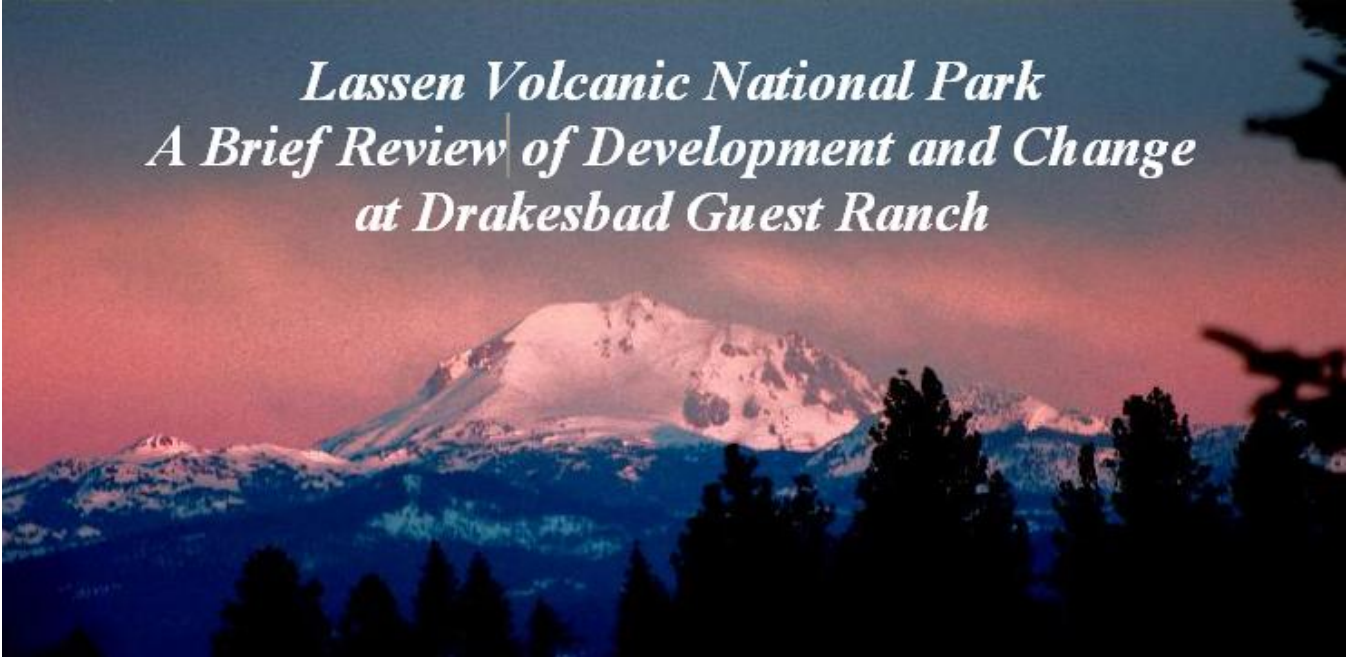




Lassen Volcanic National Park A Brief Review of Development and Change at Drakesbad Guest Ranch

Introduction

Objectives of the Research at the Drakesbad Guest Ranch

The traditional interest of the archaeologist is the study of the material remains of prehistoric cultures. As a scientific discipline that studies the past, archaeology fundamentally concerns itself with the interrelationships of three dimensions: space, time, and form (Spaulding 1972: 22-39). This is to say that the archaeologist is concerned with the form of human material culture as it changes through time and over space. However, the ultimate objective of archaeological research extends beyond the material remains of past cultures and seeks some understanding of the systemic cultural processes that governed the behavior of the human beings who used the "things" left behind.

The term "archaeology" most often raises in the public mind such adventurous images as Heinrich Schliemann digging the remains of Homer's Troy, Howard Carter first peering by flashlight into the tomb of Tutankhamun, Stephens and Catherwood searching the Central American jungle for Maya temples, or Indiana Jones off to a new adventure. The truth of the matter is that archaeology is generally a much more mundane and frequently more tedious discipline, focused most often on the small and generally uninteresting debris of daily life.

In recent years archaeologists have more frequently been called away from traditional pursuits and asked to join hands with the historian who has come to appreciate the powerful potential that archaeology has to test of the truth of the historical record, and to recover vital details thought to be too unimportant to place in the written record. It can be argued that what follows here is historical archaeology, of a sort. The subject of the investigation is bounded in space by the Drakesbad valley and its immediate surroundings in Lassen Volcanic National Park, is restricted to the time period between the approximately 1890 and the



FALL COMES TO THE UPPER MEADOW

present, and is focused on the material evidence of continuity and change in the cultural landscape of the

While the traditional archaeologist studies stylistic change in prehistoric pottery shards to order cultures in time, it is the photograph that is employed here to establish a time sequence. Fortunately many of the photographs of Drakesbad are firmly dated and can be used to form a framework into which undated prints can be placed on the basis of structural elements. The study of this photographic sequence at once yields a clearer view of the history of Drakesbad than is provided by the written record alone. For example, the most dramatic event in Drakesbad's history is the well recorded collapse of the lodge in the winter of 1937-38. The historical record credits the building's structural failure to inadequate construction methods by the builder combined with unusually heavy snow loads, but the photographic record may suggest additional reasons why the building collapsed after standing firm through 47 winters.

The research presented here also has a practical purpose beyond complimenting the written history of the Drakesbad Guest Ranch. The National Park Service in its vision for the future of the Drakesbad seeks to maintain the facility in close harmony with its past. To this end it is useful to the Park Service to know such unrecorded and tedious minutiae as what type of fences were constructed over the years, how and when paths were lined with stones, if a pond or fountain ever decorated the lawn in front of the lodge, to what extent the meadow was once populated with willows, and so forth. In a more important context, if the Park Service, faced in the 1970s or 80s with the considerable cost of restoring a small cabin attached to the back of a log barn and in a state of near collapse, had possessed clear evidence that this cabin was the oldest standing structure in the valley, perhaps a different decision would have been made.



Thus, this research seeks to answer questions about Drakesbad's buildings and environment not fully addressed in the written history with the explicit expectation that such information will assist the National Park Service preserve this unique and beautiful valley as the Sifford family envisioned it, a place close to nature reserved for renewal and reflection.

Finally, it is anticipated that this research marks only a beginning and will be refined and expanded as more photographs of Drakesbad are discovered.



GUESTS GATHER BY THE CAMPFIRE IN 2002,



AND ON THE PORCH IN 1924

Edward R. Drake and the Settlement of Hot Springs Valley

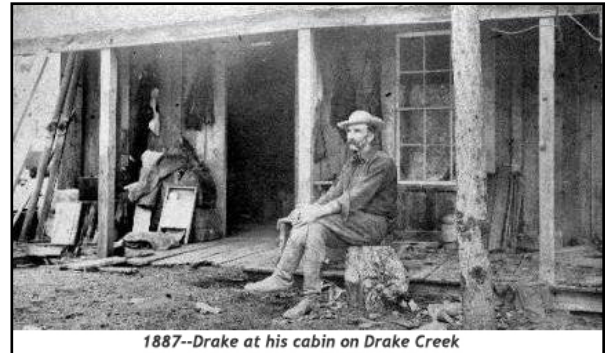
The first person known to have settled in the valley that was later to become Drakesbad was Edward R. Drake (1830-1904). It is possible that Drake may have first arrived in the Drakesbad area as early as 1875. Roy Sifford recalled, "I have been told by others that he was in the valley at Drakesbad when Dr. Harkness, for whom Mt. Harkness was named, was there in 1875" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine, 7 July 1987). Sifford also states that before Drake moved further north into Hot Spring Valley he constructed a "squatters cabin" in Warner Valley about a mile south of Lee's Camp where the road crosses "Drake Creek" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine, 9 Oct 1987). Records show that in the 1880's Drake purchased a land claim to property in Hot Spring Valley, and over the next decade acquired additional property, the largest parcel obtained through "patents from the United States



Drake's Cabin in Hot Spring Valley noted on the 1892 Keddie map of Plumas County

Government for a total of 320 acres in the areas now called 'Drakesbad' and 'Devils Kitchen'" (Strong:1989:26). By 1900 Drake's land holdings totaled 400 acres and included many hot springs and other thermal features associated with the Mount Lassen volcano.

Roy Sifford described Drake as a trapper and guide who came west from the Rocky Mountains "in the late '60's and '70's, mining up and down the Feather River near Bidwell Bar, [where] he evidently made some kind of a stake. He established a big bar there, and ran it for some time where others have told me that he had employed three or four bartenders, and it was a big place. Then, as the diggings ran out, he moved on up the Feather River into the upper end and into the Prattville - the Big Meadows country. It was there that he came on up into what became Drakesbad, Hot Springs Valley. I think he first came up there in about 1880 or the late '70's. He did not settle the land or anything, but I think he came and went and trapped in there some and made Prattville from about 1875, his winter headquarters" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine 5/5/87).



In a letter dated March 27, 1877, to J. Van A. Carter of Fort Bridger, Wyoming, acknowledging the receipt a shipment of moccasins and requesting an additional pair--"the largest pair you have", Drake gives his return mailing address as Prattville, Plumas County, firmly placing him in the Hot Spring Valley area by the spring of 1877 (Original letter in the possession of the author).

When Drake settled in Hot Spring Valley he constructed a small log cabin and a barn. Other improvements were pasture fencing of cedar pickets, a bath house, wooden latrines for campers, and a shallow well. In 1890 Drake built "a good new log cabin of some size" at the edge of the valley where today the Drakesbad lodge is located (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.).

Drake spent his summers in the valley "herding livestock, acting as a guide, and providing limited services to the occasional campers he allowed on his property" (Strong 1989:26). During the harsh Sierra winters the lanky 6' 4" Drake, who is remembered by Roy Sifford as a kindly man and a good fiddler, moved down valley to Prattville in Big Meadows (now under Lake Almanor) "doing odd jobs for a living" (Strong 1989:26).

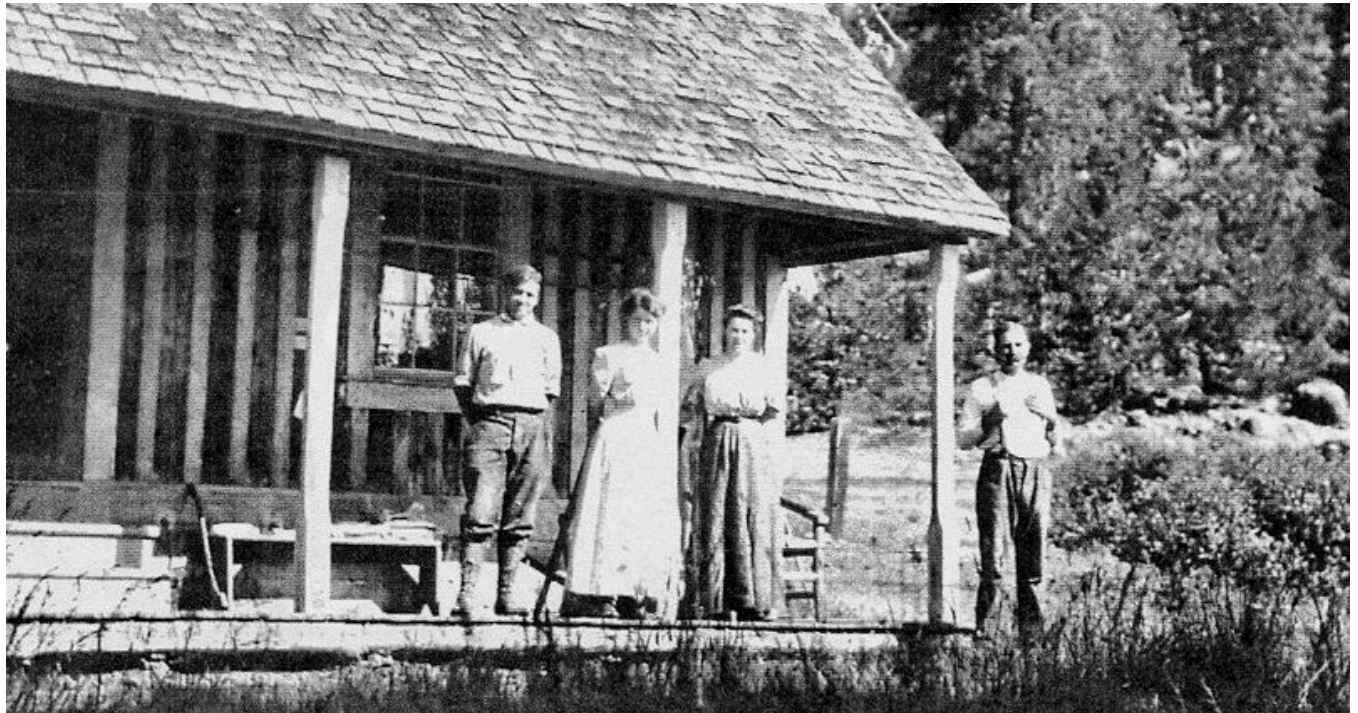
The Sifford Family Comes to the Valley

In 1900, Alexander Sifford, an ailing school teacher seeking relief from a troublesome stomach, made the difficult three-day wagon journey with his wife Ida and son Roy (daughter Pearl remained at home with the mumps) from their home in Susanville to Hot Spring Valley to camp and allow Alex to drink the soda waters of "Drake's Spring" (Strong 1989:26).

Alex Sifford's visit with Edward Drake appears to have come at an opportune time. Over the course of the three-day visit the older Sifford drank the water and he and the lanky

pioneer talked. Drake was seventy and something about Alex Sifford and his family struck a chord in the old man. After a conversation that lasted "long into the night" (Sifford 1994:14) Drake agreed to sell his 400 acres to Sifford for \$6,000 (Strong 1989:27). As part of the deal Alex Sifford assured Drake that he would always be welcome to come and go as long as he lived (Sifford 1994:15).

The following morning the Siffords started back to Susanville where Alex obtained a loan for a down payment. On June 20, 1900, the Siffords took possession of Drake's Hot Spring



1906--The Siffords on the front porch of the lodge L-R: Roy, Pearl, Ida May, Alex

Valley where they would live and work for the next 60 summers. In 1901 Alex Sifford purchased 40 acres in the Boiling Springs Lake area, increasing the total Sifford holdings in the valley to 440 acres. Later in 1908 they renamed the valley "Drakesbad" (Drake's baths) to honor the old pioneer.

Life at Drakesbad was hard work for the whole Sifford family, grubbing willows in the meadow, building to improve the property, and providing services to the hundreds of visitors who came to the valley each summer. Making the guest ranch a paying proposition was always a struggle, and the early years were a particularly difficult time of "root hog or die" as Roy Sifford remembers (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine 7/7/87). However, the Sifford's love of their valley and their willingness to share its beauties never diminished. In no small part the creation in 1916 of Lassen Volcanic National Park resulted from the Sifford's vision for Drakesbad and the Lassen area. It remained an enduring goal of the Siffords, Roy and his father Alex before him, that the Drakesbad valley would some day become part of the Park and open "for any who wished to visit and enjoy" (Sifford 1994:145).

Continuity and Change A Photographic History of the Drakesbad Guest Ranch	
<u>1. The Lodge 1900-1938</u>	<u>5. The Log Barn and Cook's Cabin</u>
<u>2. The Lodge 1938-Present</u>	<u>6. Guest Accommodations</u>
<u>3. The Bath House, Plunge, and Pool</u>	<u>7. The Meadow and Soda Spring</u>
<u>4. The Kitchen and Dining Room</u>	<u>8. Horse Corrals and Dream Lake</u>

Dates and Place Names: Photographs in this paper are assigned dates only when a date can be determined with confidence. Fortunately, when I sorted through the loose photographs in the Sifford collection, I discovered that Roy Sifford frequently recorded a date either on the back of the of the photograph or on the front in the margin. Many of the photographs in the several Sifford scrapbooks and in Roy Sifford's two-volume written manuscript of "Sixty Years of Siffords at Drakesbad" are also dated, sometimes, however, assigned only to a general time period such as "1920s". Dates for most of the Eastman photographs of Drakesbad were noted on the negative envelope by the photographer and are recorded in the U. C. Davis Eastman Collection database. In a few cases I have assigned a probable time period for a photograph based on elements in the photograph that are clearly visible in a similar dated photograph.

Most modern maps of Lassen Volcanic Park show the creek that flows through the Drakesbad valley as "Hot Springs Creek". However, an earlier 1886 geological map and the 1892 Keddie map of Plumas County record the creek as "Hot Spring Creek" and the valley as "Hot Spring Valley". In most of his writing Roy Sifford refers to the creek and the valley using the more historically correct singular form. I follow Sifford here.

Acknowledgments: The author wishes to thank the following individuals and institutions without whose assistance this research would not have been possible: Peter Schulz whose sense of civil responsibility lured me into the project; Lassen Volcanic National Park Superintendent Marilyn Parris who offered the opportunity, and her Cultural Resource Managers, Karen Haner and Cari Kreshak, who suggested the project and were a source of constant encouragement; Tim Purdy, publisher of "Sixty Years of Siffords at Drakesbad", who patiently and willingly granted me access to the Sifford documents in his care; University California, Davis, Special Collections where I was able to obtain numerous important Eastman photographs; Joan Sayre, Director of the Chester Museum, who granted me access to Roy Sifford's written manuscript; Susan Watson who kindly shared her family scrapbooks; Ed and Billie Fiebiger, the managers of Drakesbad Guest Ranch, who offered insight, suggestions, and lunch; Emily Ortega of Ortega National Parks, who offered server space to host the web site; and Nancy Carruthers Rorty, the gracious lady of Drakesbad who remains an inspiration to us all.

Of course, I alone am responsible for omissions or errors in this research, which should be considered as an ongoing project. It is hoped that the many long-time visitors to Drakesbad as they learn of this project will share their personal knowledge to correct, expand, and refine our understanding of Drakesbad's history.

Tandy Bozeman, Ph.D.
Lake Almanor California

The Lodge at Drakesbad 1900 — 1938



1887--Edward Drake's first cabin in Hot Spring Valley

On June the 20th, 1900, the Siffords' "took possession of Hot Spring Valley, the beautiful log house that Drake had made, the bath house, a barn and that possible meadow land" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine, 9 Oct 1984). Both the lodge and the smaller structure on the left were built by Drake.



Annie K. Bidwell (in hat) on porch. She visited in 1901 and 1904



Lodge in 1907

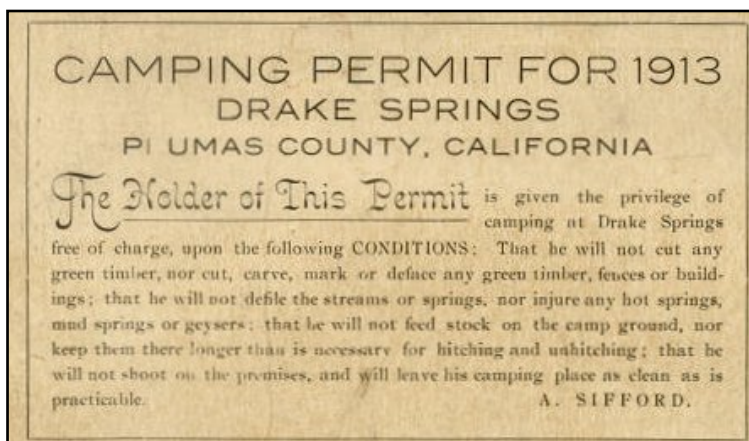
The lodge faced generally to the east and was fronted with a covered porch. There was another covered porch on the south end of the building, and a fireplace and flue at the north end. The west (rear) of the building was an unbroken wall without windows or doors and lacked a porch or overhang. Sifford states that the large pipe that served as the fireplace flue

was part of a mining flume from the Dutch Hill mine at Seneca (Sifford Manuscript: 6a.). The south porch contained a bench and wash basins for family and guests to wash up before meals



1910--Standing on porch L-R Ida May, Pearl, and Roy. Alex at far right
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)

In 1912 the Siffords formed the Drakes Spring Company and used the funds obtained from investors to begin a number of improvements that included the construction of a kitchen and dining room, a barn, the rock and cement pool, 20 wooden tent platforms, and completion of the bridge over Warner Creek.



1913 Camping Permit



1904 Glen French in his tent

In 1914 the first telephone line was run from Chester to Drakesbad. On May 14, 1914, the Mount Lassen volcano came to life in the first of a series of eruptions. Two years later in 1916 Lassen Volcanic National Park was created.

1920-1930



1923 — The Lodge and Guest Tents



1924 — Guests on the Front Porch on the East Side of the Lodge



1925—Ida May Sifford on the South Porch of the Lodge



1926— Front of the Lodge (Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1927—Snow pile at the Rear (West Side) of the Lodge



1928 — Campfire on the Lawn in front of the Lodge

1930-1938



1931 — Lodge now has a Rear Porch addition. (Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



**1931 Clearer View of the Earthen Bank at the Rear of the Lodge.
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)**

In the photographs above taken in 1926 and 1927 the rear of the lodge lacks a covered porch. However the photographs taken in 1931 show that a covered porch has been added to the west side (rear) of the lodge. Also, the covered porch at the south end of the building

appears to have been rebuilt at this time with its roof enlarged to connect with the porch roof on the east (front) side of the building, and with the new porch addition on the west (rear) side. Also, the small building adjacent to the southwest corner of the lodge and visible in several photographs dating from 1902 to 1927 disappears in photographs after 1931. It is likely that this building was removed to make room for the new porches. The lodge now had a covered porch extending around three sides of the building, the new sections constructed sometime between 1927 and 1931.



1935 — Lodge with 1935 Packard automobile. Note the addition of a Rear Porch behind sign.
(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections,
General Library, University of California, Davis)



1937 — The Covered Porch addition on the West Side (rear) of the Lodge, and the improved South Porch



Another view of the improved South Porch and the West Porch addition on the left

The Collapse of the Lodge in the Winter of 1937-38



1938--Damage to the Lodge
Left-- the Southwest Corner of the Lodge Right--the North Fireplace end

Roy Sifford returned to Drakesbad on May 10, 1938, to find that the lodge "had been smashed sideways" by the winter snows (Sifford 1994: 95). The damage to the lodge is visible in the two photographs above. The photo on the left shows the covered porch on the west and south sides of the building and the photograph on the right shows the north side (fireplace) of the lodge. Damage to the building was such that Roy Sifford considered the structure beyond repair. In addition to the damage to the lodge, Sifford reports that a store house and four cottages were "wrecked" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Dorothy Hill, June 8 1973).

Why was the lodge, which had survived 46 previous winters intact, so severely damaged in the winter of 1937-38? Roy Sifford reports that the winter of 1937-38 was "the most severe that we had ever experienced". In December the Lassen area experienced a heavy snowfall of three to four feet, followed by what he describes as a "warm rain storm" which caused extensive flooding. January was another period of heavy snowfall, "more than 20 feet in depth in some places" (Sifford 1994: 93-94).

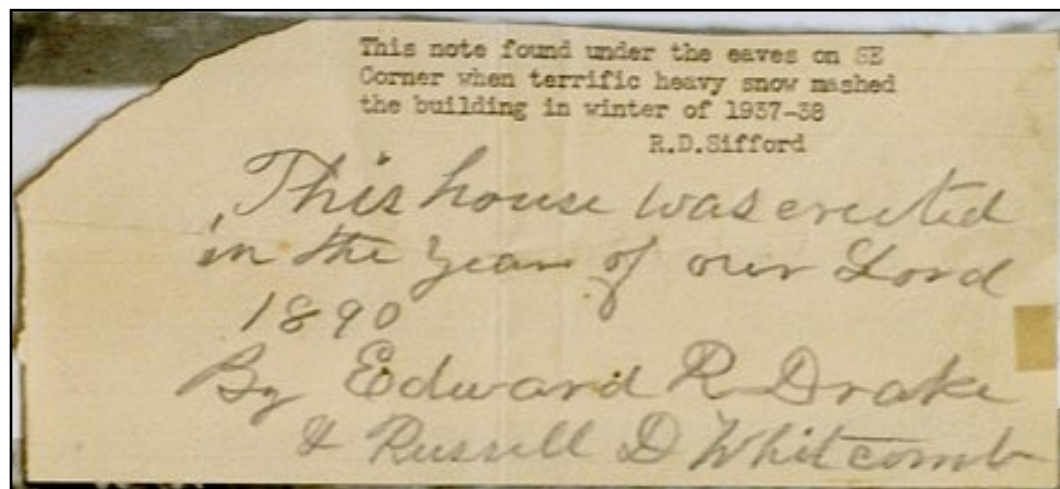
Snowfall and snowpack data for the Northern Sierra confirm that the winter of 1937-38 was indeed as severe as Sifford reported. Data from Donner Summit shows that total snowfall in the northern Sierras that winter exceeded 700 inches, more snow than any winter since

1890 and far above the 415 inches in an average year. However, the recorded maximum snowpack depth for the year 1937-38 was only slightly more than 200 inches, likely due to melting during the period of warmer temperature mentioned by Sifford. The maximum snowpack depth for the year 1937-38, while deeper than the average of 137 inches, was equal to or less in depth than the snowpacks recorded for the years 1890, 1893, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1907, and 1911.

If snowpack depth is a more accurate measure of the maximum weight of snow carried on the roof of the lodge at any particular time during the winter, then the winter of 1937-38 was severe, but not extraordinary. The lodge had withstood similar snow loads during six previous winters. This suggests that the addition of the new covered porch on the rear of the lodge and the enlargement of the covered porch on the south end may have contributed in some degree to the structural failure of the building. A rough analysis of the roof profile in the photographs indicates that the addition of the covered porch roof on the west (rear) side of the building increased the total snow-bearing roof area of the lodge by approximately 25 percent. Also, the photos of the rear of the lodge taken in 1927 and 1931 suggest that snow sloughing off the west porch roof at the rear of the lodge would not fall clear of the building but would build up in the narrow "valley" between the lodge and an earthen bank a few feet to the west. As the snow trapped in the narrow space between the lodge and earthen bank increased in depth it is probable that a considerable side force vector would press against the building.

In addition to the factors discussed above, Roy Sifford was to discover that the construction methods employed by Edward Drake in 1890 were fundamentally flawed. When Sifford tore down the lodge in 1938 he discovered under the interior wallpaper what he considered to be inadequate sway bracing. The bracing for the hand hewn logs standing on end consisted "only of rough 1 x 12 boards nailed to the up right logs using No. 10 and 13 square nails, which allowed the building to be pushed sideways by the snow" (Sifford 1994: 98-100).

During the process of removing the damaged building Roy Sifford discovered a note left by Edward Drake tucked away in the eaves of the building.



1938 The New Lodge

In June of 1938, after removing the original lodge build by Edward Drake in 1890 and crushed in the winter snows of 1937-38, the Siffords began the construction of a replacement building. Roy Sifford, who was determined to lose as little of the visitor season as possible, contacted Fletcher Walker of the Red River Lumber Company and asked for help.

The Walkers responded with "lumber, plumbing supplies, trucks and men who could and did 60 things fast". Construction began on the 20th of June and continued at a furious pace, at times there were as many as 30 people working on the building. On the afternoon of June 30th the construction workers finished the building, the Siffords moved in beds and other furnishings, and the first guests were in their rooms by ten o'clock the same evening (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine 9/9/86). From start to arrival of the first guests, construction of the new lodge had taken ten days. Only item reused from Drake's original building was the old fireplace flue which was extended eight feet to fit the taller building.



1938--The new lodge constructed in just ten days

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)



1939--Interior of new lodge

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)

A stone mason named Spenser and his son from Westwood helped Roy Sifford build the fireplace from rock collected from the hillside and carried in from Cinder Cone, many of the stones selected for their colorful red and yellow hues (Roy Sifford interview 10/17/87).



1939--Guests on front porch

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)



The lodge in 1941

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)



1945--Drakesbad "old-timers" gather for a photo



1940s--Roy Sifford and Nancy Curruthers (Rorty) on rear porch



The lodge in 1952



1952 East end of the lodge



1952--West and south sides of the lodge



1952--Guests on front porch
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1969--Lodge

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



The lodge in 1973



1975--Rear (west side) of lodge



1987--Lodge

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1992--Lodge

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1997--Lodge

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



Lodge in 2002



2002--West and south side of the lodgeLodge lobby in 1939



Lodge lobby in 1939



Lodge lobby in 2002

In the almost 80 years since its construction only minor changes have been made to the lodge. The building was re-roofed, the foundation sheathed in a wooden skirt, and, among other safety upgrades, a railing added to the porch. The interior of the lodge looks much the same as it did in 1939. Horizontal pine paneling has been added to the walls, light fixtures installed, rough bark added above the fireplace mantel, and additional wooden beams installed to improve support of the second floor of the building. However, none of these changes have altered the timeless feeling of the rustic building



2017--View of the lodge from the pool area

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BBQ





2002--Ed hosts the Wednesday night barbecue on the lawn in front of the lodge



2017--The tradition continues as Drakesbad Guests line up for the Wednesday night barbecue.

From Tub to Pool

The Evolution of Hot Water Bathing at Drakesbad



Sifford bath house and the rock and concrete plunge in 1938

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis.)

For more than 100 years visitors have come to the remote Drakesbad Valley in the shadow of the Lassen volcano to take comfort in the soothing waters of the valley's hot mineral springs. Bathing in the thermal waters has always been a main attraction at Drakesbad whose very name "Drakesbad" is derived from the German "Drake's Baths". One of the earliest structures in the valley was a bath house into which naturally heated water was piped by means of a hollowed-out log. Even today there is no better place to ease the aches of a day on the trail than a good soak in the Drakesbad pool. The following traces the evolution of bathing facilities in the valley.

1900--Drakes Bath House

The first description of the bath house built by Edward Drake sometime prior to 1900 comes from Roy Sifford who tells us, "Drake had been there [Hot Spring Valley] since '87, had a log cabin, built a bath house and built a good, new log cabin of some size which was used for many years for the office and headquarters. Later on, he had built a good, four room bath house bringing the water which was hot to about 137° down from the hot springs just to the south edge of the creek" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.). Drake's bath house was located "about where the present Bath and Plunge are located now" (Sifford 5/19/85 letter to Richard Vance LAVO Files).

Roy Sifford dates the construction of this second bath house to 1896 (Sifford Manuscript: 4c.) and describes it in some detail: "It was built close to the north side of the stream. It was made of hand hewn timbers, split cedar shakes and square iron nails. There were no metal pipes or fittings of any kind. There were four separate rooms and four wooden

tubs of normal size, made from sugar pine boards hauled from Greenville by Drake. The hot water was brought down in a ditch that crossed the creek, by using a forty foot hollowed out tamarack pole. The hot water flowed through a large hollowed out long pole which extended along the back of the bath house, about 22 feet. This large pole was the 'hot water tank.' It sat there full of hot water all the time. The sugar pine tubs stood against the south wall on the outside. A little sluice box came through the wall and to get the hot water you pulled the stopper and the hot water poured in abundance!" (Sifford 1994:9)

Roy Sifford recalled Drake's bath house as "a comfortable and good bath house" and in high demand: "even in those days there were often a 100 or so people camped with their teams and wagons and horses and they took their trips around the surrounding area and came back always three, four, five o'clock looking for their daily hot bath. Of course, not many of them could get into those four rooms and they would sit for two or three hours waiting for their turn at the bath." Bath with a towel cost \$.25 (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.). As Roy Sifford later recalled, "It was a mighty fine thing for them. Twenty-five cents for a bath with a towel. That was a pretty good deal. There was nothing like it in the country" (Sifford Manuscript:120b)



1910--Drake's bath house can be seen to the left of the wooden plunge and dressing tent

If Roy Sifford is correct, the four-room bath house in place in 1900 was the second such structure built by Edward Drake. There is no information concerning the first structure.

1902--The First Plunge

In 1902, in an effort to improve access to the hot water, the Siffords excavated a 40' by 20' and 4' deep "swimming pool" just east of Drakes bath house, using a team of mules and a scraper. Roy Sifford recalled that "we did get a pool fairly warm and fine as long as nobody stirred it up." However, the nature of the local volcanic soils was such that even a few swimmers "thrashing about" in the water turned the pool into an unsightly "mud bath". (Sifford 5/19/85 letter to Richard Vance LAVO Files). Note: In an interview with Les Bodine n.d. Roy Sifford describes the pool as "70 feet long, 30 feet wide and about 4 to 5 feet deep, and that the pool was started in 1901 and completed in 1902". However, elsewhere he gives 1903 as the date of construction of the earthen pool (Sifford 1994: 25-26).

1905--The Wooden Plunge



Wooden plunge (Drake's bath house can be seen in the rear at the right)

The next attempt at an improved swimming facility was the construction of an above-ground "wooden plunge" in 1903-04. The Sifford family began hewing timbers for the plunge in 1903, and in the spring of 1904 hauled boards from the Odette Mill in Susanville to Drakesbad for use in the construction of the plunge floor and sides. When completed the wooden plunge was 36 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 5 feet deep (Sifford 5/19/85 letter to Richard Vance LAVO Files). Finished and opened to the public in 1905,

this plunge was used by "thousands" of bathers from 1905 until 1914. Note: In the Bodine interviews Roy Sifford describes the wooden plunge as "32 feet long, 24 feet wide".

1914--The Rock and Concrete Pool



1920 The Rock and Concrete Pool



Tent Dressing Room



In 1914 the wooden plunge was replaced by an in-ground "rock and concrete plunge", 42 feet by 22 feet with a depth ranging from 3 to 5 1/2 feet. Rock for the pool was hauled from Flat Iron Ridge to the pool site where a stone mason from Susanville constructed "a very nice rock plunge" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.). Roy Sifford describes this rock and concrete plunge as the center of "Hot Water activity" and "hundred and hundred of Baths and Swims went on there". To accommodate the bathers both Drakes original bath house and tent dressing rooms were used. (Sifford 5/19/85 letter to Richard Vance LAVO Files).

1920--The Sifford Bath House



1940 Photograph of the Sifford bath house



1942 Photo of Sifford Bath House

Note similarity of smaller building on right to photos of bath house built by Edward Drake below
(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)

In 1920 Sifford says, "We built a new bath house to replace the old one of Mr. Drake" (Sifford 5/19/85 letter to Richard Vance LAVO Files). The new bath house was constructed of tamarack logs and consisted of eight bath rooms on the east side and ten dressing rooms on the west side facing the rock and concrete plunge. Sifford statement that the new bath house "replaced" the Drake bath house indicates that the latter structure was torn down. However the 1942 photograph above shows a second building which appears in size and construction to fit the description of Drakes Bath house. The photograph suggests that Drake's bath house, built some time prior to 1900, was not destroyed in 1920, but was still standing more than 20 years later. Unfortunately, the photograph above is the only one currently known to exist that clearly shows this building.



Comparison of the 1942 Structure on the left with the two photographs of Drake's bath house on the right

In the three photographs above the 1942 structure is on the left and the two photographs to the right are the only two confirmed photos of Drake's bath house built prior to 1900. The 1942 structure also appears to have four individual doors, a configuration which is consistent with Sifford's description of Drake's bath house. In later photographs this building is missing and appears to have collapsed or been removed. Several of the photos below show what appear to be the collapsed remnants of a small building. However, Susan Watson recalls a small out building in the same area in the late 1930s and it may be debris from the collapse of that building that is seen in later photographs (Watson: personal communication)



1952--Photo showing what appears to be collapsed building to the right



Undated photograph clearly showing small building missing



Photo dated 10/29/52 showing western end of pool looking toward lodge

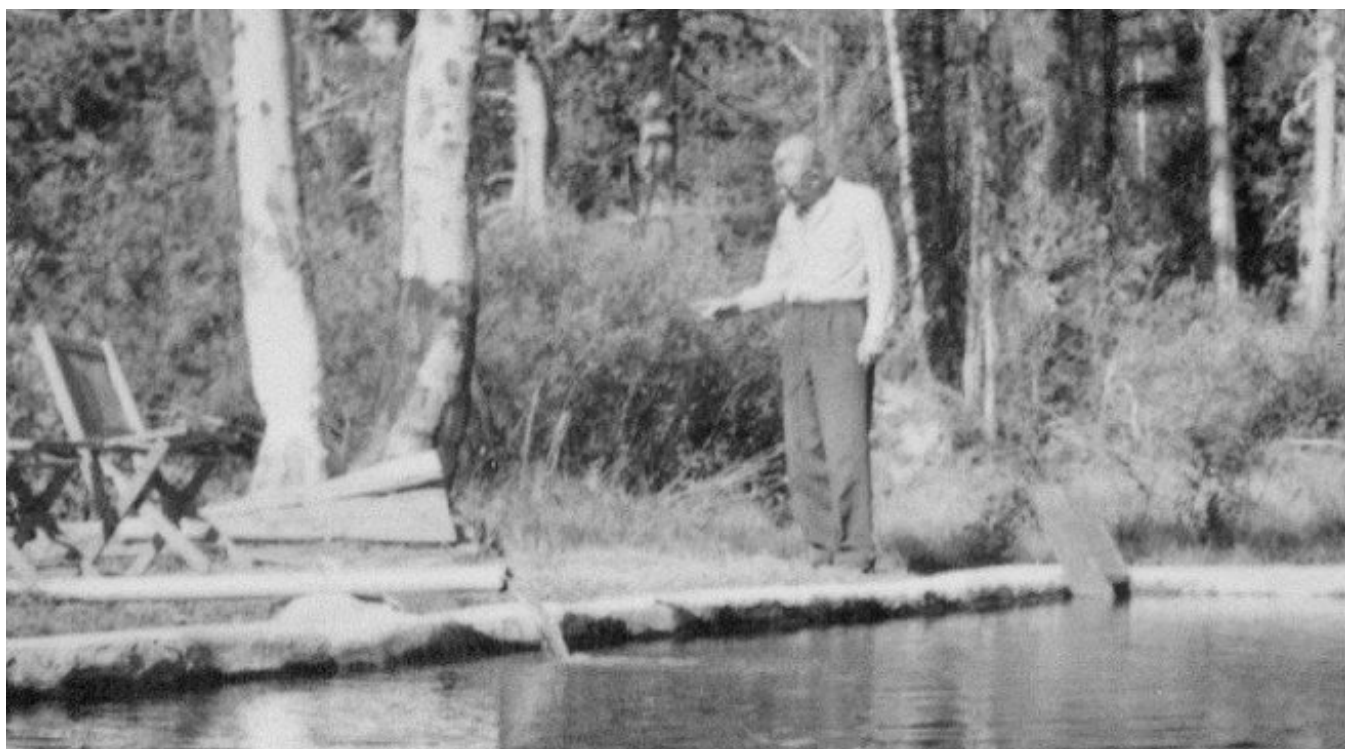


Photo dated 24 Oct 1955 showing unidentified individual pointing to wooden debris



1952--Pool and Sifford bath house
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)

The rock and concrete plunge was used until about 1960 when the Park Service "built a new plunge which is right in the place where the old plunge was and they got rid of the old Drakesbad bathhouse and built other bath houses which are there" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.).

National Park Service Swimming Pool



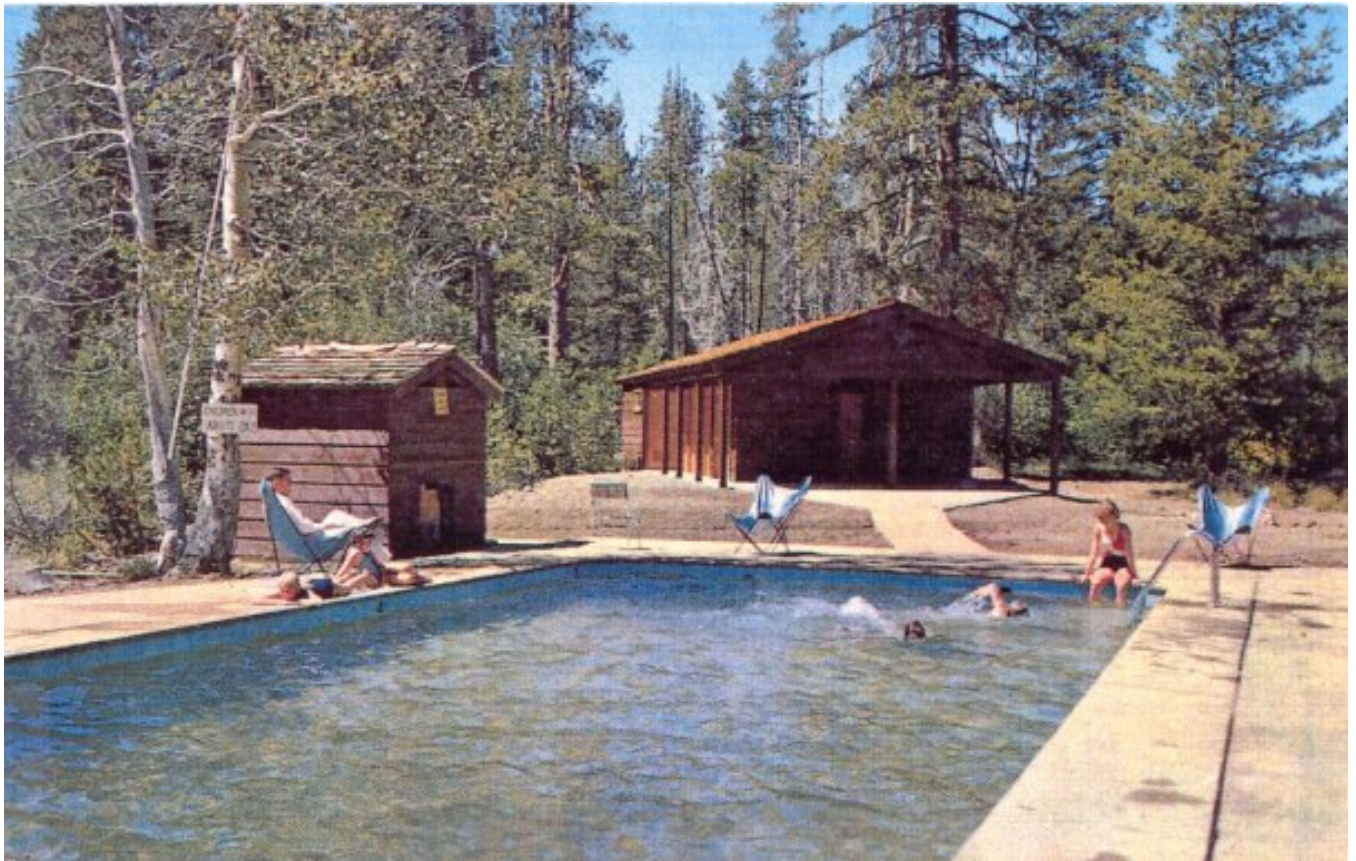
1961--New pool and old Sifford bath house
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1962--New bath house under construction at the right
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1963--Construction of new bath house completed and old Sifford bath house removed
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



Swimming pool complex in 1965
(Photograph courtesy of George Hinman)



Pool complex in 2003

The Kitchen and Dining Room

1912-1940



Eastman photograph showing kitchen and tent dining room on the right



1914-- Kitchen and dining room



1915--"Kitchen help"



1924--Kitchen and dining room



1924 Interior of the dining room

After the formation of the Drake Spring Company in 1912, the infusion of investment money was used to begin several construction projects among which was a new kitchen and canvas topped 24 by 50 foot dining room, and to purchase quality hotel equipment in San Francisco (Sifford 1994:54). Roy Sifford remembered that the dining room "was a beautiful set up on a nice day. White linens, cut glass, Roger's silverware, and when decorated with local flowers, it was a sort of a beauty" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.). "At lunch, we served salad, choice of entree, choice of dessert consistently, in the dining room, white linens, shiny glass and the silver set up on the tables. Pictures of which may be seen in many of the albums. We planned on a choice of salad, fruit or vegetables. We planned on your choice of two or three meats, a cold meat and one hot meat either beef or ham occasionally held over or some roast pork. So we had a salad, choice of meats and we planned on many, many kinds of desserts, serving 40, 50, 90 people it's no more expensive to serve a choice of four pies than it is one pie. It's a little more work and takes a little more care, but we gave them a choice of pie, generally bread pudding or some pudding and of course, the customary coffee, tea or milk" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine 5/6/85). At the height of the summer season lunch was served to as many as 150 guests each day (Sifford 1994:54).



Undated photograph probably taken in the 1930s

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)

1940-1950



1941--The old kitchen now has an attached enclosed dining room



Undated photograph showing newly constructed kitchen

1950-Present



1952--Reconstruction of the dining room after the collapse of the structure in the winter of 1951-52





1952--Kitchen



1975--Kitchen and dining room



2002--Kitchen and dining room



2002--Dining room and kitchen



2003--Dining room interior

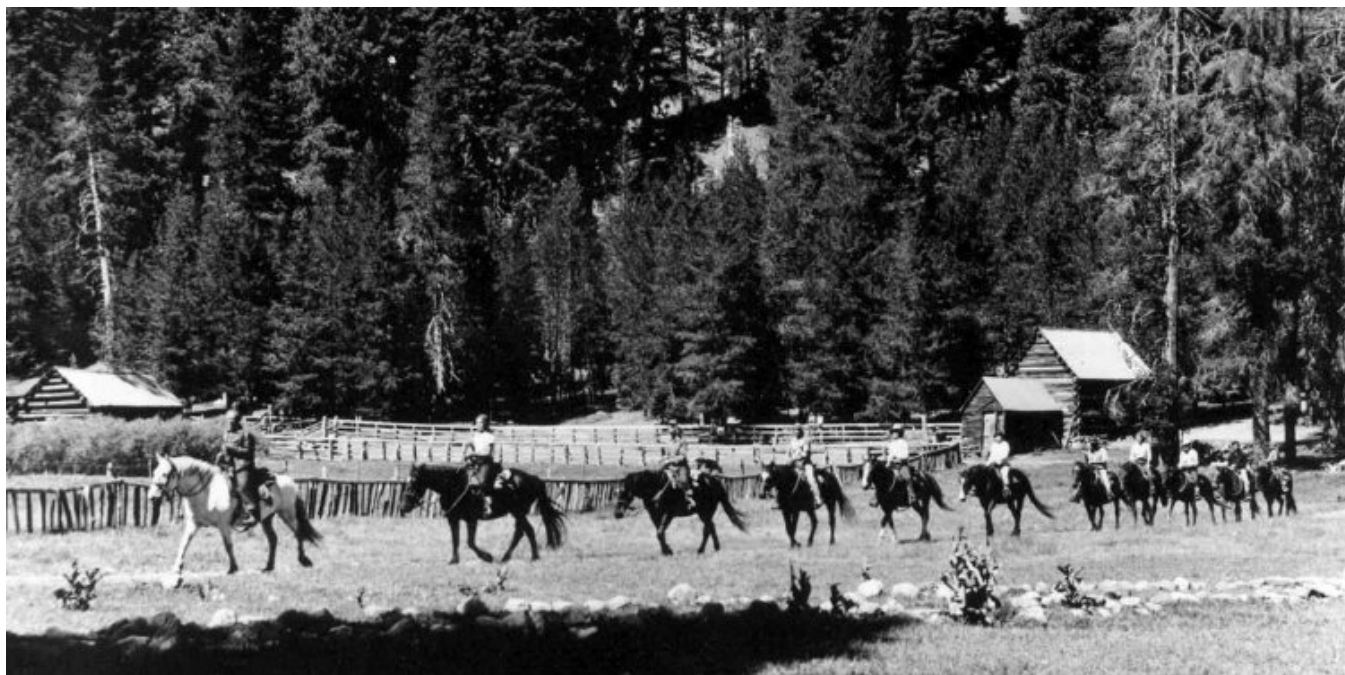


2017--Dining room interior



2017--Pacific Coast Trail Hikers enjoying a break from the walk

Barns, Cabins, and Other Buildings



"Start of a Hot Dog Ride" -- Photograph from the 1940s showing barns and corrals



1905--Pearl Sifford at age 14 with Drake's original barn in background.

Among the buildings constructed by Edward Drake prior to 1900 was a "good" barn. Roy Sifford notes that this structure was "felled by snow" in 1912 (Sifford Manuscript: 8).

The Log Barn and Shed



1952--Log barn and small "shed"

Roy Sifford says that the log barn shown above was started in 1912 and finished in 1914, and that the "shed" on the south end "was built by Drake in 1896 and was attached to the old Office Building which went down in the heavy snows of 1937. We used it for Store Room-Milk House and extra dining room from 1900 to 1938 and then moved it to the present location as a saddle room" (Roy Sifford letter to Bob Murphy 9/13/73 LAVO Files).

The photograph below of the lodge and attached building taken in 1902 would seem to confirm Sifford's statement that the "shed" at the south end of the log barn in 1952 was the structure built by Edward Drake. This would make the "shed" the oldest structure still standing at Drakesbad in 1973. Sifford says that the "shed" was moved to its position behind the log barn in 1938. However, this date must be in error as photographs of the lodge as early as 1937 clearly show the building missing. It is probable that the "shed" was moved sometime between 1927 and 1931 when the covered porch was added to the rear of the lodge and the south porch expanded.



1902--"Shed" attached to lodge

Sifford's date of 1896 for construction of the "shed" is also troubling. If Sifford's date is correct, in 1902 the structure would have been only eight years old, but the photograph above taken that year shows a weathered building shored up with logs. If Sifford's date is in error and the "shed" was constructed earlier, this suggests the tantalizing possibility that the structure may be Drake's smaller cabin that Roy Sifford refers to when he states, "Drake had been there since '87 had a log cabin, built a bath house and built a good, new log cabin of some size" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine n.d.). Sifford places Drake's first cabin in 1887 "near the location of the present lodge" (Sifford Manuscript: 1) Nothing more is known about this early structure other than a single faded photograph with most of the cabin obscured by an outbuilding. However, the structure in the photograph (below) appears to be horizontal log construction and with a stone fireplace--markedly different from the "shed" in the 1902 photograph. Thus the mystery of whereabouts and fate of Drake's first cabin remains.



1887--Drake's first cabin



1973--Log barn and "shed"



1975--Log barn with old shed replaced by a modern structure

Photographs of the log barn taken in 1975 show that the "shed" is missing and replaced by a modern structure.



Roy Sifford and riders with log barn in background





Circa 1976 Interior of log barn

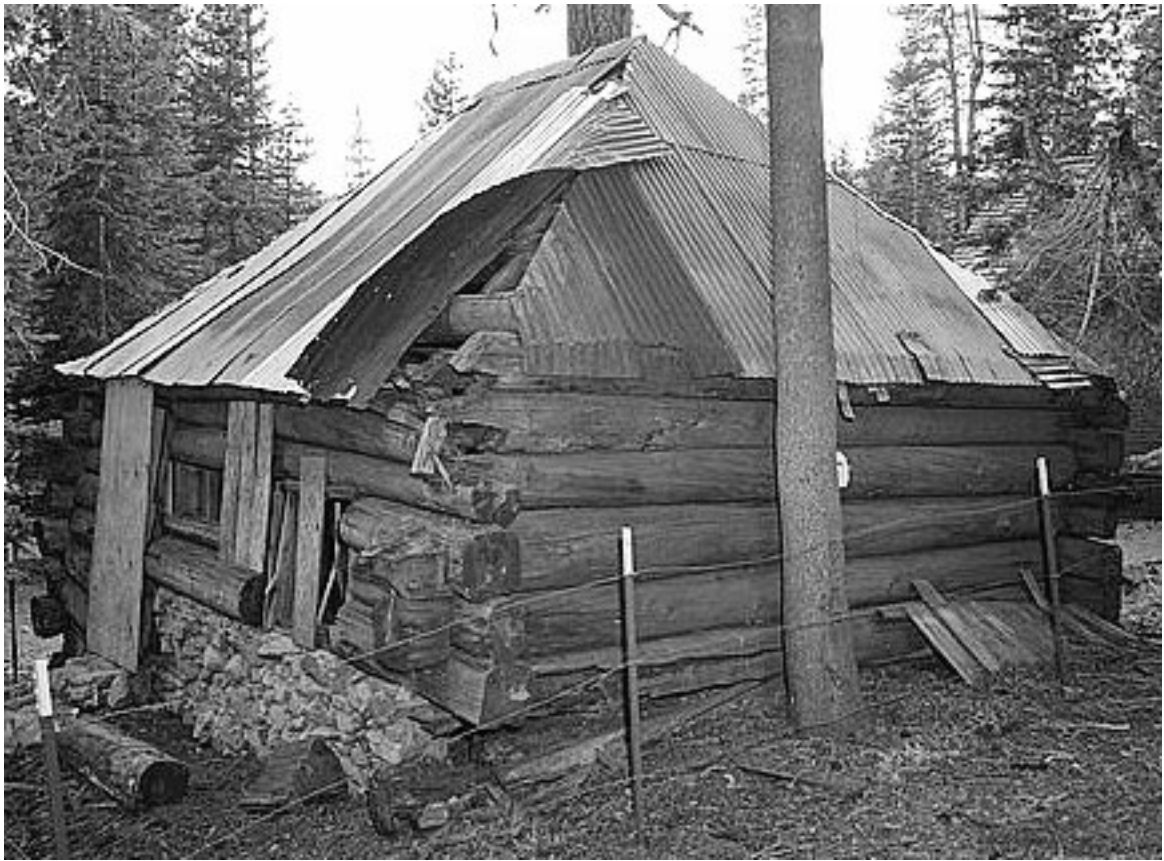
The log barn was removed by the Park Service in 1980.

The Cook's Cabin

In 1919 the Siffords built another log structure which was as Roy Sifford states "a house for my mother" and later known as the cook's cabin (Roy Sifford letter to Bob Murphy 9/13/73 LAVO Files).



1975--Cook's Cabin



1976--Cook's cabin



1976--Interior of the cook's cabin.

The cook's cabin was removed by the Park Service in 1979.

Guest Accommodations

Guest tents at Drakesbad were canvas over pole frames with beds constructed of tamarack poles with cedar shingle slats and mattresses of straw tick (Notation in Sifford Scrapbook).



1920-1925--Guest tents



1922--Guest tents



1926--Prentiss and Stella de Veuve at their tent

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1930--Gathering of guests



1936--Front of guest cabins

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis)



1952--Rear of guest cabins



1975--Rear of guest cabin



1975--Employee quarters



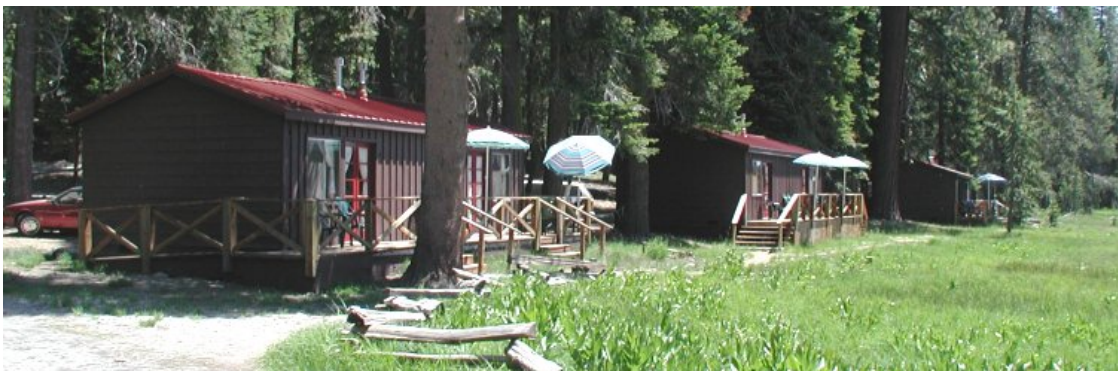
2002--Rear of guest cabins



2002--Two-story employee quarters.



2002--Duplex guest cabin constructed circa 1952



2002--Park Service Mission 66 cabins constructed in 1961

The Meadow and Soda Spring



1940--Roy Sifford, Pearl Sifford, Jean Bolton with Mt. Harkness and lower meadow on the right

The Upper and Lower Meadow

In the years before he sold the property to the Siffords, Edward Drake "had cleared the willows and brush from around that part between the bath house and present lodge, or his house. The upper meadow was a mixture of willows and alder and some brush. He had started some ditching in the upper meadow but very little, it was a lifetime work" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine 10/9/84).

The June 30, 1933 edition of the "Chester Chatter" recalled that "Mr. Drake had a good large pasture all fenced in and sometimes there would be as many as a hundred head of horses as people would drive in from all around the Sacramento valley and other places to escape the heat of the summer and enjoy the wonders of the mountains."



1902--Standing water in meadow

"The meadow to the west of the house consisted of willows and bog holes, infested with mosquitos [sic]. (We would spend many years clearing it out by hand with a mattock, pick, shovel and axe.)" (Sifford 1994:7). "It was our own purchase from Mr. Drake and we all worked the most we could each day and as long as possible in the developing it from a big willow patch, pot holes, mud holes in the open meadow that it is now..... Dug drain ditches and grub willows, that was about all I knew for our first ten seasons there" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Les Bodine, July 87). "The valley itself was quite well filled with willows" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Dorothy Hill, July 29 1973).

"We grubbed willows from the valley, hit and miss, all through the early years. And grubbing willows by hand is quite a detail. We naturally had no machinery, no Caterpillars, no tractors until later years and the way you grubbed willows was by main strength and awkwardness" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Dorothy Hill, July 29 1973).



Circa 1904--Meadow

Recalling the year 1905 Roy Sifford states, "We offered rooms, meals, saddle horses and guides. It was a busy year, over 600 people signed the register and that many more campers never signed at all. The pastures were filled with horses" (Sifford 1994: 34).



1926--Willows in the lower meadow

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1931--Roy Sifford with riders and a view of willows in the upper (west) meadow

"In our early years we had an average of ten or twelve horses and by 1920 with the big rush of visitors wanting to see Lassen Peak we averaged about thirty saddle horses. This number dropped to twenty-five by 1931 and we kept that same number until 1951 when the Park Concessionaire took over, and then we slowly phased out that operation" (Sifford 1994:91).



1939--Willows in lower meadow looking east toward Mt. Harkness

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



Alex and Roy Sifford in the upper meadow

The cedar stake fencing visible in the background was "about the only kind of fence that will hold up in the heavy snow" (Sifford Manuscript: 54a).



1940-- Horses in the meadow

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1944--Lower meadow looking west toward Mt. Harkness

(EASTMAN'S ORIGINALS COLLECTION, D-51, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis

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In 1942 with WWII in progress and meat rationing in force, the Siffords "searched around and found 100 cows and calves on the Nye ranch near Standish, in the Honey Lake Valley. We bought those and some others, and now we were in the cattle business" (Sifford 1994:103).



1952--Lower meadow looking east toward Mt. Harkness



Roy and Alex Sifford with the Caterpillar tractor used in the 1950s to remove willows

"I got a more modern Caterpillar, a 1944 D-4 with a blade and with that you could really grub more willows in a day than we could grub in a season with the mattock" (Roy Sifford interviewed by Dorothy Hill, July 29 1973).

The Meadow



1973--View from upper meadow looking east toward Mt. Harkness



1982--Lower meadow looking toward Mt. Harkness

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1992--Upper meadow
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1992--Lower meadow view of Mt. Harkness
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)

"The Meadows at Drakesbad after Sifford and son grubbed and cleared them--much of this was a boggy willow patch in 1900AD--cleared-ditched-drained it" (Sifford Manuscript: 92a.). In 2012 the Park staff began a project to fill in the old Sifford ditches and restore the meadow to its natural state. The gravel path across the meadow was replaced with a boardwalk which now allows a natural flow of water across the meadow.



2002--View of lower meadow from lodge



2017--View of upper meadow boardwalk trail leading from the lodge over the restored meadow

The Soda Spring



***Top Left: 1901--Magus Wallin building the log enclosure for the soda spring in the upper meadow
Lower Left:1966--Susan Watson Right: Circa 1939--Laura de Veuve tests the waters***



1998--The Soda Spring
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)

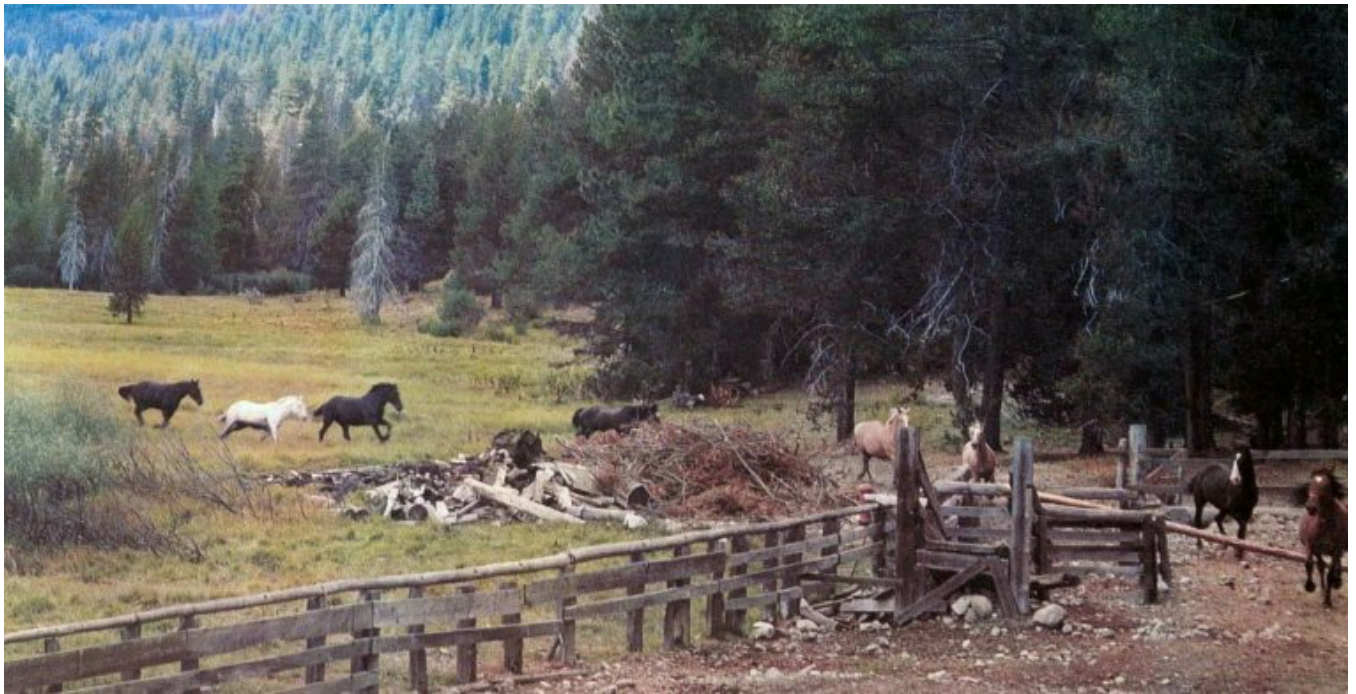
Horse Corrals



Horse corral circa 1934
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



View of corral and fences



1950--Sunrise at the horse corrals



1952--Tack shed



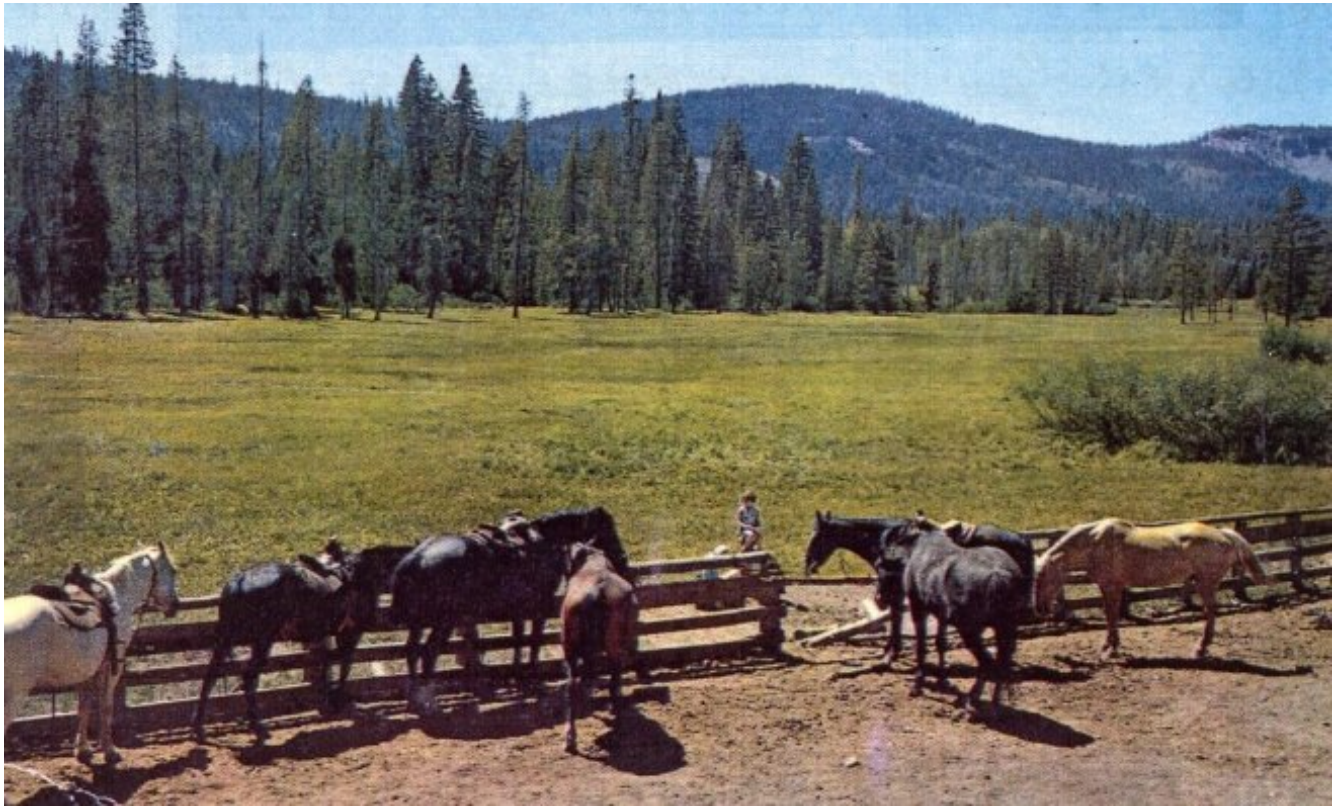
1958--Corrals and upper meadow



1969--Corrals and tack shed

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)

Horse Corral and Upper Meadow



Rebuilding the Tack Shed in June 2003



New Tack Shed in July 2003



Horse Corral and Upper Meadow 2017

Dream Lake



Dream Lake was constructed in 1932 by the Siffords who blasted out 90 tree stumps with black powder and then cleared the lake bed with a Caterpillar tractor. The lake was destroyed by flooding in the severe winter of 1937-38, and was rebuilt in 1939. The dam was again washed out in the flood of 1952 and again rebuilt. In 2011, Park staff breached and then removed the aging Dream Lake Dam, allowing the area to return to its natural state.



1934--Dream Lake

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1972--Roy Sifford on Dream Lake
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



1992--Emily Sifford goes for a canoe ride
(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)



2002--Beaver activity at Dream Lake

(Photograph courtesy of Susan Watson)