

**John Epler Sage**  
**Lumberman, Millwright, Explorer, and Poet**  
and  
**Sage's Sawmill**  
**Pine Ridge, Fresno County, California**

**With a Report of Historic Property Survey of Trestle Meadow, High Sierra Ranger District, Sierra National Forest**

by Steve Marsh, District Archaeologist

R2016051552013

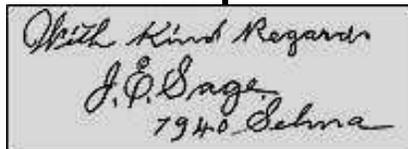
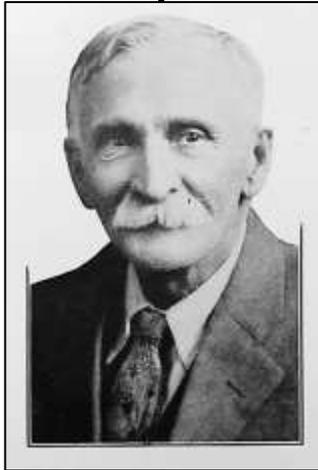
In 1877, a young John Epler Sage, a recent immigrant to California from Iowa, published an original poem in the Merced Express Newspaper.<sup>1</sup> In 1940, Sage, as a seasoned senior citizen in the Fresno County town of Selma, published a book of his poetry called *Along the Trails*, with poems describing events and places Sage encountered.<sup>2</sup> In the six decades between those years, Sage was one of the pioneer Fresno County lumbermen who made his living cutting the timber of the Sierra Forest Reserve, mostly on Pine Ridge in Fresno County. John Sage was a multi-faceted man, a poet, explorer and lumberman.

### John Sage

John Sage arrived in California in 1874 from Iowa as an 18-year-old, working on a cattle ranch in Merced County.<sup>3</sup> By 1882 he married Carrie Robinson of a Selma pioneer family,<sup>4</sup> and began a long career in the Sierras.

Soon he began memorializing his mountain experiences in verse. In 1883, a young girl disappeared from her campsite at Dinkey Creek. Sage was one of the search party, as local sawmill workers joined the effort to find the child. Sage's poem, "*Lost and Found*" (see **Attachment A**), told the story.

By the mid-1880s, Sage had established himself in the county lumber industry with his own small mill in Selma. The Fresno Republican Weekly newspaper reported:



"The little planing mill of Sage's is whittling away as industriously as ever. It seems to fairly howl its business defiance to the larger affair at the other end of town. If it gets stuck in a knot, it quietly bottles up enough steam and then tears through. Success to this little pioneer, may its shadow never grow less."<sup>5</sup>

Sage was noted for his carpentry and millwork; he contributed to the construction of notable homes in Selma.<sup>6</sup>

### Explorer

Sage also explored the Sierras. His obituary noted, "He familiarized himself thoroughly with the mountains from Yosemite to Kern County, and guided many parties of teachers and others on pack trips."<sup>7</sup> In 1886, Sage made his first trip to Yosemite, describing the wonders he'd seen in a poem:<sup>8</sup>

Yosemite  
*A fragment dropped from heaven!*  
*God said, "A gift for thee."*  
*And then behold*  
*Yosemite.*<sup>9</sup>

In 1892, he and his wife were among a party that summited Mount Whitney. The local newspaper reported the preparation for the trip: "Sage is a successful amateur photographer and expects to secure a collection of views that will be of permanent value in showing the scenic splendor of the comparatively unknown region which will be traversed."<sup>10</sup>

Sage claimed to be known as "Old Scout" from making the high mountains "his playground."<sup>11</sup>

## Lumbering

Histories and obituaries of Sage published in local newspapers told that "from 1887 to 1915 he operated his own sawmill at Poison Meadows, near what is now Pineridge."<sup>12</sup>

Pine Ridge was virgin timber country in the 1880s, and lumbermen soon began to take advantage:

"Way up in Fresno County, where the Sierra Nevada mountain ridges stand on tiptoe to overlook the range in front, until the highest peaks touch the clouds and lose zest for further peaking, there grow such pines and cedars and firs and redwoods as man may not see elsewhere. And there live lumbermen to match. In a district spoken of as the Pine Ridge, these giant trees at one time came into the possession of persons who thought more of the almighty dollar than of the Almighty's beautiful scenery..."<sup>13</sup>

A history of Fresno County noted, "In 1890 and for six years there was a veritable craze for sawmill ownership – 'frenzied finance' on a small scale... As it was said, it 'looked as though whoever had a tin can, a buzz saw, and six bits started a sawdust factory'."<sup>14</sup> "The Pine Ridge district was in its day a perfect web of sawmills and camps... it was the most important mountain settlement, contributing to the wants of thousands engaged in the industry, which was an important one in the county."<sup>15</sup> This 'perfect web of sawmills' was largely made up of small, portable mills, that moved to where the timber was available, and the lumbermen created and dissolved partnerships quickly, making it difficult to track locations and ownership. 'A Sawmill History of the Sierra National Forest' (Hurt 1940) indicates that John Sage was in the thick of the action (see Sage's Mill Locations, page 13).

A man named Bennett ran lumber mills on Pine Ridge beginning in 1883. In 1888 he moved his Rush Creek mill to Stevenson Meadow (later the site of Shaver Lake), and had John Sage as his

millwright. This mill operated until 1900, cutting over 300 acres.<sup>16</sup>

In 1892-1894, John Humphrey, another Fresno County pioneer lumberman, partnered with John Sage in a mill one mile southeast of Ockenden, until he sold out and retired.<sup>17</sup> Other sources indicate that Humphrey and Sage's steam mill at Winchell Meadow ran from 1894-1895.<sup>18,19</sup> The local newspaper reported that in 1894, Sage and Humphrey were busy sawing trays and lumber.<sup>20</sup>

## Sage's Pine Ridge Mill

In 1893, plans were apparently afoot for Sage to join with Bennett and Humphrey to put in a large lumber mill.<sup>21</sup> However, ultimately John Sage set up his own mill. It was a "double-circular steam-drive" mill on Pine Ridge (see **Attachment B**).<sup>22</sup> Tragedy soon struck. In January, 1894, Sage's mill was destroyed by fire. The newspaper reported, "There was about \$1300 worth of machinery in the mill and



Sage's Shingle and Tray Mill, Winchell Meadow, 1892. SNF HP02096 (Hurt 1940).

no insurance."<sup>23</sup> Despite the loss, 1894 must have been a profitable year for Sage, as he began building a new family home in Selma.<sup>24</sup>

Sage got the mill up and running again that summer of 1894, but more calamity struck, as reported in the news: "Arthur Snyder of Selma, while at work in Sage's mill on Pine Ridge a day or two ago, caught his hand in the machinery and so badly mutilated a thumb and finger that amputation was necessary."<sup>25</sup>

By 1897, business was booming. The newspaper reported, "All the mills are running full blast, and Sage wants fifteen more teams to haul lumber, hay, cleets, and box stuff to Fresno, Kingsburg, Fowler, Wildflower and Selma."<sup>26</sup>

'A Sawmill History of the Sierra National Forest' indicates that Sage's mill cut out the fall of 1898, having cut three million board feet of timber over 100 acres, at 15 thousand feet a day.<sup>27</sup> Other sources indicate it was still running in 1899.<sup>28</sup> Another serious mishap happened that summer, when "Glenn Bernhart of Selma met with an accident that will cripple him for life. His hand accidentally came in contact with a cleat saw, and a large part of it was instantly cut off [and] had to be removed in amputation. If it had not been for the presence of mind of Mr. Sage in immediately bandaging the arm, death would have followed..."<sup>29</sup> The newspaper reported in July 1899 that "The teamsters are hauling tray-shakes from Brown's shake camp and tray cleats from Sage's saw mill and they are first class."<sup>30</sup>

larger operations like those of the Fresno Flume and Lumber Company at nearby Shaver Lake were going strong. Within a few years, Pine Ridge was abandoned by the timber industry. In 1914, the local newspaper reported:

"A change has come over the mountains. The nearby timber has been felled and the logger has withdrawn farther into the mountain wilds...The mills are no more, are timber-bared and naught remains of their sites save the heaping sawdust dumps. Wherever a mill stood and sawed or logging camp was located devastation and waste are visible for miles about the timber denuded mountain sides."<sup>32</sup>

Sage's mill was the same. John Miller, an early Sierra National Forest employee, wrote in 1908:

"This morning I went down to Shaver and rode by the old Sage Mill. It is about a mile and one half from camp and it has sort of an attraction for me, as it was the first place I ever camped in the mountains. I was there just ten years ago this summer. The place has changed decidedly. The Mill, of course, has gone, but some of the old cabins still stand. The timber has been all cut away and it makes the country look barren in places."<sup>33</sup>



Six horse team at Sage's Mill, 1897. SNF HP02090 (Hurt 1940).

When it was in operation, Sage's Mill befit the man, by being not only an industrial operation, but being a place also of entertainment, poetry, and song. The mills were central locations that mountain residents and the many summer campers who came to the mountains to escape the heat of the Central Valley could visit for amusement. In 1898, Sage's Mill had a number of families encamped in the vicinity, including Sage's in-laws.<sup>34</sup> There were so many visitors that a person noted in 1894, "Men, women and children can be scared up from any

tree or bush on the mountainsides. Campfires, bonfires, and lights gleam from every hillside." That year, Sage's Mill hosted a speaker to "a good audience with ladies furnishing the music for the occasion."<sup>35</sup>

By 1900, Bennett's mill at Stevenson Meadow in which Sage was the millwright closed. The mill was then moved to Winchell Meadow, with Sage taking over; that operation closed in 1902.<sup>31</sup>

Soon Sage's mill on Pine Ridge ended its operations. The available timber was likely exhausted, and

A news article in 1898 wrote of a farewell bonfire given near Sage's Mill for the campers returning

home that summer, where John Sage recited poetry and made remarks concerning the trouble in the Philippines.<sup>36</sup> The following summer, in July 1899, another party was held at which Sage performed:

There was grand entertainment at Sage's mill Saturday night. The campers and saw-mill hands all were present and they had the largest campfire of the season. Over forty were present. There were some very good recitations and the music rendered, as follows: Music, by Headburg and Powell; recitation, by Miss Belle Ritchie; recitation, by Mr. Sage entitled, "The Lost Child," encore, "The Prodigal Son"; recitation by M. H. Smith of Lone Star, entitled "How Ruby Played the Piano"; encore, "Brother Watkins"; singing, Merrie Reed; song, Mr. Sage; recitation, Mr. Prichard of Selma; singing, Miss Dewell, of Fresno; singing by the audience. All returned home at a late hour well pleased.<sup>37</sup>

### Sage's Madera County Mill

John Sage wasn't out of the lumber business yet. In the spring of 1903, he set up a two-saw circular mill on Whiskey Ridge in Madera County. He operated for one season, and then Pierce Lumber Company took it over, ending in 1906.<sup>38</sup> Despite his brief operation, Sage's name has stuck to the site.<sup>39</sup> In *The Cabin*, a book published in 1911 of author Stewart Edward White's time on Whiskey Ridge, he mentioned the old Sage Mill.<sup>40</sup>

Sage was still a young man at age 47 in 1903, but his lumbering days were apparently soon over.

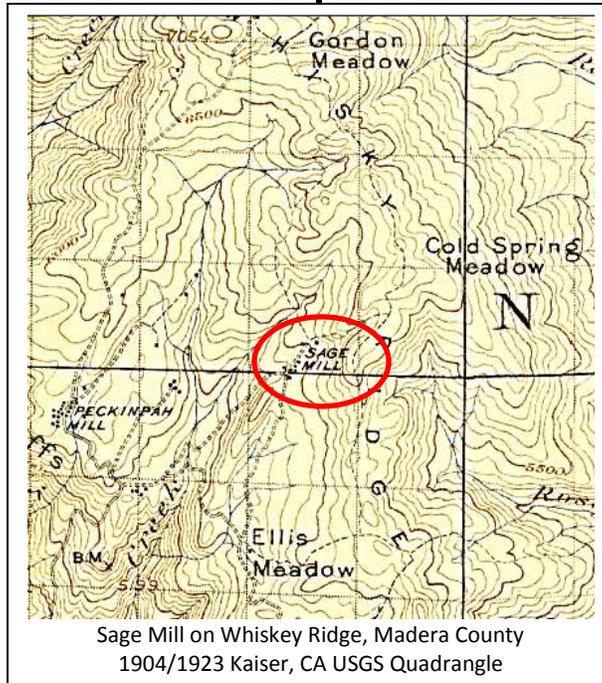
### Retirement

By the early 1900s, John and Carrie Sage were respected senior citizens of Selma. Mrs. Sage hosted Shakespeare readings and a book club.<sup>41</sup>

John took delight in portraying early pioneers in parades, and writing poetry and letters. He dressed as a scout for the Hanford homecoming parade in 1932 and 1933.<sup>42,43</sup> He was the guest of honor on his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Dinuba Armistice Day rodeo, dressed in his pioneer buckskin<sup>44</sup> and won best costume for his 'old-time guide' at the Selma Parade in 1940.<sup>45</sup> In a 1935 letter to the editor of the Fresno Bee, one of his many, Sage wrote defending hunters and the history of the American pioneer: "I am a hunter, descendant of a race of hunters, and I am proud of it."<sup>46</sup>

In 1940, Sage published his book of poetry, "*Along the Trails*," with verses about his favorite horse, his coffee pot, the fountain in Courthouse Park in Fresno, and many other people and places he encountered.<sup>47</sup>

Sage died in 1942, honored as a pioneer Fresno County lumberman and mountaineer and poet.<sup>48</sup> One of his lasting legacies is his contribution to the early logging industry on Pine Ridge, memorialized along with his advice learned over the years, in his poem of the logger, entitled "*Gospel of the Logging Line*" (following page).



Sage Mill on Whiskey Ridge, Madera County  
1904/1923 Kaiser, CA USGS Quadrangle



John Sage in his buckskin pioneer outfit. San Francisco Chronicle, May 11, 1932

Gospel of the Logging Line

By John E. Sage

The whistle has sounded the morning call,  
The day has scattered night's gloom,  
Out yonder asleep on the mountain side,  
Are the logs awaiting the boom.  
To U-bolt and clevis your anchor lines bind,  
Then clamp to the chute and the pine,  
Place the lookout where all can see,  
Then boys take out the line.

The load may be heavy, the road may be steep,  
Have a care to the bite of the line,  
Away from rocks and gulches to keep,  
Cut a lead snug and deep in the pine,  
Then on with drawhead till the fallen you find  
Lying deep in the tangle and ferns,  
Then to the lookout signal in,  
Good line, put on the turns.

Then bend the choker to the log,  
That it may leave its bed,  
Then to the lookout signal in,  
All set, full speed ahead.  
The line swings taut and every wire  
Takes on the mighty strain.  
The log hangs back and seems to sulk  
But its fight is all in vain.

And when it rolls into the gulch,  
Against the stump or pine,  
Then to the lookout signal in,  
Change choker, give back line.  
When you reach the turning point,  
The lineman then should know,  
And to the lookout signal in,  
Ahead but make it slow.

When at last you reach the frog,  
And the log glides safely in,  
You wipe the sweat from off your brow,  
And drink from the old rusty tin.  
When the sun goes down the day is done  
The logs are in the boom,  
The timekeeper marks a day well spent,  
And you are safe at home.

Cut your leads all deep in the tree of life,  
Ere the morning hours are spent,  
And to the rock of ages,  
Let your anchor lines be bent.  
Then take line out boys,  
Take it out beyond the yard,  
Take it out amid the gulches,  
Where the logging is steep and hard.

Take it out amid the snowbrush,  
The chinquapin and oak,  
Take it out amid the granite rocks,  
It never can be broke.  
Take it out amid the fir trees,  
Bend the choker on the pine,  
Sink the grabs deep in the redwood,  
Don't ever foul the line.

Bear it off into the forest,  
No matter what the haul.  
There is a lookout never sleeping,  
And you will heed each signal call.  
When you reach the boom at last  
And stand in the payday line  
You'll see the signal from the lookout there  
Well done, all off the line.



Early Day Log Wagon at Humphrey's Mill on Pine Ridge (Hurt 1940)

## Attachment A

### John Sage's Poem "Lost and Found"

#### The Story of the Search for Alice Wilson

In the summer of 1883, ten-year-old Alice Wilson went missing in the Dinkey Creek area. All of the hands from the mountain sawmills were called to assist in the search, including John Sage.

Alice was the daughter of Riley and Hatty Wilson, of Central Colony in Fresno County. Riley had come to California from New York with gold fever in 1853, mined successfully for a time, sold out, took up blacksmithing, again with success, and eventually settled in Fresno in 1881 farming fruits and vines. Central Colony was three miles south of downtown Fresno. In the 1800s, it was an arid wasteland that was converted to farming by the people who came to live there as the first successful agricultural colony in Fresno County. The Wilson's were original colonists with a farm plot on Cherry Avenue, north of Central Avenue.

The summer heat of the San Joaquin Valley would drive residents into the mountains to cool off in the summers. The Fresno Republican Weekly of August 27, 1897 wrote that the mountains above Pine Ridge were "as cool as a pickle", beating Fresno for climate, with "lots of campers up there to enjoy the fine weather." In the summer of 1883, the Wilsons, including Alice and her older sisters Kitty and Leonora, encamped at Dinkey Creek for the summer months, where the tragedy unfolded that would end at Bear Creek.

John Sage published a poem entitled "*Lost and Found*" about the events, which follows newspaper article excerpts:



Bear Creek (San Francisco Call Newspaper, Aug. 19, 1897)

## The Search for the Lost Child

An article from the Fresno Republican Weekly, Saturday, July 28, 1883.

"A correspondent of THE REPUBLICAN and one of the number who assisted in the search for Alice Wilson, the child who was lost in the mountains and was found drowned in Bear Creek one week from the time she left the camp, sends us the following particulars of the affair:

"On Sunday evening July 15<sup>th</sup>, Alice, a ten-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson of Central Colony, left the camp of her parents on Dinkie Creek, and became lost in the mountains.

*"The families of B. Marks, Mr. Wilson and others went to the mountains to spend the summer, and located at Dinkey creek, about sixty miles east of Fresno." Sacramento Record-Union, Friday, July 20, 1883.*

"The child was a slim, nervous little girl and was very easily frightened, and, her mother says, could not bear to be out after dark. On this particular afternoon she had been playing with two other girls of about her own age. They had wandered to the banks of a small creek that runs through Mr. Dusy's pasture and only a few rods from her parents' camp, and were playing near the water's edge, when little Alice accidentally fell in. She scrambled out upon the other side and started off in an opposite direction, crying and rubbing her eyes with her sleeves. This was about six o'clock and soon after, the alarm was given, and every available person at Dinkie started upon the search. The search was continued all night, and fires were built, in hopes that she would see them and come to them, but such hopes were not to be realized. She was tracked for about two miles and to the mouth of Laurel Creek, where all traces were completely lost. The search was pursued with unabated energy all day Monday, and on Tuesday a courier was dispatched for more help, and a prompt response was the result.

"People began gathering in and by Wednesday evening upward of eighty men were camped on Laurel Meadows, near where the last tracks were found. Nearly all the shake-makers responded to the first call, and the hands from the mills came in as soon as they found their services were needed. Occasionally someone would rush in to camp with the news that he had found a fresh trail, but all "fresh trails" proved to have been made by some of the searchers, or by animals. On Thursday afternoon search was resumed on Dinkie Creek, and water-holes and crevices in the rocks were searched with the idea that if she was drowned or killed her body might be recovered, but no encouragement was found.

*"Her course was traced about six miles from camp on Bear Mountain, near the big trees. It is believed that she has become delirious from fright and exposure, as her course has been through the most dense thickets and over the roughest paths." Fresno Republican Weekly, Saturday, July 21, 1883.*

"Mr. Collins kindly furnished the provisions from his own store-house and packed it to the men who were assisting in the search, and from one to four large sheep were killed daily for meat for them. The ladies occupied their time in cooking, and hard work it was, too.

"On Saturday one thousand dollars reward was offered for the recovery of the child or her body, and many went forward to assist in the search, those who went first having worn themselves out retired for rest. The creeks and canyons were searched for miles around and on Sunday, the 22<sup>d</sup> inst., her body was found in a deep hole in Bear Creek, in which the child had evidently fallen and was drowned. The discovery was made by Thomas Downing, who immediately returned to camp, about two and a half miles, for assistance in recovering the body. By means of ropes Frank Dusy descended the perpendicular banks above the stream and raised the body from its lonely resting place.

*"Following this trail he came to Bear Creek, and in exploring along that stream, he came to a cascade, at the foot of which was a deep pool of water covered by shelving rocks. There were some indications that the loose rocks near the foot of the pool had recently been disturbed, and on further investigation found the dead body of little Alice in it." Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel, August 4, 1883.*

"The search throughout was well systematized, considering that the men were undisciplined, and much credit is reflected upon the leaders and all who so generously lent their aid.

"The remains, accompanied by the parents, were brought to Fresno by Richard White, arriving about 11 o'clock Monday morning. In the afternoon a Coroner's inquest was held at the undertaking rooms of Bennett & Warner, and in the evening the burial took place near the home of the parents in Central Colony. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson have the sympathy of the entire community in their sad bereavement."

Lost and Found

By John Epler Sage, from *Along the Trails*, 1940.

Leaping o'er its rocky bed,  
Though the canyon on its way  
Catching sunbeams o'er the mountain shed  
Weaving rainbows in its jeweled spray,  
Where the tall pine trees like feathered shafts  
Of giants seem to pierce the skies,  
Granite-walled by grey rim crag and peak  
The peaceful camp of Dinkey lies.

There, hidden away from the noise of the world,  
Severed afar from the hum of the mart,  
The toilworn may rest in that beautiful glade,  
And health cheer the worn and weary heart.  
The sun had paused to kiss the night to sleep,  
And paint the granite kings with gold,  
Then passing away to its home in the West,  
The shadows of night pile fold upon fold.

Night came up from the canyon beneath,  
Clasping hands with the night as it fell from the skies.  
There came from that camp a cry of grief,  
That swift and far through the forest flies.  
And this is the news that the riders bore,  
A child is lost on the mountains' wild.  
Then quickly sped each hunter's feet,  
To find the trail of the missing child.

Soon it was found and followed afar,  
Mid the aisles of the forest, where the shadows are piled,  
Till the black robber, night, stole the sight from our eyes,  
And lost was the trail of a fond mother's child.  
Oh, the anguish of that mother, as she lay  
Beneath the pines, tall and wild,  
Praying as only a mother can pray,  
For God to watch over her loved, lost child.

Calling her name again and again,  
But only the bluff of frowning rock  
Back, the echo heartless flinging,  
The heart of that mother seems to mock.  
But the day God came with its light once more,  
And a hundred men from hill and plain,  
Searched the mighty mountains o'er,  
But all that day the search was in vain.

Three times the footprints plain were found,  
As they pressed the sands on the Dinkey's shore  
Bruised the moss clad rocks of Laurel,  
On Bear creek's bank, were lost and found no more.  
For seven long days we searched the mountains  
Through canyon deep and wooded glen,  
Rousing the lion in his rocky lair  
The grizzly in his brushy den.

Half of the eighth was passed and gone,  
When we paused to rest upon the mountain brow  
Where the stream of Bear creek hangs  
Like a silver thread, far mid rocks and pines below;  
When, from the canyon far beneath  
A shout came upward through the air,  
Then burst the notes from the signal gun  
That told our search was ended there.

Then all around in the forest wild,  
Within range of that echoing gun,  
From copse and crag, from granite pile,  
Came back the answers one by one.  
We paused, the answer back to fling,  
Then down the mountain's side we run;  
Each one faintly dared to hope,  
Each one said, "God's will be done."

We stand on Bear creek's brink once more,  
And there, in a pool that is silver bright  
Lay the one for whom we had searched,  
But with brow of death that was marble white.  
Rough were the hands, but kind the touch,  
That placed her on the funeral bier,  
A quiver played on the bearded lip,  
On the brownest cheek was a glistening tear.

The signal gun was calling again,  
The hunters came in from the circle wide;  
Slowly they joined in the funeral train  
O'er the rough, rugged trail on the mountain side.  
We laid her beneath the pines so tall,  
Her friends and kindred gathered 'round,  
And the story was told that I've told to you,  
How Alice Wilson was lost and found.

This happened in 1883.

Attachment B

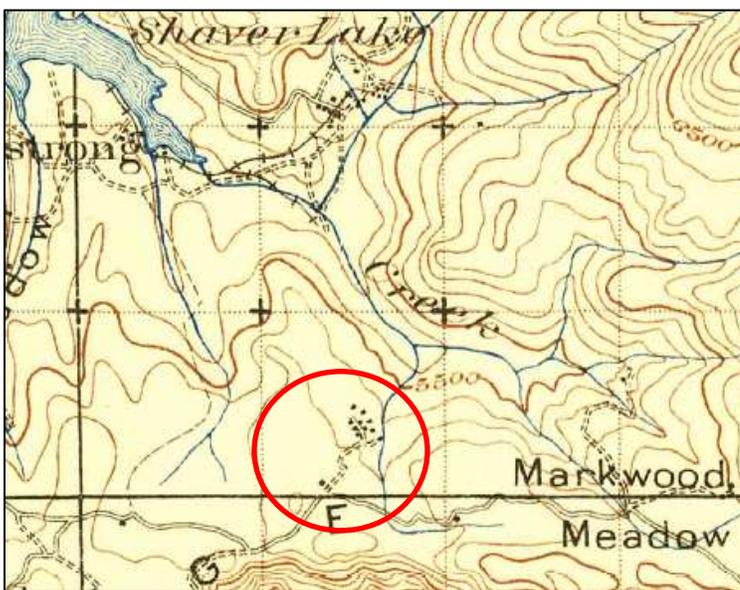
A Report of Historic Property Survey to Locate Sage's Pine Ridge Sawmill, 1893-1898  
R2016051552013

Hurt's (1940) *A Sawmill History of the Sierra National Forest* places John Sage's mill on Pine Ridge in the southeast quarter of Section 32, Township 9 South, Range 25 East. Sage's obituary in the Fresno Bee the Republican newspaper indicates that it was at Poison Meadow, which is on the Dinkey-Shaver Road, just south of Section 32. Poison Meadow Creek runs from Poison Meadow northward through the SE ¼ of Section 32 to Stevenson Creek and Shaver Lake.

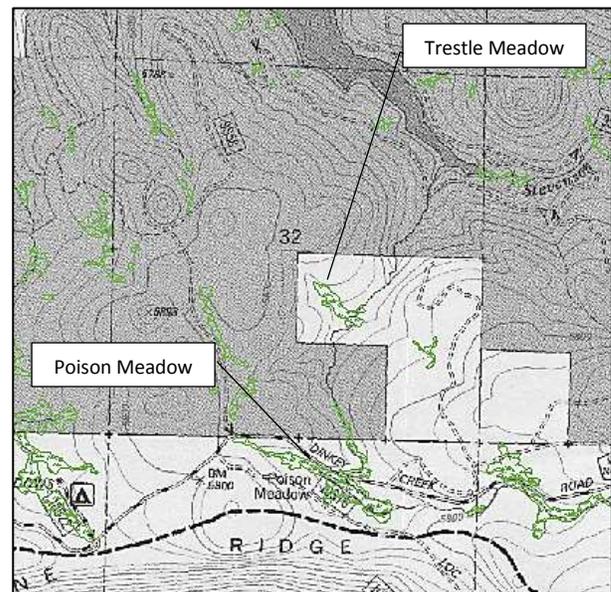
The exact location where Sage's Mill once stood is unknown. There are a few clues found in historical maps. The 1904 Kaiser, CA USGS Quadrangle map shows a roadway that leaves the Dinkey-Shaver Road in the SE ¼ of Section 32 into what appears to be a cluster of buildings (see maps below). The buildings appear to be at or near what is now called Trestle Meadow, a natural meadow on Poison Meadow Creek. The Sierra National Forest land in the SE ¼ of Section 32 is shown as a Forest Service administrative site on the 1909 SNF Folio Map, and the 1915 SNF map indicates that it was called the "Sage R.S." (Sage Ranger Station). It was not uncommon for early SNF ranger stations to be co-located with lumber mills, although Sage's Mill predates the formation of the National Forest; in this case the administrative site may have been named for the site of Sage's Mill. The early SNF maps also show a cluster of buildings near what is now Trestle Meadow (next page). One historic account in 1908 by John Miller, an early Sierra National Forest employee, tells of cabins at Sage's Mill:

"This morning I went down to Shaver and rode by the old Sage Mill. It is about a mile and one half from camp and it has sort of an attraction for me, as it was the first place I ever camped in the mountains. I was there just ten years ago this summer. The place has changed decidedly. The Mill, of course, has gone, but some of the old cabins still stand."

Trestle Meadow would have provided a good natural opening in the forest to locate a small sawmill and cabins for workers and visitors. Water would be reliable from Poison Meadow Creek. Trestle Meadow (SNF Meadow No. 517M9) apparently got its common name from a railroad trestle of the Shaver Lake Railroad, which operated in the area between 1902-1920 (SNF Site 05155400388).



1904 Kaiser Quadrangle  
Area of Buildings in Section 32



2004 Shaver Lake, CA USGS Quadrangle  
T9S, R25E, Section 32

## John Epler Sage and Sage's Mill



Left: Excerpt of 1916 SNF Map with Buildings and Ranger Station Symbol in the SE ¼ of Section 32 (T9S, R25E).

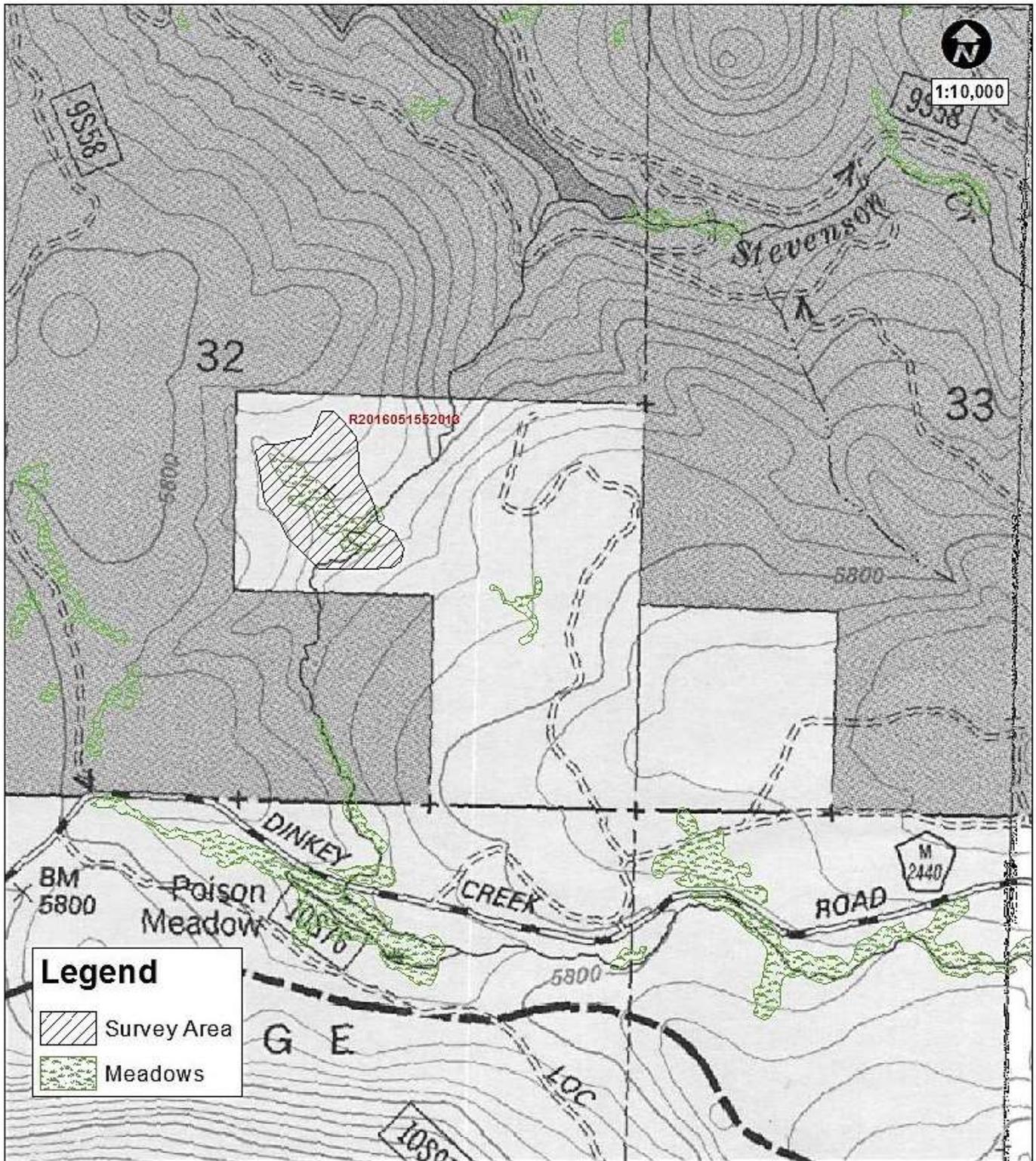
Right: Trestle Meadow looking from the treeline southeast.

**Survey:** In the summer of 2015, Archaeologist Steve Marsh and Archaeological Technician Mike Boero surveyed the area surrounding Trestle Meadow to try and identify remnants of Sage's Mill as part of the Sierra National Forest's obligations to identify historic properties under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The SNF land had been previously surveyed, as reported in *Dinkey II Salvage Sale, R1991051553013* (Banek 1991). The area around the meadow is densely wooded, with openings covered in whitethorn. A total of 13.5 acres were surveyed with an intensive (30m transect) strategy, as displayed on the attached Survey Coverage Map (page 11).

**Findings:** A number of historic-era features and artifacts were located and recorded as displayed on the attached Site Location Map (page 12). Remains of the old Shaver Lake Railroad railway are evident at Trestle Meadow, and were recorded as a segment of **Site 05155400388, CA-FRE-1207H**. Around the perimeter of the meadow, there are other indications of use during the historic period, including some refuse, an old hay storage shed from livestock management, wood structure remains, and an ancient apple tree. It is difficult to determine the relationships of the features and artifacts or attribute them to a specific historic use, so they were recorded as one site of multiple loci, **Site 05155200133**. Also, a prehistoric archaeological site was newly found and recorded as **Site 05155200134**. These records are attached.

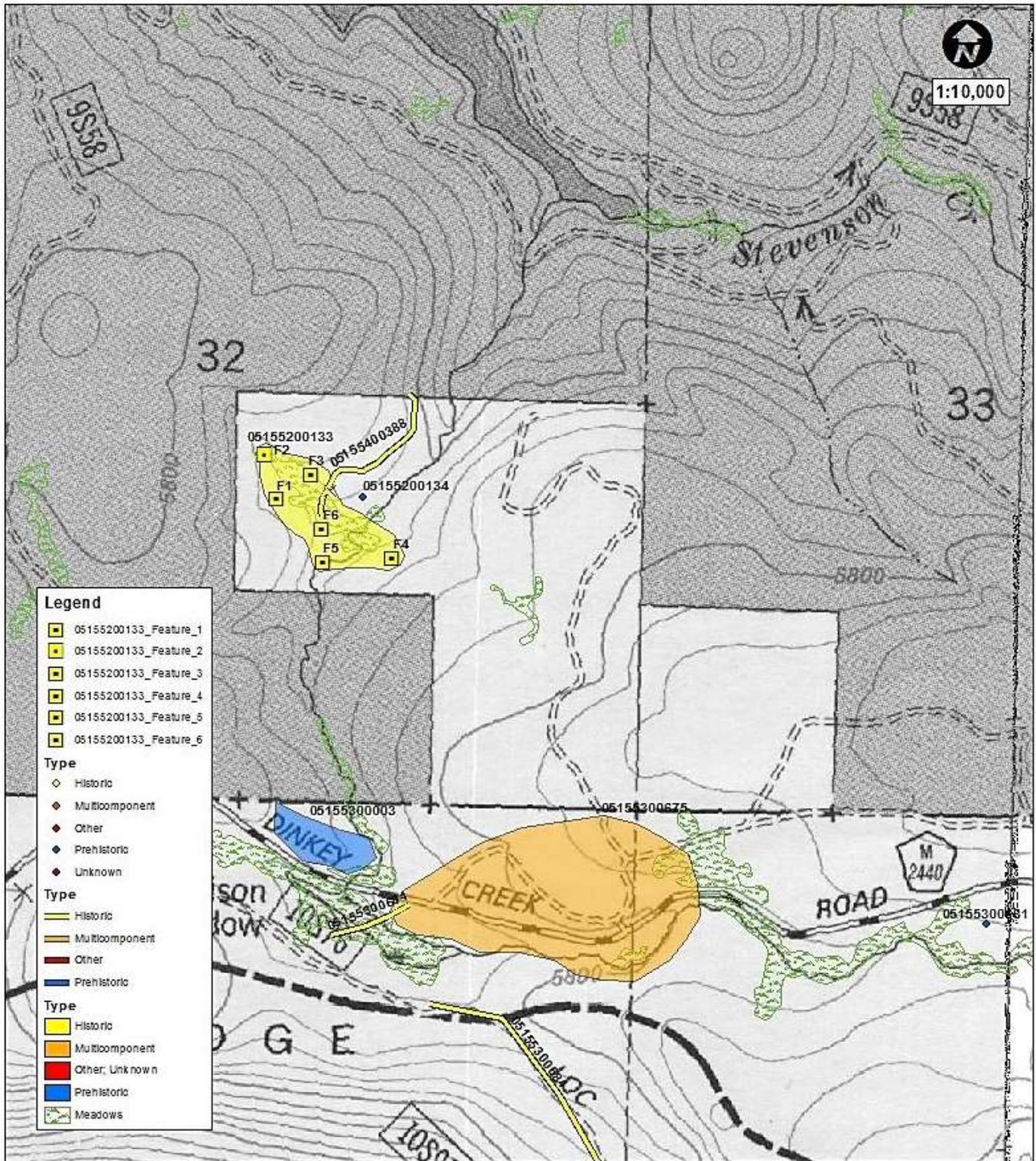
It is possible that Trestle Meadow was the site of Sage's Mill. Some of the artifacts and features of Site 05155200133 may be associated with the mill operations or the vacation cabins that were with it. More investigation is needed to confirm the location of Sage's Pine Ridge Sawmill.

Trestle Meadow Survey Coverage Map  
R2016051552013



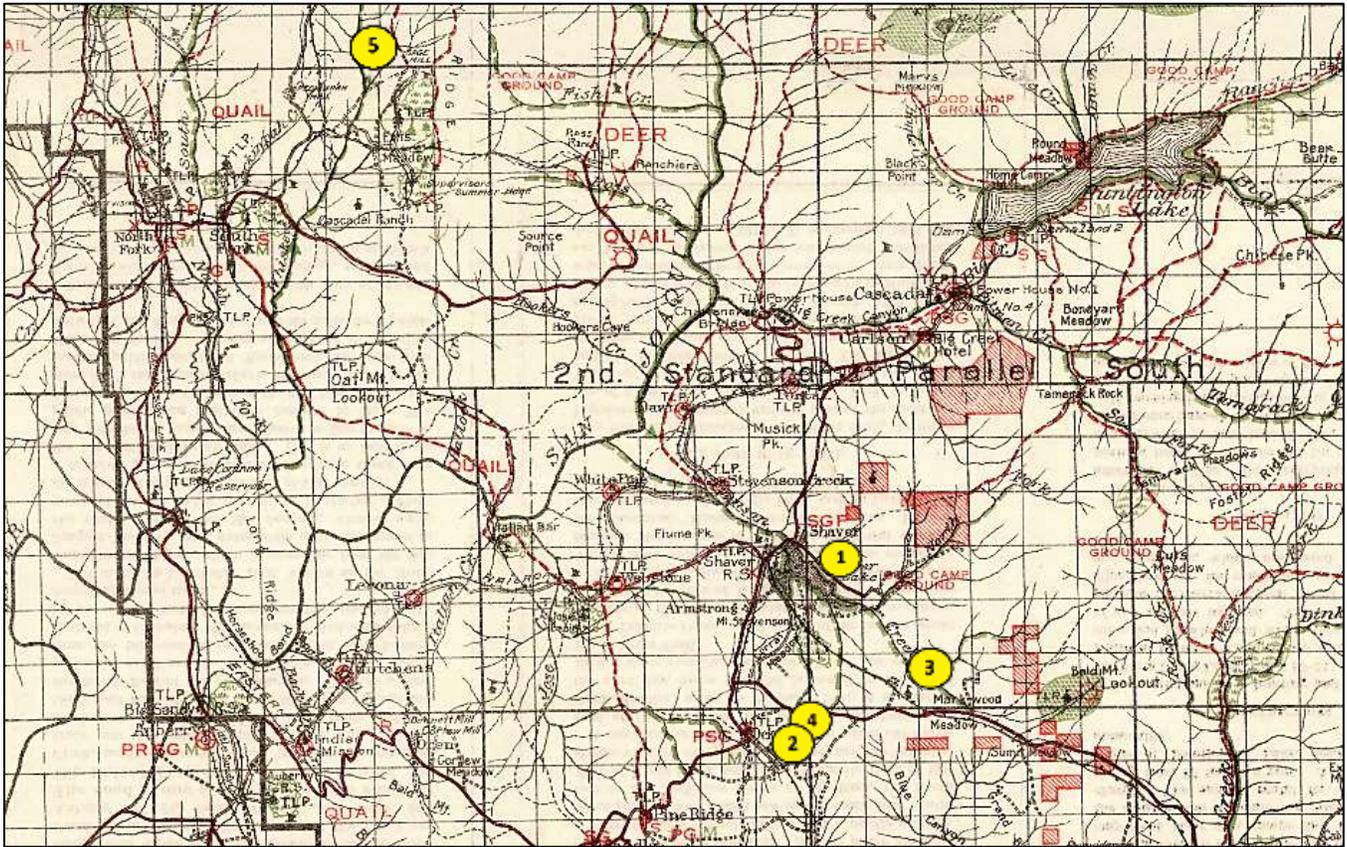
Shaver Lake, CA USGS Quadrangle  
T.9S., R.25E., Section 32

Trestle Meadow Site Location Map  
R2016051552013



Shaver Lake, CA USGS Quadrangle  
T.9S., R.25E., Section 32

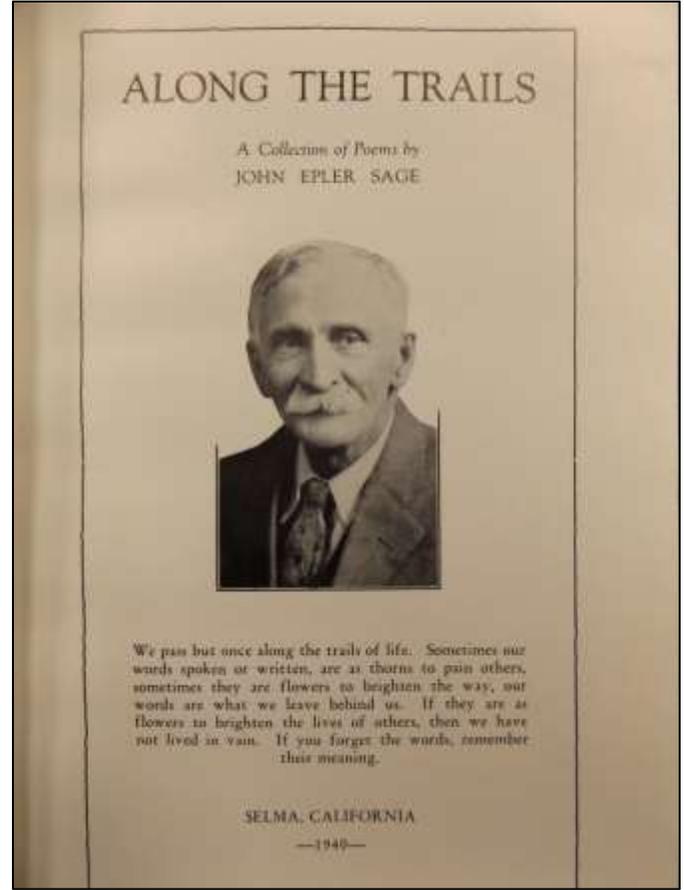
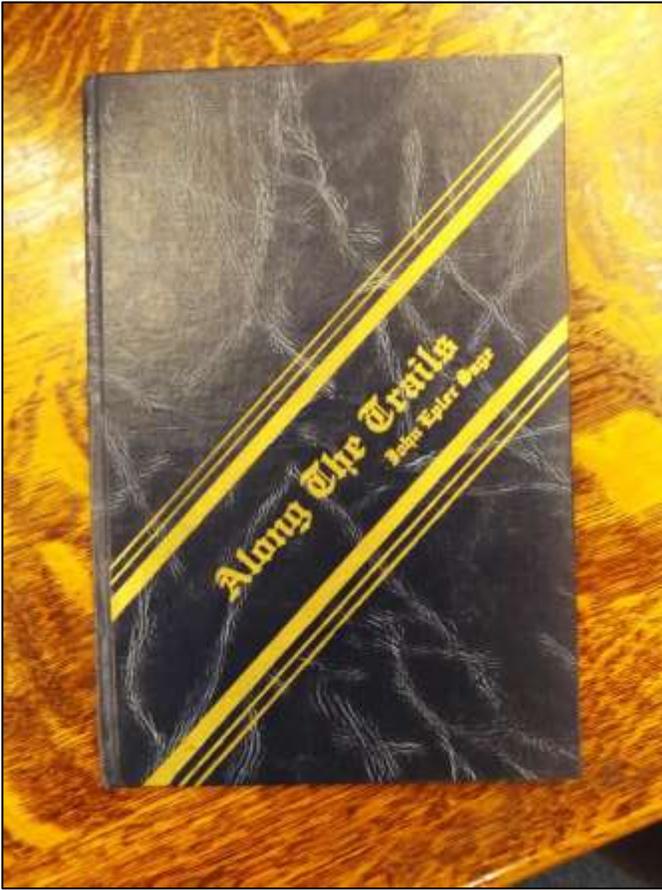
## John Epler Sage and Sage's Mill



**1916 Sierra National Forest Map**

### **Sage's Mill Locations, from *A Sawmill History of the Sierra National Forest* (Hurt 1940)**

1. Bennett's Mill, with Sage as Millwright	Stevenson Meadow	1888-1900	T.9S., R.25E., SW ¼ Section 19.
2. Humphrey and Sage Mill	Winchell Meadow	1894-1895	T.10S., R.24E., SW ¼ Section 1.
3. Sage's Mill	[Poison Meadow]	1893-1898	T.9S., R.25E., SE ¼ Section 32.
4. Sage's Mill (taking over from Bennett)	Winchell Meadow	1900-1902	T.10S., R.24E., SW ¼ Section 1.
5. Sage's Mill (Madera County)	Whiskey Ridge	1903-1906	T.7S., R.23E., SE ¼ Section 35.



We pass but once along the trails of life. Sometimes our words spoken or written, are as thorns to pain others, sometimes they are flowers to brighten the way, our words are what we leave behind us. If they are as flowers to brighten the lives of others, then we have not lived in vain. If you forget the words, remember their meaning.

John Sage

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