



WILLIAM LUCAS MARRIED **SARAH BARNES** BORN MAY 14, 1827 IN STILLWATER, TUSCARAWAS, OHIO ON OCTOBER 18, 1845 IN VAN BUREN, IOWA. THEIR FIRST TWO SONS WERE BORN THERE. WILLIAM WENT WEST FOR GOLD. HE MINED AT SUTTER'S, COMSTOCK, VIRGINIA CITY, AND CHEROKEE. AT ONE TIME WHILE ON A PROSPECTING TRIP TO NEVADA, HE AND A PARTNER WERE WORKING A SILVER CLAIM. THE TUNNELLING BECAME HARD AND NOTHING IN SIGHT—SO THE PARTNERS SOLD OUT AND RETURNED TO CALIFORNIA ONLY TO LEARN, A SHORT TIME LATER, THEY HAD QUIT WITHIN 12 FEET OF THE FAMOUS COMSTOCK LODE! BUT IT WAS PROBABLY AT SUTTER'S THAT HE MINED THE \$2000 HE SENT TO HIS WIFE. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS MONEY WAS DISPATCHED TO SARAH, IN THAT YEAR 1850, HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THE PLASKETT FAMILY MYSTERIES. THEY USED THIS "CALIFORNIA GOLD" TO PAY OFF THE IOWA FARM.

IT WAS ALSO AT THIS TIME THAT SARAH HAD HER THIRD SON—**THEODORE**, WHOM LIVED AND DIED BEFORE HIS FATHER SAW HIM. SARAH AND HER HUSBAND MAINTAINED THAT AT THIS TIME, IN SPITE OF THE DISTANCE, THEY EACH KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON. —WILLIAM THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THE CHILD'S BIRTH, THE SUFFERING, AND HIS WIFE'S DISTRESS; WHILE SHE IN TURN WAS ALWAYS CERTAIN THAT HER HUSBAND DID KNOW, DID SUFFER TOO, AND THAT HIS COMPASSION WAS A REAL AND KNOWLEDGEABLE FACTOR OF THOSE DREARY DAYS.

WILLIAM PLASKETT RETURNED TO IOWA FOR HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN. THE FARM WAS SOLD AND IOWA WAS DEPARTED FOR ALWAYS. THE FAMILY WENT DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI TO NEW ORLEANS TOOK A SHIP TO COLON, CROSSED THE ISTHMUS FROM COLON TO PANAMA. FROM THERE THEY SAILED TO SAN FRANCISCO THE DRAMA OF CROSSING THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL IN THOSE PRE-CANAL DAYS WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE ABSENCE OF A DAY OF THE TWO BOYS, BYRON AND LEONIDUS, WHO WERE TAKEN ON THE BACK OF A MULE LED BY AN INDIAN. SARAH RECALLED VIVIDLY AND OFTEN HER SUPREME SATISFACTION ON SEEING HER TWO SONS, SAFE AND SOUND AT THE END OF A VERY LONG DAY, A DAY IN WHICH SHE HAD BEEN CARRIED ACROSS THE CHAGRES RIVER UPON THE BACK OF A STRONG BLACK MAN.

FROM SAN FRANCISCO THE FAMILY WENT TO CHEROKEE, WHERE WILLIAM MINED. WHILE SARAH MADE A WEDDING GOWN, BEAUTIFULLY SEWN, AND ALL OF LACE, FOR A WEALTHY SACRAMENTO LADY. HOW SHE MANAGED TO DO IT DURING THIS ERA IS DIFFICULT TO PICTURE---BUT THIS EPISODE WAS TO HER ONE OF PRIDE AND SUCCESS. SHE WAS PROUD ALSO OF THE FACT THAT SHE BECAME A SORT OF SAFETY BANK FOR THE MINERS, WHO BROUGHT HER THEIR GOLD FOR SAFE KEEPING, AT A TIME WHEN FEW WERE TRUSTED. SHE COOKED AND WASHED FOR MOST OF THESE MEN AND HERE AT CHEROKEE, THAT SARAH GAVE BIRTH TO HER FOURTH CHILD, A BOY "**REASON ALPHA**" WAS BORN DECEMBER 11, 1852. THE FIRST WHITE CHILD BORN IN THAT AREA.

HER FIFTH CHILD **FRANCIS MARION** WAS ALSO BORN THERE IN NOVEMBER OF 1854. WHILE IT DID APPEAR THAT WILLIAM, HIMSELF, HAD LIVED THROUGH THE VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS OF THOSE DIFFICULT TIMES UNSCATHED, ACTUALLY IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE TURBULENCE, THAT HE DETERMINED TO KEEP HIS FAMILY SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM THE EVILS OF MAN. HE BECAME INDIFFERENT TO GOLD AND UNSWERVINGLY FOLLOWED THE PATH OF THE RANCHER REMOTE FROM THE CROWD! A HOMESTEAD WAS ACQUIRED IN MENDOCINO COUNTY IN THE REGION NOW KNOWN AS PLASKETT MEADOWS. SARAH HAD HER FIRST DAUGHTER SEPTEMBER 14, 1856, AND WAS CALLED **MENDOCINO MAY** AFTER THE COUNTY IN WHICH SHE WAS BORN. THE PLASKETTS HAD THREE MORE DAUGHTERS AT PLASKETT MEADOWS. **LAURA F.** IN MAY 1858, **OLIVE** IN FEBRUARY 1860 AND **MARY JOSEPHINE** ON JUNE 29, 1862. WINTERS WERE DIFFICULT. BEARS AND COUGARS ATTACKED AND

KILLED THE STOCK. IN ADDITION CATTLE AND SHEEP TOO OFTEN DISAPPEARED AS THOUGH STOLEN. AFTER A FEW MISERABLE WINTERS THEY LEFT. FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF PLASKETT MEADOWS THEY OBTAINED A HOMESTEAD IN FRESNO COUNTY, NEAR BUCHANAN, NOW CALLED CHOWCHILLA.

THE PLASKETTS AND THEIR EIGHT CHILDREN FARMED VERY SECCESFULLY AND ALSO ADD TWO MORE CHILDREN TO THE FAMILY. **ROBERT LUCAS** BORN IN 1864 AND **WILLIAM E.** IN DECEMBER 1866. BUT WHEN THE COUNTRY AROUND BECAME TO POPULATED, WILLIAM WENT LOOKING FOR A PLACE OF HIS LIKING. IN 1868 HE FOUND PACIFIC VALLEY AND TOOK UP 2000 ACRES. THIS WAS LAND CONTAINING A NARROW VALLEY BOUNDED BY THE CRASHING PACIFIC OCEAN ON THE WEST AND THE RISING SANTA LUCIA MOUNTAIN RANGE ON THE EAST. IT WAS BEAUITFUL, LOVELY, PRIMITIVE, ROADLESS, WINDSWEPT, FOGSWEPT, AND LONELY.

IN JULY 1869 THE FAMILIES (**BRYON GIANAVIL** BORN JULY 12,1846 HAD MARRIED HIS SWEETHEART (**MARTHA COREEN BENNETT** BORN FEBRUARY 01,1852 IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI) WITH CATTLE, HORSES, WAGONS AND ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS LEFT FRESNO, DROVE THEIR OX TEAMS OVER PACHECO PASS AND UP THE FERTILE SALINAS VALLEY. THEN YELLOW WITH WILD MUSTARD. THEY CROSSED THE COAST RANGE OVER INDIAN TRAILS AND REACHED PACIFIC VALLEY IN SEPTEMBER 1869. SARAH WAS THEN FOUR MONTHS PREGNANT WITH HER TWEVLETH AND LAST CHILD.

FEARING EARLY RAINS THEY SET TO WORK CLEARING A SPACE FOR LOG CABINS WHERE THEY SPENT THE FIRST WINTER. THE PLASKETTS TWELVETH AND LAST CHILD **JAMES SAMUEL** ARRIVED FEBRUARY 09,1870. THE MEN SET UP A SAW MILL IN PLASKETT CREEK AND FROM THE REDWOOD CUT AND SAWED LUMBER TO BUILD SUBSTANTIAL HOMES.

THAT FIRST WINTER THE YOUNGER CHILDERN DARED NOT VENTURE FAR FROM CAMP AS WILD ANIMALS ABOUNDED. BEAR, DEER, WOLVES AND FOXES INHABITED THE THICKET AND AT NIGHT THE EERIE CRY OF THE COYOTE AND MOUNTAIN LION SENT THE LITTLE TOTS SCURRYING TO THEIR MOTHER'S SIDE. OFTEN THE BRIGHT EYES OF THE ANIMALS COULD BE SEEN THROUGH THE CHINKS IN THE WALL.

IN THIS VALLEY THE PLASKETTS HAD MINES, GOLD AND PLACER, CREEKS, FERTILE LAND, GRAZING LAND AND OCEAN. AFTER A FEW YEARS THE ENTIRE VALLEY WAS TILLABLE AND IN THE FERTILE SOIL AND MILD CLIMATE AND CROPS COULD BE RAISED. VEGETABLES WERE RAISED THE YEAR ROUND AND IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL TO SEE TOMATO AND PEPPER PLANTS SEVERAL YEARS OLD. THE HOME OF THE ELDER PLASKETTS WAS BUILT ON THE BANK OF PLASKETT CREEK. IT WAS A TWO STORIED BUILDING, WITH WIDE PORCHES DOWN STAIRS AND A PORTICO ABOVE. AN ORCHARD WAS PLANTED IN THE MEADOW ACROSS THE CREEK WHICH GREW AND BORE ABUNDANTLY, THE OLD ORCHARD IS THE SITE OF THE PLASKETT CAMP GROUNDS; THE RECREATIONAL AREA SET UP BY THE FOREST SERVICE. THE REST OF THE CAMP GROUND LIES OVER ONE OF THE OLD GRAIN FIELDS AND IS EQUIPPED WITH TABLES, BENCHES AND STOVES WITH ADEQUATE REST ROOMS. IN 1959 THE PACIFIC VALLEY SCHOOLHOUSE WAS NEAR THE SITE OF THE OLD PLASKETT HOUSE WHICH WAS TORN DOWN. PART OF THE GRANITE STONE FIREPLACE WAS STILL VISIBLE NEAR THE OLD MAGNOLIA TREE. (THE STONE NOW SITS IN THE YARD OF PENNY PLASKETT BARBREE.) THE HOUSE WAS TORN DOWN AND A HOME FROM IT WAS BUILT FOR THE MANSFIELDS. **MENDOCINO MAY** MARRIED CURNELL HARRY MANSFIELD BORN DECEMBER 06, 1835 IN WASHINGTON, HANCOCK, OHIO. HE DIED JULY 27, 1906 IN KING CITY, CA. THEY WERE MARRIED MARCH 16, 1871. LATER THAT HOUSE WAS USED TO BUILD THE BARBREE CABIN ON THE COAST.

THE **BRYON PLASKETT** HOME, ALSO TWO-STORIED, WAS BUILT AT THE SOUTH END OF THE VALLEY A HALF MILE FROM THE ELDER FAMILY. THIS WAS A 10-ROOM HOUSE, STURDILY BUILT TO WITHSTAND WIND AND STORMS AND STOOD IN GOOD CONDITION UNTIL THE FAMILY SOLD TO HEARST IN 1922 WHEN IT WAS TORN DOWN AND THE LUMBER USED TO BUILD A HOUSE NEAR THE FORESTRY HEADQUARTERS.

LEONIDAS HAMLIN PLASKETT THE SECOND SON BORN MARCH 29, 1848, MARRIED NANCY E. SUMMERS BORN NOVEMBER 25, 1857 IN CHINESE CAMP, TUOLUMNE, CA. THEY WERE WED IN 1875 IN TUOLUMNE, CA. THEIR HOME WAS BUILT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF WILLOW CREEK ABOUT FOUR MILES FROM THE COASTLINE. THEY PLANTED A LARGE ORCHARD, THE FRUIT HAVING WONDERFUL FLAVOR IN THIS HIGHER, WARMER CLIMATE. BEES WERE KEPT YIELDING A FINE QUALITY OF HONEY. NANCY AND LONNY'S FAMILY CONSISTED OF CORA F. -SEPTEMBER 06, 1876, JAMES WILLIAM-

APRIL 06,1878, ANNIE IRENE-FEBRUARY 01,1880, JESSE H. - OCTOBER 01,1881, CHARLEY LEROY- JULY 17, 1883, LEONIDAS B. - APRIL 06,1885, ARLEY A. - APRIL 19, 1887, SADIE M. – FEBRUARY 01,1889, HALLIE W. - MARCH 27, 1891, NELLIE LEOTTA- JANUARY 26, 1893, LEWIS L.-FEBRUARY 09, 1896. ALTOGETHER IT WAS A FINE PLACE TO LIVE.

ACCESS WAS DIFFICULT. ONE HAD TO RIDE IN BY WAGON FROM KING CITY TO JOLON AND THEN TO THE NACIMENTO RIVER TO A SPOT WHICH WAS LATER CALLED THE SHUEY CAMP. HERE THE WAGONS WERE LEFT AND ONE RODE HORSEBACK, SOMETIMES WITH PACKHORSES AND MULES, THOUGH THE PRECARIOUS TRAIL ACROSS THE COASTAL RANGE. THE NEAREST TOWN WAS SOLEDAD WHERE THE RAILROAD ENDED. STOCK WAS DRIVEN THERE TO SELL, FOUR OR FIVE DAYS BEING REQUIRED TO MAKE THE LONG TRIP.

LATER SOME SUPPLIES COULD BE PURCHASED AT LOWES STATION AT THE FOOT OF THE JOLON GRADE WHERE A FLOURMILL AND STORE WERE OPERATED. STILL LATER, THE FAMILIES ALONG THE COAST ARRANGED TO CHARTER A BOAT FROM SAN FRANCISCO ONCE A YEAR. STAPLE SUPPLIES FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY SUCH AS BARRELS OF FLOUR AND SUGAR, BOLTS OF CALICO AND FLANNEL AND MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES WERE BROUGHT BY BOAT AND UNLOADED AT THE QUITE COVE AT THE MOUTH OF PLASKETT CREEK. THIS IS STILL CALLED “ THE OLD BOAT LANDING’.

WHEN THE BOAT ARRIVED GREAT EXCITEMENT PREVAILED. EVERYONE WENT TO THE BEACH, EACH HOUSEHOLD HEAD WITH HIS LIST. MUCH COMPARISON OF LISTS AND LOTS OF CONFUSION WAS EXPERIENCED BEFORE EACH FAMILY’S SUPPLIES WERE SEPARATED AND PILED APART.

THE WOMEN OF THE VALLEY WERE PROFICIENT IN PIONEER LIFE. EXCELLENT COOKS AND HOUSEKEEPERS, THEY WERE EVER READY TO WELCOME A PASSING TRAVELER. THE NAME OF SARAH PLASKETT BECAME A SYMBOL OF KINDLY HOSPITALITY AND THE YOUNGER WOMEN FOLLOWED IN HER STEPS.

ALTHOUGH THEY WORKED HARD, NOT ALL OF LIFE WAS DRUDGERY. THERE WERE FREQUENT FISH FRIES ON THE BEACH AND PICNICS IN THE COOL SHADY CANYONS. OFTEN AT BRANDING TIME THE WOMEN RODE TO THE CAMP AND ENJOYED A BARBECUE WITH THE COWBOYS.

THE PLASKETT MEN WERE ADEPT AT CARPENTRY AND WOOD WORK AND THEIR HOMES WERE FURNISHED WITH HAND-MADE FURNITURE. REASON PLASKETT BUILT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT JOLON IN 1879. IT IS STILL IN USES TODAY.

THE GORDA POAT OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED ON MARCH 25, 1893 BY THE FIRST POST MASTER CHARLES H. PLASKETT. IT RECEIVED ITS MAIL BY WAGON ROAD AND TRAIL OVER THE MOUNTAINS FROM JOLON TWICE A WEEK. CHARLES SERVED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15, 1894 SUCCEEDED BY WILLIAM E. PLASKETT, WHO HELD OFFICE UNTIL MAY 29, 1903. THE LAST POSTMASTER WAS JASPER MANSFIELD WHO CONDUCTED SERVICES UNTIL FEBRUARY 28, 1923, WHEN THE OFFICE WAS DISCONTINUED.

BRYON PLASKETT CARRIED THE MAIL FROM JOLON TWICE A WEEK RAIN OR SHINE. LATER GEORGE AMES ALONG WITH ED AND LAWSON PLASKETT EACH TOOK TURNS AT IT.

AT FIRST A PRIVATE SCHOOL WAS MAINTAINED BUT SOON THE PACIFIC VALLEY SCHOOL WAS ESTABLISHED. AN UNUSUALLY HIGH ORDER OF SOCIAL LIFE PREVAILED, A BAND WAS ORGANIZED AND A LITERARY CLUB FORMED. NEARLY ALL OF THE PLASKETT BOYS MARRIED SCHOOLTEACHERS. THERE WAS A STORY TOLD OF THE TRAIL OVER THE MOUNTAIN BEING SO PERILOUS THAT ONCE IN THE VALLEY, THE TEACHERS MARRIED AND SETTLED DOWN RATHER THAN VENTURE OUT. THIS WAS TOLD IN FUN, BUT JUDGE WHITLOCK OF JOLAN MADE THE TRIP OVER SEVERAL TIMES TO PERFORM THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY AT HOME WEDDINGS.

MANY STRANGE EVENTS TOOK PLACE IN THE EARLY YEARS. THE GRIZZLY BEAR WAS THE MOST FEARED OF ALL THE ANIMALS. NONE VENTURED FAR WITHOUT HIS TRUUSTY MUZZLE LOADING RIFLE. ONE DAY THREE OF THE OLDER BOYS, RIDING HOME FROM TENDING CATTLE, CAME UPON A LARGE GRIZZLY AND TWO HALF-GROWN CUBS, THEY KILLED THE CUBS, BUT THE OLD BEAR COULD NOT BE STOPPED BY BULLETS. CHARGING AT THEM WITH FIERCE GROWLS OF RAGE, THE INFURIATED BEAST STRUCK TERROR TO THE HEARTS OF THE BOYS WHO FIRED THE LAST SHOT FROM THE GUNS AND FLED HOMEWARD TOGETHER FOR HELP. RETURNING WITH ALL THE MEN AVAILABLE, THEY FOUND THE HUGE BODY OF THE MOTHER BEAR NOT FAR FROM WHERE THEY HAD LAST SEEN HER. ANOTHER TIME A GRIZZLY HAD KILLED A FULL-GROWN COW ON THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL UNDER A LARGE OAK. FRANK MUMA, JOE STEVENSON AND CURNELL MANSFIELD BUILT A SCAFFOLD AND TIED IT TO THE BRANCHES OF THE TREE AS A HIDING PLACE. THERE THEY WAITED AT NIGHT FOR

THE BEAR TO RETURN AND RESUME HIS FEAST. AFTER DARK SURE ENOUGH, THE BEAR CAME AND STARTED EATING ON THE CARCASS. SOME ONE AIMED AND FIRED, BUT IN THE DARKNESS THE BULLET HIT THE ROPE THAT HELD THE SCAFFOLD LETTING BOTH SCAFFOLD AND MEN FALL ON TOP OF THE BEAR. IT WAS HARD TO TELL WHICH WAS MORE FRIGHTENED AS THE BEAR WITH WILD WOOPS SCAMPERED THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH TO SAFETY, WHILE THE MEN RUEFULLY UNTANGLED THEMSELVES AND WENT HOME. THE TREE IS KNOWN AS THE BEAR TREE TO THIS DAY. DURING THE PLASKETTS OCCUPATION OF PACIFIC VALLEY MORE THAN 50 CHILDREN WERE BORN TO GROW UP HEALTHY AND HAPPY. IT WAS NATURAL THAT A STRONG SENSE OF CLANSHIP EXISTED IN THE ISOLATED COMMUNITY.

THE ELDER PLASKETTS RETIRED AND MOVED TO SALINAS IN 1896 LEAVING WILLIAM AND JAMES TO RUN THE COAST RANCH. THEY LIVED IN SALINAS THE REST OF THEIR LIVES, WHERE THEY MADE MANY FRIENDS, BOTH RETAINING THEIR UNUSAL MENTAL ALERTNESS TO THE LAST. WILLIAM DIED IN 1909 AT THE AGE OF 91 AND SARAH LIVED TO BE 96 PASSING AWAY IN 1923.

WILLIAM AND SARAH LEFT PACIFIC VALLEY, THROUGH WHICH PLASKETT CREEK FLOWS, IN 1896, BUT THERE WERE ENOUGH PLASKETTS REMAINING TO KEEP THE NAME VERY MUCH ALIVE. THE MONTEREY COUNTY ASSESSORS PATENT BOOK SHOWS SEVEN PLASKETTS WITH PATENTS IN THE AREA OF PACIFIC VALLEY. THEY WERE LEONIDAS H., REASON A, FRANCIS M, JAMES S, CHARLES H, AND WILLIAM E. PLASKETT.
