



## ROSEMARY FAULKNER

*By Noah Berner*

**W**hile the Red Barn Museum and Annex in San Andreas is home to many important historical artifacts, some hold special significance for Rosemary Faulkner.

An old apple cider press and a large, rusted road grader are among the many items at the museum that were once used on the ranch where Faulkner spent her youth.

Faulkner was born on the 4,800 acre Bosse Ranch on the South Fork of the Mokelumne River near Rail Road Flat in 1924.

“The acreage on the river was about 80 acres,” she said. “And then we owned the mountains around us.” A third generation resident of the area, Faulkner’s grandfather on her father’s side arrived in Calaveras County from Germany

in 1880. Working as a shake-maker in the higher elevations, he quickly saved enough money to send for his wife and children. Faulkner’s father, Henry Bosse, arrived in the county in 1882 at the age of 10.



**Rosemary Faulkner holds up a photo of the Bosse Ranch during an interview in Sutter Creek.**

*Photograph by Noah Berner.*

Faulkner’s mother’s side of the family came to Calaveras from Switzerland around the same time, and her mother, Louise Sandoz Bosse, was born in West Point.

At the age of twelve, Faulkner’s father went to work in the mines in Angels Camp, and he soon saved enough money to purchase the first piece of land that would grow into the Bosse Ranch.

“He started out with about 80 acres in the beginning, and then he raised a few cows, and they saved the money from the cattle sales, and every time there was a piece of property for sale adjacent to his, he bought it,” Faulkner

said. “Then, occasionally there were homesteaders who moved away, who couldn’t make a living, and the homestead went back for taxes, and he would get the property for back taxes.” Faulkner’s parents met while her mother’s family was living on the nearby Licking Fork River.

“My father was working for a miner on a piece of adjacent property, and the miner was my mother’s uncle,” she said. “My mother and her sisters would come over and visit the uncle, and that’s where he met her.”

Before the two could marry, Faulkner’s father had to come up with a dowry.

“He had to have a house, a team of horses, and other things they might have needed,” she said. “Then, they married and had the six Bosse kids. I was born to the ranch in 1924, and I was greeted by four brothers, and a sister, and my parents, of course. And that is where I grew up.”

While the family made their living primarily through cattle ranching, they didn’t eat the beef themselves. “We had a joke around home that after you were sixteen, they told you that people did eat beef, but we sold the beef and ate venison,” Faulkner said.

Truck farming supplemented the family’s income.

“We raised dry beans, potatoes and apples for sale,” Faulkner said. “You sell it to the stores in exchange for merchandise—that’s what we did—and you park your truck and sell it on the street.”

The family raised other animals at the ranch, including hogs, sheep, chickens and turkeys.

“In cold weather, they killed six pigs, and five or six deer, and they made sausage with venison and pork, and they put up the hams and bacons,” she said. “They smoked all of that meat in a smokehouse, and that preserves it, and then they would have that for the whole summer.”

Faulkner’s mother was in charge of a vegetable garden.

“She raised every kind of vegetable you could think of that would grow in that climate—cabbage and carrots and beets and lettuce,” she said. “We had seven or eight acres of

apple trees, and my mother canned a lot of that. They had a root cellar where they kept produce, and it kept quite a while. Then in the loft of that building they had a lot of straw, and that’s where they stored the apples, so we had apples until February or March of the next year.”

Ranch life required a lot of labor, and the kids pitched in to help out.

“We all had chores to do,” Faulkner said. “We had to get wood in, and we had to feed the pigs and the chickens and gather the eggs, and that was stuff that little kids could do.”

The ranch was almost completely self-sufficient, even producing enough hay to feed the livestock.

“We didn’t ever have to go rent pasture someplace else,” Faulkner said. “We were totally self-sufficient, except for flour, sugar and coffee. And then when my mother would make mince-meat, they’d buy raisins.”

Because the family lived a significant distance from town, their social life was somewhat limited.

“We didn’t have much social life with the people in town, except to go to church,” Faulkner said. “As far as going out with other kids or going to town dances, that was out of the question.”

Not many families in Rail Road Flat were able to make a living from ranching.

“There was a dairy, and people worked in the mines and the sawmills,” Faulkner said. Electricity didn’t come to Rail Road Flat until 1950.

“We didn’t have PG&E and didn’t miss it,” Faulkner said. “We didn’t have radio and we didn’t have television.”

But the family did have two things that were luxuries at the time—indoor plumbing and an automobile.

“We were the only family in the area that had indoor plumbing,” Faulkner said.

Shortly after the family purchased its first automobile in 1915, Faulkner’s mother had to rush to Sutter Creek to take her baby to the doctor.

“We did have a car, but my mother never learned to drive, and so she hooked up the



**This apple cider press, once used on the Bosse Ranch, is now displayed in the Red Barn Museum Annex.**

*Photograph by Noah Berner.*

buggy, and she went to Sutter Creek to take the baby to the doctor,” Faulkner said. “She had to have a whole day (each way) to make that journey, and when she was coming back to Rail Road Flat, a rain storm overtook her. She was drenched, and she stopped at Taylor’s Store (in Rail Road Flat). Mrs. Taylor came running out, and she said, ‘Oh, Louise, where’s the baby?’ And mother said, ‘She’s in the suitcase, under the seat.’”

Without electricity, the family used coal oil for lighting.

“We had lanterns to go to the barns and do the chores, and we had coal oil lights for the kitchen and the household, and that was pure coal oil,” Faulkner said. “Eventually, they started putting additives into it, and it got the name of kerosene. My mother just hated it. She said, ‘Oh that stuff is terrible. It smokes up the chimneys terribly.’”

Faulkner remembers an early experience of electric lighting when she visited the dentist in San Andreas for the first time as a small child.

“The office was in an old streetcar, and the doctor had his office up in the front by the street where he could get better light, and then in the back was his lab where he made the teeth, or whatever he had to do,” she said. “When my mother was in the dental chair, I played in the lab.”

Following her appointment, Faulkner’s mother asked the dentist to have a look at her daughter’s teeth. “Dr. Turner was an elderly man. He had a long, white beard and long hair, and he put me up in the big chair. There was a lightbulb hanging down over your head, and we didn’t have electricity, so that was very novel for me,” she said. “He said, ‘OK, we’ll look in your mouth.’ He put a monocle in his eye, and when he did that, it frightened me, and I screamed and kicked, and I broke that lightbulb. He said, ‘Get her out of here!’”

Faulkner was five years old when the Great Depression hit the county. Her father had ordered some seed from a company in the Midwest that came COD, and when he went to the Bank of Calaveras in San Andreas to withdraw money to pay for the package, the bank was closed.

“That was the first of the Depression in our house,” Faulkner said. “He wrote to them and told them that



**The road grader that sits in front of the Red Barn Museum was once used on the Bosse Ranch. Photograph by Noah Berner.**

the bank was closed, and he couldn’t pay for the seed. They wrote back and told him to keep it.”

The family weathered the national economic downturn relatively well.

“We didn’t really have a depression,” Faulkner said. “We had plenty of food, and outside of not having money, we were fine.”

At age six, Faulkner began attending the Fine Gold School two miles from the ranch.

“It was on top of a mountain, because the children came from another river to the same school,” she said. “Then, there was such low enrollment, because there wasn’t any local employment, the schools were consolidated with Rail Road Flat. That was the Eureka School, and it was five miles from where we lived. So, I rode my horse to school in seventh and eighth grades.”

When it was time for high school, Faulkner attended Calaveras High in San Andreas.

“That was 30 miles away, but we could catch a bus in the town of Rail Road Flat,” she said. “I graduated from Calaveras High, and that was in 1941.”

By that time, World War II was heating up.

“In 1942, I married my high school sweetheart, his name was Roy Taylor, and we established ourselves in Rail Road Flat and he worked in the lumber industry over in West Point,” Faulkner said. “When he was drafted, he went to war, of course, and Judy was born in 1943.”

Faulkner lived with her sister in the Bay Area while she was pregnant, and her daughter was born in Berkeley.

“Then, I came back to Rail Road Flat, and there was just nothing to do there but take care of my

baby in a little three-room cabin with no power,” she said. “I went back to the Bay Area and stayed with my sister, and my baby stayed for a while with my parents. I found some odd jobs to do, different things, and nothing was to my liking, but I went to a hairdresser a couple of times, and she did such nice things with my unruly hair, that I decided maybe that would be a good career.”

Faulkner decided to attend a private beauty school in San Francisco, and received her first license in 1948.

“I went to work in a beauty salon, and eventually I bought my own salon on the campus at Mills College (in Oakland),” she said. “I catered to the employees there and to the students that came to me, and a few people from the neighborhood.”

During this time, Faulkner furthered her education by attending junior college in Hayward, where she received her AA degree. After running her own salon for about 10 years, she decided to sell the business and go into teaching her hairdressing skills to students, which required returning to school and passing an exam.

“I heard about this position at Peralta (then called Laney Trade School), and so I applied and I was employed there,” she said. “I worked in the junior college for 18 years.”

Faulkner continued her education while teaching, attending the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, San Francisco, where she received a degree in industrial arts.

When Taylor had returned from the war, the couple had decided to separate. “We were just a couple of kids when we got married,” Faulkner said.

In 1970, Faulkner married John Faulkner and resettled in Rail Road Flat.

“We bought a piece of property back there and we bought a few cows, and we established ourselves on a little ranch, and we built a nice home there,” she said.

After moving back to Rail Road Flat, Faulkner found that she missed her work.

“When I came back, I just couldn’t seem to give up working out of the home,” she said. “I was looking for something to do. I didn’t have to work—I had a good pension. The first thing I did as a volunteer, I went once a week down to the convalescent home in San Andreas, and I did their hair for a day, once a week, and there was no charge.”

Faulkner soon became involved with the ladies auxiliary at Mark Twain Medical Center and the Rail Road Flat Community Club. Over the years, she has served as a director for the Bank of Central Sierra and as a planning commissioner for the county.

In the 1980s, Faulkner was appointed by Governor Ronald Reagan to the Board of Consumer Affairs for Barbering and Cosmetology.

“I served in that position for about eight years,” she said. “I enjoyed it, too. We got our expenses paid and we traveled up and down the state.”

While Faulkner was a member of the Calaveras County Historical Society even when she lived in the Bay Area, she became increasingly involved when she moved back to Rail Road Flat. She eventually joined the board, served as president, and played the leading role in establishing the Red Barn Museum and Annex, which is dedicated to preserving the county’s history in agriculture, mining, logging and ranching. “I attended the historical society meetings, and that’s how I got involved with the barn,” she said. “We read in the paper, or heard somewhere, that they were going to tear down that old hospital barn that sits right on the road where you turn in to the government center, and it was going to be torn down to straighten Calaveritas Road.”

Faulkner and others, including Beverly and Bill Burton, John James, Duane White and Dave Sanders, decided to approach the county board of supervisors about the issue.

“We were all ranch people, or had a ranch background, but were all for saving history,” she said. “We went to the board of supervisors and asked them not to tear it down, and let us take it over for a museum. It wasn’t a difficult process at all. They put us on the regular agenda, and we were assigned with the other supervisors to draw up a lease, and then we could take over the barn and start work.”

The barn was built in 1870 and was originally used as a dairy barn by the old county hospital.

“It was the county farm barn, and it was part of the hospital,” Faulkner said. “Before they had a private hospital, it was a county hospital, and anybody could go there. If you didn’t have a home, you could live there, and if you were capable—men and women both—you were expected to work at the farm or work in the hospital.”

The farm included a garden, an orchard, horses and cows.



“They milked the cows and the milk they didn’t use for the hospital, they sold it in town,” Faulkner said. “That’s what the barn was used for. It had stables in it, and horse stalls and a loft upstairs.”

Before the historical society took over the barn, the loft had been used as a meeting room for the sheriff’s posse. Various county departments had also been using the building for storage over the years.

“The only thing I can think of that’s still there from their farming days is the huge almond tree that’s out front,” Faulkner said.

The first step to setting up the museum was cleaning out the barn.

“There were so many wasps and spiders and cobwebs—you wouldn’t have walked in there, it was so bad,” Faulkner said. “We asked the fire department to come in, and they washed down the whole inside of the barn so that we got rid of all of the critters, and then we could go to work and start doing things in it.” Along with many volunteers, inmates from the local jail helped to provide labor.

“They would take out prisoners that were trusty, and they, of course, were happy to get out, and they would come over and work,” Faulkner said. “They were good workers. We furnished the tools and gloves and whatever they needed to work with, and we got a lot of free labor.”

After renovating the barn, the group requested artifacts from county residents.

“The county responded to us beautifully,” Faulkner said. “They started bringing in equipment and hand tools and all kinds of things, and it was no time at all until we were short on space. It just filled up and it looked good. ... I’m extremely proud of it.”

Once the barn was full, the historical society began to raise funds to build the Red Barn Annex, which was completed in 2010.

“That’s full now, too,” Faulkner said. “I don’t know what we’ll do with anything else that’s given to us.”

Throughout the project to establish the museum, Faulkner was often the one who would attend county board meetings and make requests on behalf

of the organization. “Bosse by name, and bossy by nature,” she said, with a laugh.

“They gave me credit for everything, but I was just a good organizer,” she said. “I had a great group of people that were anxious to get in and do something.”

The members of the original Red Barn Committee included Faulkner, Beverly Burton, Duane Wight, Dave Sanders and John James. Many more volunteered their time, including David Studley, Roark Weber, Don Winn, Ron Randall, Mark Weibe, Darrell Giannini, Don Steneck, Brad Burton, Bill Burton, Mark Nunes, Eden Sanders, Ken Markham, Tim Palecek, Frank Gilbo, Bob Wood, Dick Cowgill, Mark Mathre, Gary Herd, Dale Briski, Donna Shannon, and many others.

“I sincerely hope I didn’t leave anyone out,” Faulkner said. “You’re all very important people to the barn.”

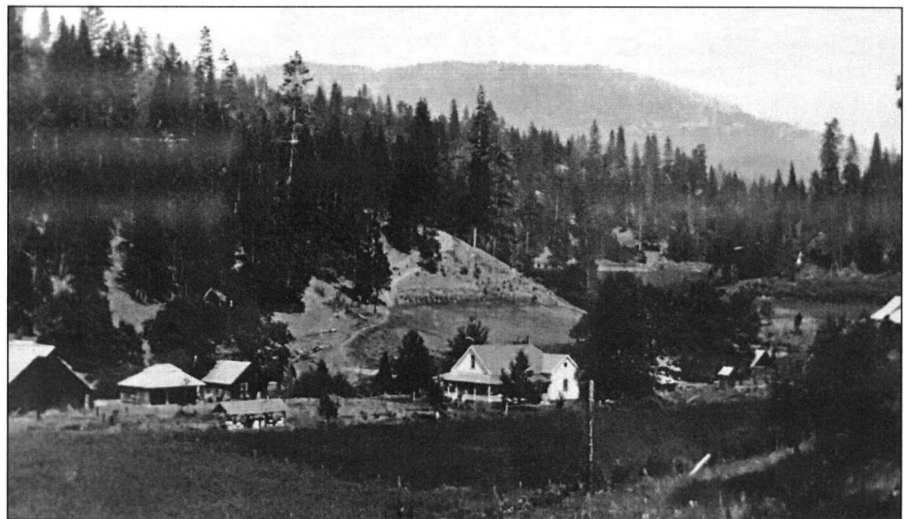
Faulkner said that agriculture and ranching have played an important role in the county’s history.

“It lasted,” she said. “The mining petered out, and so did the sawmills.”

In 1990, Faulkner separated from her second husband, and for the next 10 years, she managed the ranch by herself. Afterwards, she moved to Jackson, where she lived for almost two decades before recently moving to Sutter Creek.

Though Faulkner has lived many places and done many things, her early years spent on the family ranch near Rail Road Flat hold a special place in her heart.

“I had a very good heritage,” she said. “I feel very fortunate to have grown up during that time.”



**The Bosse Ranch.** Photograph Courtesy of Rosemary Faulkner.

# Calaveras County Historical Society

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The Calaveras County Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation. It meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in various communities throughout the County. Locations and scheduled programs are announced in advance. Some meetings include a dinner program, and visitors are always welcome.

The Society operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10:00 to 4:00 in the historic County courthouse located at 30 Main Street in San Andreas; and the historic Red Barn Museum at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, also in San Andreas, which is open Thursday to Sunday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM—Spring & Summer Hours. Saturday & Sunday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM—Winter Hours.

The Society's office is located in historic San Andreas, the Calaveras County seat. Visitors are always welcome to stop by the office for assistance with research, and are encouraged to visit the museums while in the area. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and the telephone number is (209) 754-1058, or contact us at: CCHS@goldrush.com; Red Barn Museum (209) 754-0800.

## October–November–December 2020

### New Members:

Noah Berner—Hathaway Pines  
Edgar L. Weber, xngh—San Francisco  
Tess Leary—Arnold  
Emma Campbell—Lodi  
Christopher & Ruthe Sanborn—Arnold  
Geno Oliver—Reno, NV  
Dustin Airola—Santa Monica, CA  
Lifetime Members:  
Justice Rasmussen—Altaville

### Donations:

Sue and Randy Metzger—Monetary Donation  
Marjorie Geiszler—Monetary Donation  
Sue Rydberg Canavan—copied collection of  
“The Daily News”, an early Angels Camp based  
newspaper, written by her father, Joseph A.  
Rydberg between 1940 - 1941  
Mick & Judy Serra—Donation in memory  
of John Serra  
Contra Costa County Historical Society—3 books:  
Calaveras County Illustrated and Described, by  
W.W. Elliot & Co.; Calaveras, the Land of Skulls,  
by Richard Coke Wood; On the Old Calaveras  
Road, by Mary Goodrich.  
Chuimei Ho, Ph.D—Book: Three Chinese  
Temples in California, by Chuimei Ho and  
Bennet Bronson  
Klamath Falls Historical Society—Book:  
Murphys, Queen of the Sierra, by Coke Wood

### In Memoriam:

Frank DeMoss  
Dennis Downum  
Sandy Elzig  
Larry Everett  
John Serra  
Joel Springer