



Upcoming Events

Siskiyou Stories

Jan. 10 @ 1pm

***Our Library History,
from Mining Camps to Audio Books***

with library tech Deb Perdue

Feb. 14 @ 1pm

***Shaping Scott Valley's History,
Greenview's Early Days***

with Sherry Glendenning

March 14 @ 1pm

***Siskiyou's
Gem & Mineral Treasures***

with Ken Millard

April 11 @ 1pm

***Oro Fino,
a Town Lost to History***

with Janet Muzinich

May 9 @ 1pm

Open

June

**WEDDING DRESS
EXHIBIT**

Yes, we're doing it again!
Revisiting a popular exhibit from 10 years ago.

Over the Top of the Siskiyou

There's something exhilarating about a road trip from one side of a mountain range to the other. I-5, formerly US99, doesn't cross the Continental Divide or the Sierras of Donner Party renown. But it does have a dramatic "high point" at Siskiyou Pass along the boundary of California and Oregon. The Pass area has seen plenty of human activity over the centuries; the route has been Indian path, Hudson Bay trapper trail, emigrant trail, toll wagon road, Pacific Highway, US 99, and lastly Interstate 5.

Fur Trappers, Scientists and Spies

Natives of the Shasta tribe knew the best path across when Peter Ogden and 40 trappers appeared on the southern slope in 1827, anxious to head north towards home on the Columbia River at Fort Vancouver. Ogden is considered "first over the Siskiyou," but of course, he was only the first white man, and he wouldn't have managed so handily without Indian guides.

What were the trappers doing here anyway? In the early 1800s ownership of this part of North America was unclear and under dispute by the USA and



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**Dan Cawley,
Stage Driver Extraordinaire**

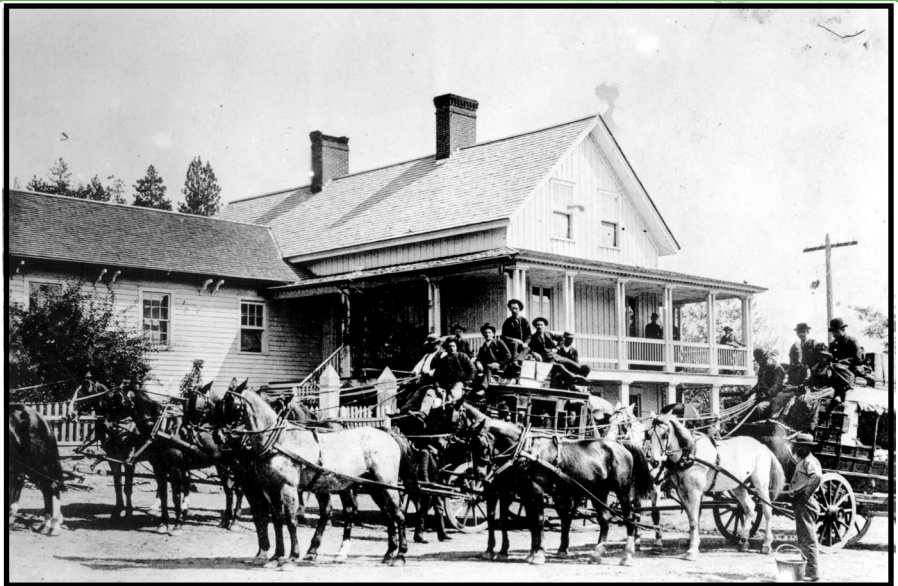
INSIDE on Page 6!

Britain. Land north of the Siskiyou, which was jointly and uneasily occupied by both countries, and land to the south along California's Sacramento River, had been settled and mapped to some extent, by 1840, but this in-between region straddling what is now the CA/OR border was relatively unknown. To Americans it was "Oregon Territory" from the Siskiyou Mountains north and "Mexico" south of them; to London-based Hudson Bay Company, it was all their own "Columbia Department." Ogden was instructed to strip this in-between land of beaver to make it unfruitful for American trappers to venture there.

Hudson Bay trappers had returned to this region only sporadically, yet all was not quiet at Siskiyou Summit. "Traffic" over the Pass increased; a trickle of independent hunters and trappers, a few brave settlers, herds of cattle being driven north into Oregon Territory. The Siskiyou Trail became an established route.

The Wilke's Expedition

Then came the amazing 1838-1842 US Exploring Expedition, better known as the Wilkes Expedition. This scientific expedition included artists, botanists,



Cole's Station, a stage stop on the south side of the Siskiyou.

geologists, ethnographers, and cartographers. The fact that this ocean-based expedition included the Pacific Northwest on its itinerary shows just how "foreign" this area was perceived to be at that time.

Seven ships left Massachusetts. After exploring South America, Antarctica, and the South Pacific, the group sailed back across to the Pacific Northwest, did a thorough survey of Puget Sound and subsequently lost one ship at the brutal Columbia River entrance. A replacement vessel was purchased from Hudson's Bay Company headquartered upriver at Fort Vancouver. While the ship was being outfitted, a land expedition was sent south on foot. In spite of the British company's cooperation with the ship purchase, the overland expedition spied on Company activities along their way, and Mexican activities once in California.

This overland group was guided by Oregonian Joseph Meek, brother of Stephen



We are quite pleased with our new "lean to" that was recently built onto the side of the historic Davis Cabin. This will be used to display some artifacts under cover, including the recently donated cream separator and small grist mill. The new lean-to is part of our ongoing Outdoor Museum Upgrade Project.

Meek, the American fur trapper who lived and died in Etna. Halfway through the 600 mile hike they ascended the slope toward Siskiyou Pass and encountered forest fires lit by Indians attempting to scare them away. But the group had already experienced floggings, near mutinies, a shipwreck with all hands lost in Antarctica and attacks of spear-wielding South Seas islanders, so the fires barely fazed them. They trekked over the Siskiyou to meet their ship in Yerba Buena (San Francisco) and resume the journey home.

By the end of that decade the trickle of travelers over the Siskiyou turned into a river with the discovery of gold in the west. The rush to the “Northern Mines” of far northern California and southern Oregon closely followed the initial discovery in California’s Sierra Nevada. The Siskiyou Trail was the only connection across the mountains in this region, a trip suited to pack trains but difficult by wagon. The miners and the settlers that stayed after the Gold Rush needed a real road over the Siskiyou.

Siskiyou Mountain Wagon Road

Entrepreneurs stepped in to fill that need. In the 19th century, state governments didn’t build roads; they only granted permission to have them built. The Oregon Territorial government was petitioned for permission to build a toll road over the Siskiyou in



The railroad crossed the top of the Siskiyou in Tunnel 13, site of the country’s last train robbery.

1857, two years before Oregon statehood.

The Siskiyou Mountain Wagon Road was the first “engineered” road over this mountain crest, a route varying only slightly from the original Siskiyou Trail. Light excavation was done, a few culverts put in, stage

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The Pacific Highway crossed both over and under the bridge and crossed the railroad tracks at the Steinman Overcrossing on the Oregon side of the border. This section of road is still drivable today.

stops and a toll station built.

It was a struggle to keep the wagon road maintained and the snow packed in winter. There would have been little profit if not for the two daily stages paying passage. The stages ran from Sacramento to Portland, and what made them profitable was a lucrative contract to carry US Mail. This 710-mile route was the second longest stage run in the US.

For the traveler it couldn't have been a comfortable ride, squeezed in like sardines, no one bathing for several days, bumping along rough roads and over rickety bridges in the dark of night, knee-to-knee with strangers. There were frequent accidents; wheels flying off, stages tipping over, horses running wild.

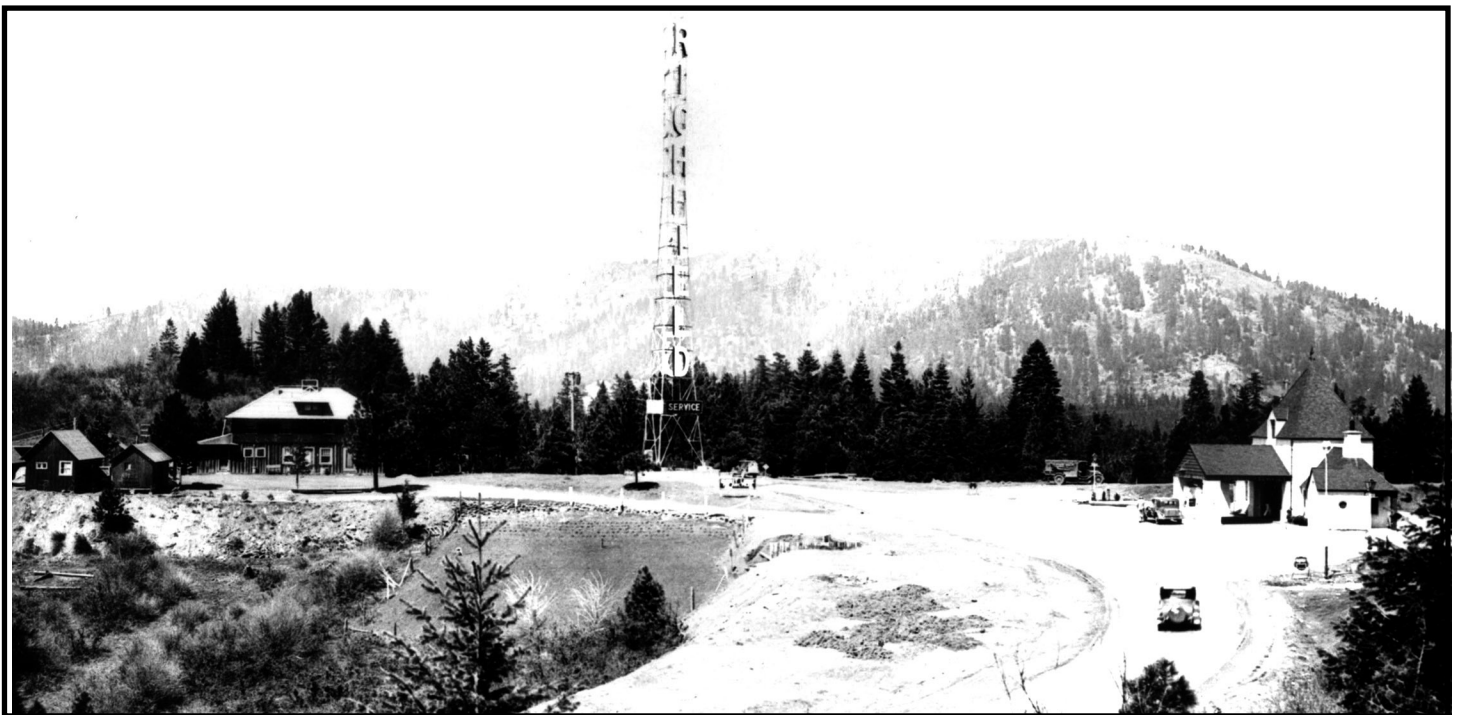
The Railroad

Meanwhile, a rail line inched its way over the mountains from California. "Hell Town," headquarters for



The thin layer of asphalt pavement on the Pacific Highway in Oregon ended right at the California border, as seen in this photo.

around 4000 railroad workers including many Chinese, was located at the foot of Bailey Hill north of Hornbrook. 20 businesses, mostly saloons and dance halls, lined both sides of the stage road. When complete, Hornbrook became an important railroad operating point with its water tank and turntable, where extra "helper" engines were put on or taken off for the steep



The circa 1940 upgrading and rerouting of the highway, now called US99, would leave the Summit Ranch (left) and the Richfield Beacon service station perched high above the new lowered Siskiyou Pass and inaccessible to motorists.

Siskiyou Mountains crossing.

As the rail line progressed, the stage line grew shorter and shorter until finally a “golden spike” was driven in Ashland on December 17, 1887. Shortly thereafter the last stagecoach rolled through, driven by veteran driver Dan Cawley (see article in this issue).

The toll road operators worried that the railroad would ruin their business. Still, they had supplied lumber for ties and trestles, even as they fumed over the messes being made where the new road and the tracks crossed. Thanks to local traffic the wagon road managed to hang on as a private enterprise until replaced by a much-improved, publicly funded Pacific Highway in 1915. Automobiles had been attempting the crossing since the early 1900s, and the motorists hadn't been pleased.



The Summit Coffee Shop reigned over the Siskiyou Pass area until I-5 opened in 1966.

Sam Hill and the Pacific Highway

When the Good Roads Movement swept the country in the early 20th century, the Pacific Highway (future US99) had Sam Hill, a large, eccentric character who considered good roads his “religion.” After a mere 34 mile road trip left him “sore inside and out” he vowed to build a 1,600 mile hard-surfaced highway from the California/Mexico border to Vancouver BC. The Pacific Highway Association was formed and Hill tirelessly promoted the road. He gave lectures, testified before Congress, studied road-building in Europe and built experimental roads on his own property.

In November 1913, in heavy wool coat and hat, Sam Hill stood in a crowd at the foot of the Siskiyou on the north side. Brandishing a ceremonial shovel, he turned over the first shovelful of earth on the Pacific Highway. With winter coming on and contractor problems, construction did not actually begin on this section until spring. Still, the new road over the Siskiyou opened within a year. The grading, ditching, and building of culverts, guard-rails and bridges were extensive, but characterizing the road as a “regular boulevard” and “one of the finest, easiest grades” as the local rag did, was an overstatement. Much of this road is drivable today.

The highway eliminated five of the seven dangerous toll road/railroad crossings. At the two remaining crossings the 1914 concrete bridges are still used, including one where the highway passes both over and under the same structure. After settling, the roadbed was paved in an 8' strip with a second strip laid down in 1920. A few patches of original pavement can still be found.

Soon a variety of roadside businesses appeared along the new highway. At the foot of the grade, Klamath Junction (now under Emigrant Lake) boasted of having “the most powerful wrecker between Portland and San Francisco.” Right on the pass at an altitude of 4516' the rustic Summit Ranch Lodge had cabins, a restaurant and a vegetable garden for the restaurant kitchen. Across the highway one in the chain of Richfield Beacon filling stations was erected in the 1930s.

It didn't take many years for this “modern boulevard” to deteriorate in reputation to “the Siskiyou corkscrews.” Plans were made for extensive improvements and realignment of the Pacific Highway, also known (since 1926) as US99. The excavation was so extreme that the pass was lowered 49 feet to 4467'. By 1940 the peaked and plastered

Dan Cawley, Stage Driver Extraordinaire

A few weeks ago, we found a canvas covered travel trunk in a dark corner of a storeroom in the museum. "D.M.Cawley" was stenciled on the outside. When we removed the canvas cover, it revealed a beautiful, well-preserved leather top. The museum had no records of this trunk.

A quick search of the *Siskiyou Pioneers* revealed that D. M. Cawley was Daniel Maston Cawley, a well-respected stagecoach driver. He drove the first coach over the Siskiyou in 1859-1860 and the last coach over the Siskiyou in early 1888.[8]

Daniel Maston Cawley was a well-known and loved stagecoach driver, a Siskiyou County fixture. Dan (1824-1903), his wife Nancy S. (1828-1878), and son Edwin R. (1851-1921), were from New Hampshire, and came to California via the Isthmus of Panama in 1856.

Dan drove coaches for 40 years over icy roads (the rims of the wheels acted like ice skates!), dusty roads, failing roads. Every trip was an adventure and a huge responsibility for the driver. Dan, a great story teller, loved to share his adventures. He knew people at every stage stop and they all looked forward to sharing a meal and hearing gossip and stories about his travels.

Newspaper stories tell many of Dan's adventures. In

1870, he was traveling from Jacksonville to Yreka. He was so concerned about the safety of a bridge near the summit of the Siskiyou that he asked the passengers to first walk across. When Dan drove the team and stage across, the bridge collapsed behind them under the weight. Dan, the team and the stage all



survived the collapse and were able to pull out of the creek bed and resume the trip to Yreka with many grateful passengers on board.[1]



After his wife Nancy's death in 1878, Dan lived in boarding houses and hotels and he continued to drive stage. He was a regular on the Callahan - Yreka route and later, the Cole's Station to Strawberry Valley (Mt. Shasta) route. When trains replaced all of the old Portland to Sacramento stage route,

Dan still drove the Scott Valley line.

In 1894 on a trip between Yreka and Fort Jones, he had eight passengers and the Wells Fargo money box on board. A highwayman with a "wicked looking revolver" stepped out and called for the stage to stop and for everyone to raise their hands. He told Dan to throw down the Wells Fargo box, and Dan did. The box was rumored to be especially full of treasure that day, and everyone wondered how the highwayman could know about it. This was the first robbery to have occurred on Forest Mountain Road and also the first time Dan had ever been robbed. Today there is a historical marker on the south side



The recently discovered trunk Dan Cawley used on his stagecoach runs.

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Richfield Beacon station and the Summit Ranch Lodge were left high and dry and difficult for motorists to access, marking the end of another era. The Summit Coffee Shop and Gas Station opened up on the new road in an ideal location for hot coffee and a tow truck. It stayed in business until I-5 opened in 1966 on a new alignment. This time, the new (and current) Siskiyou Pass located a short distance to the west topped out at 4310'. By Jill Livingston

of the road marking the spot.[4]

For a period of time in the 1880's he drove freight wagons for Black Bear Mine. While driving the freight wagons he had an accident, receiving a serious head injury, and some said he never completely recovered from it. He seems to have spent most of the 1890's recuperating from his many injuries and illnesses. He stayed with the Bloomingcamps in Beswick for quite a long period of time and seemed to improve. He began driving stages once more but then more physical setbacks caused a move to Montague. There he was under the care of Dr. Dwinnell, and again he seemed to improve.

Newspaper articles from the 1890's mention Dan quite often. He was under the care of Dr. Dwinnell many times, and each time he seemed to rally, but it never lasted long. [5]

While staying in Yreka in 1901, now under the care of Dr. Ream, he seemed to rally and used Dr. Ream's Concord Stage for a reunion of sorts. Perhaps he knew the end was near. He asked a number of the old pioneers of '52 to join him on a stage ride around town. Among the riders were Dr. D. Ream, John Kegg, Lige Carrick, L. Swan and many others. After the ride, the Concord was parked in front of the Franco-American Hotel for a photograph. [6]

Dan died at the Franco-American Hotel on October 16, 1901. The following obituary appeared in the *Siskiyou Daily News* on October 17, 1901. [7]

When Nancy Cawley died in 1878, Dan had the family vault built at Evergreen Cemetery in Yreka. It is built of locally available sandstone from the old Schlicht Place, and Dan, Nancy and their son Edwin are all interred there. It is the only vault in Evergreen Cemetery. [2,3]



The Cawley vault in Evergreen Cemetery

Whip and Reins Laid Aside.

Few men were better known than Dan Cawley. He was a striking figure in the early history of this section. He was proud of the fact that he drove the first stage over Scott Mountain on the through route from Sacramento to Portland, and the last stage over the same route when the advent of the railroad furnished other means of travel. His life was rich in thrilling experiences. All who knew him admired and esteemed him for his rugged manhood, his faithfulness to duty and his genial disposition. Dan Cawley is no more; he has passed to the unknown. He came to town Tuesday, in his usual health, and put up at the Franco. In the afternoon he made a trip to the cemetery where the vault which he had prepared years ago, for the final depository of his remains, is located, and returned in good spirits. He retired at night as usual, but shortly afterwards descended the stairs and told Charley Williams, the night clerk at the hotel and an old friend and companion, that he felt severe

pains in the region of the heart. Charley at once procured remedies and lost no time in summoning Dr. McNulty, who pronounced the malady neuralgia of the heart. In spite of vigorous efforts Dan expired about 11 o'clock. His body now lies in the undertaking parlors of the Scofield-Herman Co., and will be placed in a steel casket procured by that company on the order of deceased, long ago

Daniel Masten Cawley was a native of New Hampshire and in his 77th year. He leaves a son who visited him a month since, and who resides in Grangeville, Idaho.

Undertaker Herman has embalmed the remains in order to give the son an opportunity to be present at the funeral, which will take place from Red Men's Hall, on Sunday, October 20, at 2 p. m., under the auspices of Ieka Tribe No. 53, Imp'd O. R. M., of which deceased was an honored member.

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a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, EIN 82-1833303
 Friends of the Siskiyou County Museum
 910 S. Main St., Yreka, CA 96097
 FSCMuseum@gmail.com
President: Debbie Peters
 koby.joe059@gmail.com
Vice President: Selma Schantz
 selquilts2@sbcglobal.net

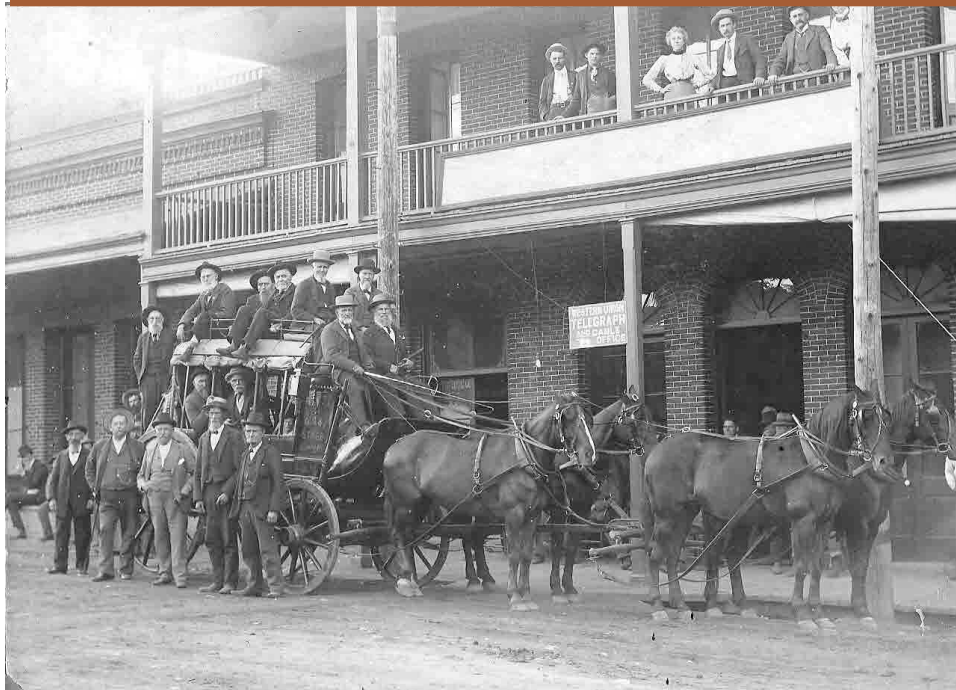
Treasurer: Caralee Scala
 cmulelady@yahoo.com

Secretary: Jill Livingston
 jandk@livinggoldpress.com

Members-at-Large:
 Frances Stidham

Kathryn Tierney
 Grace Bennett
 Karen Cleland

Newsletter Editor: Jill Livingston
Board Meetings:
 Second Tuesdays @ 10:15 am
 Everyone Welcome!



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After one last ride with Dan Cawley at the reins, old friends gathered in front of the Franco American Hotel for a photograph. The diagram naming the participants below was sketched on the back of the photo.

Story by Karen Cleland

All vintage photographs are part of the Siskiyou County Museum Collection

References:

1. "Accident from a Breaking of a Bridge", *San Francisco Call Bulletin*, San Francisco CA., June 21, 1870, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1870/>.

2. "Died", *Scott Valley News*, Fort Jones, CA., November 14, 1878, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1878/>.

3. "Sand Stone", *Scott Valley News*, Fort Jones, CA., April 30, 1887, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1887/>.

4. "Stole the Money Box", *The Dunsmuir News*, Dunsmuir, CA., October 6, 1894, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1894/>.

5. "Montague Cull", *Siskiyou Daily News*, Yreka, CA., June 6, 1896, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1896/>.

"Montague Cull", *Siskiyou Daily News*, Yreka, CA., May 22, 1897, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1897/>.

"Local Mention", *Siskiyou Daily News*, Yreka, CA., June 15, 1899, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1899/>.

6. "An Interesting Souvenir", *Siskiyou Daily News*, Yreka, CA., May 30, 1901, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1901/>.

7. "Whip and Reins Laid Aside", *Siskiyou Daily News*, Yreka, CA., October 17, 1901, <https://www.Newspapers.com/Dan Cawley/1901/>.

8. *The Siskiyou Pioneer* 2023, "Dan Cawley", Volume 10, Number 9, Siskiyou County Historical Society.

