



**Outlaws have a History in Capay Valley, too...**

*the ghosts of horse thieves, bootleggers, murderers, bank and train robbers abound in them thar hills--and in our local legends!*

*I hear a lot of rumors and stories of such things while doing this work...*

*...some of it is verifiable, but all of it makes for a good "story" so I don't always go looking for "proof"--tall-tales are part of what gives a place like this character!*

*Several such stories involve Emily Clark's boys:*

*Legend has it that David Allen rode with the James Gang; gone from the Capay Valley for months at a time, leaving his wife Sally to raise their son Noble with his family. He would return, loaded with money, and "hide out," looking nervously around, according to his great granddaughter, Gilda Clark, and then disappear again--eventually for good. Years later Gilda would receive a phone call from his second wife's family in Oregon wanting information about his roots in the Capay Valley. Since he never returned, his bachelor brother, Ham, took over as head of his family and raised Noble and acted as father and grandfather for the rest of his life.*

*Ham also confessed to a killing he did not commit and served a prison term for his brother Moses. Apparently, Moses had served time for the murder of two men already, so Ham worried that this third murder would lead to him being hanged. He made Moses promise to care for the Salt Creek Clark families and the farms in his absence. But when Ham returned to find Moses had let him down, he*

*took off after him with murder in his own eyes! Emily had to talk him out of it, but he never forgave Moses, who did not return to his family home--but his headstone can be found in the Clark plot in the Capay Cemetery.*

**Right: Headstones from the Clark plot in Capay Cemetery**

*Emily Jane Romine was born in Indiana and married David Allen Clark from Iowa. They came west to California in the 1850s and had 5 children: Susan Jane, who would marry Edmund L. Clark, Jr., from another Clark family from Dogtown; David Allen, Jr, who would bring Sally Russell, a Modoc Indian, to Salt Creek and they would have Nobel; Moses Richard; Aaron; and James Abraham "Ham," who would take over as head of the family after their father died in the Davisville area and Emily moved to the Salt Creek area of Capay Valley to homestead. We don't know for sure when they arrived, but by the 1880s they were settled in. Ham would also raise Noble and act as grandfather to Noble's son, Gilbert, who would come to be known as "Shorty." Noble's mother Sally would live until 1940, spending the end of her life living with her grandson Gilbert in a home built by Ham in the town of Capay on Cache Street--where Gilda still lives today.*

*Noble would marry Josephine Taylor, who inadvertently cut her hand off using a buzzsaw cutting firewood up at their Salt Creek homestead. Gilda tells how Josephine's young son Gilbert had the wisdom to run for a 5lb sack of flour to stick her arm into so they could staunch the bleeding long enough to get her to the doctor in Capay. Being one-handed didn't slow her much.*

*Gilbert married Hazel Mack and they had Gilda and Richard, who would be known as Dickie Clark. Gilbert brought Grandma Sally to come live with them when her health diminished. She told how she had become a temporary chief of the Modoc tribe when Captain Jack was tried and executed after the bloody Modoc War in southern Oregon--northern California in 1873.*





**Another legend involves a family called Glasscock.**

According to Ada Merhoff's book, *Capay Valley, The Land The People 1846-1900*: "The Glasscock gang of horse thieves was headquartered in the mountains forming Cache Creek Canyon, and it was not unusual for the Lowrey's horses to be exchanged during the night for those of the famous brothers, who needed fresh mounts..." page 178. And on pg 51 she writes:

"William Gordon's son John was granted 400 acres in the Rumsey area by his father and he is the only Gordon from that family to actually live in the Capay Valley" [as opposed to the much larger Gordon Grant-land near Madison]. Near his ranch, according to local lore told to Ada Merhoff, the "band of horse thieves is supposed to have often camped in the canyon near the Gordon home—resting stolen horses on their way north from Solano County. This gang, headed by brothers Tucker and Clinton Glasscock" used to demand food and liquor from farmers and take their horses as needed [see reference to the Lowrey's horses on page 178]. "There was a demand for horses in Mendocino County which were taken through Capay Valley to a steep-sided small U-shaped level valley off the side of an arroyo northwest of the Gordon place. This was the 'pocket' in which the group lay over while brands were altered and healed. Glasscock Spring on Glasscock Mountain supposedly was the outlaw headquarters 'with a skull and crossbones carved in a tree'." She says Clinton was blind, but the brains behind the operations; and Tucker 'never rode with his feet in the stirrups'. His mother used to boast Tucker was "too smart to ever be caught," but eventually he was—and "hanged in the middle of a job in Tulare County."

Ada further writes that on one typical over-nighter, camped out near John Gordon's, several of the outlaws got so drunk they threw John into his own fireplace, but Mary was able to rescue him. They had accused John of having alerted the law to their misdeeds. "After everyone sobered up, gang members returned to apologize."

On page 54 she mentions more Glasscocks, but she does not tie them to the "gang," just that neighbors west of John and Mary Gordon were Sarah and Spencer Glasscock with four children--it would appear they are of the same family.

**Photo below shows the terrain to get up to the rocky "knob."** Photos courtesy of Jim Hiatt, taken 2012.

**Glasscock Mountain**--named for the band of outlaws who hid out in its shadows beyond Rumsey. **Glasscock Knob**, the rock knoll seen on top, can be observed even from east of Esparto!

