

MERRITT HISTORY

MERRITT FAMILY

In 1901, after the urging of his older brother Warren, Fred Merritt Sr. came to California in search for gold. Leaving his young bride with her parents in New Jersey. He came to Pacific Valley in search for gold. After the birth of their first son, Mervyn and his mother followed Fred to California in 1902. They lived at the Byron Plaskett home, which was later covered by highway 1, around where the Plaskett campground is now. Fred and Warren helped manage the "Reed" Mine in the Gorda area.

In 1904 he moved to Jolon and lived in a small house close to the Dutton Hotel. While in Jolon he started working as a carpenter and one of his first jobs was working on the old Blacksmith Shop. When he saved up enough money he moved to the William Gause home, in the Argyle area. He didn't have his own horses, so he hired teams to start clearing the land. When the land was cleared, he started growing wheat and raising cattle. He never used his homestead rights and bought out many his neighbors, as they couldn't make a living and wanted to move on. Fred was a prominent farmer starting with 160 acres and by 1929 he had grown to 4,200 acres, all in the Argyle area. He ended up purchasing 10 homesteads in all, some located in Kirk Canyon, Robinson Canyon, Pole Canyon, Hall Canyon, and Newby Canyon.

Fred had 3 more sons, Warren born in 1906, Elliot born in 1908 and Fred Jr. born in 1915. When his sons were old enough they started helping their father on the ranch and raising their own families. Fred and Edith also had a daughter Edith born in 1921. Besides farming the Merritt's also started a large orchard. Remodeled and built many homes in the King City, Pine Canyon, Jolon and Lockwood area.

The Merritts also worked on installing and maintaining the new phone lines in the Argyle area.



Fred Merritt Sr.



Edith Hawxhurst Merritt



Edith and Mervyn



Elliott Merritt



Warren, Edith, Elliott and Fred Jr.



Elliott, Warren, unknown, and Mervyn at Argyle School



Elliott and Warren



Old Adobe House on Argyle



Old Homestead on Argyle



Fred Merritt Sr.



Mervyn, Warren, and a Avila Clearing Stumps



Elliott, Fred Jr., and Mervyn, at Orchard



Warren, Mervyn, and Elliott Playing with Rattlesnake



Argyle House Built by Fred Sr. in 1922



Snow in Argyle in late 1940



Harvesting in Kirk Canyon



Working Ground in Kirk Canyon



Building a Road to Robinson Canyon Canyon



Marie, Dorothy, and Warren with Lion Killed by Trapper