

Aleen Ledford
May 2, 1982

NOTES FROM INTERVIEW WITH BETTIE O'NEAL JAMISON Bettie is a granddaughter of Charles O'Neal who settled in Spring Valley, east of the Range, in 1878. The Jamison Ranch is on Highway 41, 18 miles north of Fresno on the east side of the Highway.

Most of the information given to us by Mrs. Jamison has already been recorded in two articles on the Charles O'Neal family history written by Kenneth A. Wagnon. The articles are in the Madera County Historian, Vol XV, No. 2 and Vol. XVI, No. 2. (Copies of both articles are included in this report folder). Thus, the limited notes recorded in this report only supplement or re-inforce information in Mr. Wagnons papers.

Mrs. Jamison showed us a number of family photographs from the 1800's. Most of these photographs were reproduced in the above mentioned articles. Three which were not were: (1) Grandma Gibbons 1891 (2) The Bigelows and Grampa Kigelor, 1906 and (3) Pollasky in 1891 (now called Friant and earlier called Hamptonville) showing a trading post run by William H. Hampton but bearing a banner on the store reading E.P. McKenzie.

Blackhawk: According to Bettie this was an Indian reservation. The United States government sold it sometime during the 1930's or 40's. Bettie thinks it was still a reservation when she was a small girl (She was born in 1918) She did not know which tribe lived there and thought that it was called Blackhawk after the name of an Indian named Chief Blackhawk. The reservation land lay at the southern base of Blackhawk mountain and ran east and west. A stream ran through the reservation. It is now Poponiches (sp?) field.

Smith grave: She did not have any information regarding the Smith or "Grandma Carrie" grave on the Range--suggested that maybe the Castro (1891 map) wife was related to the Smiths. She said there were and had been a number of Smith families in the area but they are scattered.

Land Ownership: There was much buying and selling of land in the years just preceding and during World War I. Land was lost for the want of a tax fee as little as \$5.00. They (the O'Neals) purchased land through tax sales. People with mining claims especially, couldn't come up with the necessary tax money and this added to the turnover of land.

Grandma O'Neal's brothers family (the Douglasses) bought the Miller and Lux property to the South and West of their ranch. (This was the original Castro land in Section 6 on the Range). They also purchased the Luke property in sections 19 and 30 East of the Range. Klette, who was a judge in Fresno was the original owner of the Indian Springs area.

Langworthy who owned land in sections 6 and 7 in the 1920's had been in the area since the turn of the century. Klette's, in addition to the Indian Springs property has a house across Rd 208 from the Bellview store.

The Fire of 1928: Bettie dated the fire as being in 1928, stating that she was 10 years old at the time. (McDougal said 1924-26). She said that the year of the fire was also the 1st year that the California Division of Forestry aided in the fighting of local forest fires and that they still had the old style fire trucks--very limited as to where

they could go, meaning that they couldn't go off of the road area. The fire started on the Fresno River north of Hensley Lake and burned down to the San Joaquin River. In 1935 and 1936 her father, John, pushed for legislation for controlled burning.

Lisenby: Lisenby's big barn was located where the current headquarters of the forest service are now. Lisenby's lodge was up on the hill. She (Bettie) used to ride her horse on the range land. She told us a snake story--One day when she was riding just south of the headquarters area she got off of her horse only to hear the familiar bzzzzz of the rattler. Her horse jumped, she jumped, but the snake went one better--it went straight up the trunk of the oak tree.

Minarets and Western Railway: The railway crossed the river at Friant (this agrees with Leshar's statement). From Friant it ran behind Dorothy Vanderdusen's place, crossed Cottonwood Creek and went north to Bellview.

Spring Valley School: The school was destroyed by the government. They did not inform the O'Neals or other area families that it would be destroyed--they came in a bulldozed it one day. The O'Neals would have like to have saved the building and move it onto private property. When it had been originally built they had donated the land for the school.

The Chinese: She was not aware of any history of Chinese miners on the Range. She remembered an old man named China George who lived in the

area of Finegold Creek. She said there is a graveyard in that area which includes Chinese burials. (Follow Rd 200 beyond O'Neals P.O. to Finegold Creek and before crossing the bridge follow the dirt road south past a house (?)).

The trees-of-heaven by the barn on the Jamison ranch are Chinese Elms.

Papers on O'Neals area and families written by Kenneth Wagnon may be found in:

The Madera Co. Historian
Madera Co. Historical Society Quarterly
P.O. Box 478, Madera, CA 93637.

Copies of the Quarterly are on file in both the Madera County Library in Madera and at the Historical Society Headquarters in the Old County Court House Museum in Madera.