

# Goin' to Philbrook

*Robert Colby*

People have been goin' to Philbrook since Native Americans frequented the High Lakes of the Northern Sierra Nevada. The Philbrook Valley is at approximately 5,400 feet elevation and about 28 road miles north of Paradise. From the earliest days it was a place to escape from the heat of the Sacramento Valley. Then the 49ers found gold in the mountains around the valley. In the late 1850s cattlemen from the Sacramento Valley discovered abundant water and grass, providing excellent summer foraging for their herds. Alonzo Philbrook, for whom the valley is named, apparently was the first to drive cattle to the valley, probably as early as 1857. A rancher named Herb from Los Molinos also may have pastured sheep in the valley.<sup>1</sup> Slowly a small community of cabins grew around a store and hotel to serve the cattlemen and miners.

Late in the nineteenth century, it became evident that the valley with the creek running into the West Branch of the North Fork of the Feather River was the perfect place for a reservoir to provide water and generate power for the cities and farms of Northern California. In the summer of 1908 the Oro Water, Light and Power Company built an earth fill dam across the west end of the valley. It failed in January 1909. The resulting torrent of water wiped out everything on the West Branch including two of the last covered wooden bridges in Butte County. Oroville escaped being flooded only because of the dike built along the Feather River in 1907.

Even with the failure of the dam, the idea of a reservoir in the Philbrook Valley did not die. In 1917 Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) acquired Oro Water, Light and Power Company and several years later bought the land in and around the valley. In 1926 the company contracted with Henry J. Kaiser to build a new earth fill dam at Philbrook. Using Robert G. LeTourneau's newly designed telescopic scraper

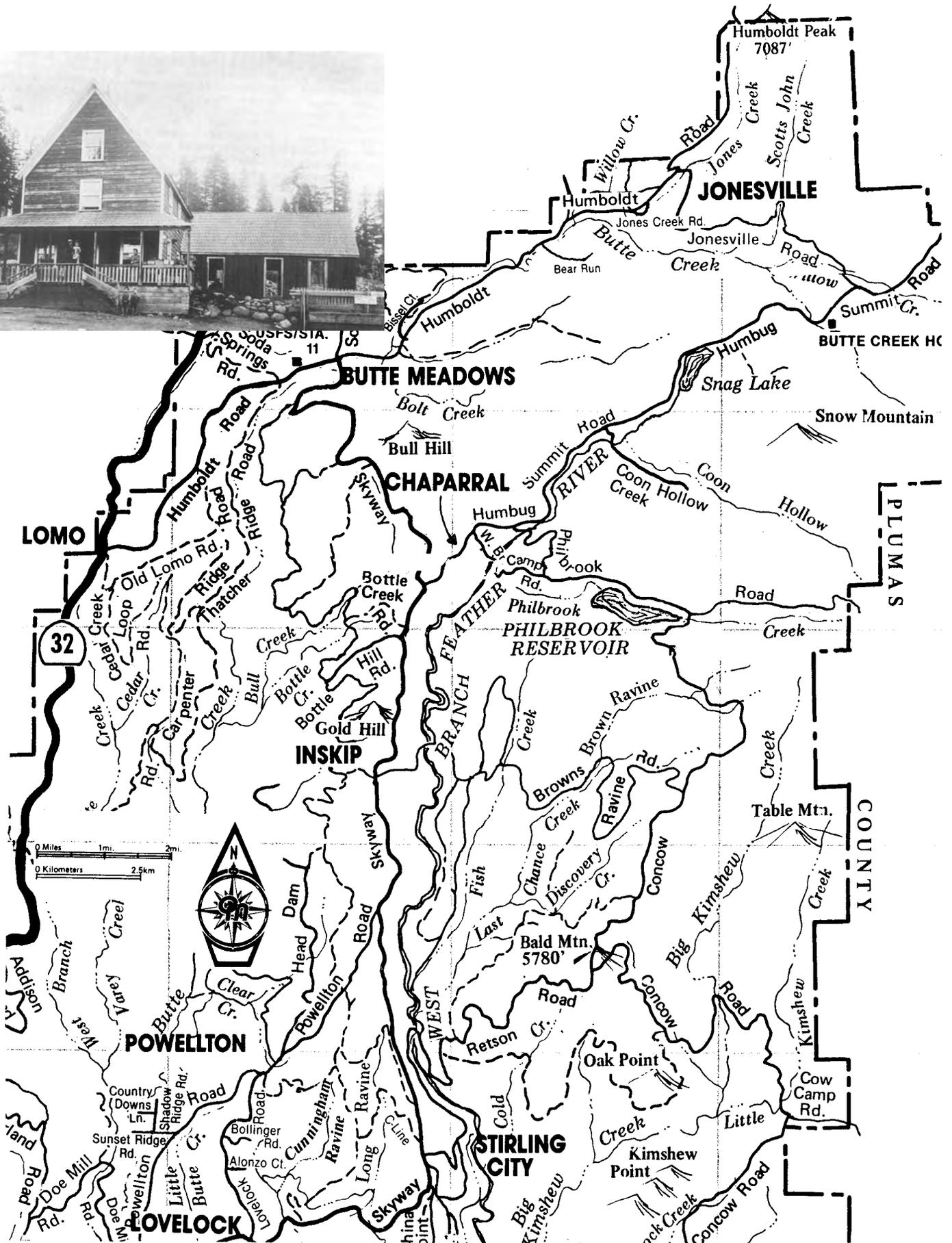
(earthmover), Kaiser built the dam in less than five months. It was the first such project to be completed entirely with mechanical equipment and without the use of horse or mule-drawn equipment.<sup>2</sup>

About seven decades earlier, however, Alonzo Philbrook brought his cattle to the Valley from his small ranch at Mud Creek near Chico. By 1860 he and his wife, Eliza, were driving up to 60 head of cattle up Neal Road, through Dogtown, up the Humbug Road to Powell's Ranch, through the mining camp of Inskip to Chaparral House, a way station on the Oroville-Susanville stage route.<sup>3</sup> About three-quarters of a mile further on, where the current, paved road to Philbrook heads eastward, is Cuddleback Flat. Here a tree-studded area slopes down to the West Branch. Across the river, the slope up the ridge on the east side is relatively easy. Alonzo Philbrook and other early cattlemen certainly could have driven their cattle this way, especially in the early days when wildland fires periodically burned out the understory of the forest.

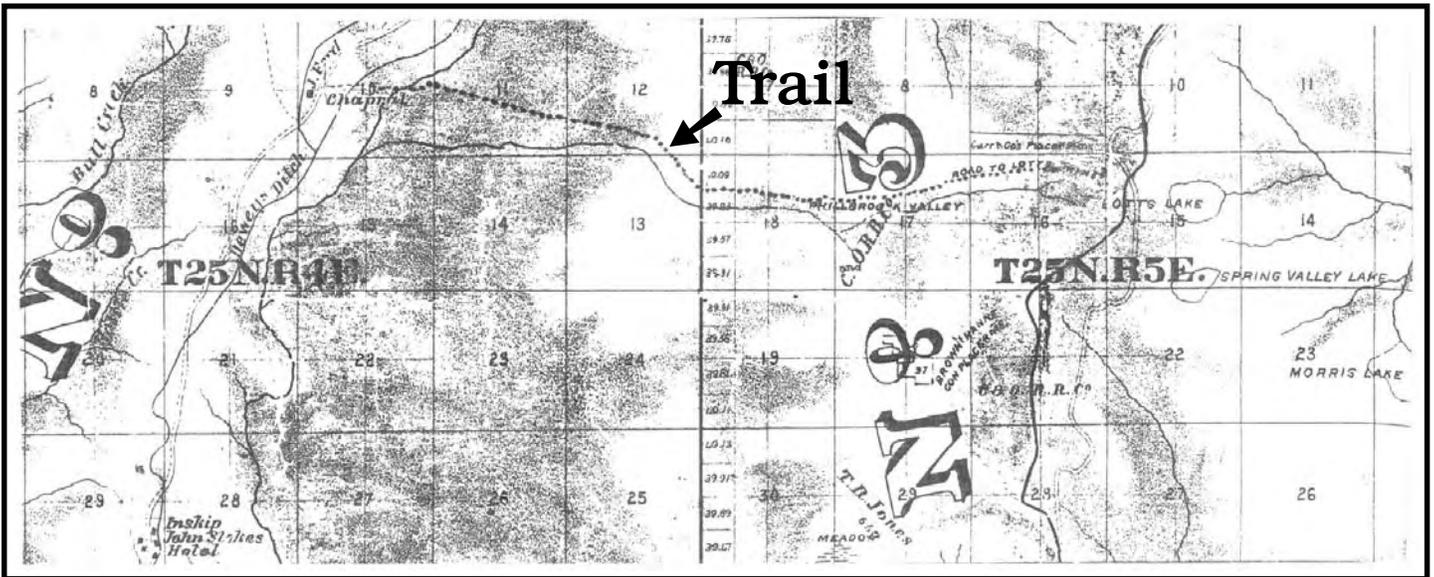
In the book *Maggie Greeno*, Eliza Philbrook is credited in 1850 with saying, "She told them that the last three years it had been their practice to set up a summer camp near a spring in the high meadows. This year, however, they had made an arrangement with Mr. John H. Smith, the owner of the Chaparral House to headquarter there." The book goes on to say, "Because the inn was conveniently located adjacent to Philbrook's summer rangelands, Alonzo and Eliza had agreed to operate it... .."<sup>4</sup> They managed the hotel and ran cattle until 1868.

## **The First Trail/Road**

The earliest evidence of a trail into the Philbrook Valley found by the author is on the 1886 "Official Map of the County of Butte." Map making in those days, especially in such hinter-



Philbrook Reservoir and vicinity. The photo inset shows Chaparral House, a stage stop on the Oroville-Susanville Stage Road also called the Humbug Road, and Humbug Summit Road. Alonzo and Eliza Philbrook managed this hotel and used it as their headquarters while they ran cattle in and around the Philbrook area. *Paradise Historical Society (photo) and Compass Maps Butte County Road Atlas, 2000.*

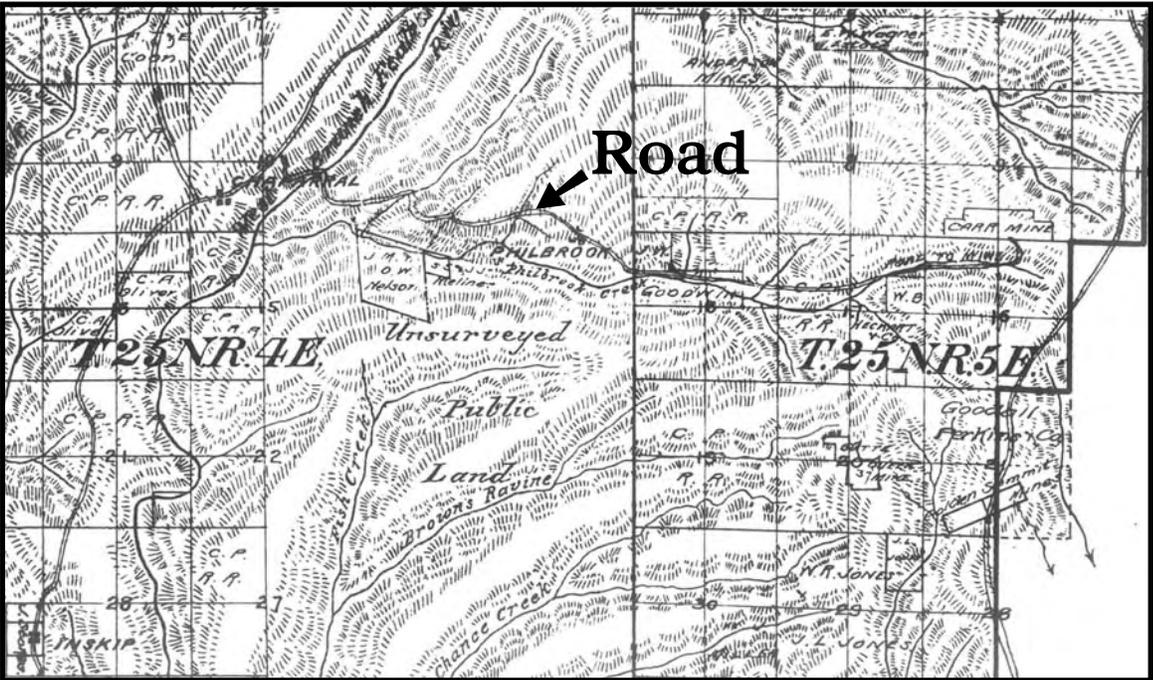


A portion of the *Official Map of the County of Butte, California – 1886*. Note the trail (dotted line) running in an easterly direction from the Humbug Road just above Chaparral and through Philbrook Valley. This apparently is the first official recognition of a trail into the Philbrook Valley. While it is called the “Road to Lott’s Mine,” this mine is actually farther to the southeast. *Paradise Historical Society*

lands as Philbrook, was often not very accurate. The general route of a road or trail, like that into the valley, was known, but it was not surveyed. Thus when such a feature was put on a map, it was sketched in based on the best estimate of its location often with little regard to the topography. The trail on the 1886 map is a good example. It leaves the Humbug Road north of Chaparral and heads eastward in a wavy line, ignoring the ridges and ravines over which the trail actually passed. Crudely mapped as it may be, this trail indicates that there was a route into the Philbrook Valley in 1886 and, by implication, even

earlier.

The 1901 “Official Map of the County of Butte, California” shows a road through the valley. The influence of the West Branch canyon and at least the major ridges and ravines is



A portion of the *Official Map of the County of Butte California – 1901*. Note that on this map the Lynch road now shows generally following the topography through Philbrook and on to the Carr Mine. This mine also shows on the 1886 map. *Paradise Historical Society*

shown on this map. The road hooks south as it leaves the Humbug Road and then turns rather sharply to the east as it crosses the West Branch a little over a mile north of where Philbrook Creek enters the river. The road then generally follows the topography in an eastward direction through the Philbrook Valley, ending at the Carr Mine.

Mrs. Coin Knotts, the granddaughter of Christopher Lynch, who ran cattle in the Philbrook Valley as early as 1877, told Joyce Jones, the current owner of Jones Store at Philbrook and author of *Philbrook*, the following. "Also that first year (probably 1877), according to my mother, Grandfather Lynch and two hired men constructed a road down to the West Branch from Philbrook."<sup>5</sup>

The route of this road is much like that of the road built in 1970 by the United States Forest Service (USFS) to the Philbrook Reservoir. One might wonder at this coincidence. Comparing the 1901 map with 1991 topographic maps shows that the ridges and ravines generally match the curves of the road on the 1901 and 1991 maps.

When building a road in the days before even horse-drawn equipment was available, one chose the easiest route. The work was done by hand, with pick and shovel and blackpowder. The route chosen by Lynch and later by the USFS is over relatively gentle topography. It was probably the general route over which Lynch, and twenty years earlier Alonzo Philbrook, drove their cattle into the valley. Eighty-two years later, the USFS may have chosen this route for the same reason rather than the more difficult route that PG&E chose in 1926.

The road that is shown on the 1901 Butte County map obviously is the one built by Christopher Lynch to facilitate getting his cattle, people, supplies and equipment into the Philbrook Valley. A road following this route also shows in a 1915 National Forest Atlas.<sup>6</sup> It still appears on the Official Maps of Butte County maps as late as 1930 and 1942, although it had been out of use for many years.

### **An Early Experience**

Mrs. Coin Knotts tells of goin' to Philbrook in the late 1870s. "When my family first arrived at

Philbrook around 1877 my mother was about four and one half years old. She told me that the family was able to go as far as the West Branch of the Feather River where the road ended. From there she and her older sister rode in what were called meat sacks balanced on each side of a very gentle horse. The two older children rode horseback and Grandmother Lynch carried a babe in arms. The family cookstove, which was a treasured item for the summer camp, was placed upside down on a gentle mare to make the trip into the Philbrook Valley. It was quite an operation to bring everything on up from the West Branch for the summer cattle camp."<sup>7</sup>

Joyce Jones also recalls George Peterson, Coin Knotts' brother, telling her that before wagons could get to the valley, all supplies had to be hauled in by horse or mule. He also said that children too small to ride often were carried in saddlebags.<sup>8</sup>

George Peterson said that, "Johnnie Thompson from Thompson's Hotel over at Powellton used to run a meat wagon into the valley for the miners and cattlemen. Mr. Thompson would stop at all the hotels and any camps along the way to sell fresh meat and maybe some other supplies to them. Other old freight wagons were pulled with three or four teams of horses ... ." He goes on to say that the road had many sharp and dangerous curves.<sup>9</sup>

When the first dam was built across the west end of the Valley in late 1908, Fresno Scrapers drawn by horses or mules were the heavy equipment of the day. Men with picks and shovels did the rest of the work. The workers, equipment, animals and supplies undoubtedly were hauled over Lynch's road to the valley after being transported to Stirling City on the Butte County Railroad. From there they were hauled up the Humbug Road to the wagon road into Philbrook.

### **PG&E's Road**

In June 1926 an article in the *Oroville Daily Register* announced construction of a new Philbrook Dam. The newspaper stated, "A road is now being constructed by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company to the scene of the damsite."<sup>10</sup> A system of old miners' ditches now mostly owned by PG&E, originated at diversion dams on the West Branch below Philbrook Creek.

Through them water would flow from the reservoir to PG&E powerhouses.

The new road intersected the Humbug Road about a quarter mile north of Chaparral, a short distance past the Cornelia Lott Sank Memorial Spring. It went eastwards up a steep slope following the road to Hawkin's Camp on the West Branch. At the top of the ridge it branched to the left in a low saddle. "There were two large white pine trees that sort of formed a gateway to the Philbrook Road."<sup>11</sup> Once past these trees that no longer are standing, the road zigzagged downhill to the West Branch.

The crossing over the West Branch was a log bridge apparently in the vicinity of today's Steel Bridge, near a small meadow known as Richie's Flat that sometimes was used as a campground.<sup>12</sup> The road skirted the east side of the meadow and started uphill making a hairpin turn to the left on what became known as "The Ladder" to some residents and just the "Switchbacks" to others. It was called The Ladder because in plan view the sections of the road between the four 180-degree turns look like rungs in a ladder.<sup>13</sup> At the top of the ridge, the road turned eastward and joined the old wagon road into the valley. (Today this junction is just to the east of the end of the paving on the 1970 USFS road.)

The road was on Lassen National Forest land and was identified as Road 25N02. Immediately after the road was completed, locals called it the Philbrook Road. Later maps identify it as the

West Branch Campground Road as it was the original way to get to the USFS campground on the East side of the West Branch. This campground apparently was built in 1926 and is reached by taking the right fork in the road just below the Ladder.<sup>14</sup>

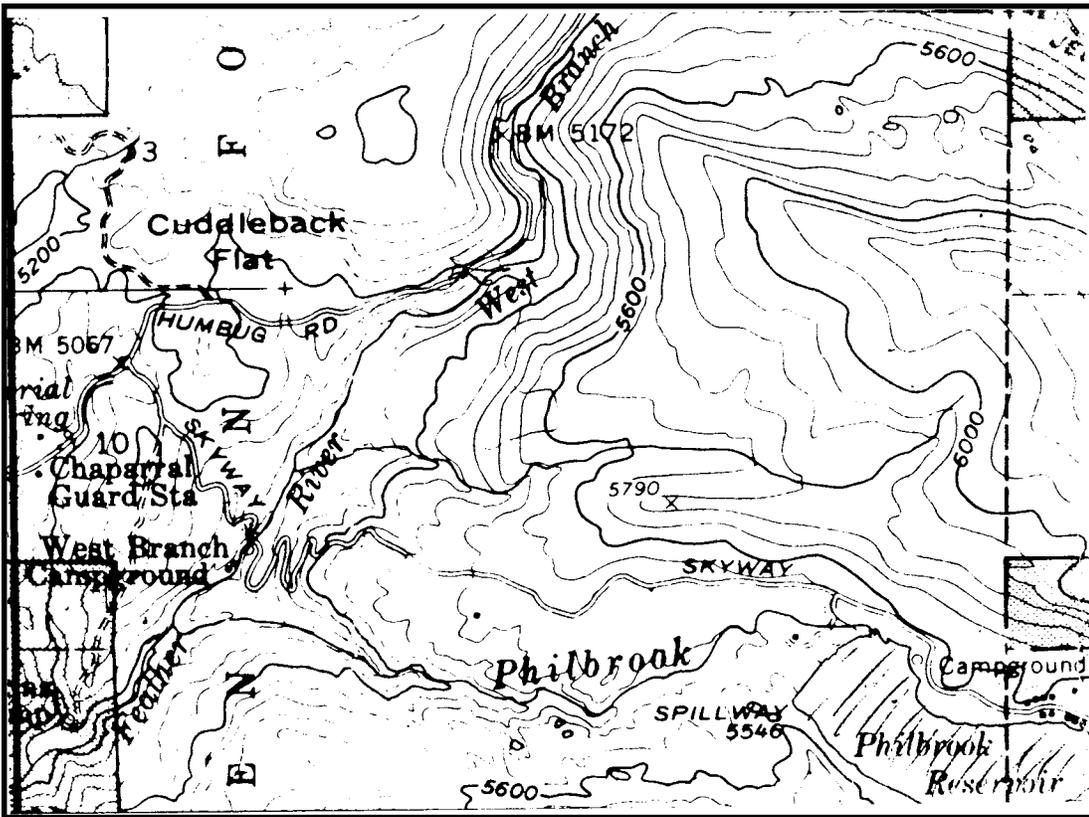
In 1926 getting the heavy equipment to the damsite, especially up this portion of the road, must have been a monumental task. Steam shovels, dump trucks, tractors, scrapers, graders, rippers and water trucks were shipped on the Butte County Railroad to Stirling City. Off-loaded there, the trucks drove and the Caterpillar 60 (60-horsepower) tractors towed the heavy equipment up the winding, often steep Humbug Road to the turn-off above Chaparral House and then over the PG&E Road. A Caterpillar 60 could travel 1.9 miles per hour in low gear, and pulling one of LeTourneau's heavy scrapers undoubtedly reduced the speed. Once they got to the PG&E Road, the going really got rough. Hauling LeTourneau's massive scrapers over the ridge and down to the West Branch was a challenge in itself. It is hard to imagine how they hauled them up the Ladder around turns that are nearly 180 degrees. The 13-mile trip from Stirling City up to the damsite must have taken several days.

R.G. LeTourneau tells the story in his own words, perhaps referring to the PG&E Road. "We were building a dam in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It was in a very remote region, which was hard to get to. We had three tractors, which had to be driven up under their own power from the railroad siding up a steep and tortuous mountain road to the dam site. Two of these tractors started out and almost made it scraping and tearing and pulling. But, the third one didn't seem to have the power. We started the motor and listened. I heard something in that motor. I stopped it. I pulled out a pair of pliers out of my pocket and set the magneto ahead one turn of the nut. We started the motor again, got into gear, and up that road we went. When we got to where the other two tractors were, we found that they couldn't make it any further, while our tractor made it."<sup>15</sup>

The PG&E Road was the route that most people took to reach Philbrook up until 1970 when the USFS built a road into the valley. It is



One of Richard LeTourneau's Telescopic Scrapers. This one is at the San Joaquin Historical Society Museum at Micki Park near Lodi, California. It is virtually identical to one of the three such scrapers that were towed over the PG&E Road in 1926. *Author*



A portion of the *Diamond National Corporation, California Timberlands, Southern Tract – 1963* map. This map shows the details of the entire 1926 PG&E Road. However, it is erroneously called Skyway. Joyce Jones

best shown on a 1963 Diamond National Corporation (successor to the Diamond Match Company) map where the road wrongly is called Skyway.<sup>16</sup>

Today only a four-wheel drive trail remains. Ordinary autos and trucks could traverse the road at least into the late 1950s, although often with difficulty. On a 1999 California Department of Transportation map as well as in the latest *Butte County Street and Road Atlas* by Compass Maps this road is shown as a secondary road, not the four wheel drive trail that it actually is.

### **Goin' from the South**

What is today known as the Concow or County Road is a rough, dirt, north-south road that shows on various maps as early as the late 1800s. It runs north from the Concow area through the Kimsheew country, passing the Philbrook Valley to the east near Lotts Lake and on into Plumas Country. In 1904, the Diamond Match Company had built a logging railroad from Stirling City into the area south of the Philbrook Valley and by 1909 had extended it

further east to Ramsey Bar and the Kimsheew country. Around 1919 logging activities were moved elsewhere and these rail rights-of-way became roads supported by a network of logging roads that intersected the Concow Road at various places. To reach Philbrook, some people undoubtedly used these roads. However, no records of these journeys have been found. Obviously the way to Philbrook up the Humbug Road was better known.

Apparently there was a trail used by miners from the min-

ing camp of Inskip to reach the mines in the mountains surrounding the Philbrook Valley. It ran from Inskip across the West Branch and then northeastward toward Philbrook. The north end is called the Bear Wallow Trail. Today the upper part of it can be reached from upper Fish Creek off of a road from Inskip to Philbrook.

The north end of this trail is at the southwest end of the Philbrook Dam. Bob Rice said that the USFS maintained and posted signs on this trail into the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, this trail shows up on the reference map that accompanies the USFS easement to Butte County for the 1970 paved road. (See this map later in the text.) This trail is identified as 4E18 by the USFS. The trail also is on the 1952 and 1960 Lassen National Forest Magalia District maps. In 1989 Nick Repanich opened the upper part of this trail for hiking and mountain bike use.<sup>18</sup> After hiking this trail, the author feels that its use was limited to foot traffic, men and mules. Neither livestock nor wagons could have used it.

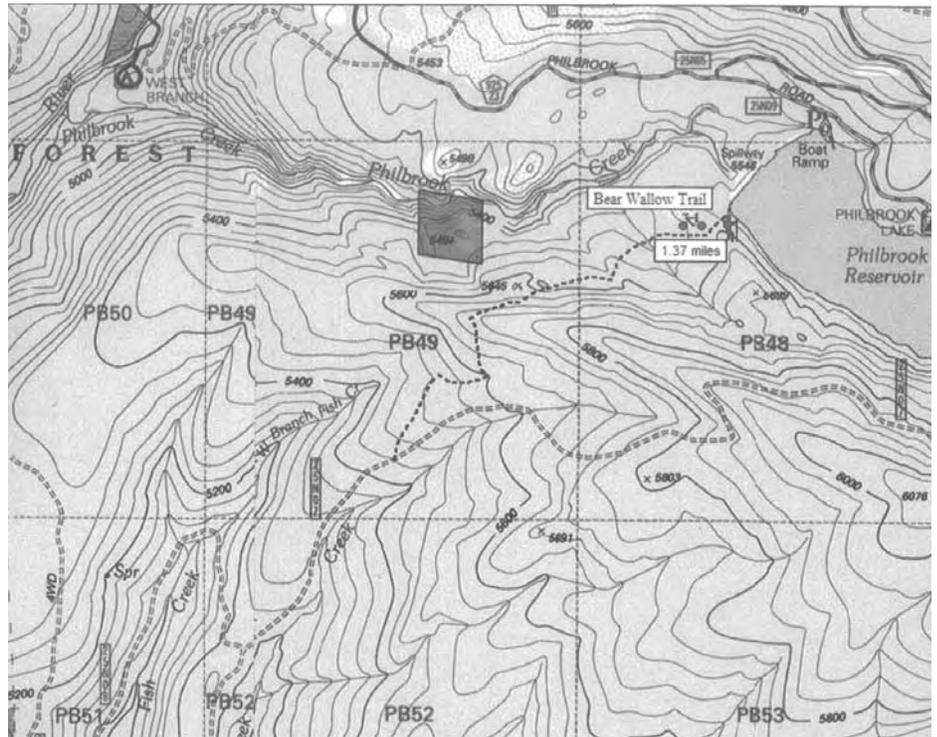
## The Steel Bridge

In 1936 Butte County replaced the original PG&E-built log bridge over the West Branch of the Feather River with a riveted-steel, Pratt pony truss span with a wood deck. This bridge was on a USFS road and not owned by the County. On occasion the County built bridges on rights-of-way in which it had no fee interest. Apparently this was done when the County considered it in the public interest and the USFS had an interest in having a bridge. In this case, the USFS interest likely was to provide a way for loggers to haul logs from the site of timber sales. Apparently such bridges were at least partially financed by the USFS with proceeds from logging operations.<sup>19</sup>

Bob Thompson was five years old when his father, Tommy Thompson who worked for the Butte County Road Department, helped build the Steel Bridge. The entire Thompson family came up to the West Branch and camped across the road from Richie's Flat where the rest of the crew camped. Thompson stated, "My mother, Melba, was hired by the County to feed the crew. She cooked over a wood stove and we slept in tents or in the open. She took photos of the bridge as it was being built with a Kodak Brownie 620 camera. Oh yeah, I went fly fishing all the time in the river. Some nice trout in there!"

As Thompson remembers, the eight to ten man crew did it all. "Dad did a little bit of everything, sort of a jack-of-all-trades." Some of the men were single, but some were married and their families camped with them.

Describing the road to the bridge site, he said, "You came in over the top of the hill from the Humbug. The road coming down there was not much of a road. It was real steep and pretty zigzaggy. We had a Model A and had to back up the hill due to the gravity-feed fuel system." He also remembers that there was some sort of bridge over the river before the Steel Bridge and



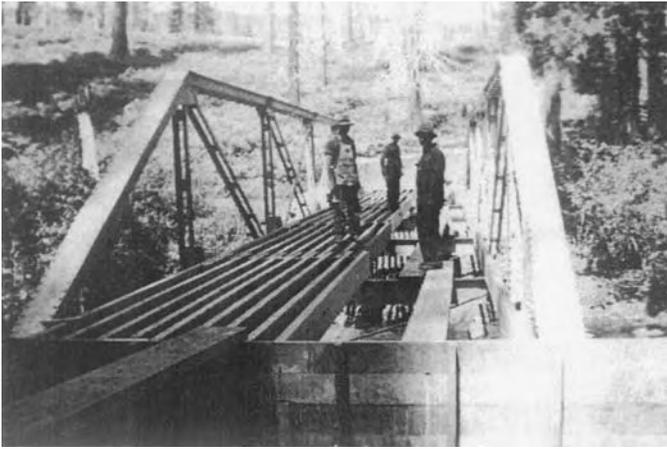
The Bear Wallow Trail, now a route for hiking and mountain biking. It is likely that the original trail from Inskip followed the rather gentle ridge between the West Branch of the Feather River and the West Branch of Fish Creek rather than connecting to the road up Fish Creek. Nick Repanich.

thinks that it was located just below the site of the new bridge.

This was not the first time Thompson's father, Tommy, had been across the West Branch. In 1926 he helped build the Philbrook Dam. Bob said that his father was just a kid then.<sup>20</sup>

The author found no documentation on the construction of this bridge in either the files of the Butte County Public Works Department or in the County Board of Supervisors' minutes. (Prior to 1955 the Board of Supervisors handled decisions on roads and bridges.) However, both the PG&E-built road and the bridge were in the county inventory of roads and bridges. The author has *Butte County Structure Inventory Field Data Sheets* from 1964 and 1976 that detail the inspection of the Steel Bridge. On these reports the road name is "Philbrook Road" and the road number is 92523.

Gene Mitzel, Road Maintenance Foreman for the Paradise Road Division in the 1960s, stated, "Every spring and sometimes in the fall they ran a motor grader over the PG&E Road. Even when we finished the part coming down from the



The left photograph shows the Steel Bridge under construction in 1936. Bob Thompson The right one was taken during a county bridge inspection in 1963. Butte County Public Works Bridge Department

Humbug Road, it was bad; we didn't do much but move the boulders around. Sometimes we had to blast the tops off boulders. I'd never take a vehicle of mine down it."<sup>21</sup>

### **The Straight Road**

Around 1950 the Public Works Department constructed another road down the ridge from Humbug Road. This road began at the same point as the PG&E Road. It went nearly straight down the steep ridge immediately to the north of PG&E's road. Before reaching the West Branch it turned 90 degrees to the right and ran parallel to the river until it reached the Steel Bridge. In country where rain and snow runoff cause severe erosion this was a problem as all the fine material was stripped away leaving large rocks exposed. Eventually the county had to blast the tops off of the larger boulders and replace the dirt and gravel.<sup>22</sup>

The route of this road is still visible, if one knows where to look. However, it is suitable only for foot travel. With the exception of Bob Rice, none of the people whom the author interviewed who had travelled to and from Philbrook after 1950 remembered this road. Also, no evidence of this road was found in the Public Works Department archive. It may be that it was so steep and badly eroded that the familiar PG&E Road, bad as it was, seemed to be the easier way to go.

### **Gettin' There Wasn't Easy**

The one thing that stands out in the accounts of travel to and from Philbrook before

1970 was that the roads were bad.

About 1936 PG&E started leasing lots around the reservoir. People camped in tents and later built wood tent platforms and finally cabins. Mostly the cabins were used through the summer and closed when the first snow fell.

In 1953 Leo Willing opened a store at the East end of the reservoir. By then there were a number of families with cabins as well as summer campers. Selling a variety of supplies and beer, the store was welcomed by all. They did not have to take periodic trips to town to stock up on supplies. The road conditions were described as murderous during the early summer months, especially if one did not drive a pickup truck or four wheel drive vehicle. In the fall, the weather often made the road even worse.

The store was closed in 1972 and was not reopened until 1976 by Jim and Joyce Jones as Jones' Resort. (Joyce is Leo Willing's daughter and her first trip to Philbrook was in 1949 in an old Ford on the PG&E road.) They built rental cabins around the store and camping spaces across Philbrook Creek. The store was closed again in 2003 and is still closed today. Fortunately the Philbrook Road of today is much improved over the road of yesteryear.

There are a number of stories of what Goin' to Philbrook entailed told by the people who made the trip. Joyce Jones' little book *Philbrook* relates a number of them.

Toddy Dahleen said: "It was quite an isolated place when we first came here camping because of the condition of the road. You had to get out



With the exception of the 1800s and early 1900s roads and trails, all of the roads into the Philbrook Valley from Humberg Road are visible in this August 1984 aerial photograph. Note that trees obscure the “Ladder” in the bottom of the photograph. The manicured appearance of the forest is due to winnowing-out of brush prior to reforestation after a wildland fire. *USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*

and move rocks and it was terrible to drive because of the steepness and the many switchbacks.” He went on to say, We used to go to town about every ten days to get the main supplies, but the small things we would get them from Leo at the store. Sometimes Leo would take orders for us and pick things up in town. Of course, we always paid a percentage more for this service and Leo always complained about the tires and road conditions.”<sup>23</sup>

Harold “Rich” Richardson and his family started coming from the Bay Area to Philbrook to camp about 1935. “The road from Paradise to Stirling City was a very twisting and winding road. From Stirling City on it was so dusty in the summer that if you stepped from your car you would go into the dust over your shoe tops.” He also said that there was an old watering trough at the Inskip Inn. “I remember it because it used to have trout in it. Here you could cool off your radiator and slake your thirst.” He also com-

mented: “It (Philbrook) was so remote then that sometimes two or three weeks would go by and you wouldn’t see a soul. If you were expecting some family member or friend to join you and heard a car approaching, you could almost be sure it would be them.”<sup>24</sup>

The author had the opportunity of interviewing Rich’s son and daughter, Tom and Jan (Richardson Neves). They started Goin’ to Philbrook as children in the 1940s and ‘50s. The family came all the way from Oakland in their 1942 Chevrolet fastback, two-door sedan. It was at least a five-hour ride. They carried enough supplies and camping gear for a several-week stay at Philbrook so the trunk was full and the back seat of the car was packed up to the top of the seats. Tom and Jan rode lying down in the foot and a half space between the supplies and the roof. Behind the Chevy was a box trailer that also was full. As if this was not enough, they carried a 10-foot rowboat on the Chevy’s roof



The Richardson' 1942 Chevrolet at Philbrook in about 1948. Bob Rice holds the left end of the sting of trout while Tom Richardson holds the right end. The trout were caught in Philbrook Creek upstream from the reservoir. *Tom Richardson*



The Richardson boats on the shore of Philbrook Reservoir. The smaller one was carried on top of the Chevy and the larger one on the trailer. *Tom Richardson*

rack and an even larger boat tied on top of the trailer. Tom reminded the author that there were no freeways nor air-conditioning in those days.

The road up over the ridge was pretty good and the Chevy had no problems going down to the West Branch. The trees were not as close to the road as they are today. On the Steel Bridge, Tom remembers that people had carved their names and dates in the wooden handrail.

Driving up the Switchbacks was much more difficult. "Mom and Jan and I had to get out and walk. Dad would 'rev-up the engine' to get up some speed to climb the steep road. He was honking the horn at each turn. But, he had to go slow around the hairpin turns, especially the second one that was nearly 180 degrees. We had to unhitch the trailer there, and Dad drove the Chevy up to our lot at the lake and unloaded everything. Then he drove back, hitched up the trailer again and drove back up to the lake. At the top of the hill he would wait for us to catch up, and we got to ride the rest of the way to the lake.

"We also hauled all of the lumber to build our cabin in the trailer. When Dad had to stop on the switchbacks, Mom would put a rock under the rear wheel of the car. Then as he got up speed again he would tell her to jump on the trailer as it went by. When Dad looked in the rearview mirror, he could see Mom, hair flying, hanging on for dear life."<sup>25</sup>

Jan remembers that sometime in the early

1960s a logging truck that was hauling logs down the switchbacks lost its load on one of the sharp turns. The road was blocked completely. "We were going home that Sunday and could not get past. We had to go back to Philbrook and stay another day. I didn't mind that, but when I got back to work a day late, I told my boss what had happened and he would not believe me."<sup>26</sup>

Such accidents were not common. Bob Moore was a "gypo logger" who logged a tract of timber near the Carr Mine, in the late 1960s. He stated that the drivers hauling logs never had any trouble, although the Steel Bridge was a tight fit for the 8-foot wide rigs loaded with logs.<sup>27</sup>

Elwin Roney, who built a cabin at Philbrook in 1939, said that he would never forget the road. "It wasn't much of a road, rough and slow. But then, none of the roads up there were worth much."<sup>28</sup>

The Hennigans have spent summers at Philbrook since 1946. Mrs. Barbara Hennigan said that originally they came from San Mateo with a trailer and boat. "I hated that road for a long time and still do. You just tried to crawl up the road and avoid the bigger boulders that could tear off your oil pan."<sup>29</sup>

Some people needed help on the way home. Stan Brock ran a garage in Stirling City from 1950 to 1955. He tells of people who were Goin' to Philbrook or to camp at the West Branch stopping at his garage on their way up through Stirling City. Driving down the hill from Hum-

bug Road to the West Branch was no problem, but coming back up often was, especially if you were towing a vacation trailer. Brock had a World War II Dodge weapons carrier, and some people would give him a time to meet them at the West Branch when they were starting for home. Using his truck's four wheel drive, he would tow them up the steep hill, for a fee, of course.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, in the category of "boys will be boys," Bob Rice said. "If we got behind a slow-poke on the Straight Road who did not pull over for us to pass because they didn't want to eat our dust, we would cross over to the old zigzag road and still get down first."<sup>31</sup>

### In the Snow

Philbrook is not readily accessible in the winter because of the Sierra snow pack. However, a number of summer residents did and still do make occasional trips during the winter months on foot or skis. In the past, Snow Cats and even a surplus military Weasel have made the trip. Travel by two wheel drive autos and trucks normally stops at Inskip as the County's snowplow stops here.

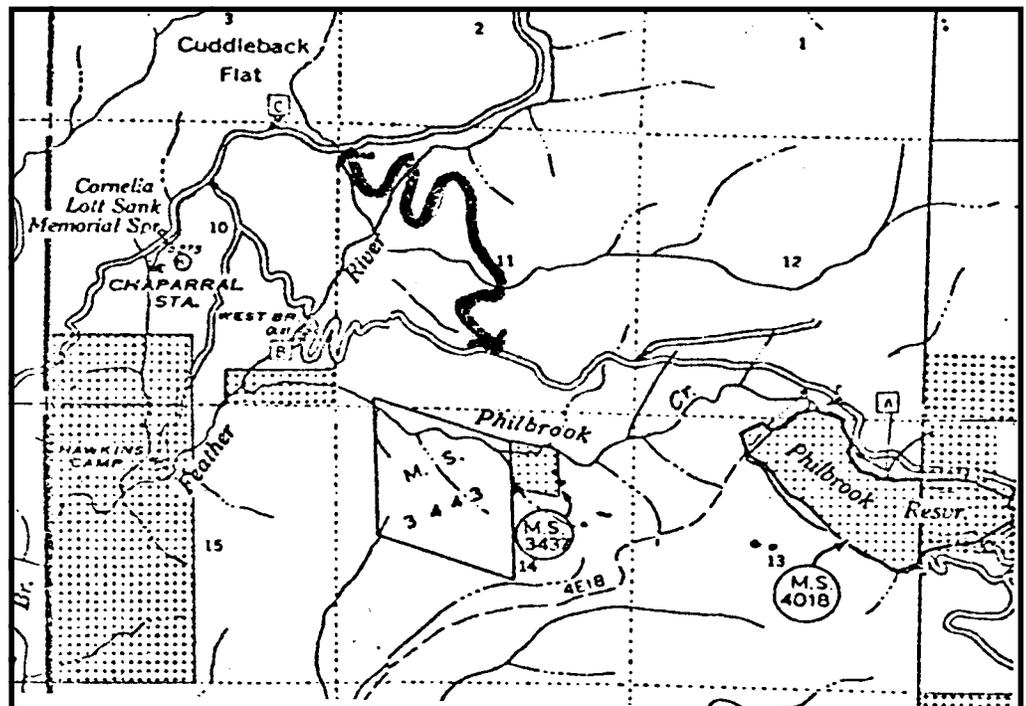
George Peterson recalled skiing from Stirling City to Inskip where they overnighted at the Inn. The next day the group skied to Philbrook. He also remembers walking in with the Moore family. They encountered fresh snow that initially was about a foot deep. "One of our party had a pair of snowshoes which we used to break trail. We all were in pretty good condition, but by the time we got to the dam we had become pretty desperate. However, we made it to the cabin, out of pure necessity, I guess." During another winter, Leo Willing pulled skiers behind his Weasel to the cabins.

"Another time we came in over the snow with the



Leo Willing in his Weasel. On several occasions, Willing was called upon to assist people attempting to travel in the Philbrook area during the winter. *Joyce Jones*

Ambaures in an old Star automobile which was converted to a snowmobile of sorts. We ran into a bank and twisted and bent one of the axles. We ran the tracks off at least a dozen times. We finally built a big fire and put the axle in it and got it red-hot. Then we put it on the floor and beat it out straight and put it back on the car again. Needless to say it worked."<sup>32</sup>



The reference map that is part of the 1974 document wherein the USFS granted an easement for the North Philbrook Road to Butte County. The 1970 paved road stands out in black. To the west the PG&E Road is evident. This map also shows the Bear Wallow Trail. It is the dashed line marked as 4E18 and runs from the Philbrook Dam in a southwesterly direction. In the lower right corner a portion of the Concow Road is visible. *United States Forest Service*