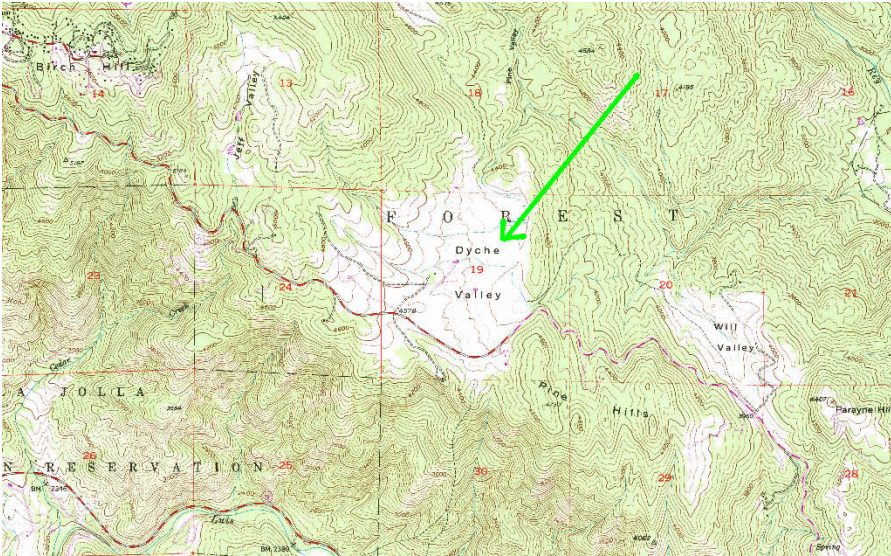


George V. Dyche of Palomar Mountain

Peter Brueggeman

Mount Helix, California 2024



U.S.G.S. topo map for Palomar Observatory quadrangle

Dyche Valley on Palomar Mountain is named after George V. Dyche, who lived there in the late 1800s. Who was George V. Dyche?



George Valentin Dyche (undated photo from Joanna Gunther) was born August 23, 1824, in Bath, Virginia, which is now known as Berkeley Springs, West Virginia [2].

Edward Davis writes [1]:

“Dyche was born at Berkeley Springs in what is now known as West Virginia. He crossed the plains in an emigrant wagon during the gold rush of 1849 as a youth of eighteen years and reached Sacramento. For some years he was a clerk in Baker & Hamilton’s Bank in Sacramento. [PB: Baker & Hamilton was an agricultural and mining equipment store in Sacramento].

He later went into the cattle business, bought steers for five dollars per head and sold them in San Francisco for seven and eight dollars a head.”

In the Sacramento Daily Union of August 21, 1851, G. V. Dyche was among several people putting forward a candidate for justice of the peace for the city of Sacramento [50].

In the 1852 U.S. Census for the County of Los Angeles, G.V. Dyche is listed as a 28-year-old trader born in Virginia and had last lived in Missouri [3]. At that time, Los Angeles County stretched from the coast to the state line of Nevada, and the census gave no specific locations for individuals. The census page with Dyche lists ranchero as occupation for most of the people on that page, whom one assumes lived in his area.

Edward Davis writes [1]:

[George Dyche] then worked for Robert Carlisle and John Rains on the Rancho Santa Ana del Chino cattle ranch. Young Dyche had an interest in these cattle, some herds ranging as far south as Warner Ranch, and so he came here to live. He built a cabin in Rincon of Warner Ranch north of the present Henshaw Dam. [PB: Davis identified the ranch as the Chino Cattle Ranch and its owners as Bob Carlyle and John Raines.]



John Rains (1827-1862), undated

John Rains superintended cattle operations of the Rancho Santa Ana del Chino (where George Dyche worked) and in Temecula, and he also worked at Butterfield's stage station at Warner's Ranch [36,38]. Maria Merced Williams (1839-1907) and Francisca Williams inherited the Rancho Santa Ana del Chino after the death of their father Isaac Williams in September 1856 [34,36,41]. Three days after Isaac Williams' death, John Rains married his elder daughter, Maria Merced, and then several months later, Francisca married Robert S. Carlisle [36,41]. Immediately after Williams' estate was settled in early 1858, John Rains sold his wife Maria Merced's half-interest in Rancho Santa Ana del Chino to her sister Francisca and used the funds to buy Rancho Cucamonga later that year [34,36,41].

In August 1859, George Dyche was elected a delegate for the Rancho del Chino precinct at the Democratic Convention in San Bernardino [12].

In September 1861, John Rains obtained Warner's ranch through a sheriff's sale because he had loaned money to John J. Warner with the ranch used as collateral [34,35,38], and then George Dyche moved there and worked as a stock foreman on the Warner Ranch [33].

Edward Davis writes [1]:

In 1861, George Dyche was arrested as a deserter by some Union soldiers and taken to Oak Grove for trial. He was found innocent and discharged. He was given a lantern by the soldiers to find his way home. This lantern was a cylinder of tin with perforated holes, lighted by a candle inside. This was in the family for several years...

Marion Beckler writes [9]:

Records show that both (George Dyche) and Joseph Smith served as Judges of the Plains in Agua Caliente district in 1862-1863.

Judges of the plains were the law enforcement officers of the livestock industry in each county and had the powers of a sheriff. They decided all disputes over ownership of cattle, horses, and other livestock, and attended

all the yearly roundups and branding of cattle and horses, where their decisions were final, with no appeal. Joseph Smith was the first white settler on Palomar Mountain, on land which George Dyche later took over.



Robert Carlisle, undated

John Rains and Robert Carlisle were hot-headed and got into financial distress and personal enmity [4,5,6]. In later November 1862, John Rains was murdered, with Robert Carlisle or Ramon Carillo speculated as involved in that killing [4,5,6,38,39,41].

Robert Carlisle quickly pressured John Rains' newly widowed wife Maria Merced to give him power of attorney over the Rains estate [41].

George Dyche lost all his capital with the murder of John Rains [37,38].



Maria Merced Williams, undated

One story is that George Dyche was amongst a group of twelve men who were personal friends of John Rains, and they suspected his wife Maria Merced, of murdering Rains; they assembled at a Cucamonga tavern heavily armed, and were having supper, discussing her lynching [37,38,39,40]. The tavern owner William Rubottom did not want a lynching of a woman without a trial and enlisted two friends at the tavern to spoil their plot [37,40]. After Rubottom served them at a long table, he stood at the head of the table with a shotgun pointed at them, called in his two similarly armed friends, and disarmed all of them. He told them they could come back and get their weapons one at a time later, which they did.

Another story is that friends of John Rains did meet at Rubottom's tavern, but they discussed how to get Maria Merced to pay money due them from John Rains [37]. George Dyche, Rains' foreman, was owed money from the ranch, and others were perhaps owed money as well since Rains was over-extended and borrowing heavily [37]. The conversation among the men perhaps got heated as they discussed what to do with Maria Merced, and someone probably said that they ought to hang her [37]. It could have been a flippant remark, taken seriously by Rubottom.

In 1864, two years after John Rains' death, Ramon Carillo, who was a trusted advisor to Maria Merced, was ambushed and killed [4,5,6,41].

Robert Carlisle was killed in an 1865 Los Angeles shootout by Frank and Houston King, after he had gotten in a heated argument the day before with Andrew King, who was the court-appointed receiver over Maria Merced's property [41].



Maria “Mary” Lugo, undated.

Photo from Joanna Gunther.

Dating back from the 1870 U.S. Census, George V. Dyche married **Maria “Mary” Lugo** around 1864; Maria Lugo was born from 1843 to 1850 at the Rincon of Warner’s Ranch, and died March 17, 1895, in Napa, California [2,11,45]. Maria Lugo’s Indian name was Tamahanish [45].

Their first-born child Emanuel V. Dyche was born February 24, 1865 [2,11].

In “Entries in the Great Register, San Diego County, California, July 1867,” George V. Dyche is listed as a 43-year-old ranchero, born in Virginia, and living in San Felipe as a ranchero, with date of registration being February 20, 1867 [3].

A newspaper item in June 1867, notes the names of San Diego county residents contributing to the Southern Relief Fund including George V. Dyche for \$5; the Southern Relief Fund was for impoverished Confederate states [13].

After George Dyche had moved away from Warner’s Ranch and was living on Palomar Mountain, he was interviewed about Warner’s Ranch in 1869 by Judge Benjamin Hayes, who wrote in correspondence to a prospective buyer for Warner’s Ranch as follows [42]:

BENJAMIN HAYES TO DR. JOHN S. GRIFFIN, San Diego, () 1869.

... I will state at once what I know in regard to the qualities of San Jose del Valle (Warner’s Rancho). I am the better able to give it a good name from having seen George V. Dyche here to-day, who lived on it a long time in charge of the Rains stock. ... In 1860 John Rains put on about 1600 head of stock cattle. In 1865, Dyche accounted to the Receiver for over 5000 head, and that after losses by the Indian depredations and partially by the drought of 1863-64. ...

GEORGE DYCHE MOVES TO PALOMAR MOUNTAIN

An item in a “Letter from San Diego. [From Our Own Correspondent.],” published in the San Francisco Evening Bulletin dated May 26, 1868, stated [22]:

The citizens here were very much excited last week by learning that Joseph Smith, known everywhere as “Long Joe Smith,” had been assassinated at his ranch “Palomar.” It seems an Englishman, whose name I did not learn, for some reason unknown, shot Smith dead while working at a bench. The Englishman then started for another place to bring some wine Smith had contracted for, leaving the latter as he fell. On his return he found a number of neighbors at the house, and being asked what had become of Joe, he gave no satisfactory answer, but finally, on being accused of murdering Smith, whose body had been found before the murderer returned, he confessed the deed. Quite a sum of money was found in the house untouched, so it is not known whether poor Joe was killed for money or not. Next morning the murderer was found hung to a tree in the neighborhood.

A news article appeared in the Stockton Daily Evening Herald on June 1, 1868, giving more specific information on Smith’s murder and murderer [23]:

MURDERD – THE MURDERER HUNG BY A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE –

A correspondent of the S.F. Times, writing from San Diego, Cal., May 22nd, says:

On Thursday morning last, May 14th, Mr. Joseph Smith, one of the oldest residents of this county, was found murdered by being shot twice – once through the head and once through the body – with a large sized Colt’s revolver, by Robert Mitchell O’Brien, a deserter of the 14th United States Infantry, who has been to work for him some two or three months. O’Brien was arrested the following day, examined by the people of the neighborhood, who formed themselves into a Vigilance Committee, tried him, and found him guilty, and hung him on the nearest suitable tree. O’Brien confessed that he killed Smith, and said repeatedly before he was executed, that he would do the same to any one that talked to him as Smith did before he shot him. Smith was one of our best citizens, a truly good man, and his loss will be universally regretted by every one in the county. He was about fifty years of age, and unmarried; leaves a fine property, and has no heirs or relations in this part of the State.

George Dyche’s time on Palomar Mountain begins shortly after the death of Joseph Smith. Edward Davis writes [1]:

To the best of my information, Joseph Smith was the first white man to build a house and live permanently on the top of Palomar Mountain. ... Joseph Smith was six feet, four inches tall, and the Indians called him “Jose Largo.” “Long Joe Smith.” When he settled on Palomar, in about 1852, he owned horses, mules, cattle and hogs. ... His home was located on the north side of what was later known as the Dyche Valley. This valley and surrounding hills were used exclusively by the La Joya Indians for untold generations for harvesting acorns and hunting deer, and they named it “We-a -ma,” meaning “Burden basket.” This is the third valley through which the road from Henshaw Dam passes. It is a broad, open valley surrounded by oak and pine-clad hills. The grass in the valley is sub-irrigated and is always lush and green - fine feed for stock cattle.

The house was situated on rising ground and commanded a fine view of the whole valley. His house was built of adobe bricks and hewed timbers and roofed with split cedar shakes and, as was the universal custom featured a large stone fireplace at one end of a large living room. No doubt Smith, with the assistance of a few Indians with whom he lived on friendly terms, did all the construction work, as he was a fine mechanic and very handy with tools.



Joseph Smith house, later occupied by George Dyche

Will Dyche, who lived in this house for many years with his father George Dyche, said Smith was a very fine craftsman and from the forest growth, he whip-sawed and cut the rough timber and fashioned it into beautiful finished tables, stands, chairs, bedsteads, etc. He made all his bee stands out of virgin timber and filled them with wild swarms from hollow oaks nearby. He repaired his wagons and tools with strong-grained native oak, which grew in abundance all over the mountain.

Smith raised hogs as his principal industry and these hogs ranged the country, feeding on acorns and growing fat on the grain he grew in the valley. He had several Indians working for him during planting and harvest, and it was his custom to pay them every week. ... He was unmarried. ... On one of his trips to Kimble's store for supplies, he met a young man whose name cannot be recalled. This adobe store was located on Warner Ranch, one and a half miles east of the old ranch house and was later operated by Henry Wilson... [PB: Kimble store was built by Cyrus Kimble in 1862. Kimble was murdered in 1865, and Henry Wilson took over the store in 1866.] The young man was poor, bare-footed, and in rags, and was looking for work, so Smith befriended him and took him to Palomar and made him feel at home. He was said to be a deserter from the army. He performed odd jobs and became familiar with Smith's habits; particularly, he managed to be near when Smith paid off his Indian laborers, hoping to see where his benefactor had secreted his money.

One day, after the young fellow had been there a month or two, while Smith was busy repairing a bee hive on the porch with his back to the house, the young man he had befriended shot and killed him with Smith's own gun, shooting through the open window from the room inside. After making a hasty and fruitless search for Smith's hidden money, he made his escape on one of the mules, going down the old Indian trail to La Joya. He led a horse packed with two empty kegs. Francesca Maxey, an Indian woman who was Smith's cook, had left that morning to visit her folks at La Joya. On the way down the trail, he passed Francesca and she asked him where he was going. He said Smith sent him to get some wine. Mateo Subish, an Indian from La Joya, rode up to the Smith house that morning and saw the body lying on the porch under a tarpaulin, with feet protruding. Mateo was prevented from making a closer examination by Smith's dogs who stood guard over the body and permitted no one to approach. Mateo immediately rode off the east end of the mountain to the Rincon of Warner Ranch and notified George Dyche, who immediately notified the store.

Word even in that early day spread like wild fire, and that night forty determined men gathered at the Smith house -- from Julian, Mesa Grande, Ballena, Warner's and all settlers' homes. They sent for Francesca, and she told about seeing the man and gave all the information she knew. These men immediately organized a searching party. Smith was a well-known man throughout the mountains and these men were a grim, determined crowd composed of miners, cattlemen, cowboys, freighters and ranchers. Two men were chosen to track the murderer down and bring him back. He left a plain trail and several Indians who had seen him pass told his pursuers. They, without loss of time, went to the Maxey place, at the far end of the Guejito ranch, and there captured their man. They tied him to his mule and brought him back to the Smith house. Of course, all this took time, as all travel was on horseback. They pulled the canvas from the body and asked if he knew him. He said "yes," but said he did not know who killed him. They said they would soon find out, so they looped a reata around his neck, threw the end over a limb near the house and pulled him up, then lowered him, but he still declared his innocence. [PB: a reata is a long noosed rope to catch animals, a lariat or lasso.] A second time he was pulled up and lowered. Three times he was pulled up, and then he made a full confession. They put chains on him, placed him on a horse and rode him down to Kimble's store. By that time seventy-five men had collected, and they immediately organized a vigilante court and had a trial. The fellow made a full confession and he was condemned to death. He was taken to a live oak tree at the foot of the hills convenient to the store, a noose was fitted around his neck, the other end was cast over a limb, and twenty -five men pulled him up, tied the end of the reata and left him. Old Fred Scholder of Mesa Grande, Nate Harrison, **George Dyche** and many well-known old timers bore a hand. When the crowd returned to the store, they held a big celebration, whiskey flowed freely all night with whooping, yelling, and shooting. A general good time was enjoyed by all.

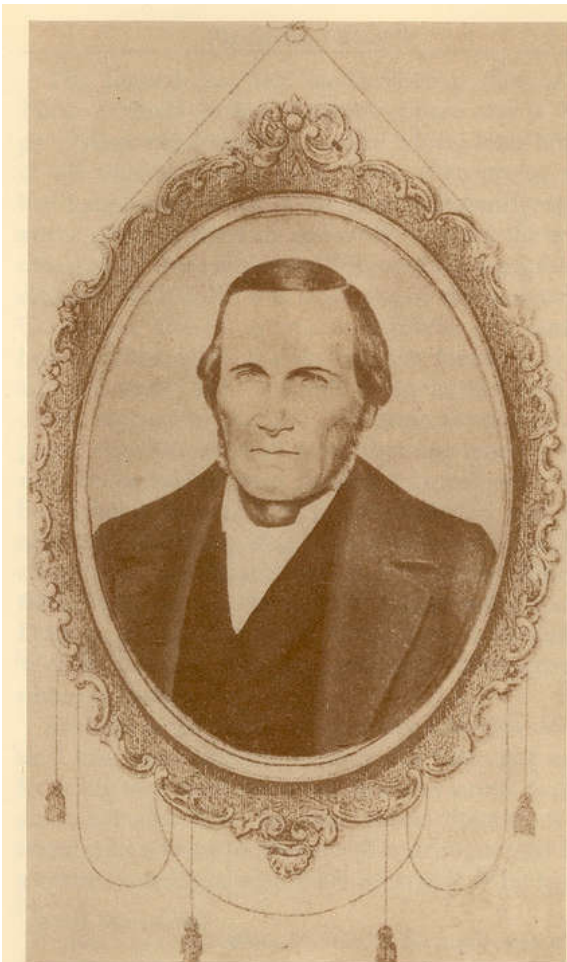
Edward Davis writes [1]:

... Smith having no heirs, his property reverted to the Public Administrator, who sold it to Wolfskill, who in turn sold it to George Dyche for what he paid for it. Dyche also came into possession of the hogs and cattle formerly belonging to Smith, and the valley thereafter was known as the "Dyche Valley," for many years Dyche and his family occupied the Smith house.



Ephraim W. Morse, undated

By July 1868, the Public Administrator of Joseph Smith's estate was Ephraim W. Morse, who was Smith's business partner on the Palomar land, both being listed at the same location as farmers (along with the hired help) in the Agua Caliente township on the 1860 U.S. Census [3,31,32]. By the time of Morse's death, he was known as a retail merchant, banker, and realtor in the City of San Diego, and in earlier years, had been engaged with Joseph Smith in sheep farming on one hundred acres of land with 3,000 sheep and 100 head of cattle [32].



William Wolfskill, September 27, 1866

William Wolfskill purchased the Joseph Smith property for the livestock and squatter's rights, intending to put his son John on it [33]. However, his son John would not live there, so William Wolfskill sold it to George Dyche [33].

In 1868, the three Wolfskill brothers, John, Josiah, and Matthew, and Edward McGearry purchased Rancho Rincon del Diablo, where Escondido is located today [30,33].

THE ONLY KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF WILLIAM WOLFSKILL
Taken by Henri Penelon, Los Angeles, September 27, 1866.
Courtesy of John C. Wolfskill.

In the 1870 U.S. Census amongst inhabitants of Warner's Rancho District in the County of San Diego, enumerated on July 14, 1870, 46-year-old **George Dyche** is listed with occupation farmer, along with his wife **Maria** (age 20, born in California and whose occupation is keeping house), **Manuel** (age 4), **Boy** (age 2) and **Louisa** (age 1) [3]. His wife Maria was named **Maria "Mary" Lugo** (born from 1843 to 1850 at Rincon of Warner's Ranch, and died March 17, 1895, in Napa, California, where she is buried) [2]. Manuel's name is **Emanuel V. Dyche** on his gravestone (born February 24, 1865, and died May 8, 1937) [11]. "Boy" is **William Van Dyche** (born 1868 and died 1948) [11]. "Louisa" is their daughter Frances, who is **Frances Virginia Dyche LaRue** (born March 21, 1869, and died March 8, 1963) [11].

In that 1870 U.S. Census, George Dyche's real estate value is \$1200, and his personal estate value is \$1900 [3]. The 1870 U.S. Census' Schedule 3—Productions of Agriculture in Warners Rancho and enumerated August 2-3, 1870, has George Dyche listed with the following [3]:

- 100 acres of improved land
- 0 acres of wood-land
- 220 acres of other unimproved land

- \$1,000 present cash value of farm
- \$50 present cash value of farming implements and machinery
- \$1,200 total amount of wages paid during the year, including value of board

- 25 horses
- 82 cattle
- 20 pigs
- \$1,700 value of all livestock

- 500 bushels of winter wheat produced during the year
- 4 bushels of rye produced during the year
- 10 bushels of oats produced during the year
- 60 bushels of barley produced during the year

In October 1869, George Dyke attended a meeting of the Democratic County Committee of the County of San Diego as a committee member [56]. In May 1871, George V. Dyke was listed as a member of the Democratic County Committee of San Diego County [55]. At a meeting of the Democratic Central Committee on June 3, 1871, member George Dyche was in attendance by proxy of William Wolfskill, and George Dyche and two others were named judges for the primary election of delegates for Brady's precinct with voting at Dr. Dawson's, for the upcoming San Diego County Convention [14].

The San Diego Union published this item on George Dyche on June 24, 1873 [47]:

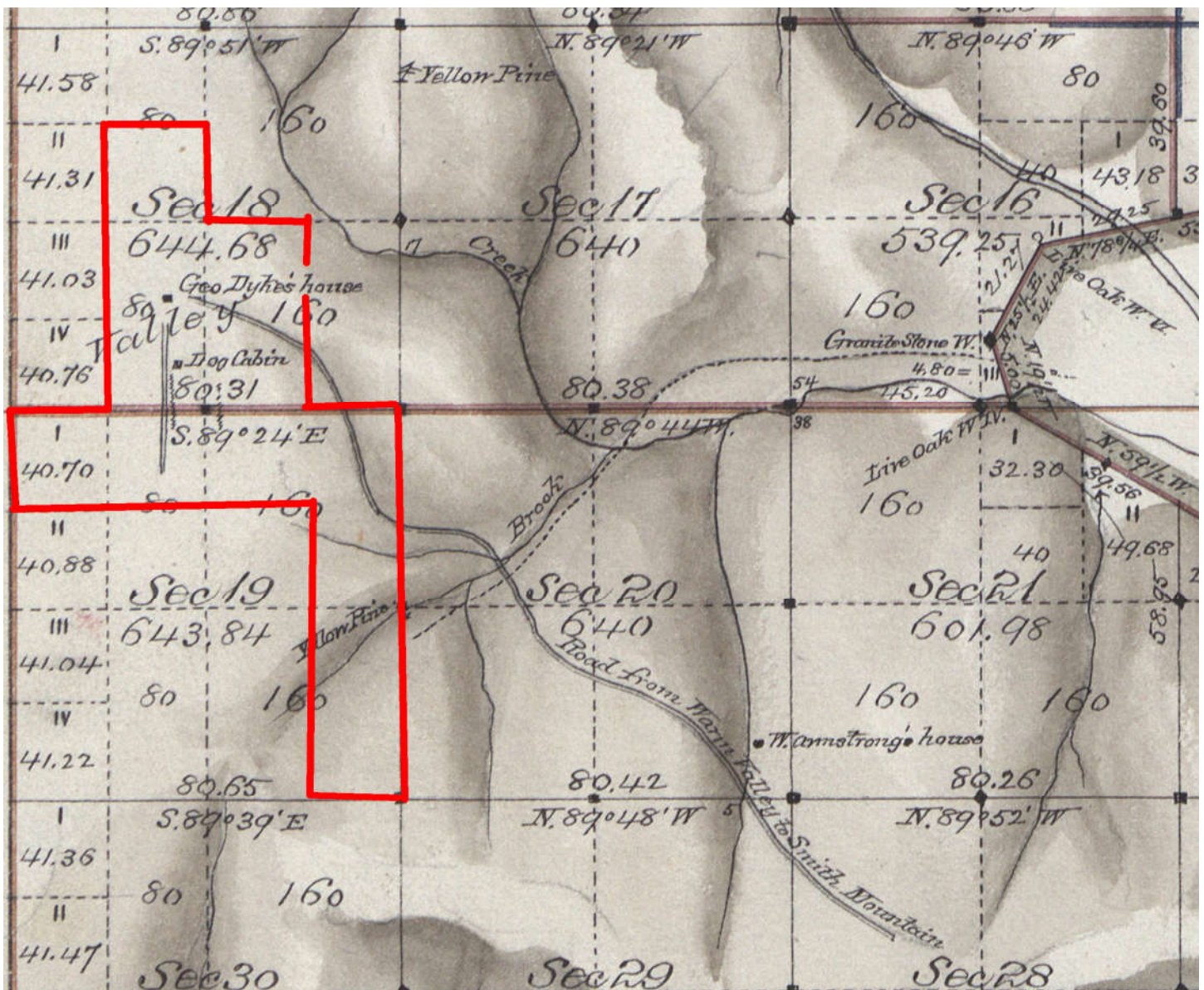
RUNAWAY. – A team belonging to Geo. V. Dyke, of Smith's Mountain, having become surfeited with the "poetic air" of this city and thirsting for glorious liberty, dashed down Sixth street on its own account yesterday morning. It brought up quite suddenly at A. Pauly's buggy in a very unpoetic manner and wrecking one awning post. The team sustained no particular damage.

In June 1875, George Dyke was listed as a delegate from Agua Caliente for the Democratic County Convention [57].

In a piece entitled “Scraps from San Diego” published in the Pacific Rural Press of July 12, 1873, Dyche’s ranch is described [48]:

... The San Louis Rey river, rises in this valley of San Jose, and in the beautiful mountain, the Palomar, generally known as Smith’s mountain, there are fine forests, of pine, cedar and fir, and Mr. Dyke’s Ranch, a beautiful place, of several hundred acres in cultivation, fenced as in Virginia and Kentucky, stake and rider rail fence, ten foot cedar rails. ...

Following Dyche’s purchase of Smith’s land on the north side of Dyche Valley from William Wolfskill in 1869, he acquired additional land via homesteading and purchases [1,20,21]. In 1876, George Dyche staked a homestead claim to 160.7 acres of Palomar Mountain land, with the U.S. government publishing in the San Diego Union five years later on July 15, 1881, that George Dyche had filed his intention to make final proof of a homestead claim on Palomar Mountain, with witnesses J. Cook, J. L. McIntier, J. Trujillo, and C. Gunn, all of Warner’s Ranch [20,21]. George Dyche also purchased 320 acres of land from the U.S. government in 1889 and 1890 [21].



Outline showing George Dyche’s combined homestead (1876) and purchased land (1889 and 1890) from the U.S. government, which complemented his earlier purchase of Joseph Smith’s land

The San Diego Daily Union published an article entitled “Snow Storm at Warner’s Ranch” on February 13, 1876 [53]:

A correspondent of The Union writing from Warner’s Ranch, sends us an interesting account of the snow-storm in that section about three weeks since. He writes:

“On the morning of the 20th January it began raining, continuing all day until midnight, when it turned to snow, falling very fast. On the morning of the 21st the snow was six inches deep all over the valley. All that day snow continued to fall and at night it was from ten to sixteen inches deep over the whole of Warner’s Ranch. On the 22nd it is still snowing and eighteen inches deep at the Canada Verde. ... From the 24th to the 27th the weather was cold and cloudy, with snow falling at intervals. On the morning of the 28th the weather cleared. All looks prosperous now; but the people owning stock in this part of the country have suffered loss. Horses, cattle, sheep and hogs have perished in the storm. The extent of the damage as yet is not known, but it must be considerable. There was but little grass when the storm began, and that little was completely covered up by the snow from the 20th to the 28th. The meagre subsistence that the stock could gather by nibbling the brush was all they had during that time. I saw George Dyche, of Smith’s Mountain, yesterday, and he informed me that he had lost a great many horses and cattle; he is not able to tell how many was yet, though the number is certainly large. He says the snow will average three feet deep in that locality. Nothing like this storm has been known in these mountains since 1866.”

A news story mentioning George Dyche was published in the San Diego Union on March 11, 1877 [18]:

A NEAT CAPTURE – TWO ESCAPED CONVICTS TAKEN

The readers of The Union will remember that a few days ago we chronicled the fact that Sheriff Coyne was on the track of a couple of escaped convicts from San Bernardino, and expected to get them. When Joe Coyne and Ned Bushyhead go after these gentry, they generally *do* get them, -- as they did on this occasion.

Two of the most desperate ruffians in the country, who had been brought down to San Bernardino from the State Prison, as we understand to testify in some case, broke jail there two or three weeks ago and set out on their way to Lower California, through this county, robbing as they went. They first raided **George Dyche’s** place on Smith’s Mountain, where they got a Henry rifle and six-shooter; then they came on to Bear Valley [PB: Valley Center] and robbed a sheep camp; next, they robbed Sikes’ house at Bernardo; then they came on down through Poway past El Cajon, and reached the Otay on Sunday last, where they robbed some Frenchmen, and then made their way across the line into the Frontier of Lower California.

Meanwhile intelligence of the escape and of the robberies in the northern part of the county had been received at the Sheriff’s office, and arrangements were promptly made to effect their capture, if it was a possible thing. We are not at liberty to mention certain details of the plan; that it resulted in entire success is enough. Coyne dropped down to the line on Wednesday and ascertained that his men were on the other side of Wild Cat Station. They had information direct from the robbers’ camp. On Thursday night, the two villains arranged a plan to come up and rob Lane’s store in Tia Juana Valley, on this side of the line. Their conversation was fully overhead; and it was diabolical enough to make the blood chill. They proposed to surprise Lane and tie him up, and then make him tell them where his money, etc., was by applying slow torture in the shape of a lighted candle

to his bare feet, puncturing his flesh with the point of a knife, etc. Lane was posted, and all was in readiness for business on Friday but it was subsequently found that the plan had been changed, and that the store was to be robbed on Saturday evening.

Yesterday morning Sheriff Coyne and Deputy Sheriff Bushyhead got into their buggies and drove down to the Tia Juana; putting their teams up at Dranga's, they footed it over to Lane's and there made themselves comfortable in a place where they could see and not be seen. The time passed slowly on. At last, a little after five o'clock in the evening, along came the two gentlemen and walked boldly up to the house. Both were heavily armed, each having a Henry 16-shooting rifle, six-shooter, and knife. Entering the store, they called for liquor and drank, and then began to look around the premises, pretending to buy provisions, and talking about prices. They said they wanted barley, and asked Lane to step outside and show them some – exchanging glances as they went to the door. They little knew that Ned Bushyhead's keen eyes were following their every movement. Lane accompanied the scoundrels, who placed themselves on each side of him – and then Bushyhead and Coyne softly crawled out. The robbers were closing up on Lane, when they suddenly stopped. The biggest one looked around and looked right into the muzzle of New Bushyhead's long revolver. Joe Coyne had the other one similarly covered. The game was up. They only said: "You played it mighty fine on us; we're sold!" The handcuffs were promptly applied, and in a few minutes Coyne and Bushyhead were spinning along homeward, each with his prisoner by his side. They got in and locked their men up about half past eight last evening.

The San Diego Union had a news item on May 18, 1878, about a death on George Dyche's ranch [19]:

A very sad accident occurred at the ranch of George Dyche, on Smith's Mountain, on Thursday night. Mr. Clark Swift swallowed by mistake a fatal dose of strychnine, dying in a terribly short time. The particulars, as we learn them from his brother, Mr. E. Swift, are as follows: The brothers who carried on a ranch together in Bear Valley [PB: Valley Center], used strychnine (as all farmers do) to destroy gophers and other vermin. Clark Swift was in the habit of taking homeopathic medicines, and carried small phials in his vest pocket. A short time ago they pulverized some strychnine and put it in one of the empty homeopathic phials for convenience, so that in going around the place, whenever they found a gopher's hole they could drop the poison in. About a week ago Clark Swift left the ranch for Smith's Mountain, to do some carpenter work for Mr. Dyche. He took with him a vest which had in one of the pockets this phial of strychnine. It seems that on Thursday evening he felt unwell and took a dose of medicine from this phial. Spasms almost immediately ensured. Mr. Swift at once understood the situation, and told those around him of his fearful mistake; but there was no antidote at hand, and in a few minutes he ceased to breathe.

Edward Davis writes [1]:

One time, on his way home with friends from an Indian Fiesta at La Joya or Rincon, George Dyche got to quarreling with Chat Helm of Warner Ranch. Both were pretty well tanked up with rot-gut and they agreed to shoot it out next morning. Foreman Charley McGary and another cow puncher from Warner Ranch egged them on and then, when they were asleep, found their guns, removed the bullets from the cartridges, loaded their revolvers with blanks, and then carefully replaced them. In the morning, in true Western style, they stepped off ten paces, stood up, and at the word, pugged away at each other until their guns were empty, with no results. McGary and his companion had the time of their lives over the joke played on these old timers. "What in Hell's the matter with me?"

said Dyche: “Guess I can shoot straight when I’m drunk.” So they shook hands and let it go at that.

In the 1880 U.S. Census amongst inhabitants of Agua Caliente Township in the County of San Diego, enumerated on June 18-19, 1880 [3], **George V. Dyche** is listed as a farmer, with wife **Maria** (age 41), sons **Manuell** (age 14) and **William** (age 13), and daughters **Frances** (age 11) and **Mary** (age 8). Their children are all noted as attending school. **Manuell’s** name is **Emanuel V. Dyche** on his gravestone (born February 24, 1865m and died May 8, 1937) [11]. **William** is **William Van Dyche** (born 1868m and died 1948) [11]. Daughter **Frances** is **Frances Virginia Dyche LaRue** (born March 21, 1869, and died March 8, 1963) [3,11]. Daughter **Mary** is **Mary Ellen Dyche Damron** (born May 8, 1872m and died June 2, 1942) [11].

In that 1880 census, Dyche’s agricultural production is recorded [3]:

50 acres of tilled land

270 acres of unimproved land

\$1000 farm value

\$1527 livestock value

\$100 paid in wages for farm labor including value of board

\$586 estimated value of all farm productions for 1879

20 acres of mown grassland

270 acres of not mown grassland

30 acres of wheat producing 103 bushels

20 tons of hay harvested

20 horses

4 mules

58 cattle

Edward Davis writes [1]:

Once a tough hombre, named Slankert, and Dick Culp, his brother-in-law from Temecula, drove forty head of fine saddle horses up to the Dyche ranch and put them in the fenced pasture, telling Dyche they had bought the horses and were driving them to Arizona to sell. They slept in the barn and early next morning they ran the horses off the mountain and took them to Arizona and Sonora and sold them. In a few days, Mr. Pryor, the owner of these horses, came to the Dyche ranch and said forty head of his fine saddle horses had been stolen from his ranch at San Juan Capistrano, by Slankert and Culp, and he had tracked the band this far. He was too late to catch the horse thieves, so he offered a reward, but nothing came of it. This same Slankert later became a deputy sheriff in Yuma and was the same one who shot and killed young Frank Fox at the Carriso stage station, a piece of plain murder. Frank was only sixteen years old and was accused of being one of a gang of horse thieves in Arizona and so, this old-time, dyed-in-the-wool horse thief, risen to the dignity of a Deputy Sheriff with a badge, shot this boy as he was going for water. He accused him of trying to escape.

Slankert killed Fox on April 1, 1890, so Dyche’s interaction with Slankert is long before 1890 [7,8]. Deputy Sheriff Slankert is named John Slankard in another source. Deputy Sheriff John Slankard killed Frank Fox at Carrizo Creek on April 1, 1890, while Fox was trying to escape arrest. Ed H. Vail led a cattle drive from the

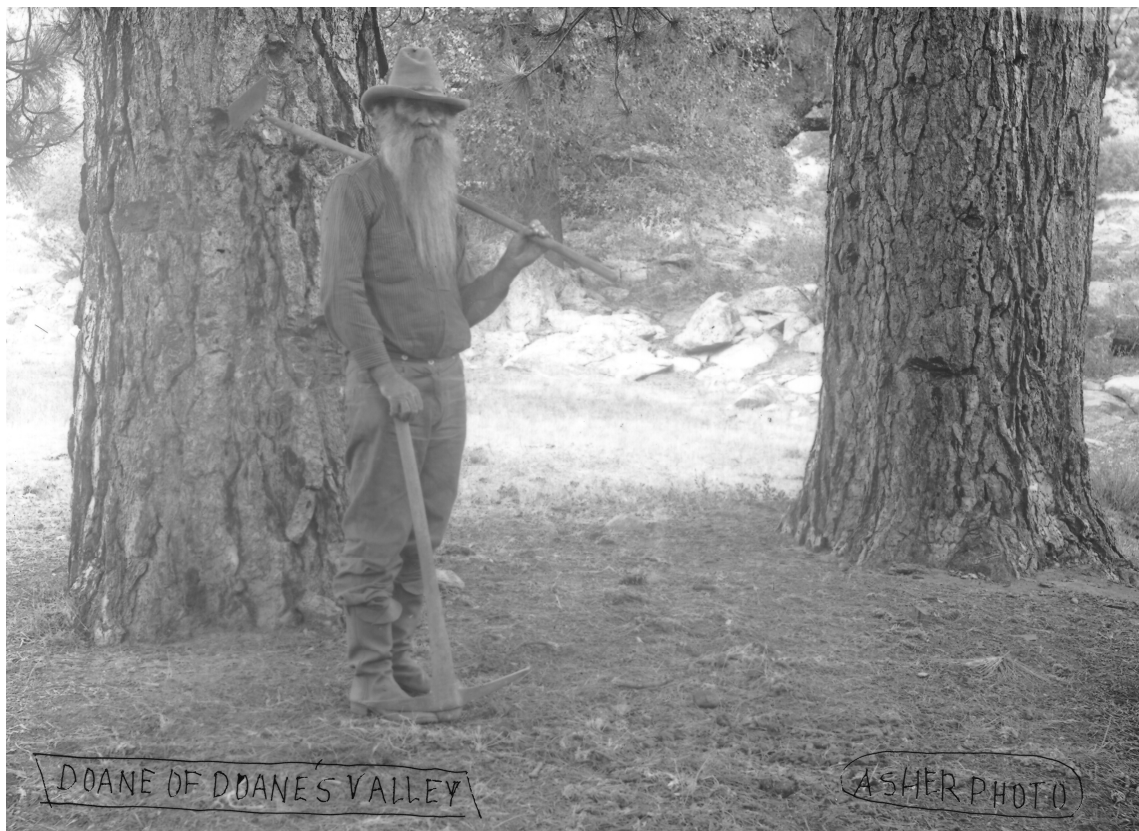
Vails' Empire Ranch east of Tucson to their Warners Ranch. Will and Frank Fox joined the Vail cattle drive under false names, after stealing horses in Arizona. Sheriff John Gray, deputy sheriff John Slankard and others met up with the cattle drive undercover, and as they were arresting the Fox brothers, Frank Fox ran off unarmed, going nowhere in the desert with Slankard in close pursuit. Slankard shot him needlessly in the back.

The San Diego Union had published this item on April 29, 1881 [49]:

Mr. T. Verlaque returned yesterday from a ten days' hunting excursion in the vicinity of Smith's Mountain. He won't talk "mines," but says there are lots of pigeons and small game thereabouts and he killed his share. Stock looks fine. It is a fine growing season. Grass is high, rich and plenty. The weather is cool yet, and the sheep men are yet in the warmer sections. He visited Mr. Mendenhall and Mr. Dyche. They both have good places and can entertain "an angel unawares" in excellent style.

Edward Davis writes [1]:

One time, about 1881, when George Dyche was on his way home with a team and wagon, he met a man at the San Luis Rey River, at the foot of the slide grade up Palomar Mountain. He had on only a shirt, overalls and shoes, no coat and no hat, but a luxuriant growth of black whiskers reaching well down on his breast.



George Doane Robert Asher photo

This man proved to be George Doane, on foot, leading his horse, to look up vacant land to settle on and make his home. George Dyche, always hospitable, invited Doane to come up with him, so together they drove up the steep slide road, resting the horses many times before the top was reached. The weather grew rainy, cold and chilling, and by the time they reached the house Doane was shivering, and water was running off forming pools where he stood. Will Dyche, then a boy, recalls how Doane stood in front of the roaring blaze in the big fire place, his thick whiskers matted together with water drizzling from

the points. His whiskers were so wet he wrung them out like a wet garment in a wash tub. He took both hands and twisted them, leaning over so the water would drizzle on the hearth. He kept turning around to get dried out, first on one side and then on the other and as his heavy whiskers dried, they spread fan-wise over his broad chest. About this time dinner was announced and Doane sat down to a feast. He ate like one starved: raised biscuits two bites and down, one after another, meat and potatoes the same, until he was filled up, and then he sat back in his chair and fell asleep. This was George Doane's introduction to Palomar Mountain. It seems he came from Valley Center to Mesa Grande on horse-back, stayed at the Angel Ranch and was on his way to Palomar when he met Dyche. Doane went to the Mendenhall ranch and saw John Place, who directed him to what later became Doane Valley. ...

The San Diego Sun wrote about May Day 1882 celebrations in "Notes From Bear Valley" (Bear Valley is an earlier name for Valley Center) [58]:

On Smith's mountain they had a gala time, concluding with a dance in the evening at the residence of Dave Warren, and another at the residence of Geo. V. Dyche, at which several of our Bear Valley people attended and had a general good time, the festivities being continued all night.

In 1883, a brief note was published in the San Diego Union mentioning George Dyche [24]:

Sheriff Coyne returned from the Smith Mountain region last night. Plenty of snow and ice there. Geo. Dyche has some very fine fat cattle.

Later in 1883, the San Diego Union noted [25]:

The Fourth was duly observed at Smith's Mountain, by a picnic and a dance at George V. Dyche's residence. About fifty persons were present.

Marion Beckler writes [9]:

When George Dyche's children and the children of Joe Damron arrived at school age they made the required number for the opening of school [PB: Beckler spells it Dameron]. So the Malava School District was formed, a log schoolhouse was built, and Mr. Snow of Love Valley was hired as teacher. But, prior to the establishment of this public school, the residents had looked out for the education of their children. The Malava School, built in the 1870s, was east of Mendenhall Valley and northeast of Dyche Valley. The original log building was moved to make an addition to the George Cook home and a new schoolhouse was built. Lumber for it was hauled up Smith's road -- dubbed "The Slide" -- by George and Hiram Cook. At that time the attendance averaged nine or ten children. There were the older Mendenhall children, the Frazier boys, Charles and Manning, Ida and Susie Cook, Emma Barker, and Emanuel Dyche [PB: Beckler has his name as Manuel]. ... The adobe house built by Joseph Smith, in which the Dyche family lived, had a large living-room about eighteen by thirty feet, and in it the people of the mountain enjoyed many dancing parties.

In a 1937 oral history about the Malava school, neighbor Winbert C. Fink said [52]:

... The first school house was built on the George Dyche place, formerly the Joseph Smith ranch. The elder people who knew the interesting history of Smith or Palomar mountain and who thought that Joseph Smith, pioneer, should be honored, wanted the

name of the school district to be Smith; but the young people, and there were a good many of them, thought Malava the better, more poetic and more romantic name. ... For many years the Malava school continued: the Dyche, Cooke and Place families furnishing a large number of pupils. The first schoolhouse was made of logs with a puncheon floor (split logs, with the flat side up – a very rough and uneven surface). The roof was made of cedar shakes (long, thin slabs roughly shaped with an ax or adze) There were four big children in the Dyche family, where the first teacher boarded, so the schoolhouse also served as the teacher's sleeping quarters. One of the first teachers was Mrs. Amy C. V. Schaeeggs, whose pen name was Stanley J. Fitzpatrick. While teaching as Malava she took up a pre-emption claim and free homestead on the mountain and later added more land to her holdings by means of purchase. She died at the Theosophical headquarters on Point Loma. Another teacher of those early days was a Mr. Ferris, father of the druggists whose store at the corner of Market St. and Fifth Ave. long has been a familiar landmark. This log schoolhouse was later replaced by one built of sawed lumber. Other schoolhouses took the place of these pioneer buildings and in later years, there not being enough pupils to keep a school going, the district was attached to the Palomar school district. The old schoolhouse was sold and torn down and the name disappeared from all reports official and otherwise. However, there are many still living in San Diego county who will remember old Malava school and the warm spring after which it was named. This spring is in Mendenhall valley, a little east of the Mendenhall Co.'s ranch house, where on a grassy slope nearby one may enjoy a grand view of mountain peaks and upland meadows. ...” [PB: Fink interview has her name as Amy Schaggs]

Marion Beckler writes [9]:

Charles Kelly, San Diego County pioneer, says he once saw George Dyche and remembers him well because of his picturesque garb, for on that occasion he was dressed in deer skin, even to the fringe on his trousers.

The San Diego Union published this humorous item on George Dyche in March 1884 [51]:

George Dyche, one of the “oldest inhabitants,” is in from his ranch on Smith's Mountain. George says he walked in, but as he is a great joker, we guess he was trying to give us a “fill.”

The San Diego Sun published this item on George Dyche in August 1884 [59]:

Geo. V. Dyche of Smith's Mountain, accompanied by his son, Will V. Dyche, a good looking young man of nineteen summers, is in town. This is the second time that Will was ever in town, and his father took him to see all the sights.

The National City Record newspaper published an “Official Delinquent Tax List of the County of San Diego for the Fiscal Year 1884-5” [26], which listed George Dyche's delinquent taxable property in the Agua Caliente road district and the Malava school district, as follows:

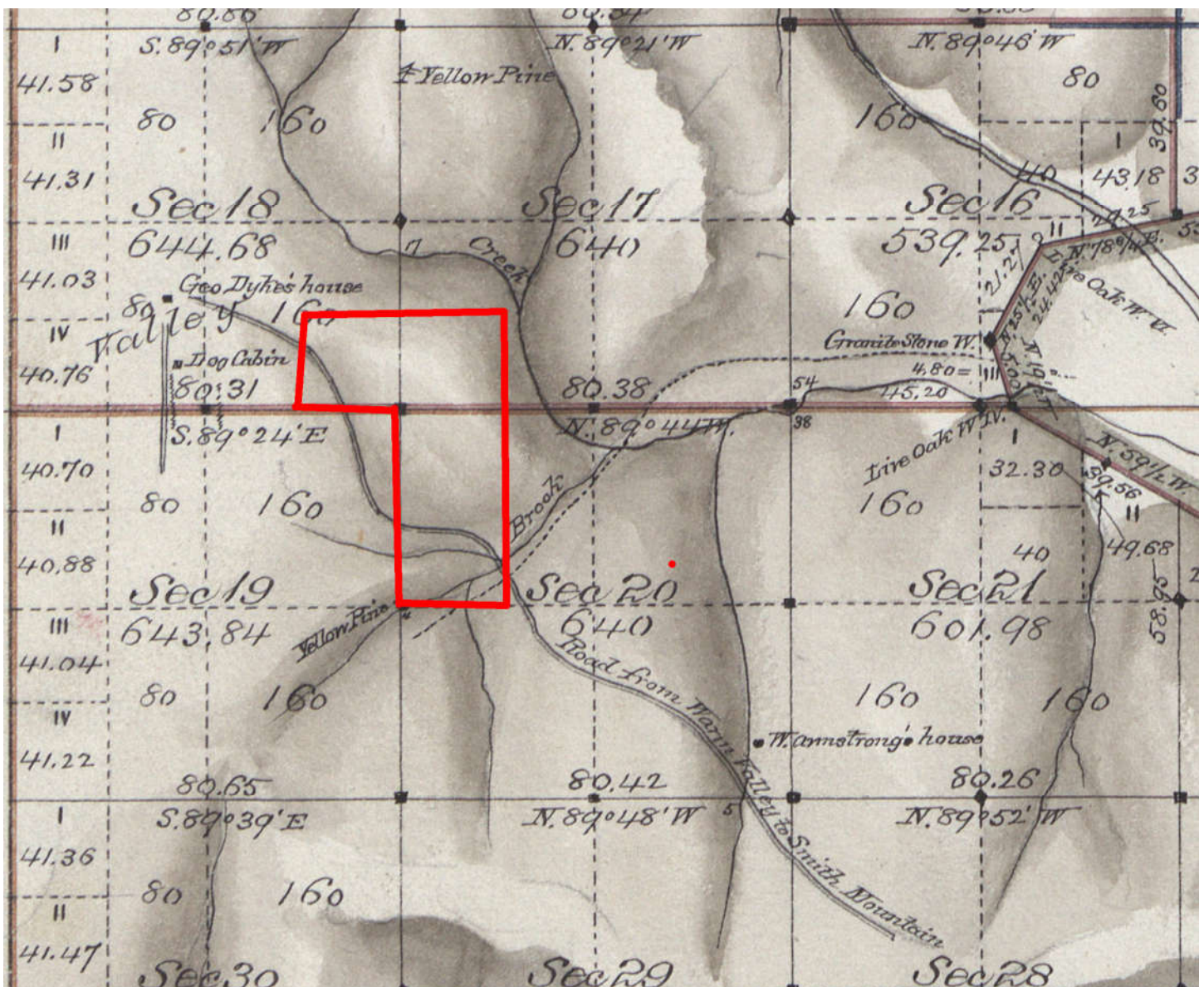
320 acres with \$550 valuation and taxes owed \$10.72

Watch \$10 valuation, furniture \$10 valuation, fire arms \$15 valuation, sewing machine \$10, farm utensils \$10, wagon \$60, harness \$10, 5 horses \$150, 5 Spanish horses \$100, 15 colts \$150, 50 cattle \$50, 1 dozen poultry \$3, 1 mule \$25, 5 hogs \$5, 50 bee hives \$63, with total valuation of \$1,471 and taxes owed \$26.51

George V. Dyche

George V. Dyche signature on a Malava School document at the San Diego History Center

In 1886, George Dyche's son Emanuel V. Dyche staked a homestead claim to 160 acres of Palomar Mountain land, with the U.S. government granting him that homestead claim five years later on April 15, 1891 [21].



Emanuel V. Dyche's homestead land on Palomar Mountain, complementing his father George's land to the left of his land

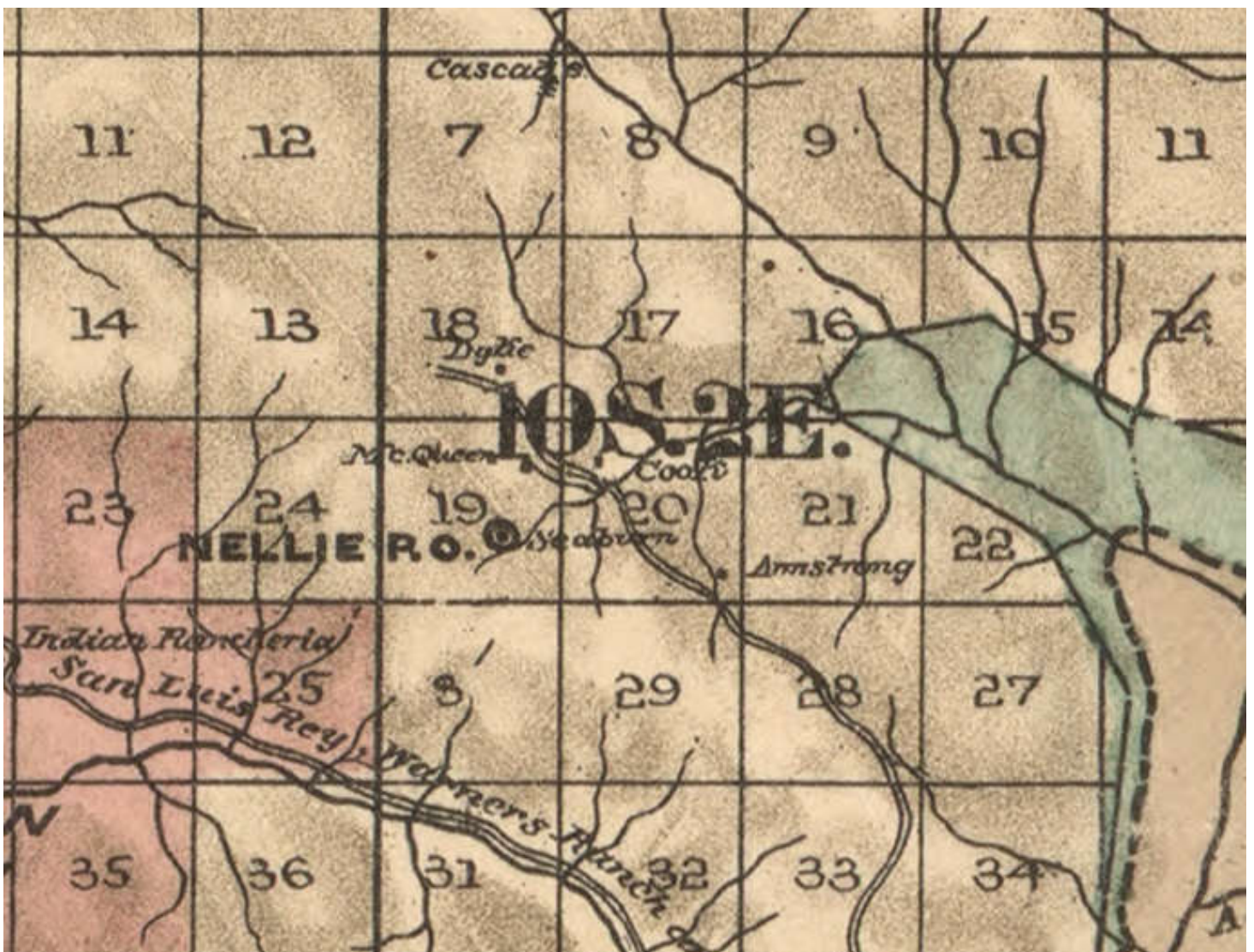
In late 1886, a note appeared in the “San Diego City and Vicinity” section of the San Diego Union that George Dyche had a bit too much to drink [27]:

George Dyche was brought to the jail in a very dilapidated and drunk condition. A bad bruise on the face showed where the ground had come up and hit him, and his general appearance betokened a long tear.

In September 1889, the Daily San Diegan published a county travel story [61]:

Turning now to the west and ascending a heavy grade, the thrifty settlement of Smith Mountain is reached. Three owners here, Messrs. Cook, Dinwiddie and Dyche, have severally 200, 100 and 100 cattle each.

In the Great Register of San Diego County for 1890 [3], with an enumeration date of July 7, 1888, George V. Dyche is listed as a farmer on Smith Mountain, which was Palomar Mountain’s name at that time.



section of 1890 map showing Dyche’s house at upper middle

Official map of San Diego County, California: compiled from latest official maps of U.S. surveys, railroad and irrigation surveys, county records, and other reliable sources. Thomas Dykes Beasley, 1890

In the Daily San Diegan newspaper in March 1890, George Dyche is quoted [60]:

George V. Dyche, an old-timer, wishes it understood that as early as 1868 he raised on Palomar mountain 80,000 pounds of grain, 40,000 pounds of which were consumed on his own ranch and the balance hauled below. This alone makes twenty loads, one ton to the load.

In the "Transactions of the Twenty-second District Agricultural Association for the year 1890, Composed of the County of San Diego," under "Premiums Awarded for 1890, in the Second Department, Fruits," George Dyche of Palomar won prizes of \$1 for a plate of Carthouse pears and \$1 for a plate of apples [43].

In the Great Register of San Diego County for 1892 [3], with enumeration dates in August and September of 1892, George V. Dyche is listed as a farmer on Smith Mountain, and Emanuel V. Dyche, age 26, is listed as a rancher, and William V. Dyche, age 23, is listed as a farmer, both on Smith Mountain.

George Dyche Leaves Palomar Mountain

On February 11, 1892, the San Diego Union published in its real estate transactions that George V. Dyche had sold his land to Enos T. Mendenhall for \$2,760 [28]. More information was published as a news item in that same issue [29]:

E. T. and Sylvester Mendenhall of Palomar Mountain have just purchased the lands of George V. Dyche, Milton V. Damron and Roy Johnson on said mountain, about 720 acres in all. This gives the Mendenhalls over 6,000 acres up there. They have 500 head of cattle and 30 head of horses and mules and evidently intend to branch out still further in the stock business. – *Escondido Times* [PB: Misspelled as Damaron in the newspaper]

In the Great Register of San Diego County for 1894 [3], with enumeration dates in July, August and October of 1894, George V. Dyche is listed as a rancher in Mesa Grande, Emanuel V. Dyche is listed as a farmer in Mesa Grande, and William V. Dyche, is listed as a laborer in Mesa Grande.

George V. Dyche's wife Maria "Mary" Lugo died March 17, 1895, in Napa, California, perhaps at the Napa Asylum for the Insane, now known as Napa State Hospital [2,44]. At that time in California, harmless demented people were commonly institutionalized, with a state report in 1892 stating that "four fifths of the reputed insane of California were inmates of asylums, and only 16 1/2 per cent were maintained at home." [46].

In the Directory of San Diego City and County for 1897, published by Olmsted Company in San Diego in 1897 [3], people listed for Mesa Grande include George V. Dyche, retired, along with William V. Dyche, laborer, and Miss Francis Dyche.

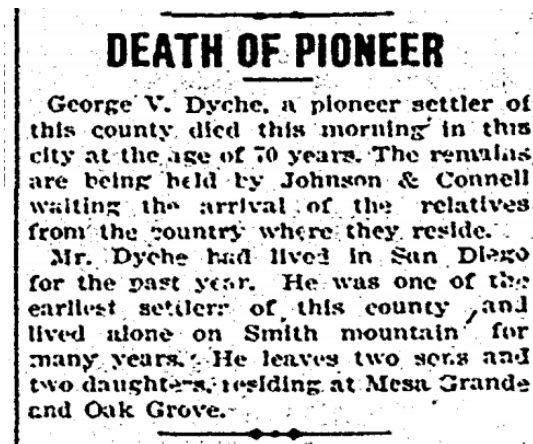
In the San Diego City and County Directory For 1899-1900, published by Fisher Ward and Pomeroy, in San Diego in 1899 [3], people listed for Mesa Grande include George V. Dyche, retired, along with William V. Dyche, laborer.

In the 1900 Census enumerated on June 9, 1900, for the First Ward of the City of San Diego, at the County Hospital and Poor Farm, George V. Dyche is listed as an inmate [3]. At that time, the San Diego County Hospital and Poor Farm was located on the south side of Mission Valley where the current 163 freeway crosses [10]. The San Diego County Hospital and Poor Farm was a safety net for the indigent and offered hospital and health care for the sick and injured who had no other means of support [10]. Indigent patients were mostly men who had lost the ability to provide for themselves and did not have family able to support them; those who were able to work

did chores within the facility itself or outside on the Poor Farm, which had eight acres of farm and orchard producing food for residential needs [10].

In 1903, in the San Diego City and County Directory, published by the San Diego Directory Company in 1903 [3], George V. Dyche is listed as an inmate at the San Diego County Hospital.

George Dyche died February 18, 1904, and a San Diego newspaper published a notice: [15]

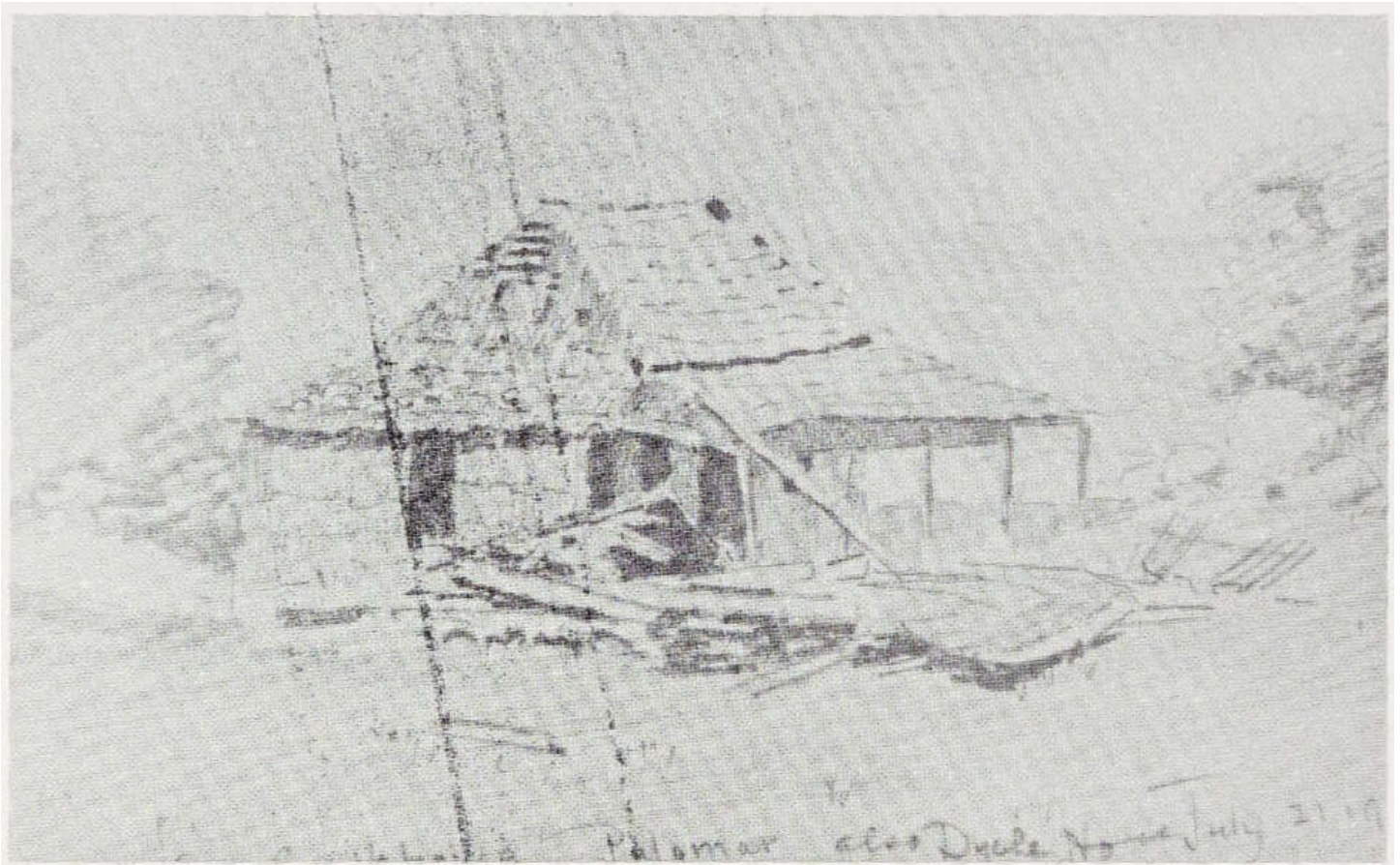


Ancestors.familysearch.org has information stating that George Dyche is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in San Diego, California [2]. That cemetery was dedicated in 1919, which is fifteen years after Dyche died, and a query on findagrave.com for George Dyche gravesite location assistance at that cemetery returned a response that the “Cemetery office has no record of this person” [2,16,17]. Perhaps that cemetery started earlier in some capacity, and since Dyche was living at the County Hospital and Poor Farm, perhaps he is buried in a common grave with no recorded location.

An oral history of Winbert C. Fink is entitled “Palomar Memories, William Dyche” and dated May 12, 1937 [44]. It is mistitled and should be titled “Palomar Memories, George Dyche” since he’s misidentified as William in the title and text. In the following text of that oral history, “George” within parentheses is substituted for “William”:

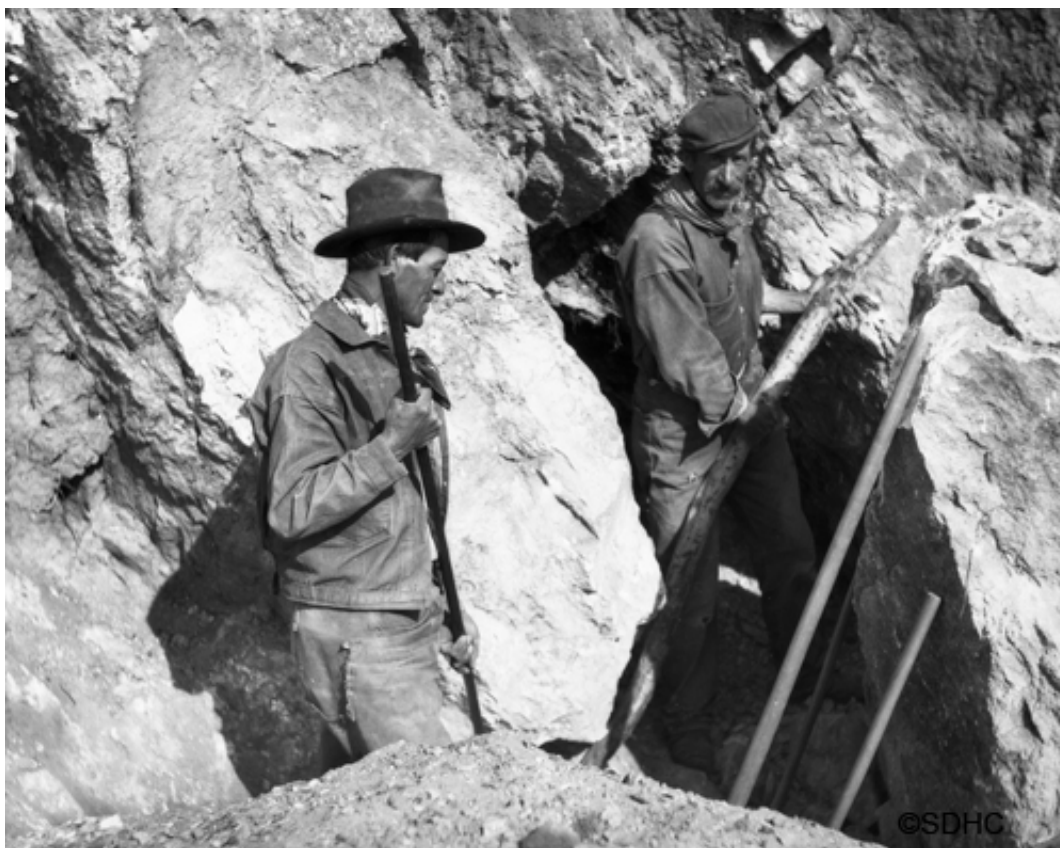
(George) Dyche and his family lived on the Joseph Smith place on Smith Mountain. There were four children of that family remaining. (George) Dyche was still living when I came in 1895. He died at the County Hospital in Mission Valley. He used to visit the neighbors on Smith Mountain when he was an old man and when compelled to do so he would talk of the old times. Many a night he sat before the fireplace at William W. Jessee’s home and moan while he related some of his early experiences. He was very careful not to mention the names of several people whom he spoke of as his enemies. It was because of his relationship with the Vigilantes that he was so reticent. He always carried his old six-gun although there was never any occasion to use it. (George) Dyche was rather small; he had a very dark complexion. He was a Hollander by birth. He maintained that his ‘enemies’ would get him one day – meaning that they would kill him. His parents were Manhattan people. They moved to West Virginia, a place on the Ohio River and there he grew up. That was his story. We understood he was a gambler on the Ohio River boats when he got the gold fever and came to the coast by way of Panama. He landed at Yerba Buena, ‘San Francisco’, made his way to Sacramento and the gold fields. Unable to make a living by labor he began clerking at Sacramento. Before Governor Downey’s time the principal owner sent Mr. Dyche to the Warner Ranch as majordomo. There are two grants in the Warner’s Ranch but these people only had control of one at

the time. Mr. Dyche lived there until about 1869 [PB: Fink said 1867]. At that time there was a change of ownership on the Warner's Ranch and he saw he had a good chance to get the Smith place on Smith Mountain. It was a squatter's ranch at that time. It was surveyed after Dyche was living on the place. William Wolfskill bought the Smith place particularly for the livestock, the squatter's rights, and for the purpose of putting his son John on it. John would not live there so Wolfskill turned it over to Dyche at the same price, Dyche giving him his mortgage. Dyche lived there until about 1892 [PB: Fink said 1893]. He married Maria, an Aqua Caliente Indian, a very fine woman. They always claimed she was the best woman on the reservation. She went insane and died in the Napa insane asylum [PB: Fink said it was at Patton]. She had lost a son by a horse falling on him. He was buried at the foot of Smith Mountain, where Henshaw Dam is, in an Indian cemetery. The cemetery was moved to Mataguay on the John Trainor ranch. There are four Dyche children all in San Diego county. Their names are: Manual, William, Frances, and Mary. Frances married James La Rue who lives at Oceanside, I think. Mary married Milton Damron who also are at Oceanside. Manuel married Ysabel Helm, a daughter of Turner Helm and his wife who was an Indian woman. William married a Miss Mitchell of Mesa Grande.



Sketch of Joseph Smith / George Dyche house in 1908, by Edward H. Davis [54]

CHILDREN OF GEORGE AND MARY DYCHE



**Emanuel V. Dyche (left, 39 years old) and Charley Duret
at Gem Mine near Rincon and Warner's Ranch, 1904** Edward Davis photo



Julian Cemetery ^[1]



Santa Ysabel store, 1898. Left to Right: Manuelita la Chusa; Cordelia (Littlepage) Mitchell; Valle Mitchell (on barrel); Rena Hoover (later Nolan) by post; Walter Gooley (seated on porch); Mrs. Hoover, Mr. Hoover (owners); Myrtle Hoover (later Barnes); Charlie Muggari; **William Van Dyche** Postcard spotted by Joanna Gunther at Santa Ysabel store



William Van Dyche in 1936, at 68 years old
Edward Davis photo



William Van Dyche and his wife Dell Mitchell, 1903 wedding photo photo from Joanna Gunther



William Van Dyche, January 11, 1947, at 79 years old
Edward Davis photos



Casner Family Cemetery, Ramona ^[1]



Frances Virginia Dyche La Rue, Forest Lawn Memorial Park ^[1]



Mary Ellen Dyche Damron, Forest Lawn Memorial Park ^[11]

Thank you to Joanna Dyche Gunther, granddaughter of William Van Dyche, for sharing information and photos, and to Elizabeth Warnock

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