

Vinegar Days Aug 19-82 Travel by Stage and article on Wells Fargo

(corrected)

1



(Left end the tufa corral) This was the River Spr. corral

5 SECTION B--THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1982

# Pioneer Days:

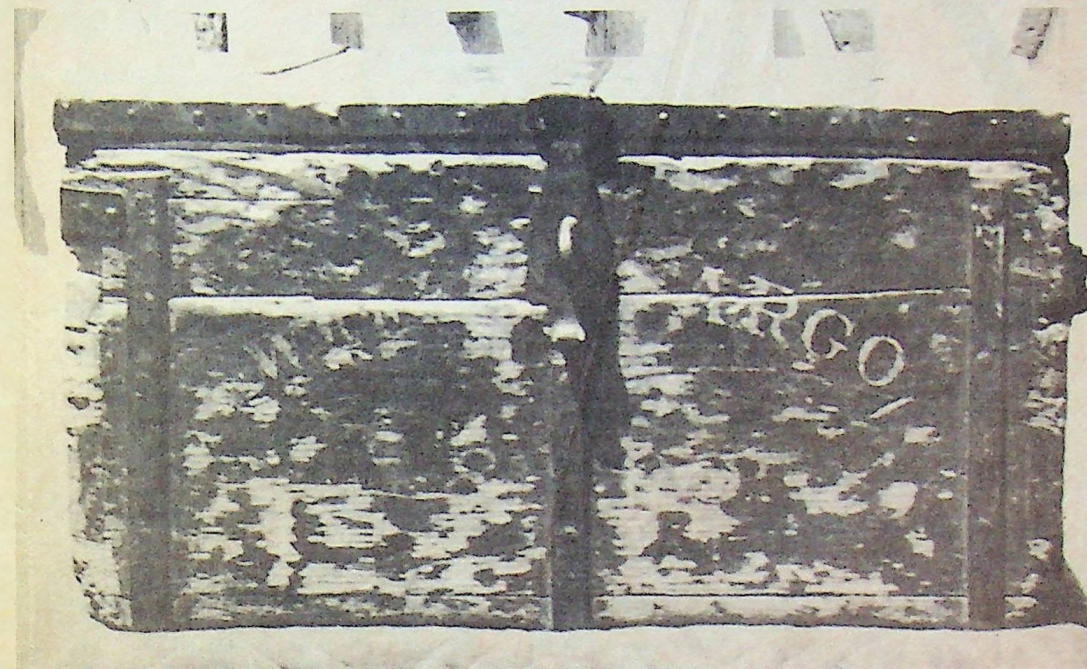
## Travel by Stage Coach was a Bit Rough



THE STAGE to Tonopah from  
Sodaville, Nevada. Dorothy Jen-  
nings rode this stage as a child  
with mother and sister on their  
way to the "richest camp yet!"  
Dorothy Jennings collection

THE FAMOUS Wells Fargo  
"Box" had seen rough use, too  
many holdups, one end had  
been repaired.

Adele Reed photo



by Adele Reed

The Aurora road that once serviced the Inyo-Mono country ran southerly through the hills and flat lands. There was one "station" along the way named "Dexters" and the next was "Adobe Meadows." It was a small settlement of near 20 buildings and the way station and corral.

Today the only remaining marker of the historic spot is the magnificent corral built of pinkish tufa rock from a nearby canyon. It is believed an early ranch owner named Frank Shaw hired Indians to do the excellent work that has stood for more than 100 years. The circle corral is about 570 feet in circumference and 138 feet across. The walls are seven feet high except one side that has deteriorated somewhat. The station building had not one nail in its construction. We were told that wooden pegs were used to hold together the big beams and the boards that no doubt came from a nearby sawmill. It was taken down some years ago. Adobe Meadows was a wide, high desert valley encircled by pinon covered hills and canyons. Alfalfa and meadow grass were harvested and teamed to mining camps. The remote area serviced early travel and now a through highway leads from Benton Station to Hwy. 395 near Lee Vining in Mono county.

Sometime after 1900 the Frank Shaw property was sold to Wm. Symons, Sr. of Bishop, who continued in the

one command reverence and respect from all. The historic place is now headquarters for cattlemen who bring stock from Hammil Valley each spring. We talked to the wife of the cow-boss, they live in a nearby trailer, and she gave us directions to find the big, black volcanic rock circle corral. There used to be two corrals but the second one had been converted into wooden post and wire holding pens. We noted the old stage road that led into the Pizona country. A fine spring of water flows from under the volcanic hill giving plentiful water for the cattle. It used to become a river, thus the name.

From "River Springs" the stage road once continued southeasterly, running close to Black Lake and by Dutch Pete's place . . . where teams sometimes stopped . . . then over the hills to Benton Hot Springs. It was once a very active stage post and is now owned by a family named Bramlett whose collection of memorabilia of the area is outstanding.

The next stop was named Partzwick (sometimes called Lower Town). It was near a mill that operated while Blind Spring Hill mining was active. The stages picked up the big leather bags of bullion marked for Aurora and points north. There were corrals and water for stockmen on the way through.

Yellow Jacket Springs was next with plentiful water for livestock and all the teams. From our research at Bridgeport we note the following pre-emption record;

the higher slopes the red-gold of the aspens gave bright color among the green pinon. Blue sky, puffy white clouds, what better time, and the pinon nut crop was heavy on the trees.

In Fish Slough we noted a stock corral, wooden one, near a line of trees, that indicate the location, somewhere in the vicinity, of the main stage depot for Owensville and Bishop Creek so long ago. We take a look into the background of one P.P. Keough, operator of the depot. Phillip Perry Keough was born in Toronto, Canada in 1857. His parents were George and Mary (Devereaux) Keough and Phillip was the youngest of eight children. When 19 years of age he left home and traveled to Austin, Nev. and entered the employ of the Wells Fargo Stage Company in Nevada.

He was a good worker in the hard days of staging and was promoted to the rank of paymaster, finally becoming the superintendent of the Wells Fargo Company. His life was a rugged one with many happenings as being involved in the stage hold-ups when the

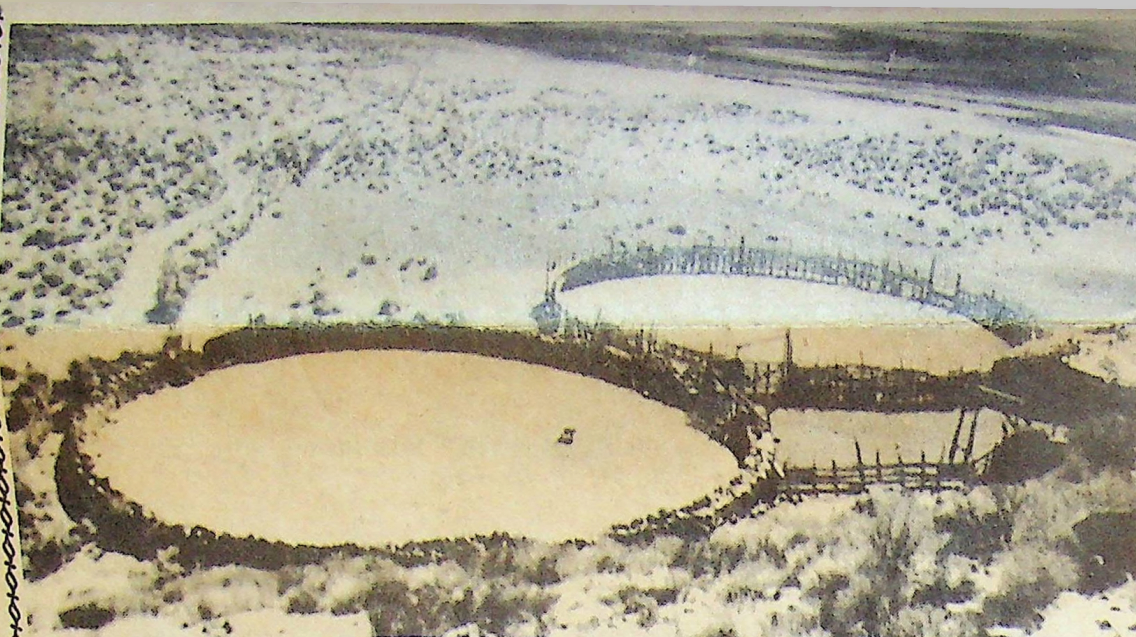
Arcularius. Edna Laura married Frank Butler, stepson of the famous Jim Butler of Tonopah, Nevada. Their children were Frank, Jr., Phillip, "Pid," deceased; Robert and daughter Bell (Butler) Test. Frank and wife, Evelyn, reside in Bishop.

We note that P.P. Keough planned the first subdivision in Bishop, 60 lots of one half acre and 12 tracts. Many people were against it as they thought Bishop had grown to its capacity, this in 1898!! In early 1900 Keough began the development of the Keough's Hot Springs about seven miles below Bishop. It became the recreation spot in the 20's and 30's with open pool, outside dance floor and the popular hot baths. Memories of Laura (Keough) Lutz and Edna Laura (Keough) Butler.

Leaving Fish Slough we list stations or ranches along the stage road where travelers once found services. These are not all indicated on the Wells Fargo schedules and are of interest locally. We find in a letter from A.A. Brierly of Independence dated April 8, 1975







THE PINKISH Tufa rock corral is seen in lower Adobe, Mono county. The old stage "station" once stood nearby.

○ River Springs Adele Reed photo

cattle business. His son, Wm. Symons, Jr. and his wife, the late Audry (Hawkins) and their son John took over the cattle business, living at the adobe ranch and at their headquarters in Hammil Valley where the stock were wintered. (Now the Zack Ranch.) Later owners at the Adobe ranch have gone into the sheep business.

Continuing with our stage road, from Lower Adobe a sandy, rough road used to lead to an important station on the northeast side of the valley named "River Springs." It took care of much travel from points in Nevada and also travel from the Queen Canyon route that came by the Truman Meadows and Pizona road. Now-a-days one can travel the oiled Hwy. 120 from Lower Adobe a few miles east and find a left turn on a graded road leading to "River Springs." In 1974 we and friends visited there . . . after exploring "Adobe Meadows" . . . and sat on the steps of the old way station at River Springs to eat our lunch. We thought of all the interesting people who once were served inside the old building and of the staggers wheeling their teams over rugged mountains and bleak desert miles.

After lunch we noted the handsome black rock fireplace in the larger room that once warmed the hearts of weary travelers. On a cardboard covering one of the windows there was a delightful sketch of the station building and a message; "Learn to live with silence and the elements, God bless you all."

A card tacked on the rear door also had a message; "Please close the doors when you leave." L.P. Yandell, owner. This we were glad to obey as buildings as this

"Toll Road Right of Way" by J.E. Lewis, Yellow Jacket Springs, Dec. 27, 1876.

"Notice is hereby given that the undersigned claims the right of way for the purpose of constructing a Toll Road from the town of Benton, Mono County, State of California, to a point 15 miles more or less in a southerly direction, via Yellow Jacket Springs, on the road now travelled from Benton to Bishop Creek in Inyo Co., Cal." J.E. Lewis. Recorded at request of J.C. Mitchell, January 6, 1877.

Another "Notice of Location" was for a Water Right by J.E. Lewis, Yellow Jacket Springs, Dec. 27, 1876. "Notice is hereby given that the undersigned claims the right of water flowing from the spring for the purposes of irrigation, and water for stock; Said spring being situated about six miles in a southerly direction from the town of Benton in Mono County, State of California; and commonly known as the Yellow Jacket Springs." J.E. Lewis. Recorded as the Toll Road claim.

Returning to our travel, we followed the graded road from Benton Hot Springs via Yellow Jacket Springs and on south to Fish Slough. We noted in several places the deep ruts of the old right-of-way. It seemed as if we were traveling over hallowed ground, sort of a commemoration to our pioneers. This day in October was a glorious time to be in the good outdoors following old stage roads, corrals and a station so historical. There are certain days in autumn in Inyo-Mono when every bush, tree, hillside, lake or mountain in the high country stand out sharp and clear. Along



THIS PICTURE shows the reason for the name River Springs and was taken in 1936 when water was plentiful

as in early years. Rhys and Violet May wintered there in '36, trapping coyotes. Rhys May collection

cali came, "throw down the box!" Keough also knew, personally, many of the early stage drivers as Hank, Monk and others. He had a part in the thrilling Black Bart incidence.

Finally, the man who had gained much knowledge during his years with Wells Fargo, came to Inyo-Mono and went into business for himself. He operated the main depot and headquarters for teaming and for stages of the United States Stage Company, a branch of the Wells Fargo Express. The station, barn, corrals and stock were located in the Fish Slough area about eight miles north of Bishop Creek.

The stage and freight route to Mammoth City in winter went by way of Benton Hot Springs, Adobe Meadow, McLaughlin Canyon. Little Antelope, Casa Diablo and up hill to the city. Another route was sometimes used, it went from Adobe Meadow to the Mono hills then south to Indian Summit and thence to Casa Diablo. Passengers were picked up in Bishop Creek and for a time at Owensville and freight was loaded at the depot. Heavy snows made it impossible to get through to Mammoth City from January to March 17, in 1881. Otherwise the fast freight kept to a

. . . this in answer to our query.

"The Thomson Ranch northwest of Bishop several miles was a popular place to pull into. The old road did not enter Bishop as Hwy. 395 does today, it came through Lagoon street. The south end of Main street was in a tule patch where my grandfather had a runaway team bog down and stopped by the mud."

"The road ran through the ranch just south of town where I was born and raised (now on lease from the DWP by Dudley Boothe). The old ruts were plainly visible just a few years ago leading south to the Chas. Partridge ranch with water, shade trees and services if needed. From there the wagon ruts headed straight for Big Pine and the Henderson Ranch. Then, a few miles south was the Fish Springs Station."

From there one can follow the old stage route by the Tinemaha Campground through sage and black rock country to Taboose and Aberdeen, both once serviced travel. Rock remains of the Eight Mile Ranch can be seen on the old road before entering Independence. George's Creek was another stop and the route continued to Lone Pine, Olancho and points south. We appreciate Mr. Brierly's help.



BENTON Hot Springs today.

Adele Reed photo

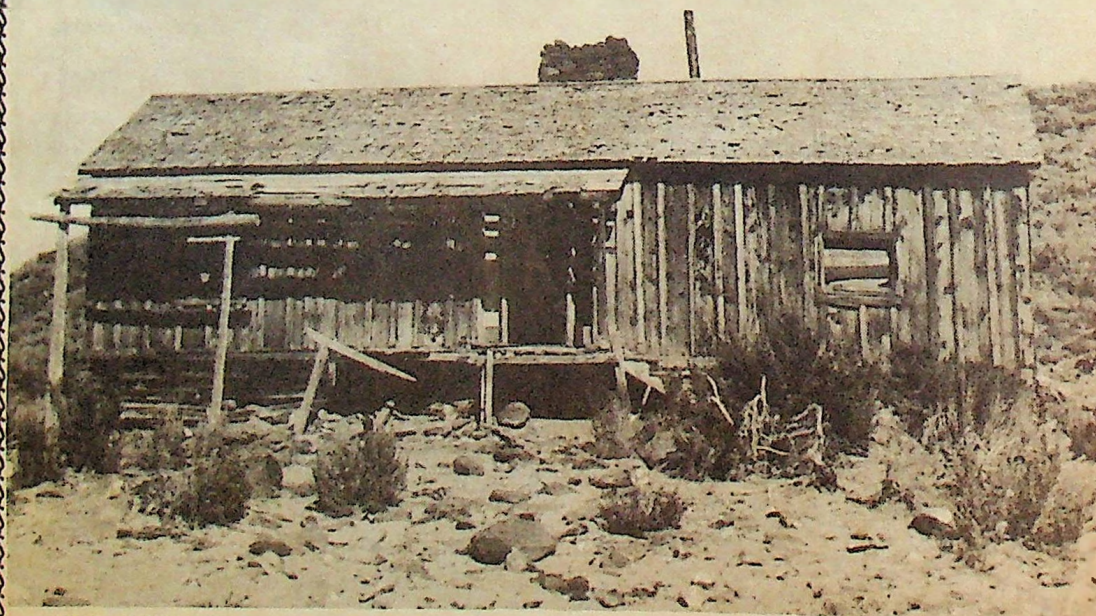
regular schedule and also hauled to and from Bodie, and Aurora and a brother of Keough ran a route to Tonopah, Nevada.

Ann Connely of Massachusetts came west on one of the first trains to Reno. She traveled from there by stage to Bishop Creek and eventually became the bride of Andy Cashbaugh. Her son "Gus" likes to tell of the rugged ride his mother had over the rough roads. She remembered the driver pulling in to the Fish Slough Station for a change of horses and how fast the fresh team covered the miles to Owensville.

In 1881 Phillip Keough and Laura Jane (Hall) were married and several years later they moved into Bishop. Their children were George, Millard, Karl and Edna Laura. The children of Karl and Dorrance (Leidy) Keough, (grandchildren of the famous stager) all reside in Bishop. A son, Sabert, deceased, and two daughters, Laura (Keough) Lutz and Phyllis (Keough)

We received a map of the Wells Fargo Express routes of July, 1874 courtesy of the Wells Fargo Bank History Room Collection. It shows innumerable stage lines in mid-western California and into Nevada. One line runs from Los Angeles to Bakersfield, Havilah, Owens Lake, Lone Pine, Independence, Bishop Creek, Benton and Aurora and north. A short line took off from Benton to Columbus, Nevada.

The story of Wells Fargo is a story of men and places in an era when tension was a plague unknown. After the first autos and the coming of the iron horse, the bright clang of steel-shod hooves and the old time flavor of the express business began to quietly fade away. Oh, yes, Wells Fargo still operated, riding "in the baggage car" minus the zip and colorful experience known while riding the coaches and Concords behind a spirited, rollicking six horse team.



RIVER SPRINGS "Station" in Adobe Valley is the only "station" remaining in either Mono or Inyo which makes

it quite unique. It is a historical building that cries for help. Adele Reed photo



Captions--Stage days

1. The pinkish Tufa rock corral is seen in lower Adobe, Mono county. The old Stage "Station" once stood nearby.

Adele Reed photo

2. River Springs "Station" in Adobe Valley is the only "Station" remaining in either Mono or Inyo which makes it quite unique. It is a historical building that cries for help.

Adele Reed Photo

3. This picture shows the reason for the name River Springs and was taken in 1936 when water was plentiful as in early years. Rhys and Violet May wintered there in '36, trapping coyotes.

Rhys May collection

4. A circle corral of black lava rock along with a pole corral ~~were~~ were seen at River Springs in 1936. The tracks of the old stage road heading to Pizona country is seen today near the corral.

Rhys May collection

5. The famous Wells Fargo "Box" had seen rough use, too many hold-ups, one end had been repaired.

Adele Reed Photo

6. Benton Hot Springs today.

Adele Reed Photo

7. The stage to Tonopah from Sodaville, Nevada. Dorothy Jennings rode this stage as a child with mother and sister on their way to the "richest camp yet!" 1901! Dorothy Jennings collection

1. Travel by Stage Aug 19-89

7 pictures enclosed

The tufa Corral not used and  
The caption <sup>was used</sup> on River Springs,  
a mistake - use both