

THE CURIOUS CASE OF PHINEAS LOUCKS

**A TALE OF A DEAD WOMAN, ABANDONED CHILDREN,
AND A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE**

**AT MARKWOOD MEADOW
ON PINE RIDGE**

FRESNO COUNTY

**With Stories by Fresno County Historians Ernestine Winchell, June English,
Charles Clough and William Secrest Jr., and Catherine Rehart**

**And Additional Information about Markwood Meadow,
Shake Making, Phineas Loucks' Land Holdings
and Other Items of Interest**

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**by
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THE CURIOUS CASE OF PHINEAS LOUCKS

This is a story about Phineas Loucks. Phineas Loucks (1845-1891) was a beekeeper and shake maker who moved his family into the mountains in nineteenth-century Fresno County, into what would soon become the Sierra National Forest. Loucks also achieved some notoriety for some unusual circumstances of his life as a result of that move.

The notoriety has been told in stories by other Fresno County historians. In the 1920s, Ernestine Winchell wrote a series of articles called “Fresno Memories” in the Fresno newspapers, and told a story entitled “*A Casual Sacrifice*”, of how Phineas Loucks’ wife lost her life in 1887 after a winter ordeal in the mountains, and his subsequent disappearance¹. Winchell’s version is captured in a reprint by June English, once historian for the Sierra National Forest, whose local history collections are now in the library at CSU Fresno². In their 1984 book, *Fresno County – The Pioneer Years*, authors Charles Clough and William Secrest Jr., told again of the untimely death of Loucks’ wife and his later disappearance³. In 2006, historian Catherine Rehart, citing English’s works, wrote an account of “*The Strange Disappearance of Phineas Loucks*” in her sixth volume of *The Valley’s Legends and Legacies*, noting that Loucks’ disappearance “remains one of the stranger mysteries in the tales of our Valley”⁴. It is this strange mystery that deserves another retelling, as contemporary accounts of Loucks’ life offer untold details.

Clough and Secrest describe Phineas Loucks as peripatetic. Perhaps a better descriptor is that he was an enthusiastic man, given to following his passions for both good and bad, which ultimately led to the noteworthy circumstances described in the earlier stories. These circumstances, of how Loucks’ wife Mary died as a young mother, and the subsequent odd disappearance of Loucks himself, have made Phineas Loucks a Fresno County tale.

Appendix 1: *A Casual Sacrifice*, by Ernestine Winchell. Typescript and additional notes by June English.

Appendix 2: Excerpt from *Fresno County – The Pioneer Years*, by Charles Clough and William Secrest Jr., 1984

Appendix 3: *The Strange Disappearance of Phineas Loucks*, in *The Valley’s Legends and Legacies*, by Catherine Rehart, 2006.

One of Phineas Loucks’ first passions was beekeeping, which may have brought him and his family to Fresno County, California from Wisconsin in 1877⁵. Phineas was born in 1845 in New York⁶. He married Mary Jane Hurst, an 18 year old from Canada, in Wisconsin in 1869⁷. As a teenager, he began keeping bees in Wisconsin⁸, subscribing to bee journals, and soon thereafter, offering in national publications novel ways of managing hives⁹. Once married, he and his wife were growing a family, with sons Alfred C. (born 1871), Wallace Eugene (born 1872) and Stephen Phineas (born 1874)¹⁰. What prompted a move from Wisconsin to California remains

unknown, but he left his Wisconsin property behind¹¹ for the warmer and drier environment of California's central valley, perhaps a better climate for advancing his interest and enterprise in beekeeping.

The Loucks family landed in Centerville, a small mining and agricultural town on the Kings River in Fresno County¹², although in 1878 Loucks had bees near the Tulare county town of Visalia, on the Kaweah River¹³. Phineas wasted no time in becoming known in the bee business, and the business appeared to be buzz-worthy. By 1880, the Loucks family had a farm near Centerville and in 1881, he made beekeeping his "entire business", locating his hives in the Sierra foot-hills, on the San Joaquin River, and on the Kings River¹⁴. Classified ads in the local newspapers of 1880 and 1881 offer Loucks' honey and bees by mail order¹⁵.



Loucks boasted about his bees and the advantages of his location in numerous publications like the Pacific Rural Press, the American Bee Journal and the National Live-Stock Journal. He also was featured in articles in the Fresno County newspapers singing praises of his successes:

Honey -- Mr. Phineas Loucks, who lives away in Centerville, was in town one day last week with a wagon load of splendid honey. He started this spring with fifty stands of bees, and commenced dividing his swarms in April, and now has one hundred and five stands, and has taken from them this date, fifteen hundred pounds of choice honey. He separates or extracts the honey from the comb by centrifugal process, which leaves the comb in perfect shape, and returns it again to the hive to be refilled by the bees. By this management he secures from three to five times the quantity of honey in a season, that he would get if his bees had to replace the comb through their own industry. Fresno Republican Weekly, June 5, 1880¹⁶.

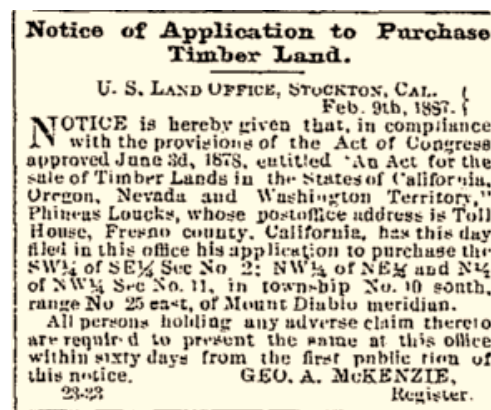
Mr. P. Loucks, of King's River, paid us a visit this week, and informs us that during the past season he has taken 11,400 pounds of honey from his apiary, and his bees have increased from 50 stands at the commencement of the season to 110 stands, and he also has on hand about 125 pounds of wax. Such is the result of one season's work in operating and starting another industry in our county. It was asserted by many that the production of honey could not be successfully and profitably conducted in Fresno County. Mr. Loucks has fully demonstrated that by proper attention and care it is practicable and profitable. And still there are opportunities for the introduction of other industries with profit. We have yet to learn of a single enterprise, that has paid in other localities, and which has been tried in an intelligent manner in Fresno County and failed. Our resources are practically unlimited. Fresno Republican Weekly, December 11, 1880¹⁷.

By 1880, life was apparently doing well for the Loucks family. The farm was successful enough to support two Chinese laborers, Fook and Loo¹⁸, cultivating 25 acres and getting three crops per season¹⁹. A daughter, Catherine (Katie) Rose had been born in 1877 in California, and more daughters were soon born, Dolly M. (born 1880) and Martha May (born 1883)²⁰. Loucks' work to get a leg up in the bee business was briefly halted in March of 1881, when while moving his bees, a kick from a cow broke his leg, leaving him laid up for a month (during which he wrote more news articles about his bees)²¹.

After 1882, there were no more local or national advertisements or journal articles about Loucks' bees and honey. Perhaps he gave up the business he had been in since a boy, but by the mid-1880s, he apparently had found another passion to follow, and moved his family again, this time to the Sierra Nevada mountains of eastern Fresno County. Soon, the events Winchell, Clough, and Rehart described began to unfold, bringing Phineas Loucks back into the news.

In 1878, the US Congress passed the Timber and Stone Culture Act, an act for the sale of timber lands in California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory. This law offered tracts of public land unfit for agriculture and valued for timber at \$2.50 an acre, and individuals could purchase no more than 160 acres. Purchasers had to swear an oath that the land would only benefit themselves, file statements with the General Land Office, and post notice of their application.

Phineas Loucks must have seen this as a new opportunity, as in March 1887, he began the process to patent 160 acres of timber lands on Pine Ridge in the vicinity of Markwood Meadow²². It's possible that he planned his timber land ownership even sooner, as another daughter, Myrtle Irene, was reportedly born at Markwood Meadow in 1885²³.



Notice of Application to Purchase Timber Land. U.S. Land Office, Stockton, Cal. Feb. 9, 1887. Notice is hereby given that, in compliance with the provisions of the Act of Congress approved June 3d, 1878, entitled "An Act for the Sale of Timber Lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," Phineas Loucks, whose post office address is Toll House, Fresno County, California, has this day filed in this office his application to purchase the SW 1/4 of SE 1/4 Sec. No. 2; NW 1/4 of NE 1/4 and N1/2 of NW 1/4 Sec. No. 11, in township No. 10 south, range No. 25 east, of Mount Diablo meridian. All persons holding any adverse claim thereto are required to present the same at this office within sixty days from the first publication of this notice. Geo. A. McKenzie, Register. Fresno Republican Weekly, March 18, 1887.

Although the Timber and Stone Culture Act did not require residency on the claimed lands, like the 1862 Homestead Act did, it appears that the Loucks family moved to the vicinity of Markwood Meadow, probably to strengthen their entitlement to the lands. By all accounts, Loucks built a cabin for his large family, including his wife and young children. It was described by Winchell as “a log house with a fireplace in the center and with wide low-spreading eaves. In the unique proportions and sturdy strength of the structure Mr. Loucks took great pride”, and Clough and Secrest described it as “built to withstand any disaster”.

Winchell tells the tale of the winter of 1887. She wrote that Phineas left his wife and six children—all under the age of ten [ed. which is inaccurate]—in the cabin and returned to the valley to tend his bees. A tremendous snowfall that winter buried the cabin completely. A passerby found no signs of life, and a subsequent search party could not find the cabin again. All three historical accounts note that Phineas was confident of the strength of the cabin and the amount of provisions the family had, disclaiming any anxiety about their health (Winchell), or showing no concern (Rehart). In 1883, the volcanic explosion on the island of Krakatoa created volcanic winter-like conditions, and the four years following the explosion were unusually cold over the earth, with powerful storms in the winters²⁴. It is possible that so much snow fell it completely buried the cabin, although it seems unlikely in such a case that without fire in the fireplace the family could have survived, and the smoke should have been seen by rescuers. In any case, Winchell, Rehart, Clough and Secrest all report that when spring arrived, the family emerged from the cabin alive--emaciated and suffering--but alive.

A news account from that winter tells a little different tale, suggesting that the later historians may have heard exaggerated accounts of the distress that the family suffered, being buried in a snow-bound cabin. The Fresno Republican Weekly from March 11, 1887 reports:

The report that a woman and some children had lost their lives in the snow storm in the Sierras, proves to have been untrue. The family of Mr. Loucks, a bee man, were living in a cabin in the vicinity of Markwood's Meadows, but having plenty of provision, and a party of hunters being camped nearby, they did not suffer seriously on account of the snow. Mr. L. was down in the valley at the time of the storm²⁵.

But a newspaper story just three years later in 1890, recalling the episode, described the “family of little ones whom some of our Selma ladies took care of when so nearly starved”²⁶. Starved or not, it must have been a difficult winter for the family.

What is in agreement in the later accounts, however, is that Mary Loucks was pregnant again during the winter. The winter’s isolation, and one could also suspect that the taxing care of six children stuck in a log cabin for the winter, took its toll on her. Other women camped nearby provided assistance and care for her, but Mary Loucks was in a weakened condition, and despite the call for a doctor (which was against Phineas’ beliefs²⁷), she died in childbirth in July 1887.

Winchell describes the scene:

Weakened by many children, by long cold months without proper exercise or food – without inspiration or recreation of any kind – the patient, gentle woman was an uncomplaining sacrifice to a Government land filing and the ambitions attending it. Grieved, horrified and enraged, the

women who had grown to admire and to love her, hastened to prepare the pain-wracked body for burial, dressing it in the one best nightgown, while one of the men hurriedly nailed up a rude coffin from boards that were on hand. A grave was dug nearby, the pine box quickly lowered and interred. Wild flowers and greenery were spread over the raw mound and desperately the agonized friends caught at that sweet touch of loveliness to land their thought toward peace.

The baby boy born to the Loucks' survived. Records are varied, as Phineas named him either Samuel Judah²⁸, or Judah I.²⁹, or Israel J.³⁰, despite the mother's wishes that he be named after her brother, William Henry Hurst³¹. Historian English's records include a note from a descendant of the child that it was family lore that Phineas had named him "Judas Iscariot", perhaps equating the betrayer of Jesus Christ with the baby that betrayed the family by causing the death of the mother. Later, after the events of this story, the family renamed the child William Henry, as Mary Loucks had wanted.

In the summer of 1887, Phineas now had seven children in his care, Wallace (16), Stephen (13), Katie Rose (10), Dolly (7), Martha (4), Myrtle (2), and the newborn, Samuel. He needed help, and posted an advertisement looking for it:

Wanted. Having met with the loss of my wife, I wish to employ a man and wife on my farm near Markwood Meadows. The woman must understand housekeeping and the care of children. Good wages and a permanent place for the right parties. Address P. Loucks, Toll House, Cal. Fresno Republican Weekly, July 29, 1887³².

The care of the children must have been a burden for Loucks, now a widowed man. Winchell tells that at the end of the summer they were taken to the Fresno County town of Selma by their father, who rented a home there for the winter³³. Clough and Secrest tell that he left them with friends or family. Rehart says the children went back to the mountains with him the next spring, but were found abandoned, and taken back to Selma where homes were found for them. Mary Loucks' brother William Hurst had moved to Fresno County, where he married³⁴, and it is possible he oversaw the care of some of the children, perhaps those who would have been of school age. The care of the younger children posed a problem for Phineas. He not only had to earn a living, but was also burdened with jury duty in the Superior Court of Fresno County in the winter of 1888; the jury notice indicated there were many cases to try and the jury would "have a long siege of it ahead of them"³⁵.

In January, 1888, a Selma attorney was appointed as a guardian for the Loucks girls Dolly and Martha May³⁶. They apparently were adopted by the Swift and Martin families, respectively, of Selma, and their uncle Hurst later became their guardian.³⁷ But some of the other children caused Loucks much distress. On December 7, 1888, the San Francisco Chronicle reported:

P. Loucks of Fresno went off to the mountains in September, leaving in his cabin in a horrible condition a nine-year-old girl and a fifteen-months-old baby. They had a bed-tick filled with straw, some dried fruit and some crackers and an old tin pan in the house. Loucks had also left orders to have milk left for them. He came back last Saturday and was arrested on a charge of failure to provide. Some ladies have taken charge of the children³⁸.

This was probably Katie Rose, now 11, and the baby Samuel. Soon thereafter, the Martin family also asked the court to adopt the baby Samuel, with Loucks' accord:

Thomas G. Martin of Selma has filed a petition in the superior court of this county for the legal adoption of Samuel Judah Loucks, a 17-months-old son of Phineas Loucks who recently deserted his family while laboring under a fit of religious insanity. Loucks gives his consent to have Martin adopt the baby. Fresno Republican Weekly, February 8, 1889³⁹.

Of the other girl, Myrtle, there is no record, although in later court papers she retained the surname Loucks like the oldest siblings, where Dolly, Martha, and Samuel took on their adoptive surnames⁴⁰.

By the spring of 1889, Loucks had returned to the mountains, likely without any of his children, and it was in May of that year that the General Land Office issued him a land patent for his 160 acres of timber near Markwood Meadow⁴¹. He was now a land-owner in the mountains, and appeared to make his living utilizing those resources, rather than beekeeping, which is rarely mentioned any longer in accounts of him.

A year later, the events began to unfold that brought Phineas Loucks even more notoriety in Fresno County. Winchell describes it most briefly, noting that he disappeared and “was never found.” Clough and Secrest write the “odd story” that Loucks was aggrieved by his wife’s death and became a morose hermit, disappearing one winter, having become “insane and wandered off into the mountains and died.” Rehart notes that Loucks disappeared and “no trace of Phineas Loucks was ever found.” Insanity can be understood by the calamities he had faced with the loss of his wife and children, and there is the sense that some of it was religiously-based urges; in fact, Loucks was known locally as a “peculiar religious enthusiast”⁴². The story, however, as told by contemporary versions at the time, is different than these later historians would tell.

Phineas Loucks would disappear by all accounts, but in reality he disappeared twice. In May of 1890, his first disappearance was reported in numerous newspapers around California, perhaps not ironically in association with another fierce snow storm in the mountains.

Phineas Loucks Missing.

Phineas Loucks, who owns a timber claim at Markwood Meadows, has been missing since January 16th. On that evening Loucks stopped at the Kenyon House on his way from this city to his home. He started the next morning and had been gone but a few hours when a severe snowstorm set in. Loucks' cabin was found untenanted, and it is believed that he was lost in the storm.

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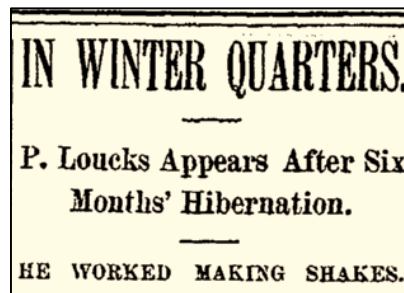
shakes and in hunting and trapping. Mr. Loucks has several children living near Selma. Fresno Republican Weekly, May 2, 1890⁴³.

This disappearance was certainly short-lived. Within days, Loucks reappeared, and addressed the situation with equanimity⁴⁴:

P. Loucks Alive. He Did Not Perish in a Snow Storm, but Was Making Shakes. An item appeared in the papers a few days ago to the effect that P. Loucks had started for his cabin in the mountains and had been lost in a raging snow storm. The following note from Mr. Loucks will show that he has reappeared in the flesh, safe and sound: Markwood, May 2, 1890. Editor Republican: As I came out to Kenyon's store yesterday I learned that the report had gone out for publication that I had probably perished. Please say that I am well and hearty, yet working hard to supply the market the coming season with shakes, as near as I am able to do so in order to pay my just debts and get square with the world. While I have been "missing" I have made 80,000 shakes and have had no time for visiting. P. Loucks. Fresno Republican Weekly, May 6, 1890.

Although Loucks' response does not equate with what one might expect from a 'morose hermit', the phrase getting 'square with the world' is haunting in retrospect, as it seems to imply debts not just financial, but perhaps of faith as well, in line with his religious leanings.

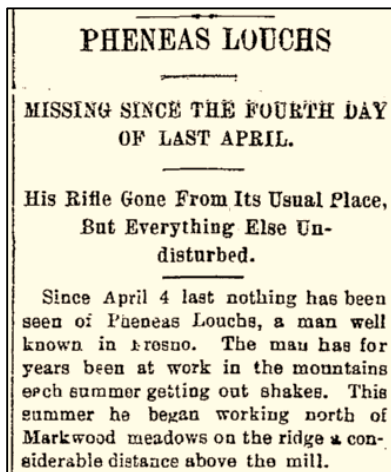
In another interview later that summer, however, Loucks was brimming with enthusiasm for his latest enterprise, shake-making, hardly the portrait of an aggrieved widower, or one burdened by childcare.



In Winter Quarters. P. Loucks Appears After Six Months' Hibernation. He Worked Making Shakes. One Tree Yielded Seventy-Five Thousand Shakes and Another Fifty Thousand. P. Loucks, a shake maker residing near Markwood meadows, turned up in Fresno yesterday safe and hearty. Last January he was reported lost in a snow storm in the mountains, and the evening newspaper of this city published a portrait of Bismark and palmed it off on its readers as the true presentment of Mr. Loucks. "I never had a picture taken in my life before to-day, and I sat for my photograph this afternoon just for curiosity. The snow around my cabin all winter was thirteen feet deep, and I was not annoyed much by callers," said Mr. Loucks. Not Cold or Lonesome. "It was not so very cold after all, but bracing. The great depth of snow did not interfere with my work, for the snow was hard most of the time. During the whole four months of snow there were only three weeks in which I had to travel on snow shoes. I occupied myself making shakes and I was not very much interrupted by the weather, although I had to dig down very often to get at the butt of the tree to cut it. "I was very much amused when I came out of my winter quarters and found that I had been given up for dead. The climate up there is delightful and the hottest day this summer was 86 in the shade." Mr. Loucks looks the very picture of health. Fresno Daily Republican, July 21, 1890⁴⁵.

Busy pursuing his new passion, Phineas Loucks had only disappeared from public intercourse. Upon his return, he enthusiastically boasted about his current enterprise of making shakes, not unlike his previous passion for beekeeping. This new endeavor, however, led him to continue his lonely life in the mountains.

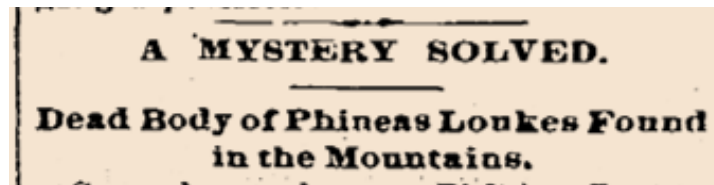
A year later, in 1891, Phineas Loucks disappeared for the second time, as reported in the local news:



Pheneas Louchs. Missing Since the Fourth Day of Last April. His Rifle Gone from Its Usual Place, But Everything Else Undisturbed. Since April 4 last nothing has been seen of Pheneas Louchs, a man well known in Fresno. The man has for years been at work in the mountains each summer getting out shakes. This summer he began working north of Markwood meadows on the ridge a considerable distance above the mill. On April 4 he was last seen at Kenyon's store and from there he started back for his mountain home. A few days since A. M. Clark and French Drury both received letters of inquiry as to what had become of the man. Mr. Drury decided to visit the camp of the man and reached there last Wednesday. He found it deserted entirely and looking as though it had not been the habitation of man for many months. Several thousand shakes were piled up already cut. The shaving tools were out on the work bench, the cooking utensils were on the cold stove, and even the man's false teeth were lying on the table. The camp had not the appearance of one which has been left only for a short time. Everything about the place stood where it usually did, except the rifle, which had gone away with the proprietor of the camp. There was nothing to indicate that the camper would not return and no intimation of possible departure for good. The friends of the man can find no explanation for his absence, yet they do not believe him dead. Fresno Morning Republican, August 23, 1891⁴⁶.

Here's where Phineas Loucks' story ended in the accounts of the earlier Fresno County historians. Phineas Loucks was gone, never to be seen again. Even in the late nineteenth-century, the disappearance of a person in a sparsely populated mountain area was cause for notice and comment. Those who knew him suggested that his hermit lifestyle and strange beliefs had caused him to go insane, wander off and die⁴⁷. One gets the sense from the earlier historians that Loucks' disappearance was his just desserts for his reckless disregard for the health and well-being of his wife and children in his enthusiastic turn to mountain life.

However, Winchell, Clough, Secrest and Rehart all missed the denouement of the story of Phineas Loucks' disappearance. A year later, in the summer of 1892, Phineas Loucks was found:



A Mystery Solved. Dead Body of Phineas Loukes Found in the Mountains. Several months ago Phineas Loukes disappeared from Pine Ridge, having on his person a considerable sum of money. He lived alone in a rude shake camp and was a man of good habits and peaceable in his disposition. A few days ago the dead body of a man was found near the Musick mines and although very much decomposed, it has been recognized as that of Mr. Loukes. A rifle was standing against a tree by the body, and the report is that there is a bullet hole through his head. It would appear from these evidences that he was the victim of foul play and that he had been murdered for his money. Fresno Morning Republican, August 17, 1892⁴⁸.

Thus finally ended the story of Phineas Loucks. Whether he met with foul play--and one of his grandsons told historian June English that family lore had that Phineas was killed by a man who detested what he had done (in causing the death of his wife and loss of his children)--or possibly committed suicide, as Clough and Secrest intimated, it was a sad tale, and unusual enough to be a tale memorialized in Fresno County history.



Appendix 1.

A Casual Sacrifice. In Fresno Memories, the Fresno Morning Republican Newspaper, by Ernestine Winchell. Typescript and postscript notes by June English, in the June English Collection, California State University Fresno.

FRESNO MEMORIES by Ernestine Winchell The Morning Republican No date 1922-32

A Casual Sacrifice

Probably Phineas Loucks and his wife had but recently arrived in Fresno county from their native Northwest (census shows Loucks came from New York State) when about 1877 they settled with their family of small children in Squaw Valley. They spent the summer of 1879 at the "cold spring" on the Pine Ridge forest road and the next year were in the vicinity of Centerville, where, with an apiary of more than a hundred stands of bees, Mr. Loucks had become quite solidly established in the honey business.

That well-watered, warm and sheltered district was ideal for bees and the profusion of wild bloom provided an easy harvest for the little workers. The swarms were ably cared for by the owner and to meet the growing demand for strained hone he (unreadable) to this county.

In 1887, with his family in a wagon, Phineas Loucks joined again the flood up the grade from Toll House, and at Ockenden he followed the road that turned to the right and wound through the forest to Markwood meadow and beyond. At the right again he left the way that led ultimately to Dinkey and to Laurel creek and on a bench by the side of a small brook in a spot bounded by boulders and spattered with rocks, he built a log house with a fireplace in the center and with wide low-spreading eaves. In the unique proportions and sturdy strength of the structure Mr. Loucks took great pride. Though the general aspect of the location was bleak and dreary beyond words, water and wood were convenient, trees for shake-making were plentiful and the place assumed in his eyes the importance of a property, for upon it he had recently filed a homestead.

Before the seasonal snows closed the mountain roads to teams Loucks returned to Centerville to work out and to give his bees as much care as might be needed, leaving his family in the new home to make good his claim to the Government land. To keep the mother company were three boys, the eldest less than 10 and three little girls still younger.

The winter of 1887-8 saw a tremendous snowfall which finally buried the dwelling from sight, the snow on the sloping roof meeting with that on the ground until there was nothing visible to distinguish that mound from any other in the whitened waste. A hunter passing on skis saw not a trace of the Loucks cabin and carried word to Toll House that it had been crushed to earth with all its inmates. With great effort and hardship men from the settlement went up to see what could be done, but they found no sign of habitation. To Centerville the news was sent but Mr. Loucks, confident of the building of his hands scoffed at the idea of the yielding of any weight or pressure and disclaimed any anxiety about his wife and children.

With the spring came the melting of the snows, and the log cabin emerged bright, dry and unharmed and when the roads became passable and Valley points open as far as Markwood meadow and even

to Dinkey and Laurel creek, the end of the wagon road, a little company from Selma camped for the hot months within Neighboring distance from the log house, so that after half a year of bitter isolation, Mrs. Loucks had once more the boon of association with women.

Not only companionship, which her starved soul so craved, but sympathetic help in time of trial for early in July her seventh child was born and no physician was within call. Tidings have wings in the mountain regions and soon it became known that all was not well with the mother — that she was ill — and then her life was feared for. Providentially, it appeared Dr. Rowell arrived at Ockenden's on his way for a short rest, and the women at the mill told him about Mrs. Loucks and implored him to go to her. With the generosity that was typical of him, the doctor made the weary drive of eight miles and back, and upon his return briefly explained that he was several days too late. That night the mother died.

Weakened by many children, by long cold months without proper exercise or food — without inspiration or recreation of any kind — the patient, gentle woman was an uncomplaining sacrifice to a Government land filing and the ambitions attending it. Grieved, horrified and enraged, the women who had grown to admire and to love her, hastened to prepare the pain-wracked body for burial, dressing it in the one best nightgown, while one of the men hurriedly nailed up a rude coffin from boards that were on hand. A grave was dug nearby, the pine box quickly lowered and interred. Wild flowers and greenery were spread over the raw mound and desperately the agonized friends caught at that sweet touch of loveliness to land their thought toward peace.

Before returning to his home Mrs. Loucks' brother, William Henry Hurst, for whom she wished her baby named, split out pine pickets with which he fenced the flower-decked grave.

At the end of the summer the children were taken to Selma by their father, who rented a house there and lived with them during the winter, but when spring came around again he returned alone to the place of the sacrifice. Later in the season when Frank Dusy stopped on one of his trips from Dinkey he found every evidence of recent occupation but no sign of the owner. Phineas Loucks was never found. Following the father's departure for the mountains the orphan children were taken into various kindly and sympathetic homes to receive proper care and they grew up to be good citizens and a credit to the memory of their devoted mother.

In time the land passed to the possession of Thomas Ockenden who fenced it along the section lines so changing the course of the road to Dinkey meadow (article was missing the last line).

[Two additional postscripts by June English:]

A descendant of Phineas Loucks requested information from me in 1967 and I was able to comply. June English.

[handwritten postscript] Jan. 1980. This same descendant recently contacted me. His name is Wesley Loucks and is descended from the baby in this story. He confirmed the info in this story: was told many years ago Phineas was killed by a Sanger man who detested Phineas for what he had done. Phineas was a well-known beekeeper — dedicated to bee culture. Mr. Loucks also stated Phineas named the new baby Judas Iscariot but family renamed baby after Phineas disappeared. Wesley Loucks has promised additional info concerning suit over the claim and cabin on Laurel Creek. J. E. (Did not do it).

Appendix 2

Fresno County – The Pioneer Years, From the Beginning to 1900. 1984. Charles W. Clough and William B. Secrest Jr. Panorama West Books. Fresno.

Excerpt

An odd story is attached to [Phineas] Loucks, who arrived at the nearby Laurel Creek area in 1887. A peripatetic county resident, he left his wife and children in their cabin on the creek while he tended to some beekeeping at Centerville. Local residents were concerned when heavy snows fell in the area and there were no signs of the Loucks family, but Phineas remained blasé about the situation. The cabin had been built to withstand any disaster, he said, and plenty of food had been placed there earlier.

When the spring of 1888 arrived, Mrs. Loucks and her children emerged from the cabin – just barely alive. Pregnant at the time of her isolation, she died in childbirth aggravated by weakness the following July. After burying her in a nearby meadow, Loucks moved to Selma with his children for a time. He seems to have left them with friends and/or family; in any event, he disposed of them so he could return to the cabin alone. Apparently aggrieved by his wife's death, he became a morose hermit. Neighbors spotted him only once in a great while; in April 1892 he was seen at Kenyon's, and no one saw him for weeks afterward. The August 10, 1892 *Fresno Daily Evening Expositor* tells the remainder of this sad tale:

A couple of months afterwards some men were passing by his cabin, found it deserted. In the woods near by they found his tools where he had been at work making shakes. From all appearances the tools had been lying there many weeks. No trace of Louks [sic] could be found, and he has not been heard of since. It is the belief that he became insane and wandered off into the mountains and died.

Appendix 3

The Strange Disappearance of Phineas Loucks. 2006. Catherine Rehart. In, *The Valley's Legends and Legacies*, Vol. VI. Word Dancer Press, Sanger, CA.

The Strange Disappearance of Phineas Loucks

In 1877, Phineas Loucks, his wife and young children arrived in Fresno County. Loucks was a native of New York who had settled in the Northwest. Now he was bringing his family to Squaw Valley.

Loucks was a beekeeper. By 1880, orchards began to proliferate in the Valley so he decided to move his family to Centerville so his honey bees could feed on the spring blossoms to their hearts content. Seven years later Loucks homesteaded a parcel of land near Dinkey Creek. In this remote spot, he built a cabin for his family which now consisted of not only his wife, but also three boys and three girls—all under the age of ten. Just before the winter snows hit, he left his family in the remote cabin to fulfill the residency requirements of the homestead and returned to the Valley to take care of his much-loved bees.

As luck would have it, the winter of 1887-88 was a horrible one. A hunter who happened by saw a small portion of the cabin—the rest was buried in the snow. He found no life and reported this when he came to the next settlement. A search party left from Tollhouse to try and rescue the family, but could not find the cabin—it was completely covered with snow. When Phineas Loucks was told of this, he showed no concern. “I built the cabin well,” he said. Spring arrived, and, sure enough, his wife and family were intact—emaciated but still breathing. In July, Mrs. Loucks, who had gone through this ordeal while pregnant, was read to give birth. Dr. Rowell was sent for, but when he got there, the poor woman had died.

The following spring, Loucks took his children to the mountain cabin. A month later, Frank Dusy stopped by and found that Loucks had disappeared. Dusy took the children to Selma and found homes for them.

No trace of Phineas Loucks was ever found. His disappearance remains one of the stranger mysteries in the tales of our Valley.

The Children of Phineas and Mary Jane Loucks

Besides the tragic story of Phineas and Mary Jane Loucks, an enduring legacy, however, was their children. Winchell provides a final statement: "the orphan children were taken into various kindly and sympathetic homes to receive proper care and they grew up to be good citizens and a credit to the memory of their devoted mother". Again, Winchell's account missed some of the continued calamity and heartache that the family endured.

Of Alfred C., the eldest son, no mention can be found other than the 1880 US Census. He was not listed as one of Phineas' heirs in 1900⁴⁹.

Wallace Eugene, his wife, and infant daughter were killed in an automobile accident with a train near Reedley, in Fresno County, in 1908⁵⁰. Wallace had married Elsie Swift, of the family that adopted his sister Dolly⁵¹.

Stephen Phineas lived in Fresno County, in the towns of Selma and Fowler and Fresno, as a servant and as a rancher. He died in 1945, at 71 years of age⁵².

Catherine (Katie) Rose was a successful student, achieving high marks, in Fresno County Schools⁵³. At age 24, she married Jonathan Gilstrap, moved to Siskiyou County, California, and raised four children. Widowed at age 63, she died in 1941⁵⁴.

Dolly M. was adopted into the Swift family of Selma; her adopted sister Elsie married her brother Wallace⁵⁵.

Martha May (Mary) probably inherited her father's enthusiastic and precarious mental disposition. Adopted into the Thomas Martin family of Selma along with her baby brother, her life became one of tragedy in 1899, as reported in the Fresno Republican Newspaper:

Studied Too Hard. Books Drive Mary Loucks to Insanity. Miss Mary Loucks, the adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Martin of Wildflower, was brought to the county jail yesterday morning suffering from insanity. Her mind was completely deranged and she had to be locked in a padded cell in the basement of the courthouse. Yesterday afternoon she was examined by Dr. Rowell, who recommended that she be committed to the insane asylum. The commitment will probably be made today. The girl is only 16 years old and was attending school where her mind became unbalanced. She was a hard student and in one year did the work which other pupils required two years to accomplish. Continued application at her books night and day secured good marks for her, which encouraged her to still further efforts. She became a confirmed book fiend and her parents found it hard to make her leave her lessons even for a minute. Her mind began to fail several days ago. Fresno Morning Republican, August 21, 1899⁵⁶.

Her brother Wallace became guardian of her estate in 1907, as she resided in the insane asylum in Stockton, CA⁵⁷.

Myrtle Irene married Charles Brimmer at age 19, and raised five children. She died in 1961 in the town of Prather, in Fresno County⁵⁸.

Samuel Judah, the last child, was named as such in an adoption petition in 1889 by Thomas Martin of Selma⁵⁹. In 1898, his uncle William Hurst applied for guardianship, and his name was listed as Israel J. Martin⁶⁰, which was reported in the newspaper as late as 1907⁶¹. The 1900 US Census lists him as Judah I. Martin, in the Martin household (along with his older sister Martha). One of his children,

Wesley Loucks, told historian June English that the family renamed him after his uncle William Henry Hurst. A 1902 report lists him as William Henry⁶². In the 1910 Census, he is a hired man in Fresno, known as William Henry Loucks. He married soon after that, and raised three children while working as a mechanic and an oil company engineer. He died in 1962 in Fresno, age 75 years⁶³.

Winchell describes Mary Loucks' grave as "nearby" the cabin. Clough and Secrest note that she was buried "in a nearby meadow". An 1890 newspaper article describes it as "Mrs. Loucks' grave is situated on an immense granite ledge, not far from the road"⁶⁴. The location is now lost to time. Wherever her grave may be, she lies there still, undisturbed and alone.

Shake Making

Shake making was a small-scale timber industry in the Sierras. Shake makers made the long thin, shingle-like pieces used for roofs and siding on mountain cabins and barns, and as fruit tray bottoms by orchardists. A shake was usually made of sugar pine, measuring 32 by 5 inches, and about ¼ inch thick. The job required a high degree of skill. Trees were selected for long, straight grain. A worthwhile tree would be felled and cut into shake length blocks. Shakes were split with a froe, a long blade with a handle on one end. Once cut, the shakes were stacked, dried and bundled for shipping⁶⁵.

Shake makers were seen by professional foresters as “generally a shiftless set who cannot bear the restraint and superintendence of manual labor in populated districts, preferring rather to lead a free and careless life in the mountain forests”⁶⁶. The shake makers had “all of the pioneer’s pride and all the skilled craftsman’s joy in his work. He wants to be ‘put in the best timber’; he does not want to look forward to taking wages from some great mill company...”⁶⁷ This characterization was echoed by the local shake makers themselves. On Pine Ridge in 1882, it was reported that “the energetic and jolly shake makers are already quite numerous. They say they prefer mountain air and pine shakes to valley dust and ague shakes”⁶⁸.

Charles H. Shinn, the first Forest Supervisor of the Sierra National Forest, wrote of “*Shakes and Shake-Making in a California Forest*” in 1909. In the Sierra National Forest, Shinn noted that the industry was of “considerable local importance” (some of the well-known names in the Fresno County timber industry were also shake-makers). After the turn of the twentieth century, in 1902 a number of shake makers were still at work on private lands. One tree, cut in 1904, yielded 60,000 shakes, which sold for \$420.00. A good shake maker could handle this in twenty days. In 1903, the government sold 150,000 board feet of timber to a shake maker, who worked the material over two summers, and cleared over \$2000.00 above expenses⁷⁰.



Making Shakes⁶⁹

Phineas Loucks took up shake-making, as he undoubtedly saw the unlimited resources and potential for carving out a good living for himself and his family, preferring to lead one of those ‘free and careless’ lives in the forest. Loucks was an industrious shake maker. In 1890 he bragged about his work that winter:

I made 25,000 shakes per month and sold them at \$4.50 per thousand. There are some big trees up in that country. I cut 73,500 shakes out of one tree, representing a product of \$329.85. The largest number of shakes that I cut out of one tree last year was 50,000, or \$223 worth. Fresno Daily Republican, July 31, 1890⁷¹.

Loucks' enthusiasm and work ethic made him successful financially, but may have cost him dearly otherwise.

Note: In a photograph entitled "Our Friends – The Shakemakers", photographer R. W. Riggs of Fresno County made a collage of images of men from the shake making industry – including some well-known names in the Fresno County timber industry like Bretz and Musick – and including a photograph of Wallace Loucks, who must have followed in his father's footsteps (next page).

"Our Friends – The Shakemakers"



Copy of a Sierra National Forest photograph of "Our Friends – The Shakemakers", by R. W. Riggs of Fresno, negative from the W. J. Mortland Collection, Fresno. Wallace Loucks is on the bottom row, fifth from left.

Markwood Meadow

Markwood Meadow became a popular place for campers, fishermen, and hunters in the late 1800s, especially those who went to the mountains to escape the summer heat of the Fresno area. It was also a good place to establish a summer home. From *History of Fresno County California*, published in 1882, comes the following description of Markwood Meadow:

Markwood Meadows are located in the high mountains, about fourteen miles east of the Toll House. It is a beautiful plateau, level as a floor, and at the proper season is covered with a luxuriant carpet of green grass. A wall of stately pines environs them, and adds to the charming character of the meadows. For years past they have been a favorite summer resort for a number of families, who have built comfortable homes for their use⁷².

In 1884, a classified ad in the Fresno Republican Weekly, offered up other uses for the meadow:

For Rent: A first-class pasture, consisting of about seventy acres...and known as Markwood Meadows. It is all under fence and has all the buildings necessary for carrying on the dairy business⁷³.

An 1898 news article described a trip to Markwood Meadow, with the author surprised to find so many campers there in July:

Down on the smooth grassy meadow a number of young men were enjoying a game of ball, while other members of the camp were busy with household duties. Every suggestion of comfort and luxury was visible, the vehicles, the horses and the pack mules gave assurance of easy transportation, while the ample hammocks swung before the houses promised comfort if one wished to remain at home....All in all, the people at Markwood have the nicest location, the fairest atmosphere, the greatest hospitality and the greatest ability of thoroughly enjoying camp life at any camp I have visited⁷⁴.

As described in the Fresno Republican newspaper in 1890, Markwood Meadow "is indeed a mark (in the) wood, and is 'the heart of the timber belt'. At the eastern end is the very substantial hewn log house where P. Loucks labored in clearing a flat of heavy timber, under a pre-emption title⁷⁵". Surrounded by the stately pines that formed the timber belt on Pine Ridge, Markwood Meadow was a choice location for Phineas Loucks to establish an enterprise working the timber.



Markwood Meadow. Image: Google Earth, 2014.

Phineas Loucks' Land Ownership

In the spring of 1887, Phineas Loucks posted consecutive notices in the Fresno Republican newspaper of his application to purchase 160 acres of timber lands on Pine Ridge east of Markwood Meadow (depicted in Figure 1 in red outline):

Notice of Application to Purchase Timber Land. U.S. Land Office, Stockton, Cal. Feb. 9, 1887. Notice is hereby given that, in compliance with the provisions of the Act of Congress approved June 3d, 1878, entitled "An Act for the Sale of Timber Lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," Phineas Loucks, whose post office address is Toll House, Fresno County, California, has this day filed in this office his application to purchase the SW 1/4 of SE 1/4 Sec. No. 2; NW 1/4 of NE 1/4 and N1/2 of NW 1/4 Sec. No. 11, in township No. 10 south, range No. 25 east, of Mount Diablo meridian. All persons holding any adverse claim thereto are required to present the same at this office within sixty days from the first publication of this notice. Geo. A. McKenzie, Register⁷⁶.

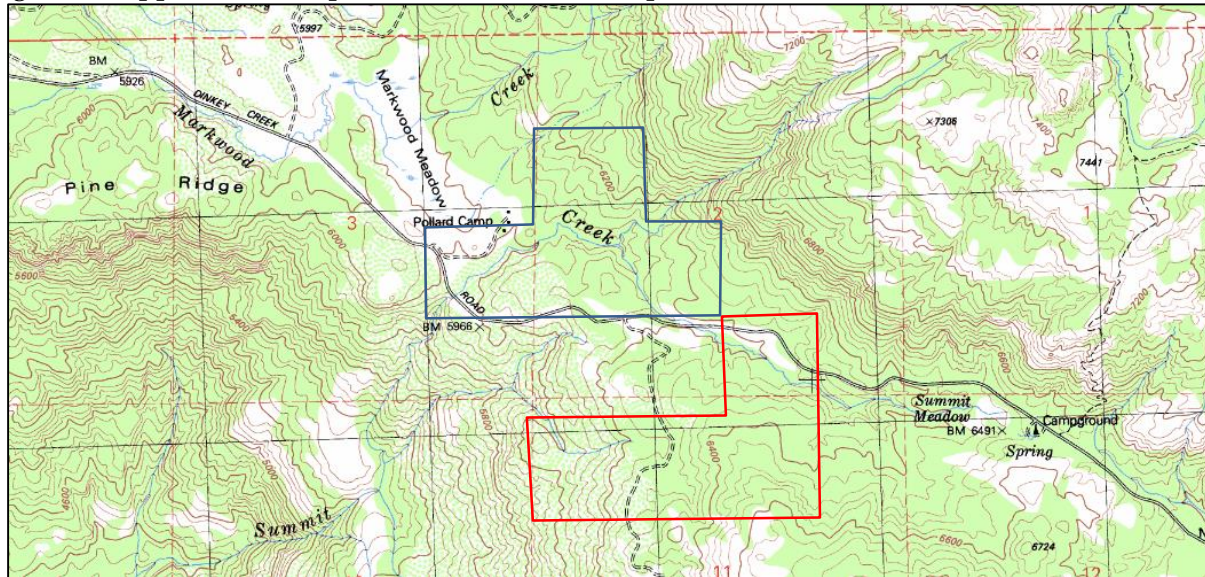
After 60 day's notice, Loucks was to furnish the General Land Office information that the land was valuable for timber only, and that it was unoccupied and without improvements. These 160 acres would have cost him \$400.00. On May 10, 1889, land patent 9019 was issued to Loucks, providing him and his heirs ownership of the land⁷⁷ (see Figure 1, and Attachment 1).

A month later, Loucks posted notices in the newspaper for a different 160 acres on the east side of Markwood Meadow. This land is depicted in Figure 1 in blue outline:

Land Notice. Land Office at Stockton, Cal, May 7th, 1887. Notice is hereby given that, Phineas Loucks, whose post office address is Toll House, Fresno County, California, has filed notice of intention to make final proof before the County Clerk of Fresno County, at Fresno City, on Monday the 20th day of June, 1887, at 10 o'clock a. m., a Pre-emption Declaratory Statement No. 13522 for the n hf of sw qr and sw qr of nw qr, sec, No. 2 and ne qr of se qr of Sec. NO. 3 t No 10 s of r No 25 e M. D. M. He names as witnesses: N. Moss, Thos Richardson, A. Littlefield, and J. L. Music, all of Toll House post office, Fresno County. May 13 6t. George A. McKenzie, Register⁷⁸.

Curiously, another landowner at Markwood Meadow, William Ockenden, was issued land patent 9552 on October 17, 1890 for these same 160 acres as those of Loucks' notice of intention (Attachment 1). William Ockenden paid taxes on property, including improvements at Markwood Meadow, from 1884-1887, and he applied for a timber patent on the property in 1887. According to SNF records, "he received the patent in spite of the fact that Phineas Loucks and his family were occupying the land and a log cabin at the time"⁷⁹.

Figure 1: Approximate depiction of land ownership.



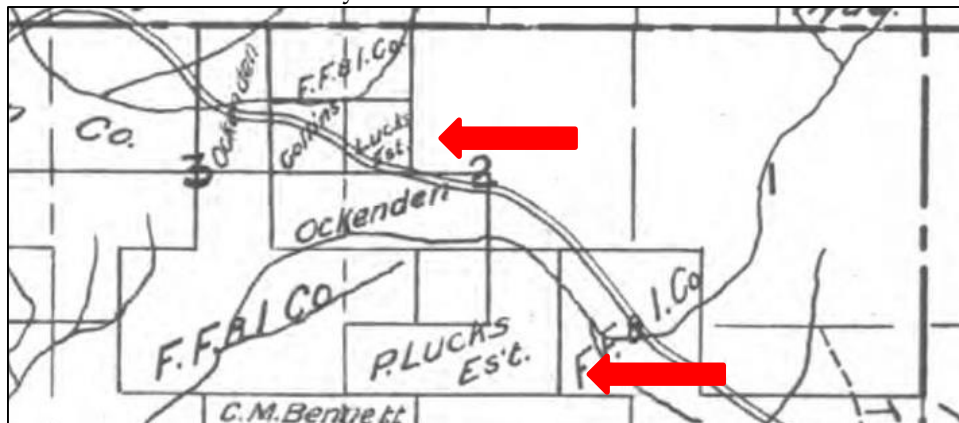
Red: Patent 9019 for 160 acres issued to Phineas Loucks in 1889

Blue: Patent 9552 issued to William Ockenden in 1890

A 1907 Atlas of Fresno County land ownership (Figure 2) shows land in the “P. Lucks Est[ate]”, including a 40 acre parcel within the land patent to Ockenden, along with the 160 acres of Loucks’ patent⁸⁰. The 40 acre parcel is not listed property in a delinquent tax list of the Loucks estate in 1897 and 1898⁸¹, published in the Fresno newspapers.

Delinquent Tax List. Notice to Taxpayers. Loucks, Phineas (estate of) Pine Ridge school district. SW 1/4 of se 1/4 Section 2, township 10, range 25, 40 acres, value \$144. nw 1/4 of ne 1/4, n1/2 of nw 1/4 section 11, township 10, range 25, 120 acres, value \$324, total value \$468, taxes and costs \$11.31, page 77.

Figure 2: 1907 Atlas of Fresno County



William Harvey Atlas of Fresno County, California, 1907. Township 10 South, Range 25 East, Sections 1-3. Note landownership by the P. Lucks Est. [estate] in Sections 2 and 11.

Loucks’ timber land was probably sold for delinquent taxes after 1907⁸². He also left land in Wisconsin; the Wisconsin probate court in 1900 wrote:

Phineas Loucks removed to California in 1877, thereafter remained absent from this state till he died in 1891. He left no heirs except the defendants, his children, to whom his property in this

State descended at his death. He then owned, in Outagamie county, this state, an undivided half-interest or more in [land] worth about \$600. ...⁸³

So where was Loucks' cabin, where his wife and children survived the winter of 1887? Clues are few. Winchell wrote that "on a bench by the side of a small brook in a spot bounded by boulders and spattered with rocks, he built a log house..." As cited above, the cabin may have been on land that ultimately was patented by William Ockenden, on the east side of Markwood Meadow. Another clue is the mention in the Fresno news of 1890, that "At the eastern end [of Markwood Meadow] is the very substantial hewn log house where P. Loucks labored in clearing a flat of heavy timber, under a pre-emption title"⁸⁴. Other hints include a mention in a news article, "The family of Mr. Loucks, a bee man, were living in a cabin in the vicinity of Markwood's Meadows"⁸⁵, and Loucks' own classified ad describing "...my farm, near Markwood Meadows"⁸⁶.

Attachment 1: Land Patents issued to Phineas Loucks and William Ockenden.

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

CERTIFICATE }
No. 9019 }

Whereas *Phineas Loucks of Fresno County, California*

has deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at *Stockton, California* whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said *Phineas Loucks*.

According to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," and the acts supplemental thereto, for the south west quarter of the south east quarter of section two and the north half of the north west quarter and the north west quarter of the north east quarter of section eleven in township ten south of range twenty five east of Mount Diablo Meridian in California containing one hundred and sixty acres.

According to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General, which said Tract has been purchased by the said *Phineas Loucks*.

Now know ye, That the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several Acts of Congress in such case made and provided, have given and granted, and by these presents do give and grant unto the said *Phineas Loucks*

and to his heirs, the said Tract above described: To have and to hold the same, together with all the rights, privileges, communities, and appurtenances, of whatever nature, thereto belonging, unto the said *Phineas Loucks*

and to his heirs and assigns forever; subject to any vested and reserved water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts, and also subject to the right of the proprietor of a vein or lode to extract and remove his ore therefrom, should the same be found to penetrate or intersect the premises hereby granted, as provided by law.

In testimony whereof I, *Benjamin Harrison* President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the tenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty nine, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and nineteenth.

By the President: *Benjamin Harrison*

M. H. Kraus Secretary
J. Tyler Recorder of the General Land Office at *Stockton*

Patent 9552 Issued to William Ockenden for 160 acres in Sections 2 and 3, Township 10 South, Range 25 East.

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

CERTIFICATE
No 9552
California

Whereas William Ockenden of Fresno County California

has appeared in the General Land Office of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office of California whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said William Ockenden

according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 25th of April, 1920, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," and the acts supplemental thereto, for the north half of the south west quarter and the south west quarter of the north west quarter of section two and the north east quarter of the south east quarter of section three in Township ten South of Range twenty five East of Mount Diablo meridian in California containing one hundred and sixty acres

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General, which said Tract has been purchased by the said William Ockenden

Now know ye, That the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several Acts of Congress in such case made and provided, have given and granted, and by these presents do give and grant unto the said William Ockenden

and to his heirs, the said Tract above described: To have and to hold the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances, of whatever nature, thereto belonging, unto the said William Ockenden and to his heirs and assigns forever, subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts, and also subject to the right of the proprietors of a vein or lode to extend and remove his ore therefrom, should the same be found to penetrate or intersect the premises hereby granted, as provided by law.

In testimony whereof I, Benjamin Harrison

President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the Seventeenth day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety fifth and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and fiftieth

By the President: Benjamin Harrison

Allen Macfarland Asst. Secretary

JR Bonwell Recorder of the General Land Office

ad interim

End Notes

¹ A Casual Sacrifice. In, Fresno Memories, by Ernestine Winchell, published in the Fresno Morning Republican in the 1920s. Typescript of the story by historian June English, in the special collections of the Madden Library, California State University, Fresno. Another version is in Sierra National Forest files with additional notes by English.

² A Casual Sacrifice.

³ Fresno County—The Pioneer Years, from the Beginning to 1900. 1984. Charles Clough and William Secrest, Jr. Panorama West Books, Fresno, CA.

⁴ The Strange Disappearance of Phineas Loucks, in The Valley's Legends and Legacies VI. 2006. Catherine Rehart. Word Dancer Press, Sanger, CA.

⁵ Probate Reports Annotated: Recent Cases of General Value Decided in the Courts of Several States on Points of Probate Law, Vol. VI. 1902. G. Clement. Baker, Voorhis and Company, NY. Report on a case in the Supreme Court of Wisconsin about Phineas Loucks' estate in Wisconsin.

⁶ 1860 US Census.

⁷ Wisconsin marriages, www.familysearch.org.

⁸ My Management of Bees. In, The American Bee Journal, Vol. XVII. July 6, 1881. Chicago, IL.

⁹ A Good Way to Hive a Swarm of Bees. In, The National Live-Stock Journal: A Monthly Publication Devoted Exclusively to Live-Stock Interests, Vol. 4., From January 1873 to December 1873. George W. Rust & Co., Chicago, IL.

¹⁰ 1880 US Census and other sources.

¹¹ Clement 1902.

¹² California Great Register, voter registration records, www.familysearch.org.

¹³ Bees in Fresno County, by Phineas Loucks. In, Pacific Rural Press, Vol. 21, No. 10, March 5, 1881.

¹⁴ My Management of Bees. In, The American Bee Journal, Vol. XVII. July 6, 1881. Chicago, IL.

¹⁵ Classified ad, Bees and Honey for Sale. Fresno Republican Weekly, numerous dates in 1880 and 1881.

¹⁶ Honey. In, Fresno Republican Weekly, June 5, 1880. **Honey** -- Mr. Phineas Loucks, who lives away in Centerville, was in town one day last week with a wagon load of splendid honey. He started this spring with fifty stands of bees, and commenced dividing his swarms in April, and now has one hundred and five stands, and has taken from them this date, fifteen hundred pounds of choice honey. He separates or extracts the honey from the comb by centrifugal process, which leaves the comb in perfect shape, and returns it again to the hive to be refilled by the bees. By this management he secures from three to five times the quantity of honey in a season, that he would get if is bees had to replace the comb through their own industry.

¹⁷ Fresno Republican Weekly, Dec. 11, 1880. Mr. P. Loucks, of King's River, paid us a visit this week, and informs us that during the past season he has taken 11,400 pounds of honey from his apiary, and his bees have increased from 50 stands at the commencement of the season to 110 stands, and he also has on hand about 125 pounds of wax. Such is the result of one season's work in operating and starting another industry in our county. It was asserted by many that the production of honey could not be successfully and profitably conducted in Fresno County. Mr. Loucks has fully demonstrated that by proper attention and care it is practicable and profitable. And still there are opportunities for the introduction of other industries with profit. We have yet to learn of a single enterprise, that has paid in other localities, and which has been tried in an intelligent manner in Fresno County and failed. Our resources are practically unlimited.

¹⁸ 1880 US Census.

¹⁹ A Fresno County Apiary. Pacific Rural Press, Jan. 1, 1881. **A Fresno County Apiary.** Editors Press: My full report for 1880 from 50 stands of bees, is as follows: Increased from 50 to 100 stands; got 125 lbs. wax, and honey for May, 1,470 lbs.; September 3,075 lbs., October 3,760 lbs., November 290 lbs., Total, 11,400 lbs. The hone was mostly extracted, say about 10,000 lbs., and the balance comb. All of it will probably be sold and consumed in Fresno county before next year's crop comes in, at prices ranging from 10 to 12 1/2 a lb., put up in cans ranging from 4 to 66 lbs. Bees are in good condition for winter, or even a dry year. My experience here is that bees, properly handled, will yield a profit the dryest year we will be likely to have. P. Loucks. Kings River, Fresno Co. CA. [Our correspondent indicates that he could have sent in a considerably better report if he could have given the bees his full attention and labor, for he had about 25 acres of land to cultivate, from part of which he took a second crop, and from about three acres a third crop for the season. We shall be pleased to have reports from other apiaries.--Eds. Press]

²⁰ 1890 US Census.

²¹ The Apiary. Pacific Rural Press, April 16, 1881. Incomplete text of article: **The Apiary.** Having had my leg broken March 12th, and still confined to my bed, for want of something better to do, I will try to tell your readers of what I would have done with my bees but for my mishap. ...I was removing my apiary to a new location, in hope of finding a healthier situation, having taken nine stands into the foothills, and nine more on the San Joaquin river, to see what bees would do in these localities. The balance I was moving some 20 miles down King's river, near Kingsburg, when my work was cut short by a kick from a cow...

²² Notice of Application to Purchase Timber Land. Fresno Republican Weekly, March 18, 1887, and April 15, 1887.

Notice of Application to Purchase Timber Land. U.S. Land Office, Stockton, Cal. Feb. 9, 1887. Notice is hereby given that, in compliance with the provisions of the Act of Congress approved June 3d, 1878, entitled "An Act for the Sale of Timber Lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," Phineas Loucks, whose post office address is Toll House, Fresno County, California, has this day filed in this office his application to purchase the SW 1/4 of SE 1/4 Sec. No. 2; NW 1/4 of NE 1/4 and N1/2 of NW 1/4 Sec. No. 11, in township No. 10 south, range No. 25 east, of Mount Diablo meridian. All persons holding any adverse claim thereto are required to present the same at this office within sixty days from the first publication of this notice. Geo. A. McKenzie, Register.

²³ Obituary of Myrtle Irene Brimmer. www.familysearch.org

²⁴ Volcanic Winter. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volcanic_winter.

²⁵ Fresno Republican Weekly, March 11, 1887. The report that a woman and some children had lost their lives in the snow storm in the Sierras, proves to have been untrue. The family of Mr. Loucks, a bee man, were living in a cabin in the vicinity of Markwood's Meadows, but having plenty of provision, and a party of hunters being camped nearby, they did not suffer seriously on account of the snow. Mr. L. was down in the valley at the time of the storm.

²⁶ On Dinkey Creek. Fresno Weekly Republican, July 4, 1890. **On Dinkey Creek. Beautiful Snow and Bands of Woolly Sheep. Crossing a Rustic Bridge. Graphic Description of the Manner in Which Bands of Thousands are Speedily Counted.** (Special Correspondence of The Republican). Dinkey Creek, June 29.--Dinkey at last, after miles of mountain road that is good, indifferent, bad and worse. From Ockenden's store it is called a ridge road, and some charming vales, or meadows, of beautiful emerald green are passed til Markwood meadow, now owned by Collins and fenced in, is reached. This spot is indeed a mark (in the) wood, and is "the heart of the timber belt." At the eastern end is the very substantial hewn log house where P. Loucks labored in clearing a flat of heavy timber, under a pre-emption title. Here is where Mrs. Loucks laid down to her long last sleep and left the family of little ones whom some of our Selma ladies took care of when so nearly starved. Mrs. Loucks' grave is situated on an immense granite ledge, not far from the road. The heavy timber precluded a title as any but "timber land," and so it is owned by Ockenden, and a saw mill will soon be built.

²⁷ A Missing Hermit. San Francisco Chronicle, August 9, 1892. **A Missing Hermit. Fears That He Has Wandered Off in the Mountains and Died.** Fresno, Aug. 8.—a correspondent of the Expositor writes from Markwood meadows, sixty miles east in the mountains, that a man somewhat famous in his way is missing in that locality. For many years, Phineas Louks, a peculiar religious enthusiast, has lived the life of a hermit in a log cabin at Markwood meadows, six miles beyond Pine Ridge. He had long been known in the vicinity as a man fanatical in his ideas of health and had a great antipathy to doctors and regarded them as enemies of the human race. He spent his time alone, coming out to the settlements once or twice a year and then returning to his wilderness cabin. Last April he was seen for the last time, when he visited Kenyon's store and then set out for his home, ten miles back in the mountains. Two months afterward some men, pausing by his cabin, found it deserted. In the woods near by they found his tools, where he had been making shakes. From all appearances, they had been lying there many weeks, but no trace of Louks could be found and he has not been heard from since. It is the belief that he became insane and wandered off in the mountains and died.

²⁸ Fresno Republican Weekly, February 8, 1889. Thomas G. Martin of Selma has filed a petition in the superior court of this county for the legal adoption of Samuel Judah Loucks, a 17-months-old son of Phineas Loucks who recently deserted his family while laboring under a fit of religious insanity. Loucks gives his consent to have Martin adopt the baby.

²⁹ 1900 US Census.

³⁰ Letters of Guardianship. Fresno Morning Republican, February 18, 1898. **Letters of Guardianship.** W. H. Hurst yesterday applied for letters of guardianship of the estate and persons of his nieces--Dolly M. Swift, Martha M. Martin, Israel J. Martin and Myrtle Loucks. The children were all formerly named Loucks, but those designated as Swift and Martin were adopted. They have property in this county, and in the state of Wisconsin.

³¹ A Casual Sacrifice. Winchell.

³² Wanted. Fresno Republican Weekly, July 29, 1887. **Wanted.** Having met with the loss of my wife, I wish to employ a man and wife on my farm near Markwood Meadows. The woman must understand housekeeping and the care of children. Good wages and a permanent place for the right parties. Address P. Loucks, Toll House, Cal.

³³ California Great Register, voter rolls, www.familysearch.org.

³⁴ Married-William H. Hurst and Elizabeth Rimmer. Fresno Morning Republican, July 21, 1892. **Married.** Hurst - Rimmer -- Near Selma, July 20, 1892, by Rev. Milton McWhirter; William H. Hurst and Mrs. Elizabeth Rimmer.

³⁵ The January Jury. Fresno Republican Weekly, December 16, 1887. The January Jury. Before leaving for San Francisco yesterday, Judge M. K. Harris drew the following jurors to serve in in Department 2 of the Superior Court, at the January term and they are notified to be present on January 8, 1888, at 10 o'clock A. M. The following are the names of the lucky men: Jas. Morrow, W. G. Collins, Benjamin Dore, George Wizeman, J. P. Stump, J. M. Corrick, B. W. McCloskey, N. D. Gilbert, J. L. Harp, R. T. Owen, P. Loucks, John House, S. H. Wood, S. J. Halbert, Alex Grieve, J. E. Appleton, T. Ponton, A. H. Blasingame, N. P. Jasson, A. J. Corlew, Jacob Reeder, Edwin Stack, N. M. Benton, Roderick Bayne, John M. Elmore. This jury will have a number of important cases to try, and have a long siege of it ahead of them.

³⁶ Fresno Morning Republican, January 26, 1888. In the Superior Court yesterday E. E. Shepard of Selma, an attorney of that city, was appointed the guardian of Dolly and Martha May Loucks.

³⁷ Letters of Guardianship. Fresno Morning Republican, February 18, 1898.

³⁸ San Francisco Chronicle, December 7, 1888. P. Loucks of Fresno went off to the mountains in September, leaving in his cabin in a horrible condition a nine-year-old girl and a fifteen-months-old baby. They had a bed-tick filled with straw, some dried fruit and some crackers and an old tin pan in the house. Loucks had also left orders to have milk left for them. He came back last Saturday and was arrested on a charge of failure to provide. Some ladies have taken charge of the children.

³⁹ Fresno Republican Weekly, February 8, 1889. Thomas G. Martin of Selma has filed a petition in the superior court of this county for the legal adoption of Samuel Judah Loucks, a 17-months-old son of Phineas Loucks who recently deserted his family while laboring under a fit of religious insanity. Loucks gives his consent to have Martin adopt the baby.

⁴⁰ Letters of Guardianship. Fresno Morning Republican, February 18, 1898.

⁴¹ Patent issued to Phineas Loucks, under the authority of April 24, 1820: Sale-Cash Entry (3 Stat. 566). 160 acres, SW1/4 SE1/4 Section 2; N1/2NW1/4 and NW1/4 of NE 1/4 of Section 11, Township 10 South, Range 25 East, MDM. Doc No. 9019. BLM No. CACAAA 126594.

⁴² A Missing Hermit. San Francisco Chronicle, August 9, 1892.

⁴³ Phineas Loucks Missing. Fresno Republican Weekly, May 2, 1890. Also in articles in the Riverside Daily Press (May 1, 1890) and the Los Angeles Herald (May 1, 1890). **Phineas Loucks Missing.** Phineas Loucks, who owns a timber claim at Markwood Meadows, has been missing since January 16th. On that evening Loucks stopped at the Kenyon House on his way from this city to his home. He started the next morning and had been gone but a few hours when a severe snowstorm set in. Loucks cabin was found untenanted, and it is believed that he was lost in the storm. The missing man was about 45 years old, five feet ten inches tall and weighed 165 pounds. His complexion was light and his hair and beard auburn. He took up his timber claim near Markwood about three years ago, hand has occupied himself in making shakes and in hunting and trapping. Mr. Loucks has several children living near Selma.

⁴⁴ P. Loucks Alive. Fresno Morning Republican, May 6, 1890. **P. Loucks Alive. He Did Not Perish in a Snow Storm, but Was Making Shakes.** An item appeared in the papers a few days ago to the effect that P. Loucks had started for his cabin in the mountains and had been lost in a raging snow storm. The following note from Mr. Loucks will show that he has reappeared in the flesh, safe and sound: Markwood, May 2, 1890. Editor Republican: As I came out to Kenyon's store yesterday I learned that the report had gone out for publication that I had probably perished. Please say that I am well and hearty, yet working hard to supply the market the coming season with shakes, as near as I am able to do so in order to pay my just debts and get square with the world. While I have been "missing" I have made 80,000 shakes and have had no time for visiting. A. Loucks.

⁴⁵ In Winter Quarters. Fresno Daily Republican, July 31, 1890. **In Winter Quarters. P. Loucks Appears After Six Months' Hibernation. He Worked Making Shakes. One Tree Yielded Seventy-Five Thousand Shakes and Another Fifty Thousand.** P. Loucks, a shake maker residing near Markwood meadows, turned up in Fresno yesterday safe and hearty. Last January he was reported lost in a snow storm in the mountains, and the evening newspaper of this city published a portrait of Bismark and palmed it off on its readers as the true presentment of Mr. Loucks. "I never had a picture taken in my life before to-day, and I sat for my photograph this afternoon just for curiosity. The snow around my cabin all winter was thirteen feet deep, and I was not annoyed much by callers," said Mr. Loucks. Not Cold or Lonesome. "It was not so very cold after all, but bracing. The great depth of snow did not

interfere with my work, for the snow was hard most of the time. During the whole four months of snow there were only three weeks in which I had to travel on snow shoes. I occupied myself making shakes and I was not very much interrupted by the weather, although I had to dig down very often to get at the butt of the tree to cut it. I made 25,000 shakes per month and sold them at \$4.50 per thousand. Large Pines. "There are some big trees up in that country. I cut 73,500 shakes out of one tree, representing a product of \$329.85. The largest number of shakes that I cut out of one tree last year was 50,000, or \$223 worth. "I was very much amused when I came out of my winter quarters and found that I had been given up for dead. The climate up there is delightful and the hottest day this summer was 86 in the shade." Mr. Loucks looks the very picture of health.

⁴⁶ Pheneas Louchs. Missing Since the Fourth Day of Last April. Fresno Morning Republican, August 23, 1891.

Pheneas Louchs. Missing Since the Fourth Day of Last April. His Rifle Gone from Its Usual Place, But Everything Else Undisturbed. Since April 4 last nothing has been seen of Pheneas Louchs, a man well known in Fresno. The man has for years been at work in the mountains each summer getting out shakes. This summer he began working north of Markwood meadows on the ridge a considerable distance above the mill. On April 4 he was last seen at Kenyon's store and from there he started back for his mountain home. A few days since A. M. Clark and French Drury both received letters of inquiry as to what had become of the man. Mr. Drury decided to visit the camp of the man and reached there last Wednesday. He found it deserted entirely and looking as though it had not been the habitation of man for many months. Several thousand shakes were piled up already cut. The shaving tools were out on the work bench, the cooking utensils were on the cold stove, and even the man's false teeth were lying on the table. The camp had not the appearance of one which has been left only for a short time. Everything about the place stood where it usually did, except the rifle, which had gone away with the proprietor of the camp. There was nothing to indicate that the camper would not return and no intimation of possible departure for good. The friends of the man can find no explanation for his absence, yet they do not believe him dead.

⁴⁷ A Missing Hermit. San Francisco Chronicle, August 9, 1892.

⁴⁸ A Mystery Solved. Fresno Morning Republican, August 17, 1892. **A Mystery Solved. Dead Body of Phineas Loukes Found in the Mountains.** Several months ago Phineas Loukes disappeared from Pine Ridge, having on his person a considerable sum of money. He lived alone in a rude shake camp and was a man of good habits and peaceable in his disposition. A few days ago the dead body of a man was found near the Musick mines and although very much decomposed, it has been recognized as that of Mr. Loukes. A rifle was standing against a tree by the body, and the report is that there is a bullet hole through his head. It would appear from these evidences that he was the victim of foul play and that he had been murdered for his money.

⁴⁹ Clement 1902.

⁵⁰ Baby Held to Have Lived Longer. Fresno Morning Republican, August 25, 1911. Incomplete text of article: **Baby is Held to Have Lived Longer. Loucks Estate Will Therefore Go to Grandparents of the Child.** ...The Loucks family consisting of father Wallace E., the wife Elsie M., and the 6 months old child Thelma G, were killed as the result of an accident in a collision between a one seated automobile and a S. P. railroad passenger train near Reedley on 7th of May 1908 near the bridge approach. The Loucks were going into the mountains for an outing....

⁵¹ Probate Matters. Fresno Morning Republican, Dec. 21, 1907. Petition has been made in the estate of Martha Martin, also known as Loucks, an insane person, for the sale of timber lands, which produces no income and is many miles from any saw mill.

⁵² Voter registrations, WWI draft registration, California Death Index, 1900 US Census and other sources, www.familysearch.org.

⁵³ School Report. Fresno Republican Weekly, May 3, 1895. Incomplete text of article: **County Board of Education Correcting Examination Papers.** ...graduating classes from the grammar grade...Following are those who were successful in the respective school districts: Central--Kate Loucks....

⁵⁴ US Census 1910-1940, California Marriages, California Death Index, and other sources, www.familysearch.org.

⁵⁵ 1900 US Census.

⁵⁶ Studied Too Hard. Books Drive Mary Loucks to Insanity. Fresno Morning Republican, October 21, 1899. **Studied Too Hard. Books Drive Mary Loucks to Insanity.** Miss Mary Loucks, the adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Martin of Wildflower, was brought to the county jail yesterday morning suffering from insanity. Her mind was completely deranged and she had to be locked in a padded cell in the basement of the courthouse. Yesterday afternoon she was examined by Dr. Rowell, who recommended that she be committed to the insane asylum. The commitment will probably be made today. The girl is only 16 years old and was attending school where her mind became unbalanced. She was a hard student and in one year did the work which other pupils required two years to accomplish. Continued application at her books night and day secured good marks for her, which encouraged her to still further efforts. She became a confirmed book fiend and her parents found it hard to make her leave her lessons even for a minute. Her mind began to fail several days ago.

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- ⁵⁷ Probate Orders. Fresno Morning Republican, December 17, 1907. **Probate Orders.** Wallace E. Loucks, a brother, has been appointed, under a bond of \$1500, guardian of the estate of Martha Martin, also called Martha Loucks, an insane person who is in the asylum at Stockton. L. P. Timmins, Herman Peterson, and H. W. Richter have been named appraisers of the estate.
- ⁵⁸ CA Marriage Records, 1910 and 1920 US Census, and other records, www.familysearch.org.
- ⁵⁹ Fresno Republican Weekly, February 8, 1889.
- ⁶⁰ Letters of Guardianship. Fresno Morning Republican, February 18, 1898.
- ⁶¹ Probate Orders. Fresno Morning Republican, December 17, 1907.
- ⁶² Probate Reports Annotated: Recent Cases of General Value Decided in the Courts of Several States on Points of Probate Law, Vol. Vi.. 1902. G. Clement. Baker, Voorhis and Company, NY. Report on a case in the Supreme Court of Wisconsin about Phineas Loucks' estate in Wisconsin.
- ⁶³ US Census 1910, 1920, 1930, California Marriages, California Death Index, WWII Draft Registration, and other sources, www.familysearch.org.
- ⁶⁴ On Dinkey Creek. Fresno Weekly Republican, July 4, 1890.
- ⁶⁵ A History of the Tahoe National Forest: 1840-1940. www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/5/tahoe/chap4.htm.
- ⁶⁶ Second Biennial Report of the California State Board of Forestry, for the Years 1887-1888. 1888. H. S. Davidson. State Printing Office, Sacramento, CA.
- ⁶⁷ Shakes and Shake-Making in a California Forest. 1909. Charles H. Shinn. In, Proceedings of the Society of American Foresters, Vol. IV., No. 2. Washington D.C.
- ⁶⁸ Toll House News. Fresno Republican Weekly, May 20, 1882.
- ⁶⁹ Making Shakes. A Photograph in the Collection: Personalities and Activities in the Self-Help Cooperatives of California: Photographs from the Exhibition. UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library. <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6r29p3pg/?order=1>. Accessed July 18, 2014.
- ⁷⁰ Shakes and Shake-Making in a California Forest. 1909. Charles H. Shinn. In, Proceedings of the Society of American Foresters, Vol. IV., No. 2. Washington D.C.
- ⁷¹ In Winter Quarters. Fresno Daily Republican, July 31, 1890.
- ⁷² Markwood Meadows. History of Fresno County, California with Illustrations Descriptive of its Scenery, Farms, Residences, Public Buildings, Factories, Hotels, Business Houses, Schools, Churches and Mines, from Original Drawings with Biographical Sketches. 1882. Wallace W. Elliott & Co., San Francisco, CA.
- ⁷³ For Rent. Classified advertisement. Fresno Republican Weekly, June 21, 1884.
- ⁷⁴ Camp Life at Markwood. Fresno Republican Weekly, July 22, 1898.
- ⁷⁵ On Dinkey Creek. Fresno Weekly Republican, July 4, 1890.
- ⁷⁶ Notice of Application to Purchase Timber Land. Fresno Republican Weekly, March 18, 1887, and April 15, 1887.
- ⁷⁷ US General Land Office, Land Patent 9019.
- ⁷⁸ Land Notice. Fresno Republican Weekly, May 13, 1887. **Land Notice.** Land Office at Stockton, Cal, May 7th, 1887. Notice is hereby given that, Phineas Loucks, whose post office address is Toll House, Fresno County, California, has filed notice of intention to make final proof before the County Clerk of Fresno County, at Fresno City, on Monday the 20th day of June, 1887, at 10 o'clock a. m., a Pre-emption Declaratory Statement No. 13522 for the n hf of sw qr and sw qr of nw qr, sec, No. 2 and ne qr of se qr of Sec. NO. 3 t No 10 s of r No 25 e M. D. M. He names as witnesses: N. Moss, Thos Richardson, A. Littlefield, and J. L. Music, all of Toll House post office, Fresno County. May 13 6t. George A. McKenzie, Register.
- ⁷⁹ Evaluation of Significance, Markwood Meadow Log Cabin (R1980051554011). 1980. Sierra National Forest, Clovis, CA. Specifically, this quotation referenced copies of papers on file for Stockton, CA, Timber Patent Certificate 9552 for William Ockenden, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- ⁸⁰ William Harvey Atlas of Fresno County, 1907. Township 10 South, Range 25 East.
- ⁸¹ Delinquent Tax List. Fresno Morning Republican, June 17, 1898. **Delinquent Tax List. Notice to Taxpayers.** Loucks, Phineas (estate of) Pine Ridge school district. SW 1/4 of se 1/4 Section 2, township 10, range 25, 40 acres, value \$144. nw 1/4 of ne1/4, n1/2 of nw 1/4 section 11, township 10, range 25, 120 acres, value \$324, total value \$468, taxes and costs \$11.31, page 77.
- ⁸² Fresno Morning Republican, Dec. 21, 1907. Petition has been made in the estate of Martha Martin, also known as Loucks, an insane person, for the sale of timber lands, which produces no income and is many miles from any saw mill. A 1907 Atlas of Fresno County also shows the land in the Loucks estate.
- ⁸³ Probate Reports Annotated: Recent Cases of General Value Decided in the Courts of Several States on Points of Probate Law, Vol. Vi.. 1902. G. Clement. Baker, Voorhis and Company, NY. Report on a case in the Supreme Court of Wisconsin about Phineas Loucks' estate in Wisconsin.

⁸⁴ On Dinkey Creek. Fresno Weekly Republican, July 4, 1890.

⁸⁵ Fresno Republican Weekly, March 11, 1887.

⁸⁶ Wanted. Fresno Republican Weekly, July 29, 1887.