

## Nuggets from the Past

By Norman McLeod

### A stroll on Main Street — in 1861

Historians tell us that the first decade of Forest Hill's existence was its most prosperous. This was after the benevolent landslide during the winter of 1852-53 uncovered below the town the rich surface diggings that eventually became the Jenny Lind Gold Mine. Other mines quickly followed, one after another and side by side, most of them rich.

There were plentiful jobs to be had, all paying the going rate of \$3.50 per day, a ridiculous sum when compared to today's inflationary wages, but in those days a dollar was a lot of money.

For the fun of it, let us journey back through time for a visit to Forest Hill during the year 1861, in the era of its financial zenith. In 1858, the town's second Forest House was constructed, an attraction that influenced the abandonment of the original townsite below the ridgetop. Businesses and residents moved to the top of the divide to be near the new Forest House. Many new businesses were erected along Broadway, the main street. New homes were built. The town expanded rapidly.

The quickest method of judging any town is by the size of its business section. We can see in 1861 that Forest Hill appears to be a real comer. Most of its buildings are shiny new. The two-story Forest House would be a credit to any town. The all-brick, fireproof, two-story building block constructed by Messrs. Hardy and Kennedy in 1858, standing cater-cornered from the hotel, is also a proud landmark, and still stands today.

With the help of the Placer County Directory of 1861, let us walk together on a tour of downtown Forest Hill. Pretend we are tourists of that era and are seeing the town for the first time. As we saunter down Broadway will we be impressed? Let us see.

On North Broadway a shop's sign advertises: "E. EIDINGER, MERCHANT TAILOR, tailoring and boot & shoe making." Eidinger's promises "ready made clothing of all kinds, custom made, for sale cheap. The finest FRENCH cloth made up in fashionable style."

In the old post office building on the north side of Broadway is located "ANGELL'S NEW BILLIARD SALOON," with two new tables using Phelan's Improved Cushions. Also advertised are wines, liquors and cigars of the very best quality, and fancy drinks mixed to order.

Also on Broadway, opposite the Forest House (today this space is a vacant lot,) is the shop of H. FRIEDLANDER, wholesale and retail dealer in clothing, dry goods, boots, shoes, hats and caps, duck, drills, sheeting, carpets, house furnishings, baskets and fancy articles.

Nearby is the store of DURIEN & LUITZ, boot and shoe manufacturers, "the finest French calfskin boots and shoes made to order and warranted to fit, on shortest notice and lowest prices."

Within the Forest House we find the office of THOS. A. YOUNG, civil engineer and surveyor who promises "to pay strict attention to making correct surveys of mining claims, roads, lands, etc."

One door from the Forest House on the south side of Broadway we find F.D. DURKEE, watchmaker and jeweler. "Jewelry of all kinds manufactured to order, cheaper than any other establishment in the mountains." We note this store is located inside a fireproof building.

Also in this same building is S. YOUNG, offering fine Havana cigars, books and stationery, fruit, confectionery, etc., plus foreign and American magazines.

On Main Street the KEYSTONE STABLES does business, that furnishes saddle horses, buggies and hacks that may be exchanged at other stables in Auburn, Iowa Hill, Todd's Valley, Georgetown, Yankee Jim's and Michigan Bluff.

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At the corner of Gold and Forest streets (Forest Street today is Lowe Street) we find WM. FORREST, machinist and general job workman, where, in connection with the machine shop, is also a wagonmaker's shop.

Ah, here is what we're seeking — a place to eat, on the south side of Broadway, the FOREST HILL RESTAURANT, with a connecting bakery. Also fine wines, brandies and cigars can be had. The proprietor, M. Phelan, calls our attention to single meals at 50 cents and weekly boarding at \$6.

Nearby, in the Stone Building, is the J.C. SCOTT GROCERY, dealer in provisions, hardware, wines, liquors, tobacco, cigars (cigars were a big item then.) Scott's motto is: "Small profits and quick sales."

A blacksmith, C.J. SULLIVAN, is located on Center Street, opposite the Forest House, with premium picks (made of the best Norway iron) and horse shoeing. Back on the north side of Broadway is THAYER & RECORD'S WINDOW BLIND FACTORY, with sashes and doors and dressed flooring for sale. Also, "building done on contract, and materials furnished."

Operating out of his cottage in town is DR. LIBBE, dentist, "attending to all operations pertaining to the teeth and mouth."

In Hardy & Kennedy's fireproof block on north Broadway CHARLES JEKELIUS operates as a watchmaker and jeweler. "Work done at the lowest prices for cash."

Again in the Hardy block is the FOREST HILL DRUG STORE, R. Parkhurst, M.D., proprietor, selling drugs, medicines and coal oil. Terms are cash.

To Argonauts on the divide, GEO. G. WEBSTER offers to assay gold dust, with dust melted into bars for purchase at the following San Francisco rates:

Gold bars over \$1,200 — 1/4 percent

Gold bars under \$1,200 — \$3

Webster operates at the Wells, Fargo & Co. office in the Hardy block. He is also an attorney and notary public. He advertises: "Naturalization papers issued to foreign miners."

HERMAN KRAUSE'S PREMIUM STEREOSCOPIC AMBROTYPE GALLERY is also in the Hardy & Kennedy block, next door to the post office, with entrance at the stairs leading to the Odd Fellows Hall on the second floor (still in place.) (Offhand we are unfamiliar with the word "ambrotype" so at home we look it up in our dictionary. "An early kind of photograph consisting of a glass negative backed by a dark surface so as to appear positive," it reads. H. Krause also deals in wines, liquors, cigars and chewing tobacco and sells San Francisco lager beer.

Many more businesses and trades are not included in our directory copy, such as hotels, boarding houses, numerous saloons, liveries, stage offices, grocers, physicians, lawyers, dance halls with German girls, and a newspaper, the Placer Courier.

As we stand on the dividing strip on Broadway in front of the Forest House, downtown Forest Hill presents a solid front of business establishments, side by side with many pedestrians and horse-drawn wagons. It is a busy town with the look of prosperity on it.

A well-dressed man emerges from the hotel to speak to us. It is Mr. Phillips, the Forest House owner. "I've watched you looking us over," he smiles.

"Yes, and we are impressed," someone replies.

"You have every right to be," he says. "In only eight years this town has boomed. I'm no prophet, but I feel in my bones there's no limit to where we'll be 10 or 20 years from now!"