amount above stated on or before the day above written then this deed shall be delivered as above stated. - But in case they fail to pay all of the said Three thousand Dollars, then the deed shall be null and void and shall be delivered to the said Chas Porter, his heirs or assigns upon demand. -
 Recorded at the request of W Sackett March 27. A.D. 1877. at 10 o'clock A.M.

J.J. Rogers

Recorder

James O'Brien et al

vs

Joseph Luebke

This Indenture, made the twentieth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy seven between James O'Brien of Smartsville, Yuba County and State of California and William B. Daigley of the Town of Wheeland in the County and State aforesaid the parties of the first part, and Joseph Luebke of Nevada County the party of the second part. Witnesseth, that the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of fifteen hundred Dollars gold coin of the United States of America, to them in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof, is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained and sold, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents do grant, bargain and sell, convey and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all those certain lots, pieces or parcels of land, situate, lying and being in the County of Nevada, State of California, more bounded and particularly described as follows: to wit: Being in Rough and Rudy Township, and on the Road leading from Rough and Rudy to Sacramento City, and beginning at a stake that stands eleven (11) chains southerly of said Road, thence running South 77° west, 17⁰⁰ chains to an oak tree standing on the north side of said Road, thence north eleven (11) feet 90 chains to an oak stake that stands on a steep hill side, thence north 77° East 55 chains to a pine stake, thence South 11 East 90 chains to an oak stake from which an oak tree 20 inches in diameter bears north 45° west 18 links, thence South 79° west 17⁰⁰ chains to the same being the premises formerly occupied by Mrs Sarah Daigley now deceased.

piece of beginning containing 818 of land more or less

as a Homestead, and known as the Gino House Ranch, also all that portion of said Gino House Ranch adjoining the tract of land above described containing six hundred and eighty five acres of land, more or less, known as a part of said Gino House Ranch, formerly in possession of said Mrs Sarah Daugley now deceased and said property being the same as Decided by a S. Lerary to James O'Brien and having date the 15th day of May 1876, and Recorded in Book of Records of Nevada County on the 6th day of June 1876 in Pages 594 and 595.

Together with all and singular the tenements hereditaments, and appurtenances thereto belonging, or in any wise appertaining, and the reversions and reversions, remainders and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; and also all the estate, right, title, interest, property, possessions, claims and demand whatsoever, as well in Law as in equity, of the said parties of the first part, of, in or to, the said premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances.

To have and to hold all and singular the said premises, together with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part, unto his heirs and assigns forever.

In Witness Whereof, the said parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

J. O'Brien
W. S. Daugley

State of California } ss
County of Yuba } On this nineteenth day of February A.D. one thousand eight hundred and seventy seven personally appeared before me, Timothy J. Brown a Notary Public in and for the said County of Yuba James O'Brien and William S. Daugley whose names are subscribed to the annexed instrument as the parties thereto, personally known to me to be the same persons described in and who executed the said annexed instrument, as the parties thereto, and they duly acknowledged to me that they executed the same.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and official my Official Seal, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.

(Seal)

Timothy J. Brown

Notary Public for
Yuba County Cal

Recorded at the Request of Joseph Knutson March 30th A.D. 1877.
at 3 o'clock P.M.

J. J. Rogers
Recorder

Recorded at request of Mrs Mary Davis
Feb'y 27th, 1890 at 10 min past 3 o'clock P.M.

A. B. Brady
Recorder

Homestead
of
Joseph Kneebone

Know all men by these presents
That I Joseph Kneebone do hereby declare
and certify that I am the head of a
family and that I do now at the time
of making this declaration actually reside
with my family on the land and premises
hereinafter described. I further declare
that my family consists of a minor
child. That the land and premises on
which I reside with my family and
which I claim as a Homestead are
bounded and described as follows
to wit:

Lying and being in the County of
Nevada, State of California they are
bounded on the North by land of
Andrew Reed Kneebone, on the South
by land of F. R. Lofton, on the East by
land of said Lofton and by that of
Robert Byers, Mrs Emma Brown and
Ara Fish, on the West by land of said
Lofton. Said premises embrace land
acquired by me through several convey-
ances from various sources, to which
I hereby refer: 1

By Patent of the United States dated the
tenth day of November A. D. 1882, for

the lot No one, the North East Quarter of the North West Quarter, the lot No four and the South East Quarter of the South West Quarter of section thirty in Township fifteen North of Range seven East of Mount Diablo Meridian in California, containing one hundred and thirty two acres and sixty seven hundredths of an acre, as may more fully appear from the Record of said Patent in Book 2 of Patents pages 382-3 Records of Nevada County, California 2

By Patent of the United States dated the tenth day of February A. D. 1883, for the lot No. Two the South East Quarter of the North West Quarter. The lot no Three, and the North East Quarter of the South West Quarter of Section thirty in township fifteen North of Range Seven East of Mount Diablo Meridian in California, containing one hundred and thirty two acres, and sixty seven hundredths of an acre, as may more fully appear from the record of said Patent in Book 2 of Patents page 381-2 Records of Nevada County, California 1882

3

By Deed of the Central Pacific Rail Road Company, a Corporation and Jas. C. B. Gunn and S. W. Sanderson, Trustees, dated the 21 day of April A. D. 1881, for lot four of the South West Quarter of section No. nineteen and the North East Quarter of the North West Quarter

of Section No. Twenty Nine in Township
Fifteen North of Range Seven East Mount
Diablo Base and Meridian containing
Sixty Six and $\frac{65}{100}$ acres as may more
fully appear from the Record of said
Deed in Book 61 of Deeds pages 533-4-5
Records of Nevada County, California.

4


By Deed of the Central Pacific Railroad
Company, a Corporation, and Jas. C. D.
Gunn and S. W. Sanderson Trustees
dated the 22 day of May A. D. 1882, for
the South half of the South East Quarter
of Section No. Nineteen in Township
Fifteen North of Range Seven East Mount
Diablo Base and Meridian, containing
eighty acres, as may more fully appear
from the Record of said Deed in Book
72 of Deeds Page 1 Records of Nevada
County, California.

5

By Deed of Andrew Reed Kneebone dated
the 13th day of December A. D. 1884, for
lot No. 2 of North West Quarter, Lot No
3 of South West Quarter and North East
Quarter of South West Quarter of Section
Nineteen, Township Fifteen North, Range
7 East Mount Diablo Base and
Meridian in Rough and Ready Town-
ship Nevada County, California, as
may more fully appear from the Record
of said Deed in Book 64 of Deeds Page
482 Records of Nevada County California.
The aggregate of said lands being about

five hundred acres of land.

I further declare that it is my intention to use and claim the said land and premises above described together with the dwelling house thereon and its appurtenances as a Homestead; and I do hereby select and claim the same as a Homestead for the use of myself and family. I further declare that the actual cash value of said land and premises so claimed as a Homestead is three thousand five hundred dollars. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this first day of March A. D. 1890.

Joseph Kneebone 

State of California
County of Nevada } ss.

On this 1st day of March in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety before me, I J. Caldwell a Notary Public, in and for the said County of Nevada residing therein, duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared Joseph Kneebone known to me to be the same person described in, whose name is subscribed to and who executed the within instrument and he acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Official Seal, at my office in the said County of Nevada, the day and year in this

ELWOOD S. BAKER
United States Attorney
JOHN S. LYNCH
Asst U. S. Attorney
Room 422, P. O. Building
San Francisco, California

Attorneys for Plaintiff

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
IN AND FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
NORTHERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff

v.

26,768.87 acres of land, more or less,
in Yuba and Nevada Counties, State of
California, INTERSTATE LAND HOLDING
COMPANY, et al.

Defendants

vs. AUMER

(Tract 73-A)

STIPULATION FOR ENTRY OF JUDGMENT REGARDING
THE SUM OF \$1.00 AS COMPENSATION FOR THE
TAKING OF TRACT 73-A, AND ORDER DIRECTING
PAYMENT OF MONEY & PREPARATION OF JUDGMENT

IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED and agreed by and between the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, hereinafter called plaintiff, and the undersigned defendant, that

WHEREAS, the Complaint in this action was filed on July 18, 1942, and on said day a Declaration of Taking was filed and the sum of TEN AND NO/100 DOLLARS (\$10.00) was deposited in the Registry of the Court as estimated just compensation for the taking of Tract 73-A, as described in the Complaint and Declaration of Taking; and

WHEREAS, the undersigned defendant represents and warrants that at the time of and immediately preceding the filing of the Declaration of Taking in this action he is the son and sole and only heir of Sarah Aumer, Deceased, the owner in fee simple of Tract 73-A, and the only person, firm or corporation entitled to the compensation for said taking, or any portion thereof.

The above document dated July 18th, 1942 shows 26,768.87 acres of land owned by Clarence Aumer 'sold' to the United States for \$10.00 taken by eminent domain. Clarence Aumer was the son of Sarah Kneebone Aumer and grandson of Joseph Kneebone Sr.

Clarence Aumer was able to buy the other siblings' shares of the Kneebone ranch thereby becoming the sole heir. Attached is a copy of the first page of this document showing the taking of Tract 73-A by the Federal government.¹⁰

¹⁰ Provided by Karen Hill archive

The Teamster Family

The Kneebone family men were known as excellent freighters. The father Joseph Kneebone Senior, eldest son Andrew R. Kneebone and younger son Joseph Kneebone Junior both followed in their father's footsteps and became some of the best-known teamster freighters in the region. They were also known in the business as "long line skimmers."¹¹ Teamsters handled a "jerk line" coming from the one lead animal, almost always a mule. The line went all the way from the lead mule back to the wheel mule nearest the wagon's left side on which the freighter rode.

The Kneebone family teamsters between 1860-1890s had to negotiate the very rugged road conditions of the Sierra Nevada. As more toll roads and bridges were built, use of the mule pack train decreased and the wagon jerk line team of mules under the steady control of the teamster took their place. The jerk line wagon team could carry tons of cargo and became the freighter of choice between Marysville and Virginia City. The team was made up of one or more heavy wagons, pulled by teams of mules consisting of four to as many as 36 mules.¹²

¹¹ Rigby, George, *He Made a Saddle* copyright 1980. Smith, Kathleen, *The Saga of Smartsville*, 2014 page 48

¹² Scimeca, Chuck; *Over the Henness Pass Road*, You Bet Press 2020 page 37



Joseph Kneebone Sr. and his 26-mule team are pictured here in the 1880s. Bells were hung above the lead pair and used to signal other wagons when navigating blind turns along the dangerous stage routes of the region. A team this size would eat approximately 800 pounds of hay every day. (YCL, California Room, Public History Archives.)

The Teamster Family



Master teamster Andrew R. Kneebone started freighting in the 1880s. His sixteen-mule-and-horse team pulled three wagons hitched together. In this picture he is hauling staples from Wheatland to the mining towns after delivering firewood. He was well-known for a driving feat performed by no other driver. He could turn his team completely around in the middle of a small city street without unhitching them. People in Grass Valley made bets on him as they watched unbelieving while he turned his team around on Mill Street. His grandson, Milton Kneebone, says he did this by walking along the sidewalk talking

to his team as it turned. The lead mules always wore bells to let the other teams know they were coming around the corners on the narrow Spenceville Road. Andy Kneebone rode his wheel mule controlling a jerk line to the lead mule on the left side. This was the only animal he drove, for in a sense the others followed the lead mule. Other drivers usually rode on their wagons, but Andy and his brother Joe (who was murdered on the Spenceville Road while driving his team) were accustomed to riding the wheel. This team is made up of some mules and some horses. (*Milton Kneebone photo.*)



Joseph Kneebone Sr. and Team (circa 1860s)

The Teamster Family

Early Emigration History of Joseph Kneebone Sr.

The following quote is from a book first published in 1924, the *History of Placer and Nevada Counties: with biological sketches of the leading men and women of the counties who have been identified with their growth and development from the early days to the present*. It well outlines the accomplishments by Joseph Kneebone an early pioneer teamster.

“While so much is being said about the limitation of immigration, it is well to remember how many of our most worthy citizens were immigrants or from immigrant stock. Some brought money into the country, but the only wealth which by far the greater number brought was in their two hands and their brains.

Of the latter number was Joseph Kneebone, who came from Cornwall, England via Panama to San Francisco, in 1867. His wife, Mary Martin Reed in maidenhood arrived in 1871, bringing with her two sons and one daughter, viz: Joseph, William and Esther. How the father acquired the 800-acre ranch at Spenceville with no

capital but hands and brain, is an exhibition of the thrift and energy of some of our foreigners which have helped to make our country great.

On his arrival in America Joseph Kneebone found work in Rocklin cutting wood. In the spring of 1868, he went to Virginia City, Nev. and did teaming there; a year later he left Virginia City with an eight- horse team and came to Grass Valley, Cal., where he worked some in the mines during the winter, but his real work was teaming while he made his headquarters at Grass Valley. He first preempted a quarter section, then took up a timber claim of another quarter section; then he bought some 400 acres of railroad land. After such signal success it is sad to record that he was shot on his own ranch at the age of sixty-four. His wife was only thirty-seven when she died. They had seven children: Joseph, William, Esther, Sarah, Richard, Mary, and Andrew R.”¹³

¹³ Lardner, W.B and Brock, M.J, History of Placer and Nevada Counties, Publisher Los Angeles Historic Record 1924 Company, pages 976 to 978

Family Group Sheet for Joseph Kneebone

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|--|
| Husband: | | Joseph Kneebone |
| | Birth: | 15 May 1838 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Polgear Farm |
| | Marriage: | 03 Oct 1860 in Redruth, Cornwall, England; Wesleyan Chapel, Methodist |
| | Death: | 04 Feb 1907 in Spenceville, Yuba, California, USA; Murdered in Spenceville |
| | Burial: | Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Father: | Joseph Kneebone |
| | Mother: | Elizabeth Pryor |
| Wife: | | Mary Martin Reed |
| | Birth: | 19 Nov 1841 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England; Carnmarthe |
| | Death: | 21 Dec 1878 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA; In childbirth with daughter, Mary |
| | Burial: | 03 Jan 1879 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Father: | Andrew Reed |
| | Mother: | Mary Ann Martin |
| Children: | | |
| 1 | Name: | Andrew Reed Kneebone |
| M | Birth: | 07 Nov 1860 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England |
| | Marriage: | 29 Mar 1887 in Marysville, Yuba, California, USA |
| | Death: | 25 Feb 1934 in Bridgeport, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Burial: | 27 Feb 1934 in Bridgeport, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Spouse: | Victoria Marie Amelia Cole |
| 2 | Name: | William Kneebone |
| M | Birth: | 09 Mar 1864 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England; Trethellan |
| | Marriage: | 06 Feb 1889 in Marysville, Yuba, California, USA |
| | Death: | 1945 in Marysville, Yuba, California, USA |
| | Burial: | Olivehurst, Nevada County, California, USA; Sierra View Cemetery |
| | Spouse: | Henrietta Bishop |
| 3 | Name: | Joseph Reed Kneebone |
| M | Birth: | 02 Mar 1865 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England |
| | Marriage: | Abt. 1881 in California, USA |
| | Burial: | Jun 1888 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Death: | 29 Jun 1888 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA; murdered |
| | Spouse: | Mary Anne Daugherty |
| 4 | Name: | Esther Kneebone |
| F | Birth: | 20 Jul 1866 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England |
| | Marriage: | 03 Oct 1889 in Marysville, Yuba, California, USA |
| | Death: | 24 Jul 1927 in Sacramento, Sacramento, California, USA |
| | Burial: | 26 Jul 1927 in Lot 54, Sec H, Odd Fellows Lawn Cemetery, Sacramento, Sacramento, California, USA |
| | Spouse: | Alpha Nichols |
| 5 | Name: | Sara J Kneebone |
| F | Birth: | 17 Jan 1873 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Marriage: | 02 Mar 1897 in Nevada, California, USA; At home of his parents, Pine and Cottage Streets, Nevada City ?? |
| | Death: | 28 Nov 1949 in Kings Beach, Lake Tahoe, Placer, California, USA |
| | Spouse: | Louis Hermann Aumer |

| | | |
|---|---------|--|
| 6 | Name: | Richard Kneebone |
| M | Birth: | Jun 1874 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Death: | 08 Sep 1876 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Burial: | 04 Oct 1876 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA; Drowned |

| | | |
|---|---------|---|
| 7 | Name: | Mary M Kneebone |
| F | Birth: | 21 Dec 1878 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Death: | 21 Dec 1878 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |
| | Burial: | Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA |

Prepared By:

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Preparer: | Karen L Hill | Address: | Atlanta, GA 30309 |
| Phone: | | | USA |
| Email: | klhill017@gmail.com | | |

Line of Ancestry from Joseph Kneebone to Francis Kneebone

- 1 Joseph Kneebone b: 15 May 1838 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Polgear Farm, d: 04 Feb 1907 in Spenceville, Yuba, California, USA; Murdered in Spenceville
 - + Mary Martin Reed b: 19 Nov 1841 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England; Carnmarthe, m: 03 Oct 1860 in Redruth, Cornwall, England; Wesleyan Chapel, Methodist, d: 21 Dec 1878 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA; In childbirth with daughter, Mary
- ...2 Joseph Kneebone b: 25 Oct 1807 in Wendron, Cornwall, England, d: 29 Apr 1851 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Polgear Farm
 - + Elizabeth Pryor b: 03 Apr 1809 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England, m: 21 Feb 1829 in Wendron, Cornwall, England, d: 17 Sep 1884 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Polgear Farm
-3 Daniel Kneebone b: 1764 in Camborne, Cornwall, England, d: 23 Sep 1827 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Polgear Farm
 - + Margery Rogers b: 06 Oct 1765 in Illogan, Cornwall, England, m: 07 Mar 1796 in Camborne, Cornwall, England, d: 07 Sep 1853 in Wendron, Cornwall, England
 - + Ann Peters m: 29 Oct 1792 in Wendron, Cornwall, England, d: 1794 in Cornwall, England
-4 Daniel Kneebone b: 19 Apr 1731 in Wendron, Cornwall, England, d: 13 May 1816 in Wendron, Cornwall, England
 - + Elisabeth Kitchin b: 28 Jul 1734 in Helston, Cornwall, England, m: 27 May 1759 in Wendron, Cornwall, England, d: Aft. 1777 in Cornwall, England
-5 Daniel Kneebone b: 16 Jul 1699 in Feock, Cornwall, England, d: 21 Jan 1782 in Wendron, Cornwall, England
 - + Elizabeth Angove b: 18 Sep 1692 in Camborne, Cornwall, England, m: 07 Oct 1721 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Phillimore's, d: 15 Mar 1774 in Wendron, Cornwall, England
-6 Francis Kneebone b: Abt. 1662 in Feock, Cornwall, England, d: 04 Jan 1722 in Feock, Cornwall, England
 - + Elisabeth [Tounkin] Tonkin b: 20 Feb 1663 in Feock, Cornwall, England, m: 18 Jul 1681 in Feock, Cornwall, England, d: Dec 1731 in Feock, Cornwall, England

Prepared By:

Preparer: Karen L Hill
 Phone:
 Email: klhill017@gmail.com

Address: Atlanta, GA 30309
 USA

Individual Report for Joseph Kneebone

Individual Summary: Joseph Kneebone

Sex: Male

Father: Joseph Kneebone

Mother: Elizabeth Pryor

Individual Facts:

Birth: 15 May 1838 in Wendron, Cornwall, England; Polgear Farm
Residence: 1841 in Wendron, Cornwall, England
Residence: 1851 in Wendron, Cornwall, England
Residence: 1861 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England
Residence: 14 Jun 1880 in Rough and Ready, Nevada, California, USA
Residence: 1881 in Nevada, California, USA; Age: 42
Arrival: 1887
Residence: 1892 in Nevada, California, USA; Age: 54
Residence: 1895 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA
Residence: 1896 in Nevada, California, USA; Age: 58
Residence: 1900 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA
Death: 04 Feb 1907 in Spenceville, Yuba, California, USA; Murdered in Spenceville
Origin: England
DESTINATION: USA
Destination: USA
Departure: Falmouth, Cornwall, England
Custom: England
Burial: Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA
Race: English

Shared Facts: Mary Martin Reed

Marriage: 03 Oct 1860 in Redruth, Cornwall, England; Wesleyan Chapel, Methodist
Children: Andrew Reed Kneebone
William Kneebone
Joseph Reed Kneebone
Esther Kneebone
Sara J Kneebone
Richard Kneebone
Mary M Kneebone

Notes:

Person Notes: 1838 - Cornish Parish Records, 24 Jun 1838; Father: Joseph Kneebone, of Polgear, Wendron, Cornwall; Mother's Name: Elizabeth; Page: 222
1841 England Census: Polgear, Wendron, Cornwall; Age 3

3 Oct 1860 - Certified copy of Marriage Certificate

"Joseph was a farm labourer at Trethellan and fell in love with his bosses' daughter, Mary. Times were very hard. Cornwall in the 1860s the men in the Gwennap Parish emigrated to find work." Mr Trevor Harvey, Seven Oaks, Kent, England.

1861 England Census: 08 Apr 1861 Trethellan, Lannarth, Gwennap, Cornwall; aged 22 years, farm labourer, married with son, living in the household of parents-in-law Andrew & Mary Reed.

1866 Traveled from Falmouth, Cornwall to Liverpool, Lancashire

1867 Emigrated to California from Liverpool

1870 Census ?

1878 Mary died.

Notes continued

Notes:

1880 California Census - Rough & Ready. Volume 7, Ed. 67, Sheet 16, Line 44. (Joseph Nebone)

1880 Naturalization: April 10, 1880, Nevada County, California.

Description: 5'7" tall, light complexion, blue eyes, brown hair

1881 Voters Registration

1882 (February) - Purchase of Land Patent at Kneebone Ranch, Nevada County (Bureau of Land Management Records CA1660_.239)

1892 Voters Registration

1896 Voters Registration

1900 Voters Registration

1900 California Census - Rough and Ready, Nevada County.

1906 Voters Registration

1907, 10 February: Murdered on Ranch in Spenceville, Nevada County, California

Buried on hillside under large oak tree. Graves were covered over in cement in the 1940's.

1907 February: Nevada County Probate Record 3/1593

Land Record: Date 10 Nov 1882; Location: Nevada County, California;

Document #2530; Serial #CACAAA 045476; Sale Type: Cash Sale;

Meridian; Parcel Township 015N: Range 007W, Section 30. 800 Acres

"Kneebone Ranch had a large barn where they kept the horses. Joseph drove a 20 mule team from Spenceville over Henness Pass hauling freight. The team had bells on the lead horse harness." Quote by LeRoy Hill, Great Grandson of Joseph Kneebone, born in 1838.

Spenceville Ranch, Nevada County, California : 39 degrees 07.358 North,
Spenceville Wildlife Preserve 121 degrees 14.553 West

Some information from: Marge Dent, 359 Whitebirch Place, Wenatchee, Washington, 98801

Individual Report for Mary Martin Reed

Individual Summary: Mary Martin Reed

Sex: Female

Father: Andrew Reed

Mother: Mary Ann Martin

Individual Facts:

Birth: 19 Nov 1841 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England; Carnmarthe
Christening: 21 Nov 1841 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England
Residence: 1851 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England
Residence: 1861 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England
Residence: 1871 in Gwennap, Cornwall, England
Arrival: 22 Dec 1871 in New York, USA
Death: 21 Dec 1878 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA; In childbirth with daughter, Mary
Burial: 03 Jan 1879 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA
Custom: England
Departure: Liverpool, Lancashire, England
Destination: USA
DESTINATION: USA
Origin: England
Race: English

Shared Facts: Joseph Kneebone

Marriage: 03 Oct 1860 in Redruth, Cornwall, England; Wesleyan Chapel, Methodist
Children: Andrew Reed Kneebone
William Kneebone
Joseph Reed Kneebone
Esther Kneebone
Sara J Kneebone
Richard Kneebone
Mary M Kneebone

Notes:

Person Notes: 1861 Census: 08 Apr 1861 Trethellan, Lannarth, Gwennap, Cornwall; aged 22 years, farm labourer, married with son, living in the household of parents-in-law Andrew & Mary Reed. Joseph Kneebone.

1871 England Census: 03 Mar 1871, Trethellan, Gwennap, Cornwall; Aged 29 years, Married, Head of family, Andrew R, Joseph, William, Esther.

Emigrated to Port of New York from Liverpool, England on SS *Cuba* on 22 Nov 1871 with children, Joseph 8, William 6, and Esther 6. Cpt William Hudson. Joseph Martin age 24 was a passenger aboard ship.

Mortuary Records: Doris Foley Historical Library, Nevada City, California. Mary M. Kneebone, Dec. 21, 1878. Died at age 38 years, unknown cause, married, nativity England, last place of residence Grass Valley.

Died in child birth with daughter, Mary. Buried on Spenceville Ranch, Nevada County, California :39 degrees 07.358 N, 121 degrees 14.553 W. Spenceville Wildlife Preserve

Individual Report for Sara J Kneebone

Individual Summary: Sara J Kneebone

Sex: Female
Father: Joseph Kneebone
Mother: Mary Martin Reed



Individual Facts:

Birth: 17 Jan 1873 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA
Residence: 1880 in Spenceville, Nevada, California, USA
Residence: 1900 in Nevada City, Nevada, California, USA
Residence: 1910 in Sacramento, Sacramento, California, USA
Residence: 1910 in Sacramento, Sacramento, California, USA
Residence: 1926 in San Francisco, California, USA
Residence: 1933 in San Francisco, California, USA
Residence: 1934 in San Francisco, California, USA
Residence: 1935 in San Francisco, San Francisco, California, USA
Residence: 1935 in San Francisco, California, USA
Residence: 1937 in San Francisco, California, USA
Residence: 01 Apr 1940 in San Francisco, San Francisco, California, United States;
Age: 67; Marital Status: Married; Relation to Head of House: Wife
Death: 28 Nov 1949 in Kings Beach, Lake Tahoe, Placer, California, USA
Race: White

Shared Facts: Louis Hermann Aumer

Marriage: 02 Mar 1897 in Nevada, California, USA; At home of his parents, Pine and Cottage Streets, Nevada City ??
Children: Clarence Joseph Aumer
Herman Reed Aumer
Verda Eileen Aumer
Elsie May Aumer
Harold Louis Aumer
Frank Aumer

Notes:

Person Notes: Sara was fondly known as "Auntie Aumer". A favorite of nephew, LeRoy Hill. She lived in San Francisco and dressed very sophisticated and flamboyant. "Pa" Aumer wore a derby hat. They owned a city block in Brockway, Lake Tahoe.

Deed dated August 10, 1907; Issued in the name of Sarah Aumer for the Camp Beal property; July 18, 1942: .20 acre FJ-73A

December 5, 1955: Section 4 (Part of 865 acres estate of August Anderson)

1959: Excessed as part of the Spenceville Wildlife Area, Nevada County. T14N S30 R7E; located in the old town of Spenceville, close to the back of Penn Valley. Take Highway 80 north to Grass Valley, then out Highway 20 to Smartsville (only one left turn into the Spenceville Wildlife Area - sign "dead-end road" into military installation.

Prepared By:

Preparer: Karen L Hill
Phone:
Email: klhill017@gmail.com

Address: Atlanta, GA 30309
USA

COUNTY of NEVADA
NEVADA CITY, CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

DATE OF RECORD: JANUARY 3, 1879

NAME: MARY M. KNEEBONE

COLOR OR RACE: WHITE

AGE: 38 YEARS OLD

SEX: FEMALE

MARRIED OR SINGLE: MARRIED

NATIVITY: ENGLAND

CAUSE OF DEATH: UNKNOWN

PHYSICIAN OR CORONER: B. JOHNSON, UNDERTAKER

DATE OF DEATH: DECEMBER 21, 1878

REMARKS: NEVADA CITY, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA COUNTY
BOOK 1, PAGE 179, NEVADA COUNTY

CERTIFIED COPY OF VITAL RECORDS

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF NEVADA) SS

This is a true and exact reproduction of the document officially registered and placed on file in the office of the NEVADA COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER.

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER

DATE ISSUED: FEB 17 1993

[Signature]
NEVADA COUNTY RECORDER

14


The death certificate above is for Mary Reed Kneebone.

Kneebone family oral history provided by Karen Hill relates that Mary Reed Kneebone, wife of Joseph Kneebone and her infant child Mary, both died from complications due to child birth at the Kneebone Family Ranch near Spenceville on December 21, 1878. Mary Reed Kneebone was 38 years old.

Additional family oral history relates that Mary and Josephs' young two year old son, Richard Kneebone, drowned in the pond near the family home.

¹⁴ Death certificate provided by Karen Hill collection.

Marriage Certificates



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 12728302-1

| 1860. Marriage solemnized in the <u>Chapel Redruth</u> in the district of <u>Redruth</u> in the County of <u>Cornwall</u> | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| No. | When Married. | Name and Surname. | Age. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father. |
| 129 | Third October 1860 | Joseph Kneebone | 22 years | Bachelor | Farmer | Trethellan Gwennap | Joseph Kneebone deceased | Farmer |
| | | Mary Martin Reed | 19 years | Spinster | do | Trethellan Gwennap | Andrew Reed | Farmer |


Married in the Chapel Redruth according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Methodist by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Joseph Kneebone in the Presence of us, Stephen Ralph Trethellan John Jesse Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Redruth
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 7th day of April 2022

MXJ 394759

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.



15

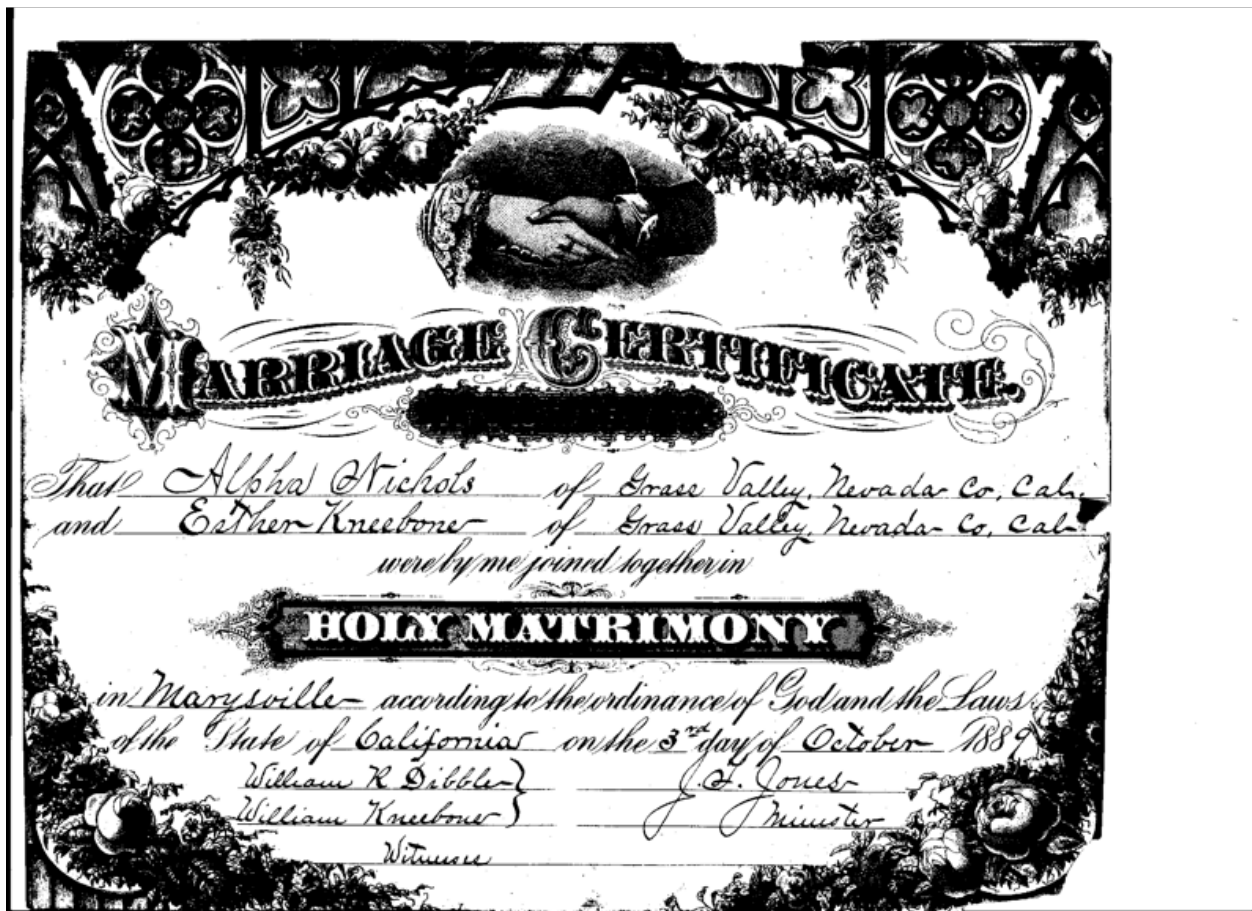
Joseph Kneebone and Mary Martin Reed's marriage certificate

Married October 3, 1860 in Cornwall, England. Joseph Kneebone was 22 and Mary Reed was 19 years old.

They were living at the Reed family compound at Trethellan East outside of Gwennap, England. Apparently, Joseph had come to work on the farm and fell in love with the owner's daughter.

¹⁵ Marriage certificate provided by Karen Hill, great great granddaughter of Joseph Sr. and Mary Kneebone

Marriage Certificates



16

The marriage certificate above is that of Alpha Nichols and Esther Kneebone, daughter of Joseph and Mary Reed Kneebone. Esther is the great grandmother of Karen Hill. Karen's family is providing funding for the Kneebone Ranch and Cemetery plaque if approved.

Ranch Home of Andrew Reed Kneebone, Son of Joseph Kneebone Sr.

The home in the photo shown below was once owned by Andrew Reed Kneebone and his wife Victoria Cole Kneebone. It is typical of the homes of ranchers in the

¹⁶ Marriage certificate provided by Karen Hill collection

Spenceville area during the 1860s-1890s. This photo is one of two existing photos of Andrew Kneebone's home in near Spenceville. Only remnants of the home remain today. The location of Andrew's father's home, Joseph Kneebone Senior, is farther east up Spenceville Road, near a spring on the south side of the Road. Only foundation remnants of that home remain today.

Andrew met Victoria Cole while driving his team through Bridgeport on his route to the Northern Mines, and they were married at Marysville on March 17, 1886. They had five sons from 1888 to 1897. Andrew, his wife and children lived at their ranch in Spenceville for many years. Victoria died at the Spenceville ranch on March 15, 1930. Andrew died a few years later at his son's home, Alfred Kneebone, at Bridgeport on February 25, 1934.¹⁷ Both Andrew and Victoria are buried at the Bridgeport Family Cemetery not far from the 1862 Bridgeport Covered Bridge.



Photo Milton Kneebone archive

Homes similar to Andrew Kneebone's in the photo above could still be found throughout the landscape prior to Camp Beale in the Spenceville area before the ranches were taken by the government through eminent domain in 1942. The home may have had power and or telephone by the time this photograph was taken based on the poles seen in the photograph on the previous page. The early 20th century flatbed truck dates the photograph to circa 1936 or earlier. Many ranches by this time period did have electricity and telephone. The Rural

¹⁷Steve Pauly, Descendants of Joseph Kneebone Sr. and Andrew Reed Kneebone, History Chair of the South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport 2012-2018

Electrification Act of 1936, enacted on May 20, 1936, provided federal loans for the installation of electrical distribution systems to serve rural areas and farms.¹⁸



Photo Courtesy of Terry Kneebone

Above is an earlier photograph of Andrew Kneebone's home showing a team of six mules hitched to the wagon. Based on the presence of the team and wagon most likely dates this photo to the late 19th or early 20th centuries. The poles crossing over the road may have been telephone poles. Many rural homes by the late 1890s had phone service.¹⁹

It is believed that the remnants of Andrew's home pictured above are located on the south side of Spenceville Road, 500 yards below the turn-off to Fairy Falls.²⁰

¹⁸ Peters, Gerhard; Woolley, John T. "Franklin D. Roosevelt: 'Executive Order 7037 Establishing the Rural Electrification Administration.'" May 11, 1935". The American Presidency Project. University of California - Santa Barbara.

¹⁹ Rural Broad Band Association of America. The independent telephone industry began to develop throughout rural America early in the 1890s. After the publication of a manual that explained to farmers how they could develop their own telephone systems on a mutual or cooperative basis, many farmer mutual systems emerged throughout rural America. By 1912, the number of rural telephone systems had grown to more than 3,200, and the U.S. telephone industry included several manufacturers that specialized in the production of so-called "rural phones."

²⁰ Bal, Peggy, Pebbles in the Stream, Nevada County Historical Society, 1993 page 38.



Andrew Reed Kneebone, Victoria M. Cole Kneebone and Family

Their five children were Charles Reed Kneebone born September 21, 1888, Joseph Russel Kneebone born February 17, 1890, Alfred Alexander Kneebone born September 30, 1892, James Budd Kneebone born February 17, 1895 and William Henry Kneebone born June 15, 1897. All five boys were born at their parents Spenceville Ranch.

Andrew & Victoria's Son, Alfred Alexander, helped Develop Bridgeport

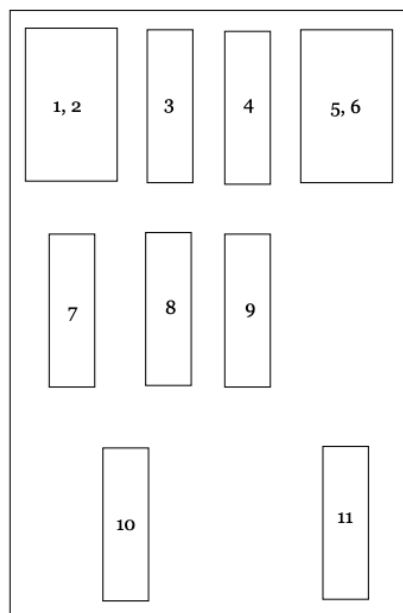
Alfred and his wife Jane Moynier Kneebone lived at Bridgeport in 1918 at the home of Charles Cole, his maternal grandfather where he farmed at his grandfather's ranch. In 1927 Alfred opened the famous Bridgeport Swimming Pleasure Resort, upstream from the gas station he opened in 1920.

The Kneebone Family Cemetery at Bridgeport



The Kneebone Cemetery at Bridgeport is located just off Pleasant Valley Road at the beginning of the historic Virginia Turnpike alongside Kentucky Creek at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport. This cemetery is maintained by the Kneebone family of Grass Valley, CA. Family members are still being interred at the cemetery.

1. Wm. B. Thompson
1809 - 1853
2. Fannie Thompson
1850 - 1856
3. Mary Ann Cole
1831 - 1900
4. Charles J. Cole
1831 - 1916
5. Eugene J. Kneebone
1913 - 1984
6. Mary E. Washburn
Kneebone
1915 - 1984
7. Andrew Kneebone
1860 - 1934
8. Victoria Kneebone
1862-1930
9. Wm. H. Kneebone
1897-1919
10. G. H. Graves
1831 - 1900
11. Milton E. Kneebone
1916 - 1991



The Kneebone Family Cemetery Contains Eleven Graves Dating From 1853 to 1991

Grave Site 1.

Captain William Thompson, born 1809, died 1853. A ship captain who left his ship in San Francisco Bay in 1849 and came to the Bridgeport area with his wife, Mary Ann Thompson, and their daughter, Fannie Thompson. Captain Thompson died here of an unknown illness at the age of 44 years.

Grave Site 2.

Fannie Thompson, born 1850, died 1856. The only daughter of William and Mary Ann Thompson. She died at six years of age from an unknown cause.

Grave Site 3.

Mary Ann Thompson Cole, born 1831, died 1900. The widow of William Thompson and wife of Charles J. Cole. The Coles owned a farm at Bridgeport and collected tolls at the covered bridge. They had three daughters and a son. Mary Ann was 82 when she died.

Grave Site 4.

Charles J. Cole, born 1831, died 1916. Charles arrived in the Bridgeport area in early 1850. He married the widow of William Thompson at Thompson's request before he died. Charles homesteaded 160 acres in 1861 and built the Bridgeport house, a stage and wagon stop, in 1862. This is also the year the present covered bridge was built. Charles was 85 when he died.

Double Grave Site 5 and 6.

Eugene Joseph Kneebone, born 1913, died 1984, and **Mary E. Washburn Kneebone**, born 1915, died 1984. The brother of Milton Kneebone, Eugene was born in San Francisco, lived in Spenceville, and became a mining engineer. He and his wife Mary were interned in a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines during WWII. After the war they returned to Grass Valley. Eugene worked as a mining engineer at the Idaho-Maryland mine in Grass Valley before he died. His wife Mary followed in death six months later.

Grave Site 7.

Andrew Reed Kneebone, born 1860, died 1934. Born in Cornwall, England, he joined his family in Spenceville in 1876 after completing his education. Andrew learned "teamstering" from his father,

becoming one of the finest and best-known teamsters in the Gold Country. Married Victoria Cole in 1886 and had five sons from 1888 to 1897. After his wife Victoria died, Andrew obtained 1/3 of the Bridgeport ranch and his four living sons received 1/6 shares. Andrew lived a short time at Bridgeport before he died at the age of 73.

Grave Site 8.

Victoria Marie Cole Kneebone, born 1862, died 1930. Victoria was born at Bridgeport, the youngest of the three Cole daughters. She married in 1886 to Andrew Reed Kneebone in Marysville and lived at Andrew's Spenceville ranch. Victoria had five sons; only one was born at Bridgeport. All were raised at the ranch in Spenceville. She obtained the Cole farm when her brother and sister deeded their share of the Cole estate to Victoria in 1921. She was 68 when she died in Spenceville.

Grave Site 9.

William H. Kneebone, born 1897, died 1919. The youngest son of Andrew and Victoria, he was born at Spenceville. William died at the age of 21 in San Diego. The probable cause of death was pneumonia. William was the only son of Andrew and Victoria to be buried at Bridgeport.

Grave Site 10.

G. H. Graves, born 1831, died 1900. Graves and Charles J. Cole obtained a 40-acre General Land Patent for placer mining in 1888. Graves granted Cole his share of the placer mining patent for his care, shelter and maintenance. Graves was 69 when he died.

Grave Site 11.

Milton E. Kneebone, born 1916, died 1991. He was a grandson of Andrew and Victoria. Born in Grass Valley, Milton attended school in Spenceville and spent summers at Bridgeport helping at the swim resort. He was the brother to Eugene Kneebone. He died at age 75.

*Compiled by docents Marlene Linstadt and John Tamagni, with the gracious advice and assistance of Lucille Kneebone Brandt, descendant of pioneer resident Charles J. Cole. (Revised September 2000; rearranged and reformatted September 2007, HEL)

ROBBERY PROMPTED THE MURDER OF PIONEER JOSEPH KNEEBONE

James Oates Disappears Following the Crime and Officers Are Hot on His Trail

(The Bee's Special Service.)

GRASS VALLEY (Nevada Co.), February 15.—Shot down and murdered for the money he carried, the body of aged Joseph Kneebone, a prominent pioneer rancher of Spenceville, was found yesterday, after it had lain in the farm yard since last Sunday. Every indication points to James Oates as the guilty wretch. He has disappeared and so far has escaped arrest, but cannot long evade the officers, who are hot on his trail. As told in the last edition of yesterday's Bee, Kneebone's body was discovered yesterday before noon by his grandson, who came to the place from his father's home to deliver the mail as usual. Finding nobody about the house, he started toward the barn, but brought up suddenly, horrified to come upon the dead body of his grandparent in the pathway, 50 feet from the house, between the blacksmith shop and the residence. The boy hurried homeward as fast as he could go. His father, Andrew Kneebone, then drove to Spenceville, whence he telephoned to Coroner Gill of this city and the Sheriff's office.

Coroner Arrives.

Gill and Dr. Chappell arrived on the scene during the afternoon. The Coroner had the body removed to the late residence where Dr. Chappell conducted an autopsy. He found that three pistol wounds had been inflicted, any one of which would have proved fatal, and that two would have caused instantaneous death. Two of the bullets were recovered. They are of .38-caliber, fired at close range and there is every indication that Kneebone's own revolver was used to commit the bloody deed, as it cannot be found, though he kept it beneath his pillow.

What is believed to have been the first shot fired entered at the base of the skull and came out through the mouth, breaking the neck and causing death immediately. The other two were fired through the back, as the body lay prostrate, one of the shots perforating the heart. In falling, the wounded man struck his forehead against a rock, as both bruise and bloodstains indicate. While he lay face downward the murderer evidently fired the remaining two shots into the quivering flesh.

An inquest will be held to-morrow afternoon, after the funeral, which takes place at 2 o'clock from the late residence. Interment will be made in the field near the house.

Showed Gold at Store.

Last Saturday Kneebone visited Spenceville, where he exhibited a quantity of gold in paying a bill at the Anderson store. It is the opinion of the proprietor that Kneebone had at least \$150 in his possession. Among other things he purchased a gallon of whisky for his "hired man," as he termed his employee, saying that the farmhand worked better when served a little liquor. He broke a gold piece and started homeward. That was the last seen of him alive.

It is definitely known that James Oates drifted to the Kneebone ranch fourteen days before the murder. He was without funds, as a sealed letter to his mother indicates. This was found by the Coroner and opened last

night. It contains nothing of particular interest, except to refer to his financial condition. Oates went to work for Kneebone for his board and lodging until such time as the weather should clear, when he was to receive regular wages. He occupied a cabin close to Kneebone's cottage, and was in a position to see and hear all that was going on within.

Oates Leaves a Trail.

Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock Oates rode up to Spenceville on Kneebone's saddle horse. He offered a \$5 piece at the Anderson store in payment of a bill of \$1.75 which he owed. This created some surprise, as hitherto he was never known to have a cent and had even attempted to borrow 10 cents. Oates then purchased a pair of blue overalls and a soft slouch hat of a dark color. He announced that he was going to Lincoln, as Kneebone had departed for Nevada City. Further on, it has been ascertained that he proffered a \$10 piece for a drink, but the proprietor of the wayside house was unable to make the change. Instead of continuing toward Lincoln, Oates is known to have taken the Wheatland road and it is reported that he tried to dispose of the Kneebone horse.

Since then nothing has been heard of him, but it is the belief that he will be easily apprehended, as he is a marked man. He is below average stature, red of face, shifty eyes, rather stubby in person and is given to drink.

Not only was not a cent found on Kneebone's body, but even his silver watch had disappeared, and this he carried with him continually. The house bore no semblance to having been ransacked, and it is believed by the officers that the murderer plundered his victim's pockets and then fled, having obtained all the money possible.

After the Fugitive.

Coroner Gill and Surgeon Chappell arrived here at 2 o'clock this morning. They announced that Deputy Sheriff Waters had continued toward the valley country in hopes of obtaining some clue to Oates, who cannot have gone far, as he is neither cunning nor bright. Oates was born and reared at Nevada City, this county, and has for years been a thorn in the side of his relatives, who are respectable people. He is a degenerate of the first water.

The murdered man was one of the pioneers of Spenceville. He owned a large ranch and of late years was devoted himself to raising horses and mules. Years ago he operated the largest freighting outfits in the county. Later his sons took up this work. One lived on each side of his ranch and never a week passed that they did not pay their father a visit.

Something of a sensation was created last night when "Bill" Casey, also of Spenceville, but more recently of this section, announced that he knew who had killed "old man Kneebone." Casey has something of a reputation himself, having served a term in the County Jail. Among conservative people it is believed that he is seeking notoriety. He has not been at Spenceville for some time.

This article states that the grandson of Joseph Kneebone, son of Andrew Reed Kneebone, went to his grandfather's home to deliver the mail only to find that his grandfather had been murdered. He then ran back home to tell his father of the murder. Andrew Kneebone then drove to Spenceville to telephone the authorities of the tragedy.

Marysville Daily Appeal, Volume XCV, Number 125, 26 May 1907 — Trial of James Oates tor Kneebone Killing [ARTICLE]

Trial of James Oates tor Kneebone Killing

NEVADA CITY, Nevada County. May 25. —Day by day the evidence through which the People hope to fasten upon James Oates the murder of Joseph Kneebone is being introduced and is straw by straw woven into a web from whence it seems that the accused man cannot escape. The sale of the horse which Oates took from the dead man and the sundry transactions which accompanied this sale were fully brought out by witnesses last night and yesterday afternoon. A. Anderson, a Spenceville merchant, told of Oates showing him gold when paying for a pair of overalls on the fateful Sunday, and W. R. Ross, a Waldo storekeeper, helped to forge the link by telling of Oates' visit to his place while riding Kneebone's horse. On Melon Hill, near Spenceville, Arthur Hunt met Oates and after again exhibiting gold, Oates tried to sell Hunt a watch. Young Robert Blackford told of the purchase of Kneebone's horse from Oates, and the paying of \$15 for the animal. In payment, Oates was given a check made payable to James Charles. E. F. Enochs next swore that he cashed such a check for Oates at Enoch's saloon in Wheatland. Clerk E. J. Dole of the U. S. Hotel, of Marysville, told of Oates registering there and under the name of James Charles, and C. P. Carison followed and told of hiring Oates to work on his ranch near Yuba City and of the arrest of Oates on this ranch. A. N. Kneebone, Court Reporter John W. O'Neill, W. T. Robinson, Coroner A. L. Gill and Attorney J. M. Walling gave evidence that was not of much Importance in itself, but which helped to build up the prosecution's chain. At noon the trial was adjourned until Monday next. The prosecution announced that it will be able to conclude Its presentation of evidence In about an hour when the trial is resumed. It Is figured that the case will go to the Jury next Tuesday evening.

Acquittal of James Oates in the Murder Trial of Joseph Kneebone Sr.

The trial of James Oates resulted in an acquittal on May 28th 1907. After the jury was out for 24 hours the judge declared a mistrial, six voted to convict and six voted for acquittal.²²

²² San Francisco Call, Volume 101, Number 180, May 29, 1907

James Oates Once More Landed In Jail

James Oates, the man who was arrested, tried and acquitted on a charge of murdering old man Kneebone in Nevada county over a year ago, and who also has served a term in the Folsom prison for a crime against nature, is once more in durance vile. He now occupies a cell in the Marysville city prison and will be up before Judge Morrissey this morning to explain his attempts to sell a saddle horse that he rented from the Poole stables yesterday morning.

Oates hired a horse and saddle and indulged in some equestrian exercise about the city streets. He applied at several places for a buyer for the horse. He offered it to one man for \$12 and the next man was to be given a bargain. He would sell the outfit for \$10, as he needed the money. There were no horse buyers in town.

Oates claimed that he was a line-man and was engaging men to go to work on a power line in this neighborhood. He did not hire a crew, however, for, before he had a chance to do any work in that line he was nabbed and placed in jail. He will have a hearing today.

Oates was charged with Kneebone's murder in Nevada county on February 10, 1907, and was arrested by Sheriff Noyes in Sutter county on February 20th of the same year. Readers of the Appeal will remember that Oates was working for Kneebone and after he was killed Oates took the dead man's horse and sold it. He admitted doing that, but said Kneebone had given him the animal. He was not convicted on the murder charge.

James Oates after being acquitted in the Joseph Kneebone Sr. murder is arrested a year later. Article above from the Marysville Appeal, Vol. XCVII, #112, May 9, 1908



U.S. Army soldiers looking at the Kneebone family Cemetery plot, Spenceville Army Base at Camp Beale, circa 1943.

The Kneebone Cemetery & Cemeteries of Spenceville

The text carved into the top of the cement crypt above showing the names and deaths of each Kneebone family member no longer exists. It has either intentionally been removed or has completely weathered away over the years. The most likely answer is that the text has intentionally been removed.

This is based on the fact that at other pioneer cemeteries found in the Spenceville Wildlife area, the cement grave caps of the same time period (circa 1943) provided by US Army, when they owned the property during World War II, still remain intact. In the photo above the descriptive texts are clearly legible. The Cabbage Patch Cemetery is a good example with text still clearly visible today.

The Cabbage Patch Cemetery



Photo by Chuck Scimeca

The gravestones were removed and replaced with cement slabs by the Army during World War II at pioneer Cemeteries throughout the Spenceville area to protect the graves from military exercises and tank training.

The Cabbage Patch Cemetery is located just in Yuba County east of the Waldo Bridge along Spencerville Road within the Spencerville Wildlife Area. The small town of Cabbage Patch was established in 1852 by two Black men known for raising cabbages there.²³ By December 1898 Cabbage Patch had grown to the point that it opened its first Post Office. The local citizens decided a name change was warranted and the colorful name of Cabbage Patch was changed to Waldo in honor of Captain William Waldo.

²³ Bal, Peggy, Pebbles in the Stream, Nevada County Historical Society, 1993 page 32

The Kneebone Family Ranch and Cemetery at Spenceville



Photo by Chuck Scimeca

The Kneebone Family Cemetery in the photograph above was taken in March of 2022 at the Kneebone Family Reunion at the Ranch site near Spenceville.

There are no longer any inscriptions on the cement cap seal. Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission consultant Torben Eriksen and I spent a great deal of time trying to locate any remnants of the inscriptions, but we were unable to locate any. The cemetery lies near the top of a hill shaded by a single oak tree, across the meadow from the Kneebone home site seen in the distance. The home site is about one hundred yards north of the family cemetery along the oak tree line, seen in the distance, just beyond the small wooden fence posts.

In the photograph above, “pictured are Richard L. Hill, and his sister, Karen Hill, great-great grandchildren of Mary M. Reed Kneebone and Joseph Kneebone, Senior.”

The Kneebone Family Cemetery near Spenceville



Pictured here is the grave of Joseph Kneebone Sr., his wife, Mary, sons Joseph Jr. and Richard, and daughter Mary as it looked after a federal government redesign around 1951. Between 1950 and 1951, the government began to bulldoze numerous historic gravesites that fell within what would become Beale Air Force Base. Cement slabs were poured over graves and monuments removed in order to "protect" the burials. In 1888, Joseph Jr. was shot dead along Spenceville Road. Then, 19 years later, his father, Joseph Sr., was found dead of gunshot wounds in the yard of the family ranch near Spenceville. Little motive was established in either murder. The crimes were never solved and the murderer(s) never apprehended. (Bee Superior California News.)



Leaving Spenceville Road the Kneebone Family Cemetery is located about seventy-five yards southeast, uphill from the homestead remnants which are

located on the south side of Spenceville Road. As seen on the photo above, a lone oak tree shelters the grave site of the Kneebone family. (the tree has since fallen)
The quote in the article below is taken from The Camp Beale News, dated, September 16, 1943

“In the placing a concrete protective slab over the graves, post authorities transferred the inscriptions from the headstones to the center of the slab. After the name of Joseph Jr. is the word: “murdered,” and the date June 29, 1888. After the name of the father is the word: “murdered,” and the date February 14, 1907.”

When Uncle Sam took over vast areas of prairie and woodland to fashion Camp Beale, he became custodian of a number of burial plots, many of them shrouded in the romantic and rugged history of California's early gold days.

Immediate steps were taken by the United States engineers to protect these graves of California pioneers from injury during the normal use of the reservation for training purposes.

Heavy concrete slabs were placed over the burial plots, and all unit commanders are to see to it that added precautions are taken to protect them when the areas in which they are located are in use.

Probably the largest, and one of the most interesting of these plots is that of the Kneebone family, pioneers who lived near the old village of Spenceville, now being used for commando training purposes.

Five in Family

Buried here in a plot about 14 by 16 feet, in the northeast corner of the reservation, close to the Spenceville road, are five members of the family, Joseph Kneebone, Sr., his wife, Mary, his sons, Joseph, Jr., and Richard, and a daughter, Mary.

In placing the concrete protective slab over the graves, post authorities transferred the inscriptions from the headstones to the center of the slab. After the name of Joseph, Jr., is the word: “Murdered,” and the date June 29, 1888. After the name of the father is the same word: “Murdered,” and the date Feb. 14, 1907.

In these words lie one of the most mysterious and intriguing stories of this storied section of California.

The Kneebone family, some of the descendants of which still live in these parts, was one of the most respected and industrious living in the vicinity of Spenceville.

The senior Kneebone was a freighter and had founded the Kneebone ranch, a few miles up the road from Spenceville. His son, Joseph, who was 26 at the time of his death and a native of Cornwall, was well liked.

In Business For Self

Purchasing one of his father's 12-mule freighting outfits, he established himself in the business of hauling supplies and other freight from Spenceville to Marysville.

During the forenoon of June 29, 1888, he was proceeding with his freighting outfit down the road to the home near Spenceville, to spend Sunday, after having hauled a load of freight earlier in the week to Marysville.

Scarcely half a mile behind him travelled two young men in a buggy. They reported they came upon the Kneebone outfit, with the driver missing and the mules tangled in the gear. Search revealed young Kneebone lying dead in a field about fifty feet away, with several .48 calibre bullets in his body. The supposition was that he was riding the wheel mule, as was the custom of freighters, when he was shot, that he dismounted and walked fifteen feet to a fence, where he fell. Investigation apparently disclosed that he was then dragged into the field and two more shots were inflicted while he was not yet dead.

His pockets had been rifled, but not much importance was attached to a robbery theory as freighters were in the habit of seldom carrying.

(Continued on page five)

Pay Dirt

In the interest of bigger, better and deeper fox holes in areas out in the northeast section of the reservation, we take pleasure in passing along a slightly dated story about Dr. John Marsh, the pre-gold rush overlord of Contra Costa county.

This is all second-hand dope, no Bealiner reporter being present at the time, but there's a story that Dr. Marsh dug himself quite a considerable stake at Parks Bar—gravel, not liquor, gents—which is a little below Smartsville. Two saddlebags of gold he dug himself, and then fearing robbery buried them somewhere along the Indian Springs-Spenceville road.

Since Dr. Marsh was murdered a few weeks later by his own incensed ranch hands, it's doubtful that he ever got around to digging up his cache of gold. So there it is, boys — somewhere along the Indian Springs-Spenceville road. With payday two weeks gone already, we'll be seeing you.

[Back](#)

TERRIBLE CRIME.

**A Young Man Murdered and Robbed
Near Grass Valley.**

**Sensation in Hollister Growing Out
of the Prewett Conspiracy.**

**A State Senator Implicated—Sacramento
Laws Declared Invalid—A Stage
Driver's Suicide.**

GRASS VALLEY, June 29th.—This morning, at 10 o'clock, Joseph Kneebone, Jr., was shot dead and his body robbed near his father's house, thirteen miles west from here and three miles from Spenceville. He had been freighting from Marysville to Sierra City for W. T. Ellis of Marysville and was returning home to Sierra City on his wagon. The wagon and horses were found driven out of the road into a pile of rocks. The dead body had been dragged away from the wagon twenty yards into the brush and the pockets cut open and the shoes taken off. A bullet had been sent clear through his breast. How much money he had is not known. The Sheriff has gone to investigate.

Joseph Kneebone, Sr., the deceased's father, has had a great deal of trouble in the last few years about land boundaries, and several times his fences and stacks have been burned by incendiaries. The murder may be part of that trouble, but the young man was not concerned in those difficulties.

The article above describes the murder of the young teamster Joseph Kneebone Jr. in 1888. It is interesting to note that Joseph Kneebone Sr. had experienced several troubling incidences with neighbors leading up to the murder of his son Joseph Kneebone Jr. The horrific murder highlights the tragedies befallen the Kneebone family starting with Joseph Kneebone Sr.'s young two-year-old son, Richard Kneebone, drowning in a pond near the Kneebone home in 1876 and mother Mary M. Reed Kneebone along with her infant daughter, both dying in child birth in December 1878.

Regrettably, concluding with the murder of Joseph Kneebone Sr. himself on February 4, 1906 being found on the path by his grandson going from the barn to his grandfather's home.

Makes a Bea-Line for the News

CAMP BEALE, CALIFORNIA

Thurs

GI Crypt For Pioneer Graves



This burial place of the pioneer Knoebone family is one of the plots in the training area of Camp Beale, now protected by heavy concrete slabs laid by U. S. Engineers. This plot, and other burial places of early settlers of the California gold country, were taken over when the Beale reservation was established.

Grave on Reservation Shrouds Mysterious Death of Pioneers

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Cat Tale Number 3, And May This Be The End of Them

Once curiosity killed a cat, this time it just made him look kind of silly.

The other day one of Capt. Theodore K. Dittchen's enlisted men at the post engineers noticed the fan in one of the ventilators stored on the warehouse platform revolving slowly. Odd, thinks the EML, as how the ventilator hasn't hooked to anything. So there's an investigation. And inside the ventilator is a little black cat, pretty run-down and thin after his treadmill work.

The black kitten had crawled in there, maybe after a mouse for his evening meal, or maybe out of curiosity. And then, finding nothing of interest, had started to climb out. But everytime he took a step, the blade turned, and there he was—putting one paw before the other steadily, but getting nowhere at all.

The kitten's doing nicely now. They're feeding him up over at the post engineers, and daily explaining to him that ventilating systems are a snare and a delusion—even when running.

Beale Daugh Marine Woman

(Picture of page 3)

Camp Beale just a daughter this week—and to the Marines. Miss Dixie D. Cowley, the 22-year-old daughter of Col. A. D. Cowley, post commander, was sworn in last Saturday, Sept. 11, at Los Angeles, as a member of the U. S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve.

Miss Cowley expects to receive her orders to report to Camp Lejeune, N. C., within two weeks or a month. She has worked at Camp Beale most of the past year and is capable of doing any type of clerical work. She expects her duties in the Marines to be similar to her work here.



Photograph courtesy of Karen Hill archive, circa 1890 24

The photograph above is a stylized family portrait of Joseph Kneebone Sr. on the left and Alpha Nichols on the right. Alpha is the husband of Esther Kneebone, daughter of Joseph Kneebone Sr., Esther is the great grandmother of Karen Hill.

The “happy mule” pulling the water wagon implies that the dirt roads of Spenceville were well maintained.

²⁴ The photograph above is typical of 1870 through the early 1900s souvenir portrait photography that was popular in America. Photo booths where visitors could have an opportunity to pose in front of painted canvas foregrounds with comical bodies for their own souvenir portrait. Photo studios were hugely popular attractions at state and local fairs, carnivals, and downtown arcades. Often printed on penny postcards these images were mailed across the country to family and friends.

From Pebbles in the Stream by Peggy Bal

Pebbles in the Stream

"the stages from Sacramento to Nevada [City] changed their route, which formerly had been by the Empire Ranch and passed by this place. Considerable surface mining was done here and the place was called Round Tent."

Round Tent was across the road from the big concrete cistern one mile east of the big iron bridge over Dry Creek. The cistern was used by the family of Dave Jones Jr. in the early 1900s to pump water up from the creek for their livestock. The 1862 map of Yuba County called the Jones' place "Miners Camp."

It was at about this place (Round Tent) that the old stage road crossed Dry Creek and continued on the north side of the creek. It was a narrow road going over some rough rocky land, and when the creek was high it was said to "shiver like jelly."

In those days, the Spenceville Road was called dark and sinister. It received this reputation from the mysterious unsolved murders of the two Kneebone men. Joe Jr., the son, was killed first—in 1888. He was a master-driver and was riding the wheel mule of his twelve-mule team, coming down the road from Indian Springs when two men shot him. They dragged him through a fence and pulled off his boots to make it appear to be a robbery. The team continued on to the Dougherty Ranch where Joe's wife (a Dougherty girl) was waiting. She opened the collar of Joe's lead mule and found his money, which had not been disturbed.

The murder was never solved, but the feeling of his neighbors was that it was a case of mistaken identity. Young Joe was a mild-mannered, gentle man and had no known enemies. His fate may have been decided by the fact that his team looked like another.

His father, Joe Sr., was of the opposite temperament, with a wild reputation. Nineteen years after his son's murder, Joe Sr. was shot and killed by a hired man in the yard of his home. For some reason, although all the evidence pointed to the guilt of this suspect, he was never prosecuted.

When the Army took the Kneebone's property, the engineers came upon the family cemetery which denoted the dates of these murders. They removed the headstones, transferring the inscriptions to concrete slabs. The Kneebone Cemetery is about a half-mile up the old Spenceville Road after it leaves state land.

The narrow old road following a ledge on the north side of the creek can still be seen. After crossing a wooden bridge below Round Tent, wagons and coaches would pass over the Hymes Toll Road. John

Old Roads and Trails

Hymes lived at the edge of the creek, and in the custom of the day, charged 25¢ to use the road in front of his house. For this toll, Mr. Hymes was responsible for the upkeep of this six-mile stretch of the road.

Traveling this section of the Spenceville Road could not have been easy for teamsters driving eight, ten or twelve-horse or mule teams. They had an understanding that the team going uphill had the right of way. The downhill team would be unhitched and moved from the road until the other outfit pulled safely by. The Kneebone teams always carried bells on their harnesses. Miriam Griffith of Wheatland remembers hearing those bells coming and knowing Andy Kneebone was coming with firewood for her family and a Christmas tree for her.

The new road, the one used today, was built in 1916, and the concrete bridges at Spenceville in 1913. Spenceville was located at the point where Little Dry Creek flows into Dry Creek. The road up to Grass Valley from Spenceville followed the present day road, leaving the State Wildlife land at the turn to the falls emerging from former Camp Beale property near Pegar's Y in Indian Springs.

During the years of World War II, this road to Grass Valley was frequently used by Army tanks during nighttime maneuvers, when tank drivers were trained to follow the pinpoint of light from the



Vintage tow truck belonging to Joseph H. Kneebone was known as the most modern tow car in northern California in its day—1925.
(Milton Kneebone photo.)

25

This article found in the book **Pebbles in the Stream**, describes the murders of Joseph Kneebone Jr. in 1888 and his father Joseph Sr. Kneebone in 1907. The two murders were never solved.

Joseph Russell Kneebone, owner of the circa 1925 tow truck shown in the photograph above is the son of Andrew Reed Kneebone and Victoria Cole Kneebone.

²⁵ Bal, Peggy, *Pebbles in the Stream*, Nevada County Historical Society, 1979 pages 10 and 11.

Background on the Town of Spenceville

Spenceville: Mines and more

The Union| Mar 16, 2002

Maria E. Brower



Looking north on Spenceville Road toward Grass Valley: August Anderson's home and general store are surrounded by a white picket fence. A team and wagon are near the porch of the store. Farther up the hill is Spenceville's schoolhouse. Across the street is Anderson's barn. Behind the large tree in the center is Emma May Austin's home. The mine is at bottom left. Courtesy: Searls Library, Nevada County Historical Society

The town known as Spenceville was in the southwestern portion of Nevada County 17 miles by road from Wheatland and 17 miles from Grass Valley.

The road was used as early as 1851 as a road from Sacramento to Grass Valley and Nevada (City), and later became Spenceville Road. A post office was first established there in 1872 but discontinued six years later. It was re-established in 1879 and finally discontinued in 1932.

The town is said to commemorate Edward F. Spence of Nevada City, who donated lumber for the first school built there in 1868.

Spenceville was unique because it wasn't known for its rich gold quartz mines; its main claim to fame was the copper ore discovered in 1862-63.

A copper mine was in operation by 1875 and was the first mine in the state whose pyrites were used for the manufacture of both mineral paint and sulfuric acid.

In 1881, Thomas Price of San Francisco reported that the copper deposit would prove to be a permanent one and of great value.

The Imperial Paint and Copper Co. was organized there in 1892. The brown-colored paint manufactured from the copper ore was fire- and waterproof and said to maintain its shade. Promoters said the paint was superior to any of the metallic paints imported from the East or Europe. The plant produced 10 tons of paint every 24 hours.

One of the early families that came to settle in the Spenceville area was that of Cyrus C. Bitner, his wife Mary (Steele) and their two daughters, Ella May and Barbara ("Emma").

Bitner was originally from Somerset County in southwestern Pennsylvania and moved to Iowa just prior to the Civil War. The family may have already been on its way to California when two events may have altered its plans.

Emma, their second daughter, was born in early 1860 in Iowa, and the Civil War soon broke out. Bitner enlisted in an Iowa infantry unit, held the rank of 1st lieutenant, and later transferred to the 9th Iowa Cavalry and was promoted to captain. After the war, Bitner farmed in Iowa for several years and became the editor of the newspaper in Eddyville, Iowa.

The family came to California in 1873 and settled in Spenceville in an area that boasted gently rolling hills and a mild climate with warm dry summers. In the early days, the mild climate boasted oranges and other semi-tropical fruit, while the plains and valleys were used for growing cereals. Ground higher up was suitable for pasture. There was plenty of water available for irrigation from the numerous small streams that flowed into the Bear River to the south and the Yuba River to the north.

Bitner became involved in mining and was owner of several mines, including the Mother Lode Quartz, Jackson, San Francisco, American, St. Louis, Philadelphia, 16-to-1, Rose Hill, Mayflower, Last Chance Extension and Bitter, as well as others.

He was also superintendent of the Mineral Hill Mining and Smelting Co. and owned claims on the copper belt – the Golden Eagle, Index, Legion, Mineral Hill, Progress, Sacramento, Main Chance, First Chance and Advance Chance. Later in life he held various local offices in the area, including justice of the peace.

Bitner was partner in some of his mining ventures with a neighbor named Austin, also from Pennsylvania, and both had children who entered the teaching profession. Ella Bitner married John H. Austin in Nevada City in 1879. He would first become a teacher and later an attorney.

After teaching in several schools, Ella became well respected in education and held the office of county superintendent of schools from 1922 to 1933. When she retired, she held the record for tenure in the position.

Emma, the younger Bitner daughter, married August Anderson, who was a prosperous Spenceville merchant and purchased the old “Original Kneebone” ranch in 1908.²⁶ Anderson was also postmaster there from 1899 to 1914. The Andersons were well-known in the community for many years.

The town of Spenceville is no more; most of the area that made up the farming, ranching and mining community is now located in the Spenceville Wildlife Refuge. Hiking, horseback riding and a shooting range are available.

Author Maria E. Brower

Maria is a local researcher and member of both the Nevada County Genealogical Society and the Nevada County Historical Society. She volunteers at the Doris Foley History Branch Library in Nevada City. She descends from the Bitner family of Somerset County, Pennsylvania. She has written several books on the history of Nevada County and surrounding areas.

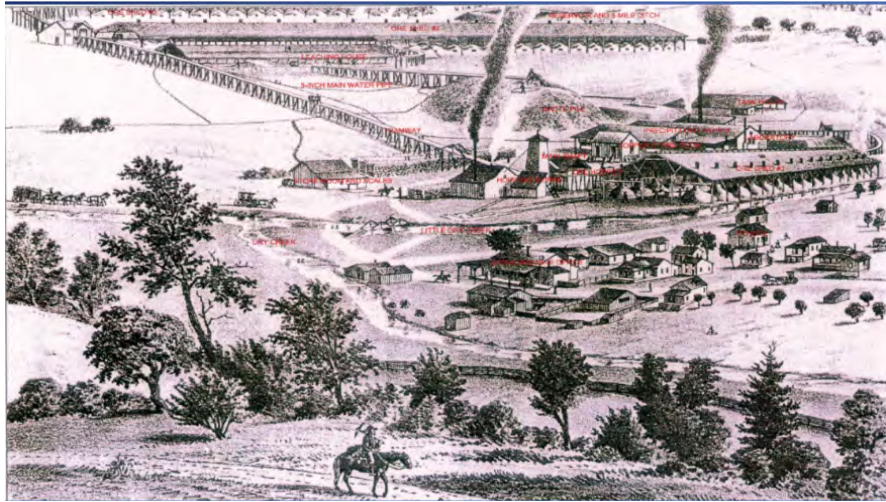
²⁶ The Kneebone Ranch site, 1860s to 1908, went through a series of owners since 1908, which included the Robinson family of Grass Valley who sold their property in 2004 to the State of California as new addition to the Spenceville Wildlife Area.

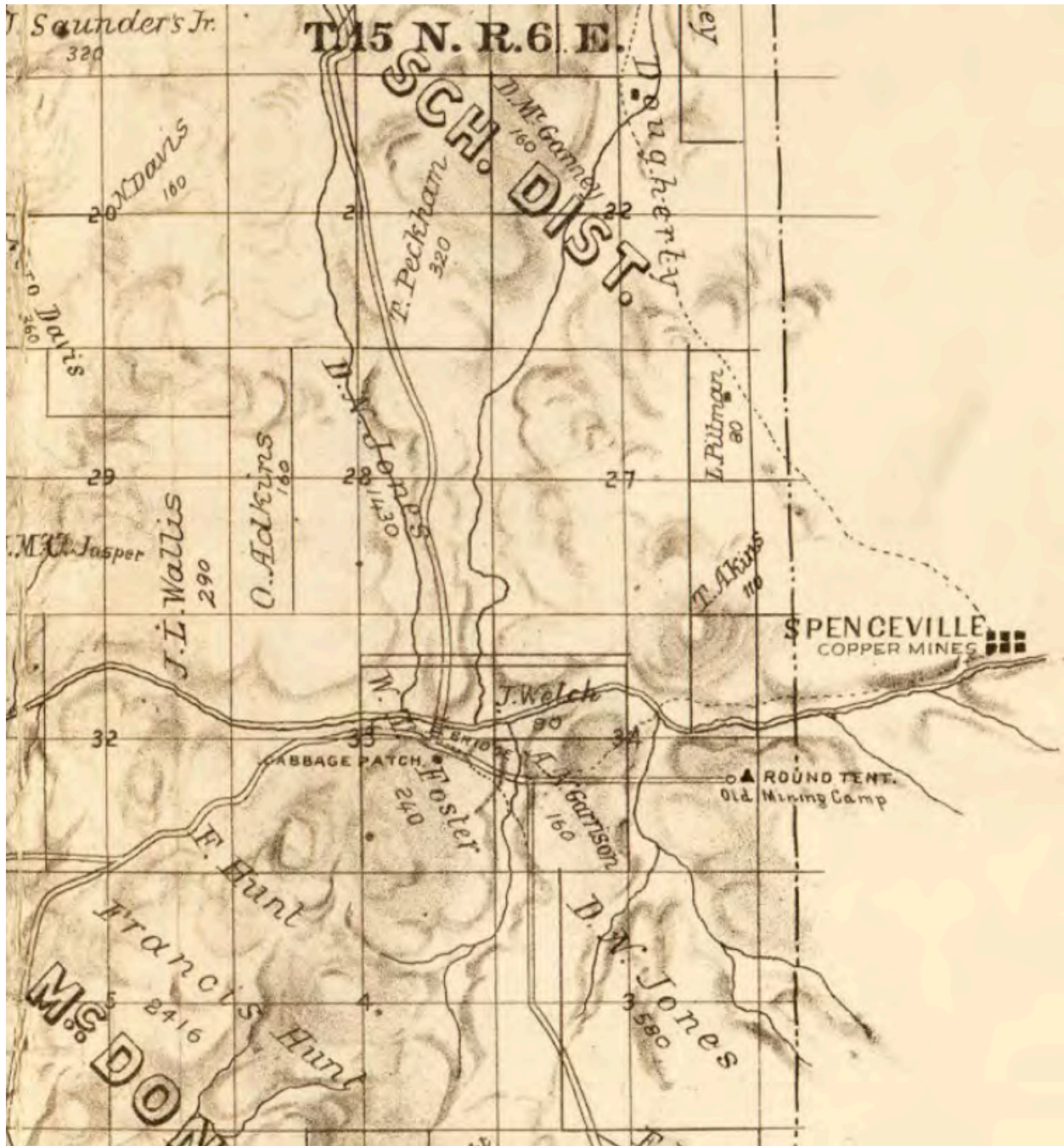
Spenceville, Nevada County Copper Mining Town est. 1863

A resident of **Purtyman's Ranch**, Spenceville's earlier name, was digging a well for drinking water and came upon some copper in 1863. Mining commenced but only lasted until 1865 as the copper was a low grade and working it after the costs of labor and materials was just too high. The mine lay dormant until The San Francisco Mining Company bought the property in 1872 and invested \$15,000 in equipment to better extract the copper. A document from 1875 states, "Work is being prosecuted on the copper-mine at Spenceville, in this county, under the superintendency of Mr. G. P. Deetkin, with every prospect of success. The shaft is down 100 feet, and the ledge at that depth is 70 feet in width. The rock is richly impregnated with native copper. The ore is taken out and roasted in a large furnace, after which it is turned into three large vats, upon which a stream of cold water is turned, and the copper, in a state of solution, is then conducted from the vats into a large cylinder of about 12 feet in diameter. In this is placed old or refuse iron, for which the copper has an affinity. The cylinder is made to revolve rapidly by steam, by which means the copper is collected on the iron. The superintendent thinks the process of separating copper from the ore in which it is contained is no longer a matter of experiment. There are many other ledges in the vicinity equally as rich and are awaiting the success of working this one." *Raymond, Rossiter W (1875) Statistics Of Mines And Mining In The States And Territories West Of The Rocky Mountains; Being The Seventh Annual Report United States Commissioner Of Mining Statistics, Government Printing Office 1875.*

Spenceville Copper Mine,

1880.





The map above is a portion of the “Official Map of Yuba County” by order of the Yuba County Board of Supervisors, 1887. Compiled by J.M. Doyle Yuba County Surveyor, published by Britton and Rey, San Francisco CA.

Spenceville is shown off the map grid on the right hand side. The reason for this, Spenceville is less than a mile inside Nevada County.

Spenceville



The Cyrus Bittner family, early pioneers in Spenceville, came to California after the Civil War; Bittner was a veteran. His daughter Ella May married John Austin, son of another pioneer family. Ella Austin became the first female superintendent of schools in Nevada County and held that office from 1922 to 1933. The post office is the building on the left. (Courtesy Searls Library.)

27

The Spenceville Post Office seen on the map indicated by the red arrow was not established until April 25, 1872, and was discontinued February 20, 1932. The small town was named after Edward F. Spence a druggist from Nevada City, who donated the lumber for the first school built at Spenceville in 1868.²⁸

²⁷ Brower, Maria E. Gold Rush Towns of Nevada County, 2006, Arcadia Publishing, page 85. In the text below the photograph, Cyrus's last name is spelled as "Bittner" this is a typo. The correct spelling is **Bitner**.

²⁸ Janicot, Michel, A History of Nevada County Post Offices, Published by the Nevada County Historical Society 1994, pages 35-36.

