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# The Distant Bells of *St. Turibius Mission*

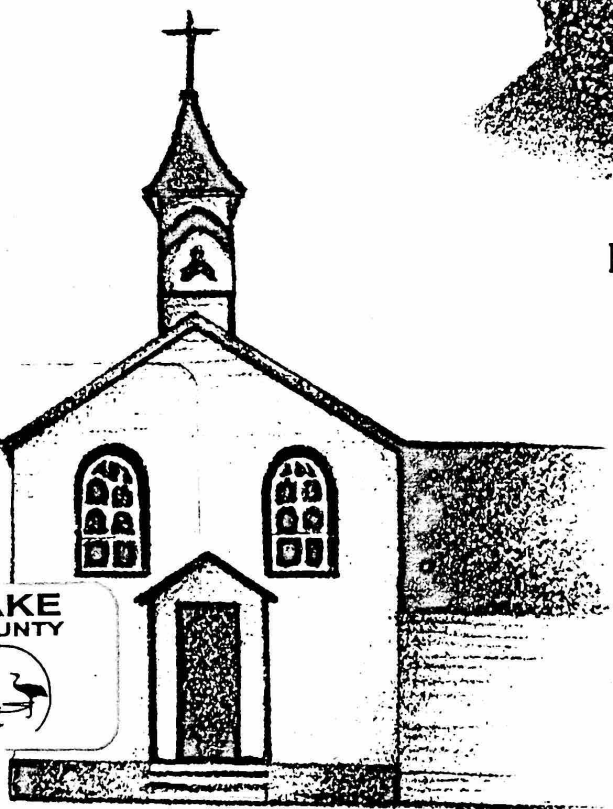
By Bill Darwin Whelchel



Rev. Peter Lauth



Rev. Father Philemon  
Toepfer, O.F.M.



St. Turibius Mission  
Kelseyville, California

# DEDICATION

This book is respectfully dedicated to my devoted wife:

KATIE WHELCHER

whose love, patience, and understanding made this story possible.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to our good friend:

REV. FATHER HANS RUYGT, OFM

Pastor of St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Church in Ukiah, California for his encouragement and for his generous sharing of research materials used in this book.

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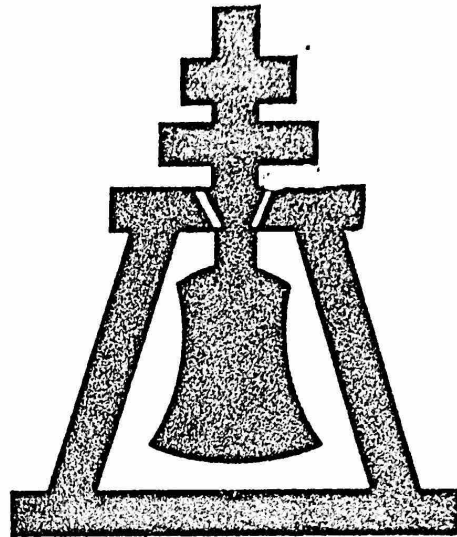
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Special Note: The cover of this book was designed by Tracey Harger (Green) of San Bernardino, California, who is a graphic arts specialist for a major newspaper in the Palm Springs area.

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# INTRODUCTION

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BIG VALLEY MISSION - BARN AND SCHOOL - 1961



The buildings pictured above were once a part of the flourishing St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm near the town of Kelseyville. It was the headquarters of the Catholic Religion in Lake and Mendocino Counties for more than forty years.

The Mission was established by Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany of San Francisco and Bishop Eugene O'Connell of the Diocese of Grass Valley, who sent Rev. Father Luciano Osuna to Clear Lake to work with the Indians. The Mission was abandoned in 1914.



Archbishop *Joseph Sadoc Alemany*

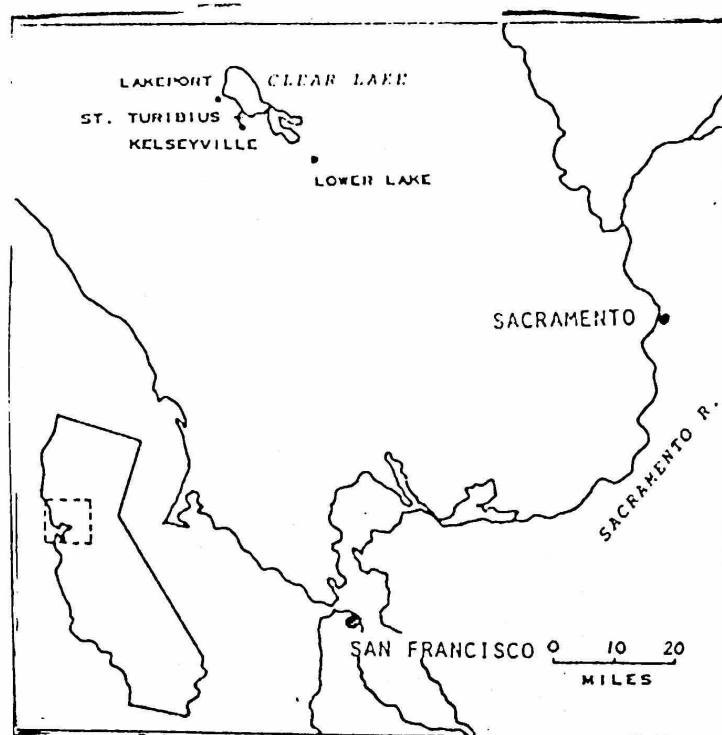
# FORWARD

As you read this book, you will be sharing with the author something that is very dear to my heart and to the hearts of the Indian people who lived in Big Valley and around Clear Lake. It is my hope that you will enjoy this journey into the past and that you will find it a pleasant experience.

St. Turibius Mission was a church, a school, a farm, and a village that was established by Most. Rev. Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., Archbishop of San Francisco for the benefit of the Indians who lived in Big Valley. About one hundred and twenty-five Indians lived and worked at the Mission over a period of forty-seven years which makes this a rather large story about a very small place.

So why write a story about St. Turibius Mission? Because it was the first and only Catholic Indian Mission of any kind in Lake County. The story must be recorded before it is lost like so many other stories about the Indians and the history of Clear Lake and the surrounding areas.

Bill Darwin Whelchel



# MISSION BELLS

The great Mission bells that rang out across the valleys of California in the early days were a symbol of life that have all but vanished. Work, worship and meals were regulated by the ringing of bells in a world where faith was the only source of strength and security.

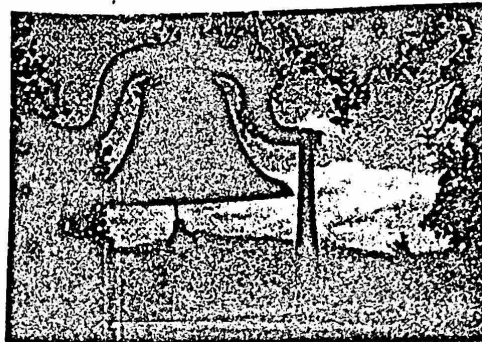
The era from 1769 to 1835 was rich in faith and purpose. It was also heavy with sorrow, neglect and death, and proves that man not the elements shaped our history.

One of the men who shaped our history in those early days was the great Franciscan Missionary, Father Junipero Serra, who established many of those early Missions with their great ringing bells.

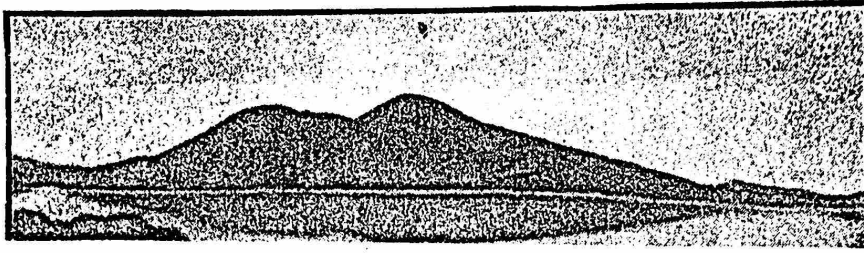
Another great Franciscan Missionary, who shaped history at Clear Lake in the 1860's and 1870's was Rev. Father Luciano Osuna, a priest from Mexico, who established St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm on the shores of Clear Lake near the town of Kelseyville.

The bells in the tower of the church at St. Turibius Mission that sprinkled the air with Holy sounds for more than forty years, was donated by Father Edward Sorin the Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. He had a number of priests and Brothers at Clear Lake in 1881 and 1882.

Rev. Father Philemon Toepfer, O.F.M., moved one of the bells that was at St. Turibius Mission to Sulphur Bank when he built St. Anthony's Church there in 1909. It is still at that church which is not being used at this time.



# THE DISTANT BELLS OF ST. TURIBIUS MISSION



## I. EARLY HISTORY OF CLEAR LAKE AND BIG VALLEY

At first, there were only the Indians. . . .and the land. . . .and the water. . .

The Clear Lake Basin prior to the coming of the white settlers was home to fifteen Indian tribes, speaking six different languages. Each tribe was entirely independent and inhabited one of the many valleys in the area, or settled on one of the three islands on East Lake and Lower Lake or the island on Upper Lake. They lived in permanent village-communities and enjoyed prosperous and satisfying lives.

There were three groups who spoke Pomoan related languages - the Eastern Pomo, the Northern Pomo and the Southeastern Pomo. There were three groups who spoke non-Pomoan languages - the Hill Patwin, Lake Miwok and Lake Wappo.

Even though Clear Lake and Big Valley were a long way from the paths of the early hunters, trappers and explorers, there were some who had heard of the "Big Lake" and the abundance of elk, deer, and grizzly bears, so a few brave men drifted in and out, few staying very long.

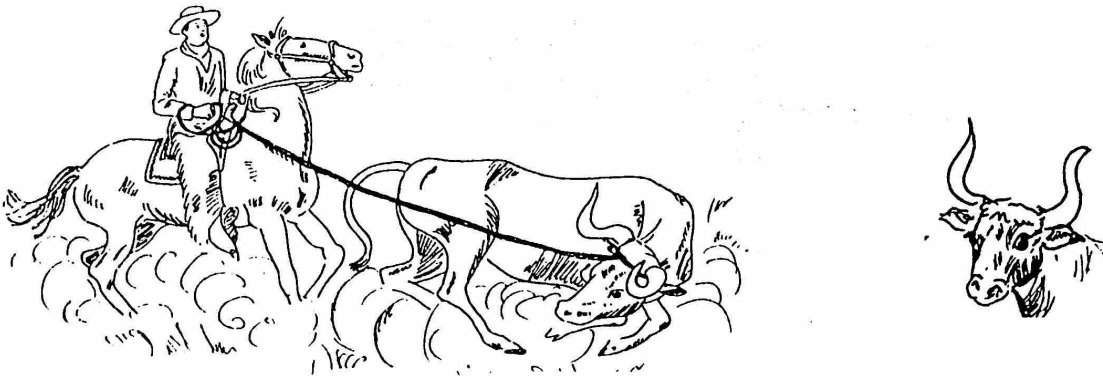
It has been said that an old "Mountain Man" named Caleb Greenwood came to what he called the "Big Lake" in 1826 with two companions. They built a log cabin in what is now the Excelsior Valley near Lower Lake and spent one winter hunting and trapping along the banks of Cache Creek.

To Big Valley belongs the honor of having the first settlers in what is now Lake County. Historians say that early settlement of the area began in the 1830's with the establishment in Big Valley of a large Mexican rancho called "Rancho Laguna de Lup-Yomi" by Captain Salvador Vallejo, whose brother, General Mariano G. Vallejo, was the Commandante General of all the Mexican forces north of the Bay of San Francisco, with headquarters in Sonoma.

Salvador Vallejo and his brother-in-law, Ramon Carrillo and their vaqueros drove hundreds of Longhorn cattle from Sonoma, up through the canyons and over the mountains to Clear Lake in 1838. They set up their headquarters on the banks of a stream in Big Valley near what is now the town of Kelseyville. They recruited many Indians, sometimes by force, to serve as vaqueros. The Indians were taught to ride horses and herd cattle. Salvador and Ramon did not stay at Clear Lake, but left the cattle in charge of a major-domo (foreman) and ten vaqueros.

In 1847, Don Salvador Vallejo, no longer an army officer, was living on his large "Las Trancas" Rancho in the Napa Valley, when he decided to sell his cattle

and grazing rights at "Rancho Laguna de Lup-Yomi" on the shores of Clear Lake to four Americans from Sonoma - Andy Kelsey, Ben Kelsey, Charles Stone and Ed Shirland. Andy Kelsey and his brother-in-law, Charles Stone were sent to Clear Lake to take over the cattle operations from Salvador Vallejo.



They proceeded at once to build a large adobe ranch house and new and larger corrals. The location they chose for their cattle operations was just west of what is now the town of Kelseyville, but across the creek and on a little hill.



Andy Kelsey and Charles Stone were very cruel to the Indians. They forced the Hoolanapo, Habenapo and Lileek Indians to work for them. They built two Indian camps near the ranch house and all the Indians had to stay in those camps. They imposed curfews, and would not let the Indians hunt, fish or gather food materials on their land. They did not provide food for the Indians and many of them starved.

They beat or killed anyone who did not obey their rules. The Indians finally could take no more of the cruel punishment and decided that they had to kill the two men in order to be free. So on December 25, 1849, they rebelled and killed the two ranchers while they were eating their breakfast in the ranch house. The Indians took the two bodies up a hill in back of the ranch house. They hung them on some trees and shot them full of arrows. They cut them down and buried them under one of the trees.



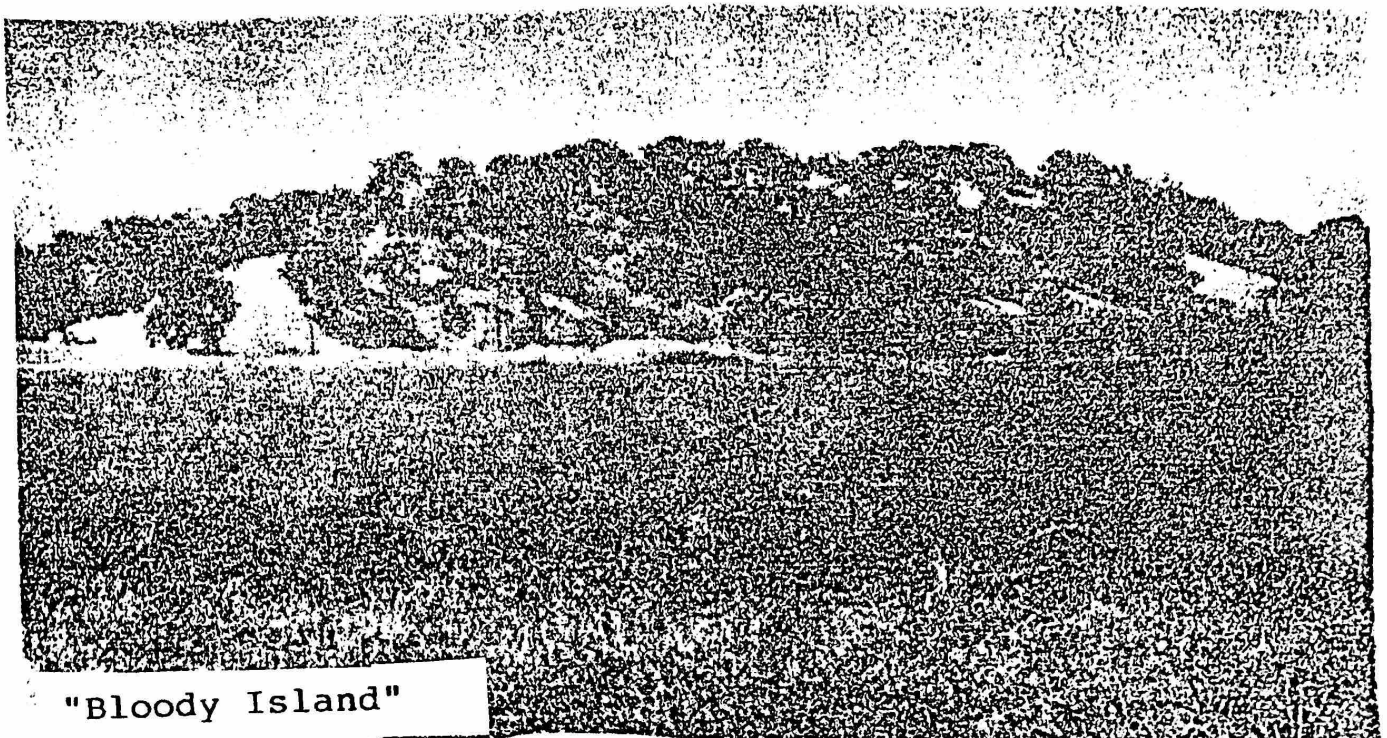
After the killings, the Indians took all of the food, cattle, horses and other things they wanted. Then they burned the ranch house leaving only the adobe walls standing. Some of the Indians moved to Scotts Valley, while others congregated in a band of several hundred on an island on Upper Lake, where they believed that they would be safe from any intrusion by U. S. Army troops.

The white settlers at Sonoma and Clear Lake protested to the U. S. Army forces stationed at Sonoma and asked that troops be sent to Clear Lake to punish the Indians who killed Andy Kelsey and Charles Stone.

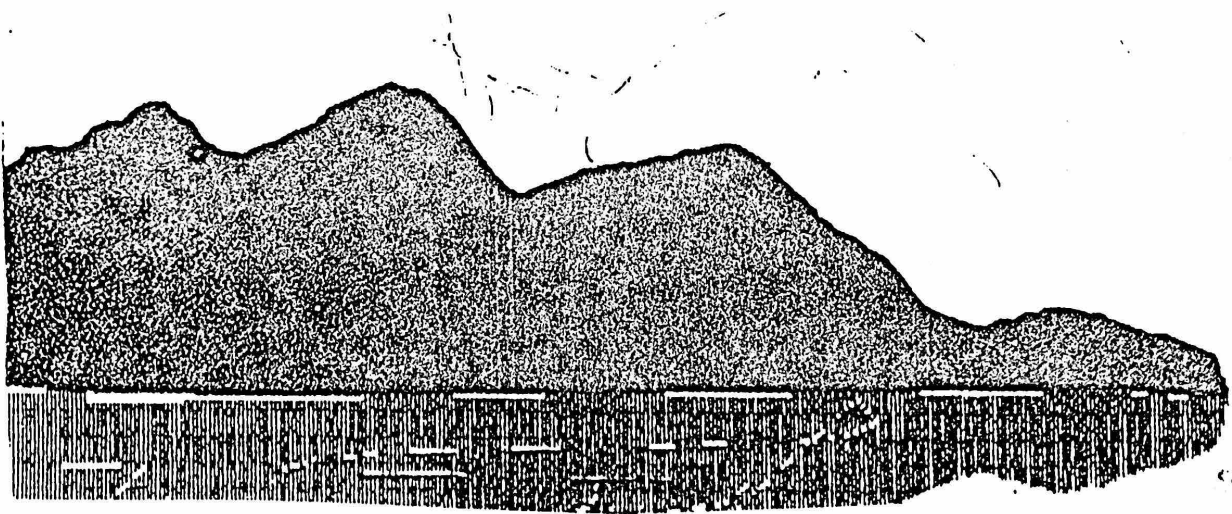
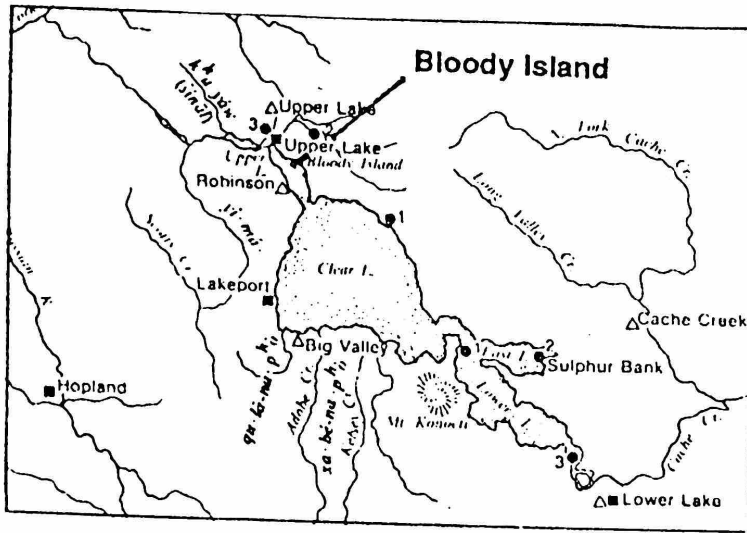
In January of 1850, Lt. J. E. Davidson, Commander of the First Dragoons in Sonoma took 26 soldiers to Clear Lake to investigate the killings. They were not able to do much because the Indians were hiding out on islands and the soldiers could not reach them without boats. The soldiers returned to Sonoma.

It was a wet spring, so the next group of soldiers were delayed until May of 1850. Captain Nathaniel Lyon was put in charge. He left Benicia with soldiers, whale boats and mountain howitzers. They met Lt. Daviedson and his First Dragoons at Lower Lake on May 11, 1850. On May 12, 1850, Lt. Davidson and his men rode around the south side of the lake, while Captain Lyon and the Infantry got into the whale boats and made their way up the lake. They surprised the Indians who were hiding out on the island on Upper Lake. Lt. Davidson and his men joined them there and they attacked the Indians on the island. They killed several hundred with their rifles. Then Captain Lyon ordered his men to sling their ammunition around their necks and go into the tules and kill all the Indians who were trying to escape. They killed men, women, and children. They even stabbed little babies like toads and tossed them into the tules.

After the soldiers left, it took the Indians five days to gather up all of the bodies and cremate them. The soldiers said that they killed about 200 Indians but the Indians said there were more than 800 bodies. The last known survivor was Jenny Marshall, who died in Upper Lake in 1932 at age 103.



That island on Upper Lake is now known as "Bloody Island" because it was Christened in the blood of the gentle Pomo people. The Indians at Clear Lake lost all hope after the Bloody Island Massacre.



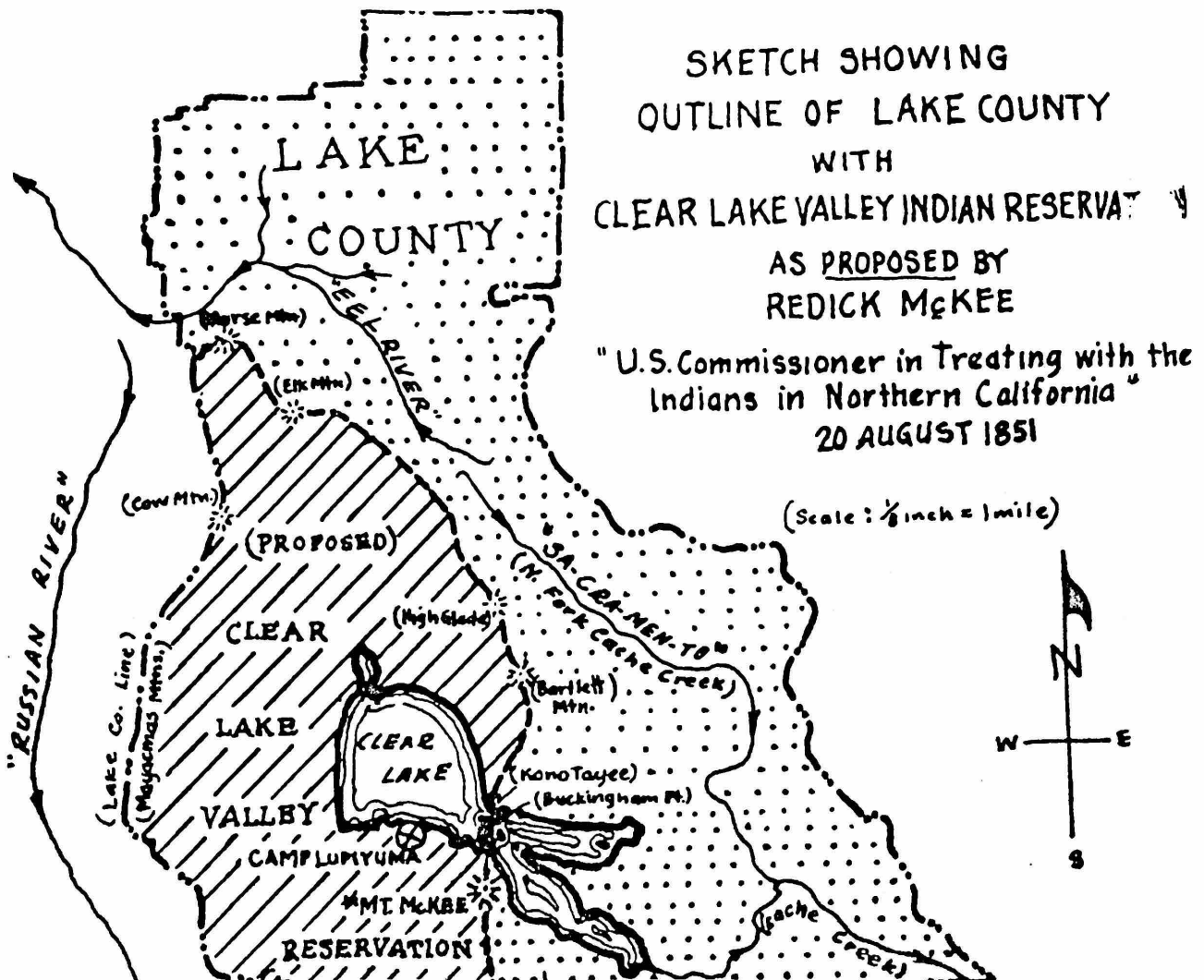
## 2. THE TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP - 1851

Few of the people who live around Clear Lake realize that except for the failure of the U. S. Congress to ratify a treaty signed by the chiefs of the Indian tribes living around Clear Lake in 1851, the entire Upper Clear Lake Basin to the west of sacred Mount Konocti would now be the "Clear Lake Valley Indian Reservation."

On August 21, 1851, Lt. Col. Redick McKee, one of three U. S. Commissioners appointed by the U. S. Government to negotiate with the Indians of California, stood before a gathering of Indian chiefs at "Camp Lupi-Yoma" in Big Valley. George Gibbs, the interpreter for Col. McKee said that they were surprised when all of the Indian chiefs came in with short hair protesting the Bloody Island Massacre.

The treaty that was negotiated set aside most of the land in the Upper Clear Lake Basin as far north as the Eel and Sacramento Rivers for the Clear Lake Valley Indian Reservation. In exchange the Indians had to relinquish title to all other lands.

But the Indians lost once again, when the treaty signed at Clear Lake along with seventeen other treaties signed between 1851 and 1852, were never ratified by the Congress due to California's opposition to the treaties. Within five years many white settlers had flocked to the area and took all of the best Indian land.



### 3. THE BEGINNING OF THE KELSEYVILLE COMMUNITY

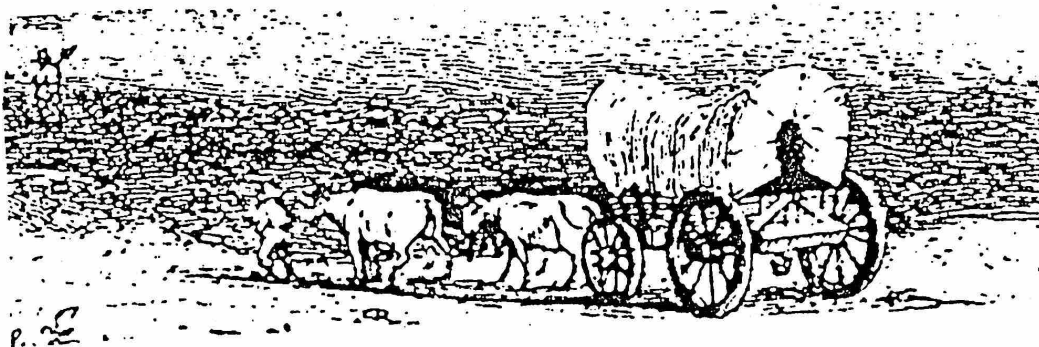
After the Indians killed Andy Kelsey and Charles Stone in December of 1849, it wasn't long before all of the white settlers moved out of the Clear Lake area and settled in areas that had better protection. In 1851, J. M. Hamilton rode through what is now Lake County and he found not one single white person living around the lake. He did find two buildings that had been built by the white people. One was the old burned-out Kelsey Ranch House near what is now the town of Kelseyville. The other building was a log cabin that was located near Putah Creek in Coyote Valley near where the Hidden Valley Golf Course is now located.

In the spring of 1853, after the mines at Shasta had been somewhat exhausted many of the miners and their families moved down the Sacramento River and settled near what is now the town of Colusa. Then, they learned that the U. S. Congress had failed to ratify the treaty that was signed by the Clear Lake Indians in 1851, so they decided to check out the area and see if it would be a good place to settle with their large families.

They sent a couple of scouts on horseback to check out the area. On arriving at Clear Lake, the scouts were delighted with the surrounding countryside. They did not see a single white person but there were many Indians living around the lake but they seemed to be peaceful. Deer and elk were in great numbers, the latter being seen in bands of hundreds roaming the hills and grizzly bears were plentiful.

Early in 1854, the Hammack, Crawford and Reeves Parties, who were living near Colusa, decided to move their families to the Clear Lake Country. There were twenty-five to thirty people in the group. It was no small undertaking because there were very few roads and Clear Lake was in a remote mountain-encircled area. There was an old army road after they reached Napa City, but it was a crude, rough road that was no more than a wide trail. In places, especially when going over the Howell and Pope Valley Mountains, which were very steep, the teams were unhitched and very large ropes were made secure to rocks and trees and then were tied to the wagons to act as brakes. The wagons were then carefully eased down the mountains.

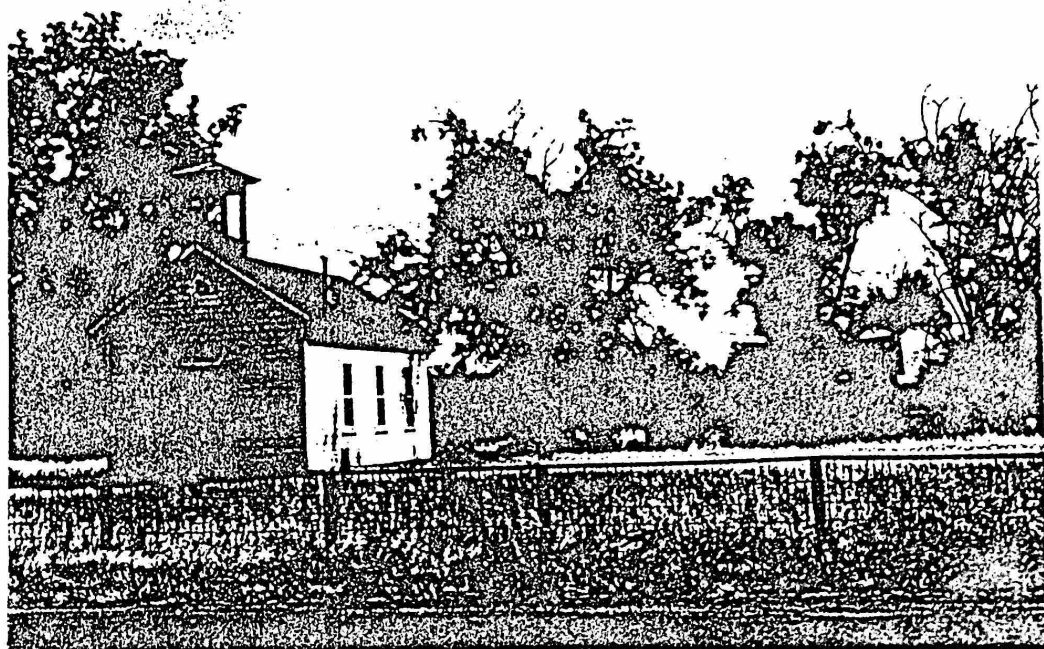
After more than two weeks of travel in this way, they reached Lower Lake and started over what is now the Seigler Mountains. They never would forget the sight that met their eyes when they first looked down into Big Valley for the first time. They thought they had found "the Garden of Eden". The lake was as blue as the sky. All around the lake were meadows of wild oats, clover and grass as high as a man's head. Here and there among the trees they could see smoke curling up from the tule huts of the Indians who lived in Big Valley.



The Hammack and Crawford Party arrived in Big Valley on April 14, 1854 and pitched their tents around a large oak tree. The Reeves Party was delayed and did not arrive until seven days later on April 23, 1854. The Hammacks and Crawfords, who were related, settled in the center of Big Valley, while the Reeves Party settled two miles east of what is now the town of Kelseyville. That was the beginning of the town of Kelseyville.



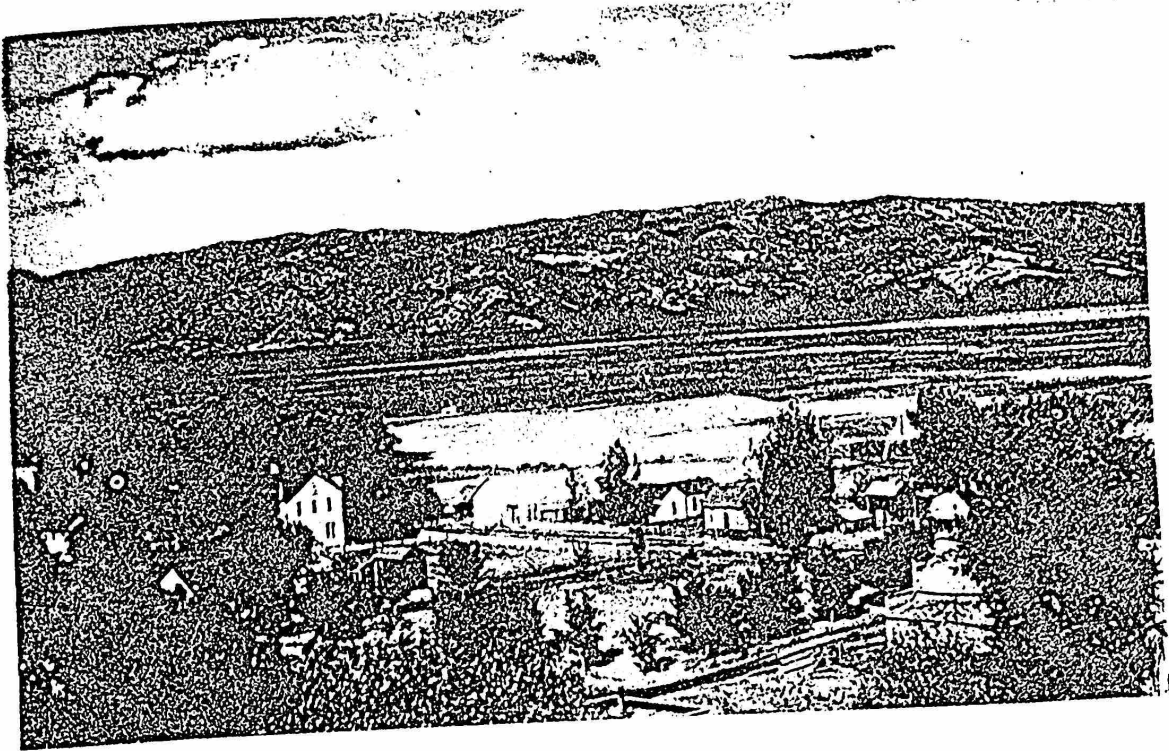
Pomo Village Site



The town of Kelseyville was established in the 1850's. It was first called "Kelsey Town" in memory of Andy Kelsey, the first American to settle in what is now Lake County. Then, sometime in 1854, Martin Hammack and his son-in-law, Woods Crawford, riding horses, were the first white men of record to reach the summit of what is now Mount Konocti. They decided to change the name of the mountain from "Mount McKee" to "Uncle Sam" Mountain. At about that same time, the name of "Kelsey Town" was changed to "Uncle Sam", the same as the nearby mountain. The name of the post office was also changed to "Uncle Sam". Much later, probably in the 1880's, the name of the town and the post office was changed to "Kelseyville".

The first business in the little community was a blacksmith shop. Horses and oxen had to be shod, so Ben Benham, who was skilled at the work, built a little shop on the banks of Kelsey Creek near where the town of Kelseyville now stands and began shoeing horses and oxen for his neighbors. Bill Graves was his partner and repaired and made wagons. Joe German, a carpenter, built a house nearby and a town was started.

From that time until 1880, the growth of the town was steady but not very fast. In 1880 there were: Three stores, one drug store, two hotels, one blacksmith shop, one gunsmith, one livery stable, one meat market, one shoe shop, one millinery shop, one doctor, the Wells-Fargo Express Office, and a telegraph office. There were four or five churches including the Methodist-Episcopal Church, St. Peter's Catholic Church and the church at St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm. There was a school house in the little community where two teachers were employed.



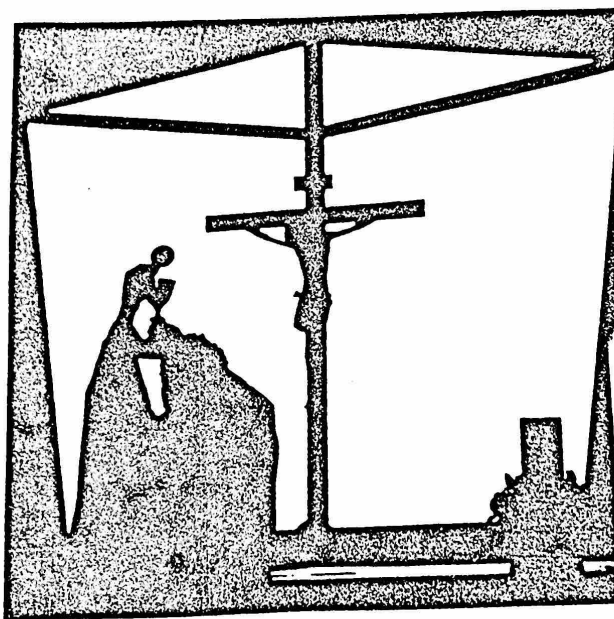
An early view of Lakeport.

#### 4. EARLY CATHOLIC ACTIVITY AT CLEAR LAKE

Peter B. Clark, an early Catholic settler, arrived in Big Valley, shortly after the Hammack, Crawford, and Reeves families arrived in 1854. He took up a homestead and built a house. He bought a lot of land south of Kelsey Creek and a small section north of that stream. A shoulder of sacred Mount Konocti formed a prominent background for his ranch. It was later named "Clark's Peak."

Peter B. Clark was very friendly with the Indians. He let them establish some villages on his land. He let them hold religious ceremonies. They were, also, allowed to build a huge sweathouse and dancehouse.

Peter B. Clark and a few other Catholics, mostly Irish, were among the first settlers in Big Valley. Before there was a Catholic Church or a Catholic Mission in Lake County, traveling priests served the needs of the Catholics in the area. Peter B. Clark and his brother-in-law, John Lynch would often accompany the priests on their rounds.



In 1862, Holy Mass was celebrated for the first time in Lake County. It was celebrated in the presence of four or five Catholic families at the Kelsey Creek District School House in Big Valley. That same year, 1862, Holy Mass was celebrated at the Old Assembly of God Church Building in Lower Lake.

From 1863 to 1867, traveling priest celebrated Holy Mass once or twice a year

in the home of Peter B. Clark or in the home of John Lynch at Finley in Big Valley. The names of those early priests were not recorded.

#### 5. REV. FATHER LUCIANO OSUNA -- FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY

Although Clear Lake was never the home of one of Father Junipero Serra's great Franciscan Missions, it was the home of St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm, which was established by another great Franciscan Missionary, Rev. Father Luciano Osuna, O.F.M.

To better understand why Father Osuna was sent to Clear Lake to work with the Indians, it will be necessary to review a little of his background.

Luciano Osuna was born in a little village near Guadalajara, Mexico in 1844. When he was just a small boy, his grandmother gave him a wooden crucifix which had been given to one of her relatives by the great Franciscan Missionary, Father Junipero Serra, when he was preaching in the Diocese of Guadalajara in 1759.

After receiving the crucifix from his grandmother, young Luciano decided that he wanted to become a priest and a great missionary just like Father Serra.

When he was quite young, Luciano Osuna entered a seminary in the Diocese of Guadalajara. While he was attending the seminary, he was taught about all of the great Catholic saints. His favorite was St. Turibius, the Christ-like shepherd of the poor in Lima, Peru for twenty-seven years. Young Osuna decided that if he became a missionary and ever got a chance to name a mission, he would call it St. Turibius in honor of his favorite saint.

Sometime in 1862, the Bishop of the Guadalajara Diocese received a letter from the Most Rev. Joseph Sadoc Alemany, Archbishop of San Francisco. Archbishop Alemany wanted to know if any of the seminarians would like to come to San Francisco and finish their training. Then after they were ordained as priests they would be sent as missionaries to work among the Indians in Northern California.

Luciano Osuna jumped at the chance to become a missionary, so he left for San Francisco some time in 1862. He completed his training and was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Alemany. Sometime later he was sent to the Vicariate of Marysville to work with Bishop Eugene O'Connell and await his assignment to work as a missionary with the Indians in Lake and Mendocino Counties.

Since Father Osuna was fluent in both Spanish and English, he was very popular in the Marysville area. Some of the churches wanted to keep him as their pastor, but he told them that his only interest was in working with the Indians.

Some time in 1867, Bishop O'Connell sent Father Osuna to Clear Lake to work with the Indians in Lake County and in nearby Mendocino County. When he first arrived at Clear Lake he was riding a donkey and wearing a monk-like robe with open-toed sandals, just like his hero, Father Junipero Serra. . . .





The people at Clear Lake did not know who had sent Father Osuna or to which Religious Order that he belonged. Peter B. Clark said that he probably belonged to the conventional Franciscan Order, which was correct.

When Father Osuna first arrived at Clear Lake, he spent most of his time try- to convert the Indians around the lake to Christianity. By 1872, he had reached Burns Valley, some 24 miles from Kelseyville. Bishop Eugene O'Connell made the long journey down from Grass Valley to baptize and confirm fifty (5) adult Indians.

Father Osuna's commitment to the Indians is reflected in a letter he wrote to Bishop Eugene O'Connell on August 29, 1872:

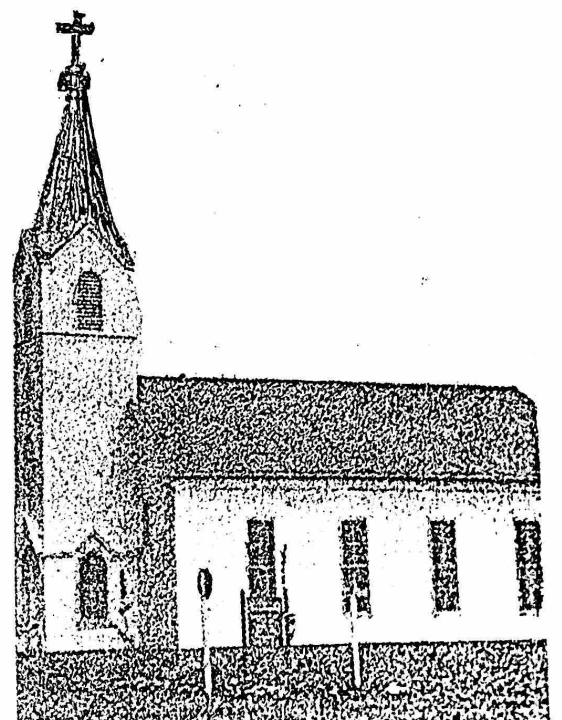
"I Have been with the Indians most of the time; they are sick and hungry and I am hungry with them. We have no place to live and nothing to do to work for a living.

"The Indians are starving both in the body and in the soul. We must do something for these Indians soon, otherwise our charity will not reach them. I do not see any other way to help them, but to get a place and there under a priest's care, they will work for a living which will help them both in the body and in the soul. I spoke to a man in Lake County, and he will let me have a place for very little if I will only pay the taxes on the place this year.

"As winter is nigh, we must take hold of every opportunity to help the Indians, lest by neglect, one of these little ones will perish. Some will have to pass the winter with rain upon their heads and with empty stomachs; and what is worse, without the shelter of religion. I hope, Bishop that you will agree with my views, and for your part you will do all in your power to raise all kinds of money, clothing, blankets, and so forth.

"That is the way to put money in the Bank of Heaven, and on the last day, we will be able to avoid that terrible sentence of the Lord 'You saw me hungry and naked and did not recognize me!!!"

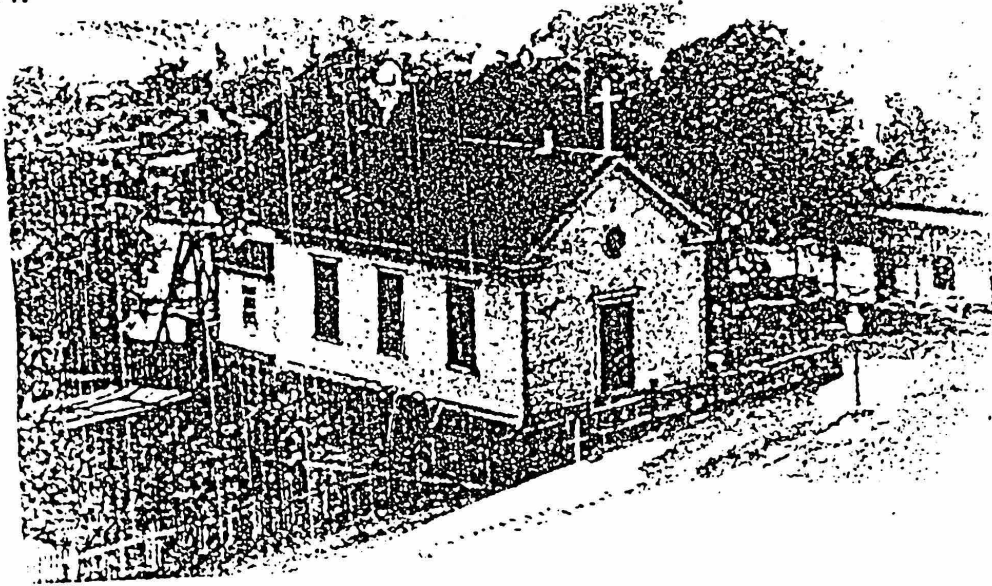
After baptizing a small number of Indians in Big Valley, Father Osuna was able to work with some of the other missions in his area and was able to build three Catholic Churches in Lake and Mendocino Counties. He built St. Peter's Catholic Church in Kelseyville in 1870, St. Mary's Catholic Church in Lakeport in 1871, and St. Mary's Catholic Church in Ukiah in 1871.



A side view of St. Peter's Catholic Church in Kelseyville.

In 1870, Peter B. Clark and his brother-in-law, John Lynch furnished all of the materials and did most of the work in helping Father Osuna build St. Peter's Catholic Church in Kelseyville. John Gard donated the land on which to build the church.

The people of Lakeport helped Father Osuna in building the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church (St. Mary's) at 3rd and Bush in Lakeport in 1871.



Some ten years after starting his apostolate with the Indians, Father Osuna, in his easy-going manner and independent attitude toward local Indian Agents, antagonized the Reverend Mr. J. L. Buchard, the Methodist Minister in charge of the Round Valley Indian Reservation at Covelo in Mendocino County. Even Father Osuna's appearance seemed to offend the Indian Agent. Father Osuna was always riding a donkey and wore a monk-like robe and open-toed sandals and he lived with the Indians.



Following his usual normal practice, one hot day in November of 1873, Father Osuna went to the Round Valley Indian Reservation, without first getting permission from the Rev. Mr. Buchard or one of the Reservation authorities. A nasty confrontation ensued between Father Osuna and the Indian Agent. Tempers flared, words flew and the exasperated Preacher Buchard hit Father Osuna over the head with his cane, and had him escorted from the Reservation.

Despite this rude treatment, Father Osuna kept going back to the Reservation without first getting permission from Preacher Buchard. The third time this happened, Preacher Buchard had him taken to the Justice of the Peace, some sixty miles away in Ukiah, and had him charged with "insanity." The Rev. Mr. Buchard wanted him to be taken to the Insane Asylum in Stockton. Father Osuna was examined by four prominent doctors and they all found him to be perfectly sane. The charges were promptly dismissed because Father Osuna was well-known and well respected in Ukiah where he had built St. Mary's Catholic Church in 1871. An article in the Ukiah newspaper stated that the Rev. Mr. Buchard, the Indian Agent at Round Valley was jealous of Father Osuna because he was so well-liked and respected by the Indians.

In 1874, Father Osuna realized that he could never settle his differences with the Rev. Mr. Buchard at Round Valley so he discontinued going to the Reservation. As a result of this intolerable situation, Father Osuna along with Peter B. Clark and his brother-in-law, John Lynch from St. Peter's Catholic Church in Kelseyville, went to San Francisco and met with Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany and Bishop Eugene O'Connell.

Father Osuna told them that the Federal Government had issued orders for all of the Indians in Big Valley to be moved to the Round Valley Indian Reservation where they would be under the supervision of the Rev. Mr. Buchard, the Indian Agent that had given Father Osuna so much trouble.

Father Osuna asked Archbishop Alemany and Bishop O'Connell if they would furnish the money to establish a Catholic Indian Mission and Indian Farm for the benefit of the Indians. He said that the Federal Government would cancel their orders for the Indians to be moved to Round Valley if this was done.

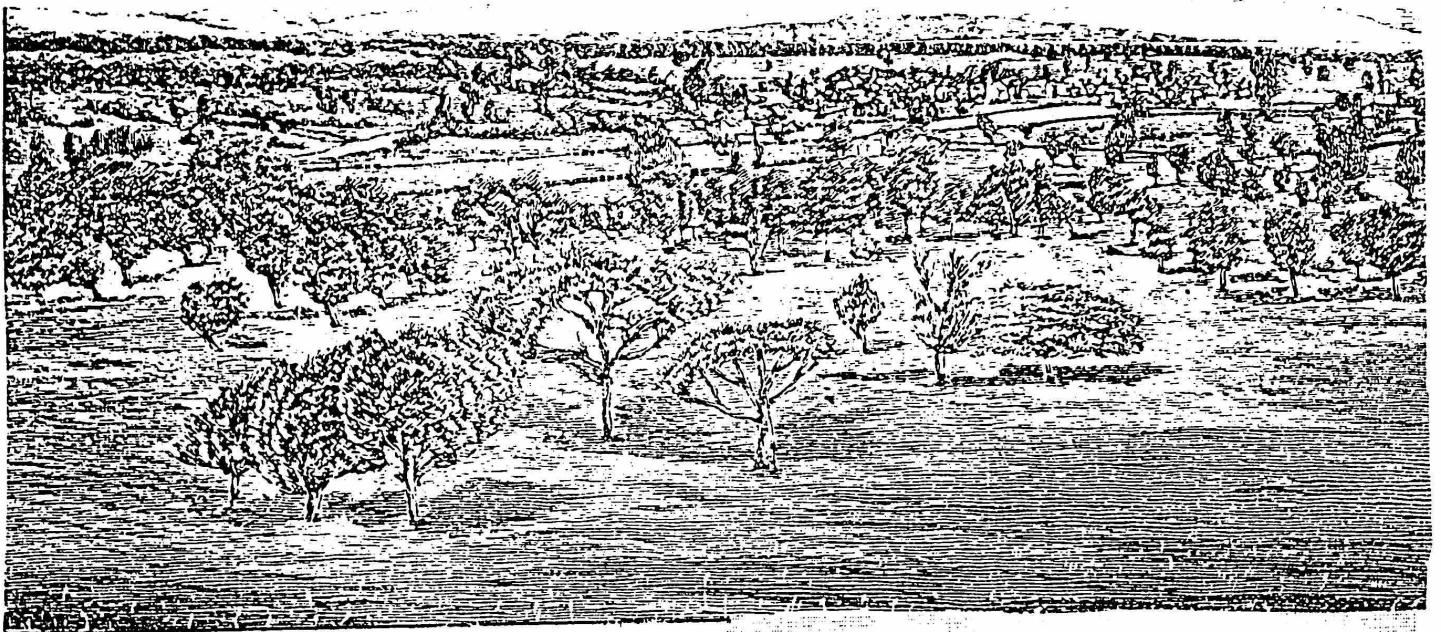
A short time later, Archbishop Alemany and Bishop O'Connell issued the following statement: ". . . .what we contemplate at Clear Lake is to have a Catholic Mission and Indian Farm in Big Valley for the spiritual benefit of the Indians. We wish to provide a home for the Indians where they will be protected from unfriendly Indian Agents and they will have a priest as a spiritual guide to save their souls.

"The said property is to be used primarily for the benefit of the Indians. It will be worked, at least partially, by the Indians, who will be directed, when necessary, by a Religious Brother, who has been trained for this type of work, or by some good farmer who might want to help. This project will be under the direction of Father Osuna or other priests."

In October of 1877, Father Osuna purchased 160 acres of land from Thomas O'Brien. The land was located in Big Valley on the shores of Clear Lake. The land was purchased, using \$5,500 from Archbishop Alemany's Pius Fund, which was a special fund that was set up for Franciscan priests to help the poor and the oppressed.

Father Osuna acquired 66 additional acres of swampland from F. A. Middleton on October 17, 1878 for \$133.00. On May 29, 1879, Thomas O'Brien sold Father Osuna more swampland for \$65.00. He eventually purchased more than 235 acres on which to build the Mission and Indian Farm.

During this time, Father Osuna erected a rough-board one-story building that was thirty by fifty (30 x 50) feet. It was located on the upper end of the land. One section of the building was used as a school and the other section was used as a church or chapel. Father Osuna also built a small cottage for himself.



BIG VALLEY



Ox team hauls logs at saw mill near Seigler Mountain.



Father Osuna named the place "St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm", in honor of his favorite saint. Other buildings were built, including housing for the Indians. Later crops were planted and livestock was purchased. Father Osuna was now free to conduct his ministry unhampered by unfriendly Indian Agents.

Father Osuna continued evangelizing the white settlers and non-Mission Indians around Clear Lake. Mission records show that between 1870 and 1879 that he baptized 567 persons, mostly Indians.

Then, late in 1879, for some reason now unclear, Father Osuna suddenly left St. Turibius Mission and probably returned to Mexico. It is not known what actually happened, but there were rumors that there was a death in his family. He felt he had completed his goal and wanted to retire from missionary work. He probably became a parish priest in a small village in the Guadalajara Diocese in Mexico. Archbishop Alemany's only comment was that Father Osuna was needed in other places. . . .

## 6. THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF MISSION SANTA BARBARA

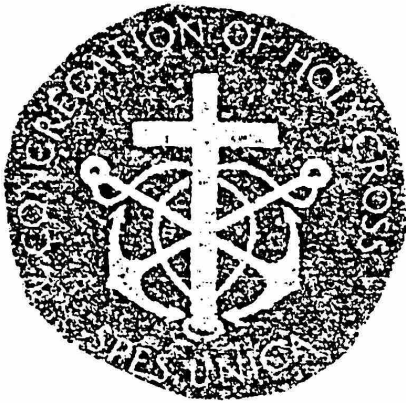
Before Father Osuna's departure, Archbishop Alemany contacted the Franciscan Friars of Mission Santa Barbara, seeking missionaries to replace the popular Mexican priest. By December of 1879, Father Bonaventure Fox and Father Ubaldi de Rieti, along with Brother Joseph O'Malley had traveled up from Santa Barbara to take over St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm and the various missions in Lake and Mendocino Counties.

The Franciscan Friars from Mission Santa Barbara did an excellent job teaching the Indian children and taking care of the missions and it was thought that they would stay for many years. However, at the end of the first year, they decided that they did not want to remain and returned to Santa Barbara. It was noted that they had a clause in their agreement which stated that either party could terminate the agreement at the end of the first year.

## 7. REV. FATHER EDWARD D. GOVERNO - DIOCESAN PRIEST

The Franciscan Friars from Mission Santa Barbara were followed by Rev. Father Edward D. Governo, a young Diocesan priest from the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He was assigned on a temporary basis while Archbishop Alemany was trying to make an agreement with Notre Dame to send missionaries to Clear Lake. Father Governo was very inexperienced and had no training on how to run a farm. Due to his inexperience most of the wheat was lost the first few months he was there. Father Governo served until October 3, 1881, on which date he was named Assistant Rector of the Mission at San Jose.

## 8. THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (NOTRE DAME)



Father Peter Lauth

The California experiences of the priests and Brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Cross located in South Bend, Indiana, in the 19th Century was marked with frustration and tragedy. In 1850, four Religious Brothers were sent to California to hunt for gold. One died there, one withdrew from the Congregation, and the other two returned with empty pockets.

Then, on June 14, 1881, a letter arrived from the Most Rev. Joseph S. Alemany, Archbishop of San Francisco, addressed to Father Edward Sorin, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, requesting missionaries - priests, Brothers and Sisters, for the far-flung area under his jurisdiction, which included most of California, part of Nevada and all of Utah. The Sisters of the Holy Cross were already in Salt Lake City, Utah, where they had established a hospital and academy in 1875.

The Congregation of the Holy Cross now enters the picture at St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm. Father Peter Lauth was the first to be chosen by Father Sorin, to fill Archbishop Alemany's request for Holy Cross Missionaries.

Peter Lauth was born in Luxembourg in 1834. He was a member of a family that had many Holy Cross connections. At one time, three of his brothers, John, Jacob and Michael were priests in the Congregation, and three of his sisters were Holy Cross Sisters. Another brother, John Peter Lauth was a professor at Notre Dame and he was buried in the community cemetery.

Peter Lauth entered Holy Cross in 1863 and was ordained to the priesthood five years later in 1868. He served in various educational and pastoral assignments for a few years. He finished a term as pastor of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in South Bend, Indiana in August of 1880.

Father Peter Lauth had a great desire to go into missionary work and asked to be sent out on a mission. One year later, he was still at Holy Cross in South Bend, Indiana. On August 5, 1881, he wrote a letter to his Superior General, Father Edward Sorin, and told him that he felt unappreciated. He told Father Sorin that if he did not get an assignment as a missionary soon that he would join the Benedictine Order, the same course that his brother, Jacob Lauth, had taken upon receiving his dispensation from Holy Cross in September of 1880.

It was not long before Father Lauth received an assignment which would send him to Utah or California. He left by train and arrived at Ogden, Utah on August 27, 1881. He was met at the railroad depot by Father Scanlon. He was told that he must wait for orders from Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany of San Francisco, who would decide whether he would be sent to Silver Reef, Utah or to Northern California.

A few days later, they received a letter from Father George Montgomery, who was Archbishop Alemany's secretary. He said that Father Lauth was to proceed to San Francisco and from there he would be sent to St. Turibius Mission at Clear Lake, which was 115 miles north of San Francisco.

On September 22, 1881, after a round trip by ferry, train and stagecoach to St. Turibius Mission, Father Lauth wrote to Father Sorin. He said that he was impressed by what he saw at Clear Lake, but that he felt that two priests, a Brother, and three Sisters would be needed to make the Mission a success.

On October 12, 1881, Father Lauth wrote another letter to Father Sorin, telling him that he should send a Brother right away because he did not have anyone to help him with the farm work at the Mission.

Father Lauth told Father Sorin that he had five missions and churches around the lake to take care of - St. Peter's Catholic Church at Kelseyville, St. Mary's Catholic Church at Lakeport and missions at Lower Lake, Sulphur Bank and Middletown. He said that he had to travel to these places over mountain roads using a horse and buggy and it took a lot of time.

As time went by and no help came from Notre Dame, Father Lauth became very discouraged. He wrote to Father Sorin and told him that he didn't think that a priest should have to milk cows, feed pigs, take care of horses in addition to all the other things that was required. He said that if he didn't get some help soon, that he would write to Archbishop Alemany and ask to be relieved of his assignment.

Then on February 1, 1882, Father Sorin, the Superior General, sent Father Lauth a letter stating that Father Peter Johannes and a Brother would depart for



California immediately. Father Lauth was very happy about this because he wouldn't have to milk cows and feed pigs any more.

There was a last minute change in assignments. Father Peter Johannes was appointed as pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church in South Bend, Indiana and Father Paul Kolopp would be sent to California in his place. With him would be Brother Clement (George Boone). They arrived at St. Turibius Mission at the end of February in 1882.

Father Kolopp was born in France in 1855 and entered the Holy Cross at Notre Dame in 1875 and was ordained a priest in 1880. Before his California assignment, he served at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in South Bend, Indiana.

Brother Clement was a native of Ft. Wayne, Indiana where he was born in 1851. He became a Religious Brother in 1881 and made his profession of vows at Notre Dame on February 2, 1882, only two weeks before he was sent to California to operate the Indian Farm at St. Turibius Mission.

With the arrival of Father Kolopp and Brother Clement a new spirit of enthusiasm was evident. For example, on April 2, 1882, the newspaper in Lakeport ran this anonymous undated letter from a "Neighbor" (which no doubt was written by Father Peter Lauth)

TO THE EDITOR: BEE- DEMOCRAT

"A faithful reader of and subscriber to your widely circulated newspaper kindly seeks, as a favor, to have the following lines in its columns. It will undoubtedly interest your readers since they are anxious to know what is being done for the Indians in this county.

"About three miles north of Kelseyville, His Grace, Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany of San Francisco bought a ranch which is to be worked for the benefit of the Indians. His Grace, has, at last succeeded in procuring two priests from Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana to tend to the spiritual needs of the Indians, and a Religious Brother to work the farm with the Indians.

"A school has been opened, wherein the Indian children are taught the rudiments of the English language and Christian Religion. I may remark that these children have a very capable teacher in the person of Father Paul Kolopp, CSC, who assumed the task on his arrival here a few weeks ago.

"Being highly educated, Father Kolopp is capable of teaching Greek, Latin, German, French and higher mathematics, and as a matter of fact, also English.

"Twice every Sunday, the Indians have Divine services and instructions at 10:00 A. M. and 2:00 P. M. In these instructions, they are taught the truths of the Christian Religion.

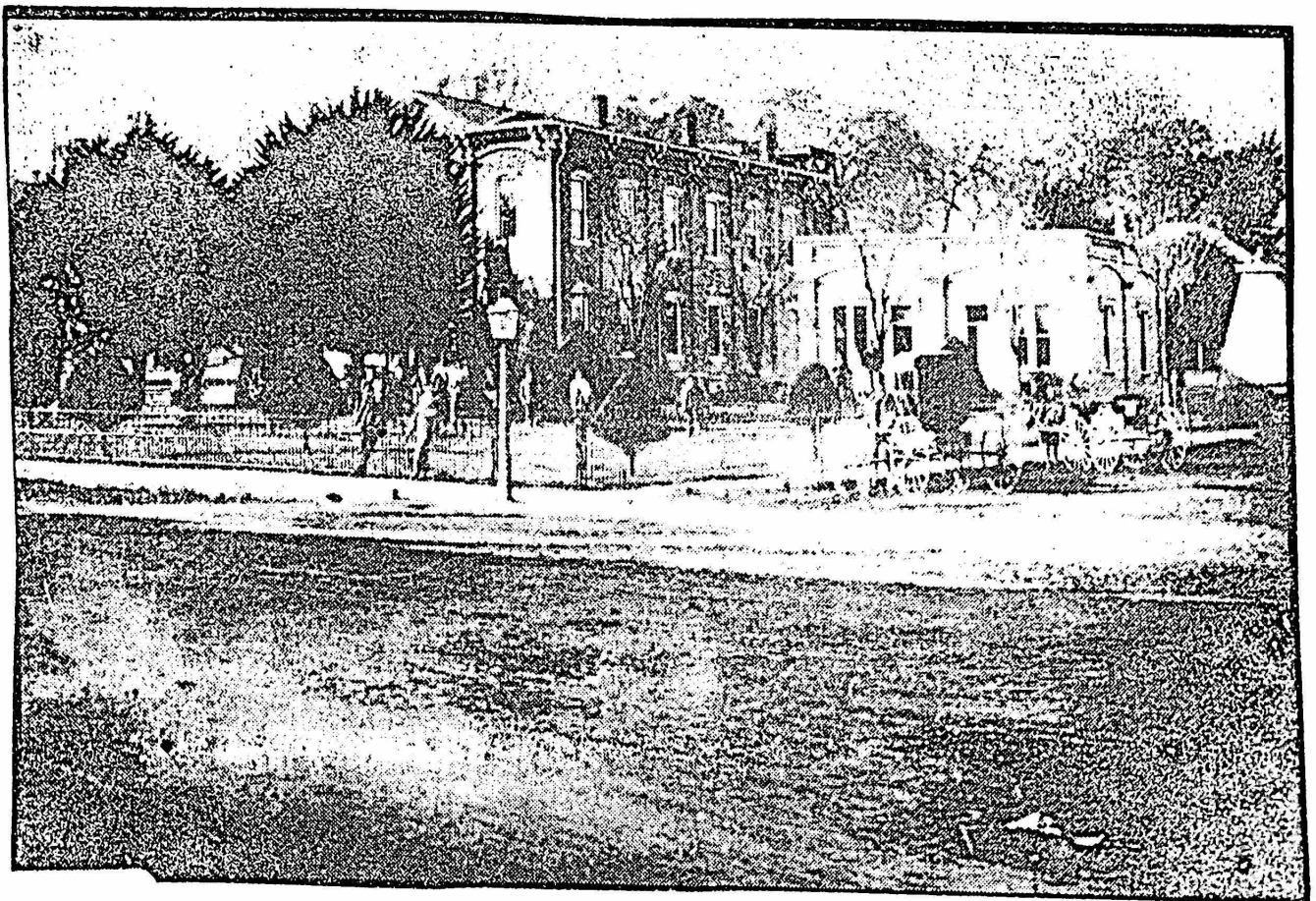
"They are taught the origin of the human race, the creation and preservation of the world, about God and His existence and attributes, and the Blessed Trinity. They are taught how the Son of God became man for our salvation. They are taught about the scriptures, heaven and its joys, the Church Christ established, and all the means He has established to sanctify and save our souls.

"In a few months, I will inform you of the success of these newcomers, who work so zealously for the spiritual and temporal welfare of these poor Indians. The Indians are given a share of what they raise on the farm...." s/ A NEIGHBOR

Brother Clement's first letter to his Superior General, Father Sorin was written on March 19, 1882 and was filled with expressions of great hope for St. Turibius Mission and Indian Farm.

Near the end of the letter he wrote: "Last Friday, there were two Indians who were 'hanged' in Lakeport for the killing of a white man. Father Lauth instructed them and had them go to Confession, and the probability is that they went to heaven. Father Lauth is a good religious and is attentive to business. We have order in our house and we have our exercises prompt and regular and we know that is the way to perfection..." s/ BROTHER CLEMENT

Incidentally, the Lakeport newspaper expanded on Father Lauth's part in the hanging of the two Indians, Marcus and Jeff, mentioned by Brother Clement in the letter to his Superior General. Here is what the newspaper wrote: "The Lake County Courthouse Yard was enclosed with a sixteen (16) foot fence. The scaffolding was built inside the fence. When all was ready - the Sheriff and the Undersheriff accompanied by the prisoners came onto the scaffold. They were followed by Father Peter Lauth. It seems that both the Indians had been received into the Catholic Faith, and the last religious ceremony before the final dissolution of the body and soul was repeating the Lord's Prayer after the priest. They also said one or two other forms of devotion. The Indians were then allowed to make a final statement. and each, with a few words in his native tongue, cautioned their relatives who were present, against the use of liquor, stating that it was the cause of their ill fate, and that it would always cause trouble whenever used. . . ."



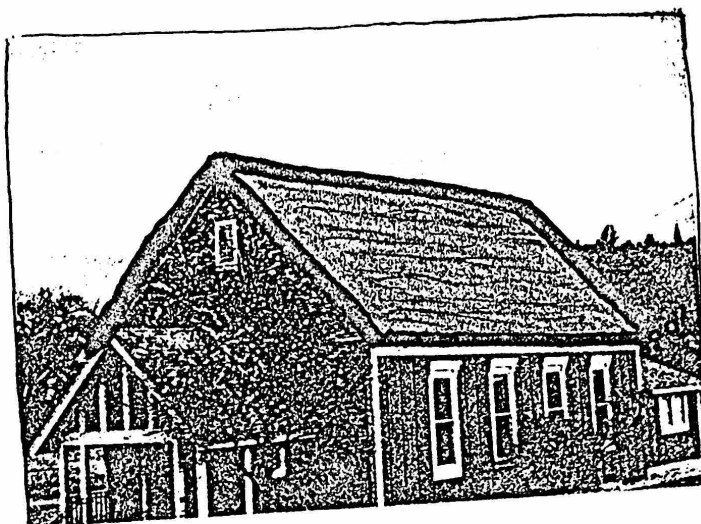
The Lake County Court House in Lakeport,  
shortly after it was built in 1871

With Father Kolopp and Brother Clement now on hand to help with the Indians at St. Turibius Mission, Father Lauth was now able to devote more time to the religious needs of the white people and non-Mission Indians around the lake.

So Father Lauth, together with the people of Lower Lake, decided to build a church which would be called "St. Joseph's Catholic Church". It was built in 1881. It was a building twenty-eight by forty (28 x 40) feet. It was constructed by Fruits and Blann Construction on a lot donated by R. K. Nichols and L. Kugelman. Construction of the church took about six weeks and it was completed in time for dedication on Christmas Day.

The Lower Lake Bulletin covered the event: "Last Sunday morning we attended one of those pleasant experiences of growth, which marked the progress of a Christian community. It was the dedication of the new St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Lower Lake.

"Father Peter Lauth, after dedicating the church to the service of God, delivered an eloquent sermon. He made plain to the large audience assembled, of the many symbolic signs used in the celebration of the Mass. The Catholics of this town should be proud of their new church, which is one of the most handsome edifices in Lake County. . . ."



St. Joseph's Catholic Church

The Lower Lake Bulletin as well as the Bee-Democrat of Lakeport carried several announcements during the spring and summer of that year, not only of the Masses to be celebrated but of evening lectures by Father Peter Lauth.

On May 28, 1882, Father Peter Lauth sang a High Mass at St. Joseph's in Lower Lake to mark First Communion Day. Then on July 23, 1882, Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany of San Francisco made the long journey to Lower Lake to administer Confirmation.



This scene of the Lower Lake Main Street looks west.

Things changed at St. Turibius Mission in the first week of August 1882, when Father Lauth received a letter from his Superior General, Father Edward Sorin, instructing him to return to Notre Dame for a new assignment. No mention was made of sending a replacement for him at St. Turibius Mission.

Father Peter Lauth followed the orders he had received from Notre Dame and returned to South Bend, Indiana. He was told that he was to proceed to Austin, Texas to replace Father Daniel Spillard, as pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church in the Texas capital. He arrived to assume his new duties on September 7, 1882.

Father Paul Kolopp and Brother Clement were not very happy at St. Turibius Mission after Father Lauth left. They requested that they be given a new assignment because they did not want to stay in California. By mid-October of 1882, Father Edward Sorin, their Superior General, realized that St. Turibius Mission was a lost cause as far as the priests and Brothers of the Holy Cross were concerned.

Father Sorin permitted Father Kolopp and Brother Clement to withdraw from California. Father Kolopp was assigned to Sacred Heart Catholic Church in New Orleans, Louisiana and Brother Clement returned to Notre Dame.

Father Peter Lauth did very well in his new assignment at St. Mary's Church in Austin, Texas. In May of 1886, he received the distinction of being voted the most popular clergyman in Austin, Texas. He continued as pastor of St. Mary's for sixteen years and then retired and returned to Notre Dame where he spent the rest of his life. He was buried in the community cemetery at Notre Dame.

## 9. REV. FATHER P. J. REINSDORFER, SM, - DIOCESAN PRIEST

In October of 1882, Rev. Father P. J. Reinsdorfer, SM, a Diocesan Priest was temporarily assigned to replace the priests and Brother of the Holy Cross at St. Turibius Mission. He was assisted by Father William Dempflin, OP, a Dominican from Benicia. He was called "Father William" by the Indians. These two priests served the many missions in Lake and Mendocino Counties from October 1882 to March of 1883, a five month period. They baptized 271 Indians. Rev. William Brennan attended to the spiritual needs of the Lake County Missions after the other two priests departed.

## 10. THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

In October of 1883, the Most Rev. Joseph S. Alemany, Archbishop of San Francisco petitioned the Society for the Propagation of the Faith to take over St. Turibius Mission and the other missions in Lake and Mendocino Counties. In response to this request, Rev. Father C. de Romanis and Rev. Father A. Petinelli, of the Society arrived in October of 1883 and remained until August of 1887, being assisted during those four years by Rev. Father William Dempflin, OP., who visited the scattered Indian villages and baptized 212 additional Indians.

## 11. THE FRANCISCAN FATHERS OF THE SACRED HEART PROVINCE

In August of 1887, at the request of Most. Rev. Patrick William Riordan, the new Archbishop of San Francisco (who succeeded Archbishop Joseph S. Alemany who retired), the Franciscan Fathers of the Sacred Heart Province, with headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, agreed to take charge of the Indian and white missions in Lake and Mendocino Counties. Father Stanislaus Rieman, OFM., and Father Victor Aertker, OFM., along with Brother Erasmus Beier and Brother Nicholas Uhrmaker arrived at St. Turibius Mission on August 20, 1887.

When the Sacred Heart priests first arrived at St. Turibius Mission, they found a small dwelling, with a little church, also used as a school, surrounded by a large farm, in the corner of which was the rancheria of the Pomo Indians with some eighteen to twenty families (about 120 souls) considered as belonging to St. Turibius Mission.

They also discovered other Indian villages at Sulphur Bank, Upper Lake, Scotts Valley, Coyote Valley and Cache Creek in which Catholic Indians lived and must be visited.

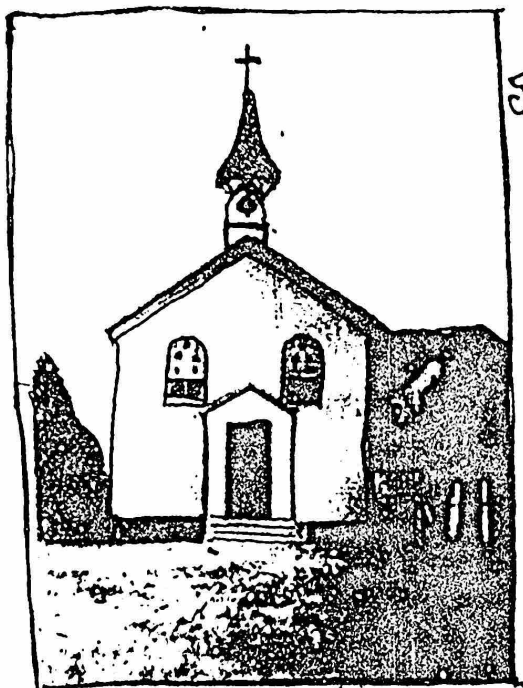
Their field of labor included not only all of Lake County but most of nearby Mendocino County. St. Turibius Mission attended to the problems of the missions in Mendocino until January 20, 1893. Besides the white people in Ukiah, the priests of the Sacred Heart looked after the Indians of the Yokiah Tribe.

Father Victor Aertker, OFM, erected a small church near Ukiah, and Father Zephyrin Englehardt, OFM, (who wrote many articles about the Franciscans in California) opened an Indian school in 1889. A small church which was also used as a school was built in Hopland and was enlarged in 1890. Both of these schools were taught by teachers paid by the U. S. Government. At Hopland, Masses for the white settlers were celebrated in the District School House before a church was built.

When the Franciscan Fathers of the Sacred Heart Province arrived at St. Turibius Mission, there was no church, properly speaking. The building was used as both a school and a chapel or church. It was reconditioned by Father Stanislaus Rieman, OFM. He also reconditioned St. Peter's Catholic Church in Kelseyville both inside and out.

A new church was erected at St. Turibius Mission by Father James Nolte, OFM. He also reconditioned the Mission House into a monastery of two stories, with ten rooms. The new church was dedicated under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 24, 1893 by Father James Nolte, with the permission of the Most Rev. Archbishop of San Francisco.

The Indian school at St. Turibius Mission was made into a contract-day-school by the U. S. Government in 1888 and remained such until 1900. The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Washington, D. C. made provisions for the Indian children at the school until it was abandoned in 1905. About seventeen children were in attendance at the time.



ST. TURIBIUS  
MISSION

KELSEYVILLE  
CAL.



REV FATHER PHILEMON  
TOEPFER, O.F.M., PASTOR

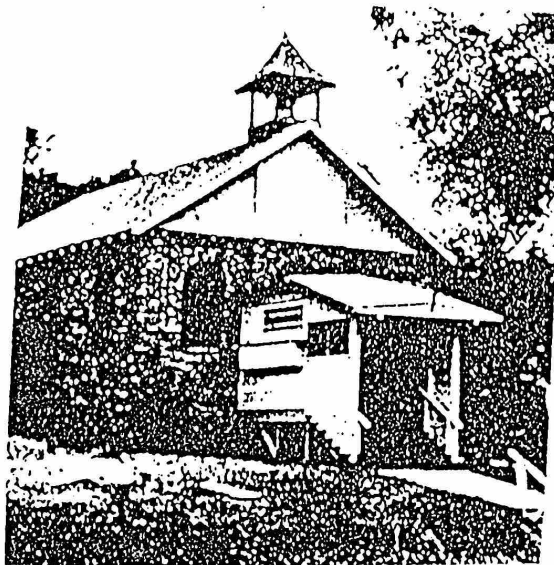
In the 1890's, Father James Nolte, OFM, with the assistance of the U. S. Government, built a school for the Indian children at Sulphur Bank, but it was discontinued after a few years because of a lack of attendance. Dennis Pluth of Clearlake Oaks has a picture of his father, Peter Pluth II standing in front of the old Indian school.

St. Anthony's Catholic Church was a Mission Church, which was built in the hills about a miles east of what is now Highway 20 and Sulphur Bank Road in 1909. It was built by Father Philemon Toepfer, OFM, as a place of worship for the workers at the Old Quicksilver Mine, the white settlers in the area, and the Indians. For many years prior to that time, the priests from St. Turibius Mission would come to Sulphur Bank and celebrate Mass in private homes.

Father Toepfer heard about a lawyer in Pennsylvania who would donate large sums of money to church groups after he won a large court case. Father Toepfer wrote to the lawyer and asked him to think about the people of Sulphur Bank, the next time he wrote out a check. A few months later a check arrived for \$4,000 to pay the costs for building the church. The lawyer asked to remain anonymous.

Father Toepfer obtained brick from the old furnaces at the Quicksilver Mine which were probably impregnated with mercury. The Catholics in the area donated their services in transporting the brick and laying up the walls of the church. Peter Pluth **I** hauled most of the brick using a wagon and four horses.

Father Toepfer brought a bell from St. Turibius Mission to hang in the bell tower. The bell originally came from Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana because they had several priests and a Brother from the Holy Cross Order at St. Turibius Mission in 1881 and 1882.



*St. Anthony's Church, Sulphur Bank*

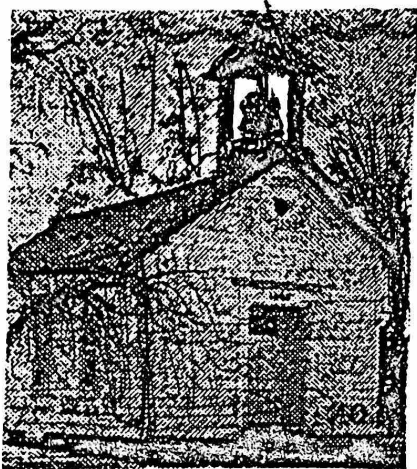
Throughout the years, when the Franciscan Fathers of the Sacred Heart Province were at St. Turibius Mission, it became quite an establishment. A vineyard was planted north of the monastery, a wine cellar with double wooden walls and sawdust as an insulator was built in conjunction with a water tank and a tower. A four room guest house with storage rooms was built north of the church. A workshop

and blacksmith shop was set up next to the vineyard. Included in a group of buildings to the east was a granary, a large barn and a school.

## 12. THE BIG VALLEY RANCHERIA

After the Mission was closed down in 1914, the U. S. Government purchased land on the shores of Clear Lake, about a mile and a half from Finley and three miles from Lakeport on which the Indians that remained at St. Turibius Mission were settled as wards of the U. S. Indian Bureau.

In 1915, the church at St. Turibius Mission was moved by Father Philemon Toepfer to the Big Valley Rancheria in Finley. Then, sometime later the church burned down. In 1948 during the time that Father Julius Gliebe, OFM, was in charge a new church was built in Finley which became known as "The Holy Cross Chapel."



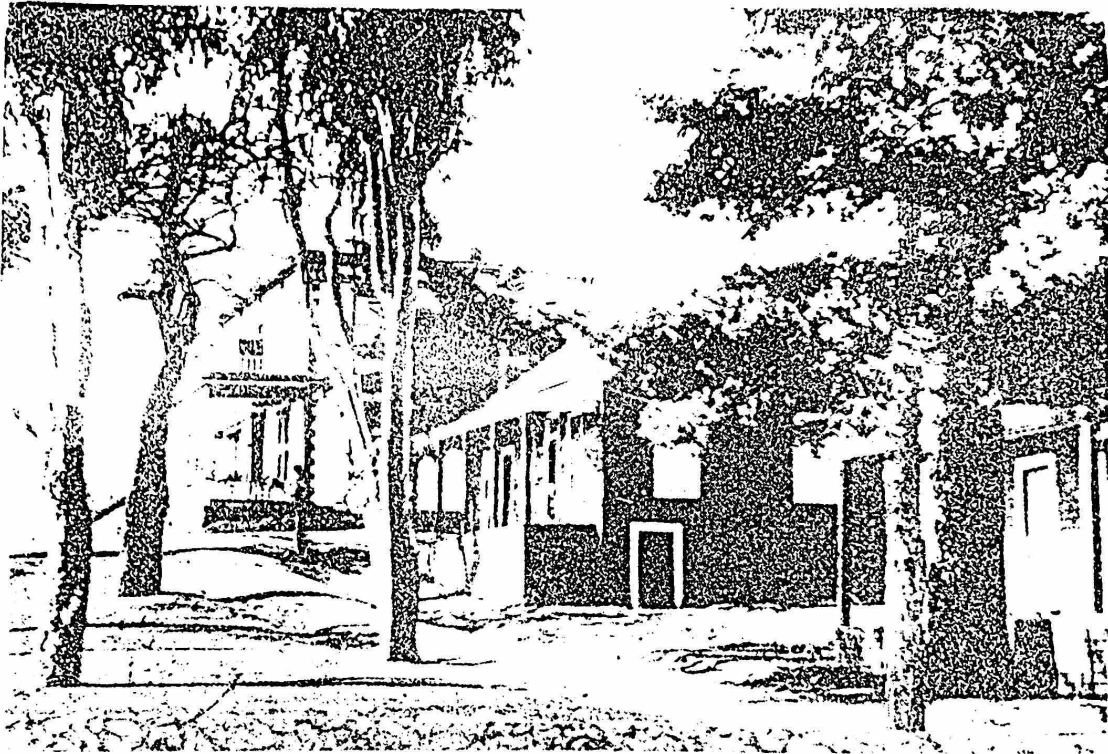
## 13. ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH AND RESIDENCE - 1916

In August of 1907, the Central Counties Land Company, through their agent, E. S. Vandercook, offered to deed three acres of land in the Rumsey Tract in Lakeport to the Most Rev. Archbishop of San Francisco as a site for a new church and school, with the understanding that the land company would be allowed to purchase 155 acres of St. Turibius Mission land at \$110 and acre. The Central Counties Land Company had to put up \$2,500 option money which would be forfeited to the Archbishop in case the deal was never finalized.



After the abandonment of St. Turibius Mission in 1914, the Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna of San Francisco, authorized the Franciscan Fathers and Brothers who had been at the Mission to establish their headquarters in Lakeport, the county seat. Father Philemon Toepfer rented a house across the street from St. Mary's Catholic Church.

In 1915, the Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco, finding the Rumsey Tract unsuitable for the location of the new church and residence, purchased all of Block 26, of Welch's Addition to Lakeport, running from Main and Forbes to Seventh and Ninth Streets, on which then stood the abandoned Benvenue Hotel and Cottages. The Franciscan Fathers lived in the old hotel and one of the cottages until they were torn down to make a place for the new church and residence.



Benvenue Hotel

In the spring of 1916, the Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco, commissioned James P. McLaughlin, a San Francisco contractor to proceed with the construction of the new church and residence in Lakeport, according to the plans of John J. Foley an architect from San Francisco. The church was mission style and stucco construction, seventy by thirty (70 x 30) feet; the residence was fifty-five by thirty-five (55 x 35) feet and was of the same construction with twelve rooms and a basement.

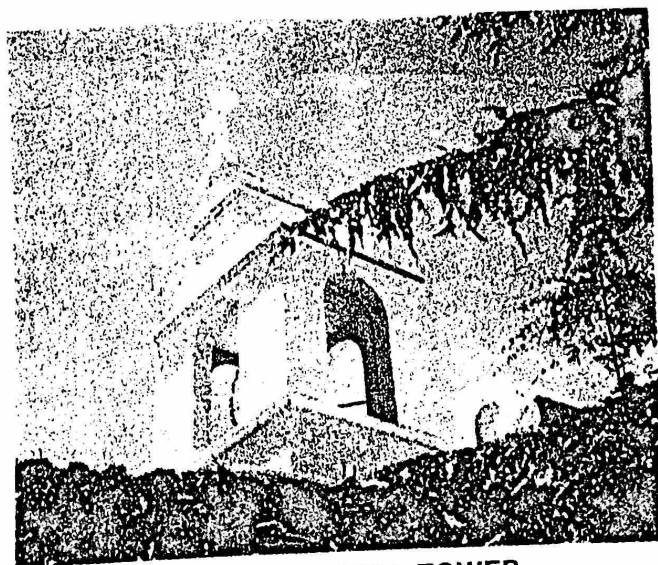
The new church and residence was dedicated under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco on December 19, 1916.

# ST. MARY'S



In 1917, the Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco, sold 80 acres of the south portion of the St. Turibius Mission land to George Stahelli for \$16,000, which together with \$2,500 from the Rumsey Tract Option Money from the Central Counties Land Company was applied to defray the cost of building the new church and residence in Lakeport.

After all of the land at St. Turibius Mission was sold, all camp sites at the Mission were leveled and became a thing of the past. The burial grounds, although preserved were neglected by the surviving Indians. The barn, school and granary and part of the tank house remained for several years. Two of the original buildings still remained a few years ago as part of the Keithly Ranch.



ST. MARY'S BELL TOWER



14. DIRECTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO - 1962  
(Published by "The Monitor" 441 Church Street, San Francisco, 14, CA.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH (MISSION 1871 - PARISH IN 1914)

PASTOR: REV. REMBERT ABLES

ASSISTANT PASTORS: REV. ALOPHONSE WEBER & REV. ED WILSON

MISSIONS: KELSEYVILLE (ST. PETER'S - 1870)  
LOWER LAKE (ST. JOSEPH'S - 1881)  
CLEARLAKE OAKS (ST. ANTHONY'S - 1909)  
CLEARLAKE HIGHLANDS (OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE  
1954)

STATIONS: Adams Springs, Hobergs, Loch Lomond, Seigler Springs,  
Forest Lake, Lucerne, Blue Lakes, Indian Rancheria (Finley)

PASTORS AT ST. TURIBIUS MISSION - BIG VALLEY

Rev. Luciano Osuna (1867 - 1879)  
Rev. Bonaventure Fox (1879 - 1880)  
Rev. Edward D. Governo (1880 - 1881)  
Rev. Peter Lauth (1881 - 1882)  
Rev. P. J. Reinsdorfer, (1882 - 1883)  
Rev. William Brennan (1883)  
Rev. C. de Romanis (1883 - 1897)  
Rev. Stanislaus Rieman (1897 - 1893)  
Rev. James Nolte (1893 - 1894)  
Rev. Maxmillan Klein (1894 - 1897)  
Rev. Gregory Knepper (1897 - 1899)  
Rev. Pius Niermann (1899 - 1900)  
Rev. Vitalis Feldman (1900 - 1902)  
Rev. Philemon Toepfer - (1902 - 1914)



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