

MEADOW NEWS

High Sierra Meadows Property Owners Newsletter

<http://www.highsierrameadows.com>

Winter 2016

Arnold Meadow: The Story Behind the Name

by Rick Edgeworth

Have you ever been sitting quiet and content in your camp chair on a warm summer's eve and found yourself wondering "Who the heck was Arnold"?

A few years back I came across a book titled "Place Names of the Sierra Nevada". Published in 1926 this book had but a single sentence entry under the name of Arnold Meadow. That sentence was "Probably for Ben Arnold a Rancher of the Foothills". With that tidbit I began researching the story behind our Meadow – like most stories of history there were many dead-ends, false starts and more rumors than truth but in the end, I feel pretty sure we know who Arnold really was.

First off – *Ben Arnold* is NOT our Arnold. There was a Benjamin Talbot Arnold run-

ning around the area during the 1800's working at Jones' Store, laboring in Coarsegold and ranching in North Fork. Locals in North Fork still point out "Ben's Place" up the road towards the start of the Scenic Byway. But he was NOT OUR Arnold. So that tidbit was a dead-end.

But, that research led me to the Land Patents database of the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM was tasked with registering land to Homesteaders prior to the creation of the Sierra National Forest in 1893. Homesteaders paid a fee to the BLM to register their property as "private" and received a Land Patent documenting the ownership. Those BLM documents recorded who bought, when they bought and the map coordinates of where that land was located. I was able to find the BLM Land Patent issued on January 18, 1892 to one James Hayden Arnold formerly of Illinois for the cash purchase of 160 acres of land and cabin for the purpose of cattle and livestock. I took a copy of the 1892 BLM plat map and laid it over the USGS map for our area and it was a perfect match! **(Cont'd page 2)**

Water News:

The water system worked nearly flawlessly this season. There was a minor glitch early in the season when the radio communication system between the lower well and water tank somehow stopped working. It was fixed rather quickly and there was plenty of water for property owners and their visitors all season.

Madera County Environmental Health performed an onsite inspection of the water system. A final inspection report was issued and is available for reading or downloading from the Meadow website. The water system passed inspection with flying colors. There were only a couple of minor corrections required that Robert and Richard St. Marie made in accordance with the inspection report.

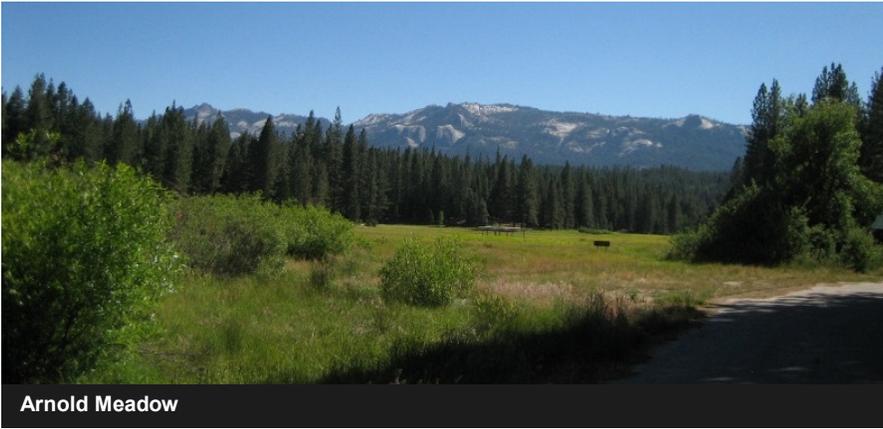
The quality of the water distributed throughout the Meadow met or surpassed all County and State requirements. Bacteriological testing is required three times a year; nitrate nitrogen testing is required annually; and nitrite testing is required every three years. The Meadow is current and compliant on all water quality testing. Copies of the most recent test results may be found on the Meadow website. ●



Wonderland-Photo by David Person-2013

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Arnold Meadow

Arnold Meadow: The Story Behind the Name

(cont'd from page 1)

So our namesake has a name – **James Hayden Arnold**.

But a name is not a person – so the man behind the name became the next quest and with his name, back in time we go.

Did you know that there was no Madera County before 1893? Actually, this whole part of the country wasn't even part of America until the War with Mexico ended in 1846. The county of Mariposa at that time covered all of what we now call Fresno, Madera and part of Mono counties. Fresno (including the future Madera) was split off in 1856 but it would take another 37 years before an actual Madera County would be created. I make note of this because the county names became important when trying to back-track James Hayden Arnold. Using the records of the U.S. Census – I found a James H. Arnold in the 1860 census for the Ciudad de Los Angeles. James is listed as being born in October of 1837 in Illinois and declares his age as 23.

Now young James must have been a traveling man as he disappears from the records for the next decade or so until he reappears in the voting rolls of 1880 Great Voter Register of Fresno County (Madera Precincts) where he is listed as being recorded in 1878 as James Hayden Arnold originally of Illinois now 41 years of age with an occupation of Teamster. He lists his home as "Walkers" – the area below the infamous Walker's Grade between O'Neals and North Fork. So sometime between age 23 and age 41 our intrepid traveler moved from the wilds of Los Angeles up to the wilds of the Sierra foothills.

James Hayden Arnold appears again the 1890 Census, occupation Rancher, and then as the buyer of the Meadows in the 1892 BLM Land Patent records. One year later, Madera County becomes official and James registers to vote in 1894, listed as age 57 originally from Illinois. As this registry was the first for the new county of Madera – they included descriptions of the citizens. In James' case, he is described as having a height of 5'6 3/4", light skin, blue eyes, grey hair and being deaf. He lists no family as he is a single male occupied as a rancher.

Our James Hayden Arnold appears one last time in the 1900 U.S. Census, unmarried male aged 63 and then disappears from the record and does not appear in either the 1904 Voter registry or the 1910 Census so we must assume he passed sometime in the early 1900's.

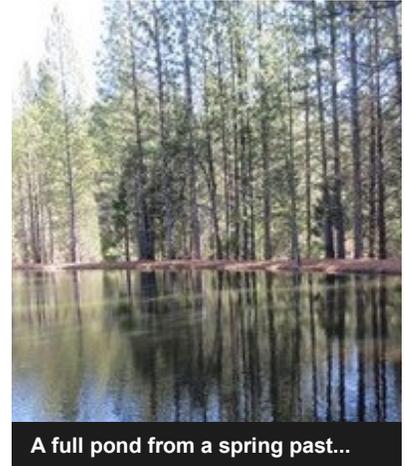
But he must have made a mark as his name was given to the flats we call Arnold Meadow. That name is referenced in an 1897 diary kept by Federal surveyors mapping the area following the creation of the Sierra National Forest. The place name of Arnold Meadow first appears on a map in the 1904 USGS Kaiser Quadrangle and has stuck to this day.

According to some old newsletters found by Mike Compton, early High Sierra Meadow owners turned to a Connie Popelesh, District Archeologist to research the history. Her letter suggests that after the passing of James Hayden Arnold, timber and mining speculators from San Francisco swarmed to the Sierra region buying up unclaimed land around the meadow. Who actually owned it is unclear but she does have references to the Daulton (Dalton) family using it for private camping in the 1920's. The Daltons by the way were/are a very large and powerful ranching dynasty in

Pond Tree Removal

The drought has weakened the pine trees throughout the forest and made them very susceptible to a bark beetle infestation. The Meadow has been no exception. The Board issued a contract for \$17,500 for the removal of approximately 80 dead pine trees at the pond. The job was started in mid-November and was progressing well until the weather turned bad and forced the contractor out of the Meadow. Thus, the job won't be completed until after the spring snow melt.

Everyone probably noticed the annual assessment increased for 2016. The Board decided to increase the assessment by \$52 per lot for two years to cover the cost of the pond tree removal. The fee sunsets after two years. ●



A full pond from a spring past...

both Fresno and Madera history. It may be that this family had some ownership interest for most of the early 1900s.

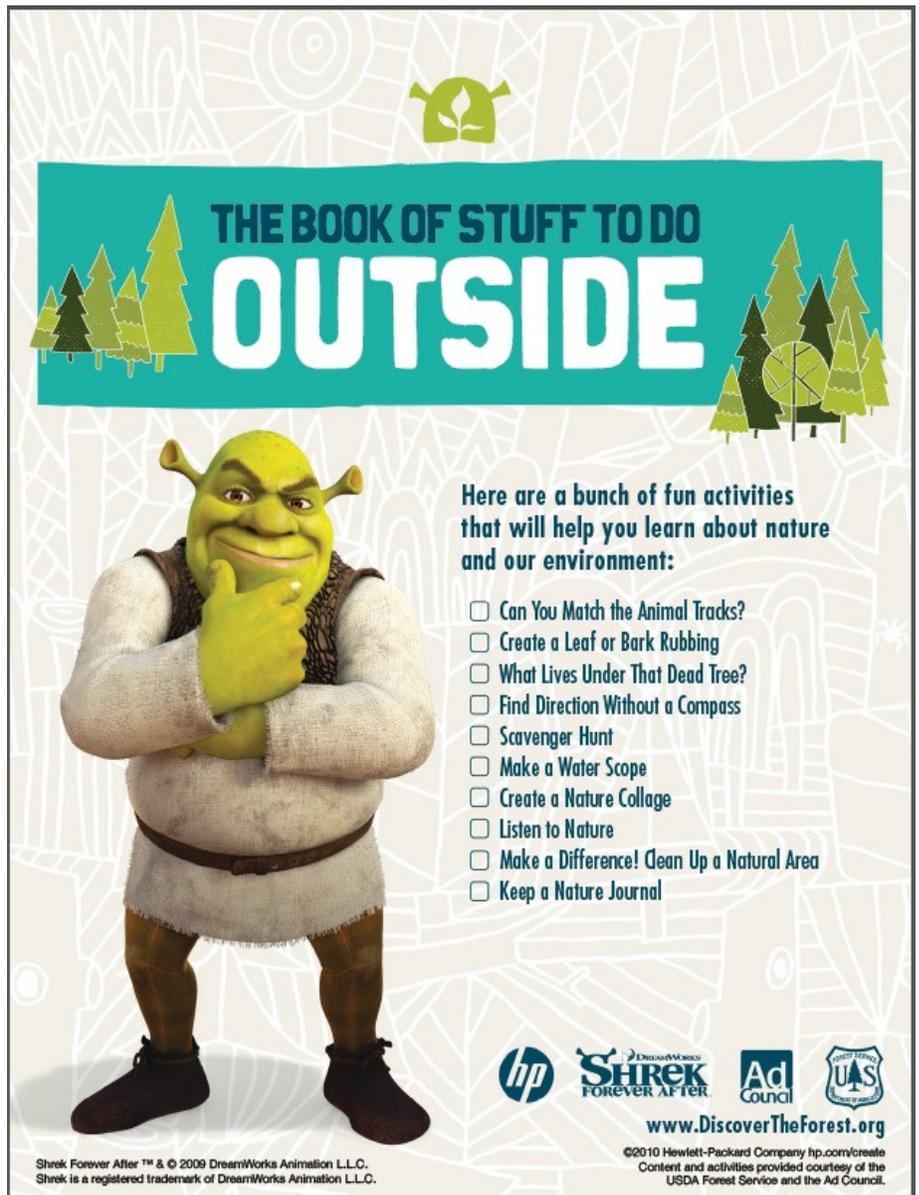
By the late 1940's rumors started about a new Federal highway that would cut across the Sierra connecting Fresno to the area of Mammoth Mountain. (*Authors Note – this story will be revealed in next year's newsletter*). Probably based on this rumor, the Meadow was purchased in 1950 by a Claude E. Williams – a businessman, land developer and local politician who founded The Falls Resort in the early days of Bass Lake. According to archived documents on file with the California Secretary of State, Williams formed a land development company called Sierra Ranches, Inc. of Bass Lake to purchase and maintain the meadow. (cont'd on page 4)

CCR Compliance:

For reasons unknown, more recent Boards have gotten away from the practice of 'annual lot inspections'. However, the current Board began two years ago to perform inspections and notify owners of CCR deficiencies. Most deficiencies are minor in nature and require very little effort to remedy. Most deficiencies include unpainted or unfenced propane tanks and unpainted structures. However, there are some violations that include the installation of man-made structures without architectural approval. Virtually all man-made improvements require architectural approval; i.e. solar panels, storage sheds, propane tanks, metal containers, and cabins, etc. Applications for property improvement may found on the Meadow website or by contacting a board member or David Person, the sole member of the architectural review committee. ●

Good Neighbor Policy:

Just a reminder that all owners are asked to take responsibility to ensure their family members and guests adhere to the policy. While not all inclusive, chain saws, generators, construction equipment and all other loud devices shall not be operated prior to 7:30 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. Boisterous activity and loud music are discouraged at all times and shall not be permitted before 7:30 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m. The maximum speed limit on all roads is 20 mph and roads are NOT to be used for recreational driving. Do not trespass on the lots of others nor drive on banks along the roads. No rifles, shotguns, pistols, air rifles, bows and crossbows shall be used within the Meadow. These devices shall be discharged far enough outside the Meadow as not to disturb anyone inside the Meadow. This means crossing just over the fence to fire rifle and pistols is insufficient. You must go far enough into the forest as not to disturb other owners. ●



**THE BOOK OF STUFF TO DO
OUTSIDE**

Here are a bunch of fun activities that will help you learn about nature and our environment:

- Can You Match the Animal Tracks?
- Create a Leaf or Bark Rubbing
- What Lives Under That Dead Tree?
- Find Direction Without a Compass
- Scavenger Hunt
- Make a Water Scope
- Create a Nature Collage
- Listen to Nature
- Make a Difference! Clean Up a Natural Area
- Keep a Nature Journal

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www.DiscoverTheForest.org

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Kids Corner: <http://www.discovertheforest.org/pdf/theBookOfStuffToDoOutside.pdf>

Board Meeting Schedule 2016:

- ∞ Second Tuesday in March @ 7:00 p.m. via teleconference
- ∞ Second Sunday in June @ 11:00 a.m. @ the Meadow
- ∞ Second Tuesday in November @ 7:00 p.m. via teleconference
- ∞ Annual membership meeting & picnic, Labor Day weekend @ 12 noon.

**It is not known when and if a special meeting may be required during the year but as noted above, legal notice would be posted on the HSPOA website.*

Arnold Meadow: The Story Behind the Name

(cont'd from page 2)

For you airstrip buffs, it was Claude Williams who cut the airstrip across the meadow sometime in 1951-52 as it appears in the FAA charts of 1953 where it remained until 1970. Reading a family history of Williams he is mentioned as an avid amateur pilot who loved high country hunting and fishing trips. Archives from the Madera Mercury and Madera Tribune newspapers of the time makes it seem that for much of 1950s and 1960s, Arnold Meadow was used for contract cattle ranching and private hunting, camping and fishing.

By the late 1960's the hoped-for Mammoth Pass Road from Fresno to Mammoth Lakes was dead and gone – and so must have been the hopes of land developers like Claude Williams as this article suggests:

The Fresno (Bee) Republican newspaper of January 5, 1969 has this listing in the Real Estate section:

High Sierra Ranch Is Sold Sierra Ranches, Inc. of Bass Lake has sold its 160 acre Sierra Ranch to a syndicate headed by the Odekirk Investment Corp. of Southern California. The ranch, known as Arnold Meadow, has an airstrip, lake and Arnold Creek on the property. It is surrounded by U.S. Forest Service land and is located above Chiquito Creek in the Mammoth Pool area. The Odekirk Investment Corp. has syndicated and developed considerable commercial and investment properties in the Los Angeles area. The property was acquired at an undisclosed price for investment purposes. The new owners also have under study the possibility of a small lot subdivision.

Two years later, articles such as this one from the August 1971 Independent Press Telegram of Long Beach appear

High Sierra Meadows has begun sales. Surrounded by the Sierra National Forest and near the spectacular Minarets Wilderness Area, High Sierra Meadows has been opened for public purchase. Announcement was made today by Ron Odekirk of American West Resort Properties. Odekirk said, "When these lots are sold there will be no more that offer California's most beautiful High Sierra Meadows, deep in the tall pine forest of the High Sierras. Located in some of the most beautiful country in California, access is by county and forest service roads and water is supplied to every site. High Sierra Meadows has its own private lake for swimming or fishing for trout. Privacy is assured by a gate that is closed to all but property owners and their guests

Tall pine forests, mountain meadows and a lake combine to make the development one of the most unspoiled recreational properties on the market. Odekirk Investment Corporation, 420 N. Brand (No. 410) in Glendale, is the developer of the recreational property that lies 30 miles within the boundaries of Sierra National Forest. "The lots represent an opportunity to purchase a miniature pine forest perfect for a camper, trailer or cabins if you prefer", Odekirk noted. "A lot at High Sierra Meadows assures of an uncrowded place for a weekend vacation".

"Today our national parks are vastly overcrowded and camping areas are filled," said Odekirk. "We are offering a chance for a family to own a permanent campsite or recreation area within easy weekend reach of most metropolitan areas in California."

From that point on – High Sierra Meadows becomes the familiar place we know today with some lots still owned by the "Original Settlers". But we all go back to a wandering young man from Illinois named James Hayden Arnold. So now we know. ●

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"Basic Essentials" you should carry when exploring the wilderness:

Map and compass

Extra Water

Extra Clothing

Extra Food

Flashlight (with extra bulb & batteries)

Matches or Lighter & Fire starter

Knife

First Aid Supplies, Sun Protection, Insect Repellent

Plastic Trowel & Toilet Paper

Whistle

Communication devices: 2 way radios/ cell phone

***Always tell someone where you are going and when you will return. Also, leave a note in your car with the same information.**

Call 911 in an emergency.