



*Ore carts being pulled by a small electric engine making work more efficient at the Penn Mining Company in Campo Seco at the turn of the century. There were hundreds of mines in Calaveras County in the 19th century with barely a trace of them left today. When steel was needed for WWI and WWII, most Calaveras mines were “scrapped out” to serve the war effort.*

## Chapter 2: Calaveras County — San Andreas, Mokelumne Hill, Murphys, Valley Springs, Copperopolis, and vicinity

Calaveras County, to which a large proportion of the miners in halcyon days of '49 and '50 betook themselves and from whose hills and gulches million upon millions of gold have been poured into the treasury of the world, has an area of 622,000 acres. Here are found some of the best mines in this State, and the entire county may, in fact, be regarded as a bed of mineral deposits. The baser metals, copper, iron, cinnabar, etc., are found in abundance, and ledges of marble, limestone, and granite, and undeveloped deposits of coal are known to exist.

Calaveras is now attracting attention as a fruit and vineyard country, and its foot-hills are being occupied and covered

Where one disappointed miner would leave the Mukelumne for the Tuolumne, or any other place about which he had heard fair report, perhaps a dozen unsuccessful Tuolumne diggers would pour into the Mukelumne. And so it ever was.

Leonard Kip, 1850





After having been held in snowy fetters so long, the residents were only too glad to visit the town, where they could spend a few hours' in the drinking-saloons and stores in talking over the prospects of the coming season, or visit the gambling-house and indulge their passion for gaming - a passion that existed in the breast of nearly every miner in California during the five years following the advent of the mining population.

The gamblers, those who dealt faro, monte, and other games of chance, and who followed no other occupation, were delighted with the change. For weeks it had been "dog eat dog" with them, and now the prospect of having a few outsiders to fleece was a source of great gratification. In order to celebrate the event they had clubbed together, raised a purse of a thousand dollars, and offered it as a prize to the person who could make the quickest time on snow-shoes over a track to be designated by a committee.

Albert S. Evans, late 1860s



*These men were washing dirt in tubs of water. It was common practice when the water flow was low or stopped during the dry season to load bags with "pay dirt" and wash it elsewhere.*

with fruit trees and vines that are yielding good return and promise well for the future.

Calaveras is a wonder land, having more general and especial natural curiosities than any other county in the State. Among these we may mention the Big Trees, Natural Bridges, Hot Springs, Extensive Caves, Basaltic Cliffs, Table Mountain, and others world-wide in reputation.

If a person would travel over the county he would find a never ending panorama of grand and pleasant scenes; the old abandoned mining grounds and towns going to decay; the present successful quartz and copper mines; extensive mining ditches bringing water long distances over hill and valley to supply the miner and the farmer; this canal winding its sinuous way on the top or around the sides of the ridge, or its sparkling contents rushing impetuously down the water-furrowed center of a ravine; here and there an aqueduct, a cabin, an abandoned mining claim, or a saw-mill, give variety to the landscape.

There will unfold new sights of natural grandeur to the admiration of the tourist winding his way through a series of beautiful forests, valleys, and glens, where on either side towering mountains solemnly look down upon the placid sil-

ver streams beneath. Sunshine alternates with shadow in the secluded recesses of a quiet mountain ravine, where clear crystal brooks run like silver threads through the verdant landscape that they nourish.

Over the wide and open valley game wing their flight, seeming to be poised still in the clear mountain air. It is the real play-ground for the sportsman. Through the thicket springs the light-footed deer, and the footprint of the bear is stamped on the ground. Foxes, silver-gray squirrels, rabbits, hare, mountain and valley quail, are in abundance here, and the clear brook streams contain the red-spotted trout, the mountain brook, and the salmon trout.

In the agricultural view will be seen vast wheat fields; vineyards of the choicest grapes; the orange orchard; the largest fig-trees in the State. The valleys are rich with crops; there are cattle upon a thousand hills; the timber is of the finest kind, and the climate delightful. Its undeveloped resources now being opened up by new railroad connection are almost inexhaustible.

RAILWAY PUSHING EASTWARD. The San Joaquin and Sierra Nevada Railroad is pushing its way eastward through Calaveras County, opening up at least 300,000 acres of United States Government lands subject, to-day, to entry, on which is found some of the best mineral lands in the States; besides, the foothills of Calaveras present the finest opening on the coast to men of small means, who desire to make homes for their fami-

*The Central Pacific Railroad's engine 1003 with Mr. James and other workers in Calaveras.*



Courtesy Steve Crandell Collection

At this point our camp life commenced and I took my first lesson in getting up a meal, thought I was doing splendidly and was congratulating myself on the extra style in which I cooked the steak, but my mode of seasoning with powdered sugar instead of salt, hardly suited the rest of the mess and they unanimously agreed that I had considerable to learn before they could class me as a good cook.

We had a five story gold washer, that is, five sets of sieves, one above the other, graded from very coarse to fine and warranted to catch all the gold, fine or coarse, for had it not been tested thoroughly in New York to the satisfaction of an admiring crowd with a bucket of sand and scraps of lead thrown in—not a particle of the lead escaping during the washing process. Then we had axes, picks and shovels and even a ten-pound crowbar, and last, but not least of all, a box containing various acids, duly bottled and labeled, so that no bogus gold could be played on us; for with our valuable box of acids we were not to be fooled.

Harvey Wood, 1849

