

Cowan Family

long period of time, for the Health Department in Stockton. She retired in 1982 after her marriage. Bill Banks died in 1988.

Sources: 1. Many letters from Helen Banks. 2. County of Merced, Marriage License, #105937, November 1, 1921; Birth Certificate #78; July 31, 1922. State of California Death Certificate #25-027465, June 16, 1925. 3. County of Tuolumne, Death Certificate #41, March 20, 1929. 4. County of Mariposa, Draft Registration #445, June 5, 1917. 5. Mariposa County Federal Census Records, 1900, 1910, 1920. 6. Mariposa County Great Register 1890. 7. Mariposa County Land Records, August 2, 1885; September 26, 1924; October 8, 1924. 8. County of Merced Sworn Statement signed by Mrs. J. D. Seals, September 2, 1942. 9. Gudde, Erwin G., *California Gold Camps*. 10. *Tuolumne Independent*, March 28, 1929, *The Banner*, March 22, 1929, obituary Mildred Cardoza. 11. O'Beirne Funeral Home Record, p 62, Statement Mildred Cardoza funeral, Estate Mildred Cardoza paid in full June 11, 1929. 12. Copy of letter from City of Sonora, Edward J. Wyllie, Community Development Director to Helen Banks, June 21, 1999. 13. Post Card, March 19, 1918, from Tony Cardoza, Fort McDowell, Angel Island to Annie Cardoza, Hornitos, Mariposa County. 14. Letter from Mildred Cardoza, French Camp, to Bessie Seals, Sonora, February 3, 1929. 15. Letter from Dorothy Schlenker, Cave City, Kentucky, to Bessie Seals, Raymond, California, November 5, 1929. 16. Mariposa County Courthouse and Mariposa County Library, copies of the Cardoza guardianship action in the Mariposa County Court, April 15-29, 1929. *Christine Claire—My Story*, by Christine C. Kirk, Merced, California, a Cardoza family cousin of Helen Banks. 17. Letter from Earl C. Gordo, Cathey's Valley, California, a Cardoza relative of Helen Banks.



OLIVER COWAN AND FAMILY

by Anne Williams

I am indebted to Diane Cowan Leonardo, great granddaughter of Oliver Cowan, who contributed important material to this article.

Oliver Cowan was born in New York State on July 28, 1826. His parents were John Cowan and Sarah (Sally) Harding. His grandparents were David Cowan and Esther Leighton.

In 1832 John Cowan purchased 80 acres of land in the Barr Oak settlement in Van Buren Township, Indiana, near the Michigan border, after the U. S. Government had signed a treaty with the Pottawatomie Indians in 1828, opening the La Grange area to settlers. In 1835 he purchased another 80 acres. Enoch Leighton purchased 80 acres in the same area. The land was heavily wooded with hardwood trees and contained many small lakes.

John and Sarah Cowan had three sons: Oliver; Merinus (1828 NY-1912, bur. Greenwood Cemetery, La Grange, IN); and David. John Cowan died June 18, 1845, at 45, and is buried in the Eagley Cemetery in Van Buren Township, with other members of the Cowan and Leighton families, who remained in Indiana. John's father, David Cowan, born March 22, 1757, was a private in Co. L of the Mary, Rhode Island troops in the Revolutionary War. He died July 24, 1851.



Sarah Harding Cowan

Oliver Cowan came by wagon train from Indiana to Tuolumne County early in the Gold Rush. His cousin, Elisha Leighton, also came to California and settled on the coast at Pescadero.

The first record of Oliver in the county is in the 1854 tax assessors records, showing that he owned property in Brown's Flat and Sonora, including real property valued at \$300, personal property at \$1400 and improvements of \$1700. By 1858 he owned five lots in Sonora comprising

360 acres and valued at \$900, with personal property of \$600 and improvements of \$1800. An 1875 map of the Brown's Flat Mining District shows him as owner of five pieces of property.

He was clearly a man who saw the value of owning property. In 1879 he owned three lots in Brown's Flat, which included a claim to the Oliver Cowan water ditch, and eight lots in Sonora, containing improvements including a house, a barn, fences, an arrastra, a blacksmith shop and the Red Rock flume. The ditch and flume system carried water to the southwestern section of Sonora. Instead of mining he was in the business of providing the miners' needs - arrastras to crush their ore, water to wash it and a blacksmith shop to make and repair their tools. The family home was built on one of his lots on Washington Street at the corner of what was Cowan Alley and is now Cowan Street. The lot is now vacant except for a foundation. The house, no longer owned by the Cowan family, was destroyed by fire October 1, 1995.

On his death Oliver Cowan's three oldest children, a son and two daughters, each inherited a piece of property. His wife received the remaining land, part of which she was to hold in trust for the younger children. Her inheritance included trusteeship in the



Willie Ann and Oliver Cowan with
Herbert Cowan

Oliver Cowan Ditch Company, which owned a water system comprised of a ditch and two reservoirs that carried water to the Cowan home as well as others in the area. Oliver Cowan's granddaughter, Ethel Fahey, lived on one of these pieces of property until her death, at 93, on March 22, 2003. This property will remain in the family.

On September 15, 1858, Oliver Cowan married Willie Ann Tripp, born September 22, 1843 to W. O. Tripp and Rebecca Davis, who were married in Baltimore in 1828.

Oliver and Willie Ann had 11 children, at least four of whom died in childhood. Oliver Cowan died February 3, 1897, of heart disease. His wife, Willie Ann, lived to November 10, 1899. They, along with most of their children, are buried in the old Sonora City Cemetery.

Their first child was Mary Roberta, born August 11, 1859. She is listed with her parents, age 6 months, in the 1860 census. Living as neighbors were Willie Ann's parents, W. O. Tripp, age 57, born in New York, a saddler, and his wife, Rebecca, 50, born in Virginia, with their children; William, 16; Elizabeth, 14; Patrick H., 12, all born in Virginia; and Andrew J., 6, born in California. W. O. Tripp died December 28, 1888, at 81.

Mary Roberta Cowan did not marry. In the 1930 census she was still living in the old family home with her widowed sister, Olive E. Rablen. Mary Roberta died July 3, 1931, aged 71 years and just



Ethel Cowan Fahey



Mary Roberta Cowan

short of 11 months. Her death was partially the result of a fall, which occurred several days previously in her kitchen when she fractured her hip.

Child 2 of the Cowans was Olivia Elizabeth, born in April 8, 1861. She married on New



Olive Elizabeth Cowan Rablen

Years Day, 1889, William Henry Rablen, born in Wellington, England, May 3, 1851 to William and Jane Rablen. He was a faithful member of the Baptist Church and a regular member of their choir. William Rablen died in December 21, 1917, and Olivia Cowan Rablen on January 19, 1948. They had no children.

Their third child was William Herbert, (June 3, 1863--May 28, 1871). 4. Alice Rebecca was born in 1865. She married, on Christmas day 1892, Henry Johns, who died July 20, 1917. On April 24, 1920 in Seattle, she married Gilbert Hart. Hart died December 19, 1940. Alice Cowan

Hart died April 22, 1949.

The next three children of Oliver and Willie Ann, all sons, died young. They were 5. Oliver Leonard (1867--1878); 6. Henry Alpert, born in 1869 and lived only five days; and 7. David Alfonza, (1870--1871), possibly of scarlet fever as did William Herbert, who died the same year. Child 8. Clarence Franklin was born in January 18, 1872. He was a miner, a carpenter, and an orchardist. On November 26, 1903, he married Nellie Jane Davies, one of the seven children of William D. and Mary Davies, pioneer



Alice Rebecca Cowan Hart

residents of the Springfield

area. Clarence and Jane had three children. 1. Oliver Franklin, who married Eva Belle Parsons, June 14, 1931. Their children are Dwaine Oliver and Diane Elizabeth, Child 2 of Clarence and Nellie was Ethel, married first Frank Oliver, June 29, 1932, who died June 3, 1968. She married on January 14, 1970 Warren Fahey, who died March 5, 1981. 3. Virginia, married Buel Hunt October 11, 1951. Their children are Lee Oliver and Russell Kay.

The last children of Oliver and Willie Ann were 9. Vivian Orshall (August 23, 1876--



Clarence Franklin Cowan



Nellie Jane Davies and Clarence F. Cowan

December 25, 1901). 10. Malcolm Albert (1878--April 16, 1918) and 11. Oliver Wilbert (May 24, 1880--February 9, 1953), who married Harriet Seyler January 9, 1906.

Their children, none of whom had children, were Harry David (November 8, 1906--d date

unknown); Oliver Malcolm (August 21, 1909--May, 1983) married Ruth Harvey; Alice L. Cowan (March 17, 1914--March 24, 1970), married Milton Richards September 12, 1953.

Frank Oliver, Ethel Cowan's first husband, owned and operated the Oliver Hardware Store in Sonora for 56 years. Ethel Oliver Fahey was a president of the local American Legion Auxiliary and a member of the Tuolumne County Genealogical Society. Her second husband, Warren Fahey, was a member of a pioneer county family, both Oliver Cowan and Dennis Fahey arriving here in 1851.

Six of Oliver and Willie Ann Cowan's descendants were college graduates--a chemist; an organic and physical chemist; a teacher; a musician and computer programmer; a business administrator and a forester.

Dwaine Cowan, great-grandson of Oliver, known as "the father of organic conductors and superconductors" graduated from Fresno State in 1958 and attended Stanford University and Cal-Tech. Over the years he has written nearly 200 articles, acquired four patents and written two books. He is a long-standing member of the American Chemical Society, the American Physical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and professor emeritus at John Hopkins University, where he has taught for 34 years.

Dwaine Cowan shares some thoughts on family members: Clarence Cowan, his grandfather, "Too much is just right."; Diane Cowan Leonardo, Dwaine's sister, "I start them in Kindergarten, Dwaine finishes them at Johns Hopkins . . ."; Ethel Cowan Oliver Fahey, "was such a compassionate person . . . cared for family members and her neighbors; EvaBelle and Oliver Cowan, parents of Dwaine and Diane, "Instilled a love for God and all his creations."

The Cowan name will not be carried down in this branch of the family past the present generations, so will disappear from the county records.

There are nine members of the Cowan family buried at the old Sonora City Cemetery.

Sources: 1. Leonardo, Diane, early Cowan family history, correct dates and names, pictures, and other personal family material. Thanks, Diane! 2. 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1930 censuses. 3. 1866, 1890 censuses and voter register records. 4. Burden Burial Records. 5. Eleven obituaries from the *Union Democrat*, *The Banner*, and *The Tuolumne Independent*. 6. TCGS library records. 7. County Tax Assessor's records from the Tuolumne County Archives. 8. Rasmussen, Tom, *Old Sonora City Cemetery Records*.



Photographs are courtesy of Diane Cowan Leonardo.

THE JOSIAH HALL FAMILY

by Anne Williams

Much of the material for this article was furnished by Diane Hall Ollar, who donated her history of the **Hall** family to our society library.

Josiah James **Hall** was born in London, England on September 25, 1816, to Henry William (ca 1786--ca 1885/87, London) and Mary Lemon **Hall** (April 12, 1793--June 15, 1872, London). Josiah arrived in Brooklyn, New York, before 1837. According to the New York city directory of 1841-42 he was a shipmaster and, his wife, Elizabeth W. Golden/Golding **Hall**, (born December, 1809, Bristol, England) practiced the then medical procedures of cupping and leaching.

Drawn by the Gold Rush, Josiah arrived in California August 12, 1849, on the ship *Brooklyn*, leaving his wife and four children behind. The children, all born in Brooklyn, were Lavinia, born ca 1838; Mary Lemon, March 23, 1842; Edwin Henry, March 3, 1845 and Elizabeth, ca 1848.

When he arrived in Sonora he opened a general store, where he stocked everything from groceries to farm implements to mining tools and where the city's first banking was transacted. He continued to operate this business for 30 years. In 1853 his wife and children joined him.

Josiah **Hall** became a prominent businessman and civic leader. He owned a great deal of property in and around Sonora, as well as several businesses on Washington Street. He also invested in various mining operations, including the Hall Mine in Soulsbyville, which he acquired in 1878. He served on the Sonora City Council and was appointed mayor of the city in March, 1859. He was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, where he served as treasurer for many years, and the Pioneer Association of Tuolumne County.



Josiah Hall

Lavinia **Hall**, also known as Louise, married William F. **Cooper** July 6, 1860. They had two sons, William (b. May 11, 1863) and Thomas. Mary Lemon **Hall** married Abner **Reed** July 15, 1862. She died March 2, 1918, in Oakland, Alameda County. Edwin Henry **Hall** married Mary Adelle **Ballard**, daughter of Jeremiah Bentley and Nancy Jane Weyer **Ballard**, April 26, 1870 in Sonora. Elizabeth (Bessie) **Hall** married William J. **Warder** of Knights Ferry, November 11, 1866.

Tragedy struck the family when Josiah's wife, Elizabeth, became ill. Her niece, Sarah **Golding**, came from New York to take care of her aunt. Elizabeth **Hall** died May 6, 1863. Sarah stayed on, after her aunt's death, with Josiah and the two youngest children. On January 22, 1865 Sarah A. **Golding** became the second wife of Josiah **Hall**. The ceremony took place at the Rock River Ranch, the home of William and Lavinia Hall **Cooper**. This same year Josiah built the Hall house on Bradford Street in Sonora. The house remained in the Hall family until 1990 when it was sold to Royd and Susan Rosenquist, who have lovingly restored it.

Josiah James **Hall**, Jr. was born in November, 1865, but, unfortunately, died when just a year old.

Two weeks after this sad event Josiah received the appalling news that his daughter, Lavinia, had been shot and killed by her husband, William F. **Cooper**, during a fit of insanity, apparently caused by a fall and head injury the previous summer. Before this event there had been no domestic problems and both were well thought of in the community. Cooper after wandering