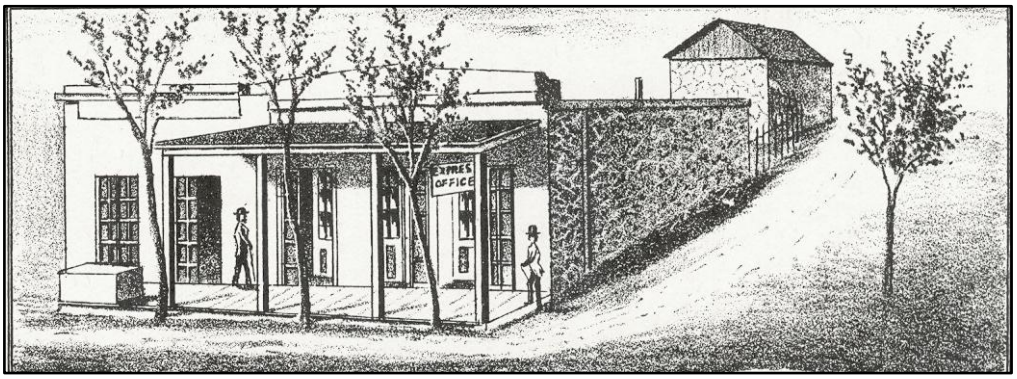
Peter L. Traver was a very active citizen of Murphys Camp. He arrived before 1852 when he purchased a building, lot and all goods from a man named in the deed as "Doc Roberts" who may have been Dr. Charles Bolton Roberts. In 1863 Dr. Charles B. Roberts died in Philadelphia and Peter Traver and Dr. William Jones both submitted claims to his estate for funds that were owed them from the time that Roberts was in Murphys Camp. This property was west of where he would later build his stone store and Traver sold it in 1853 to Samuel Crispin who opened a saloon in the building.

In 1855 Traver sold a lot with a building that had been used as a store that was located where the Murphys Hotel parking lot is now. V.M Worth was the buyer and he opened a carpenter shop in the building. Peter Traver appears to have built his stone store soon after that sale since "*Travers stone store*" was listed in November of 1855 in a mechanics lien filed on a lot to the west of the store. With a tin roof filled with sand, stone walls, a well inside the building and iron shutters to close it up, Peter L. Traver's store easily survived the fires in August of 1859 and in 1874 and the explosion of 1893.

Traver purchased what was called the Cottage House that was on the west of his stone store building in November of 1858. Peter Traver took out two mortgages on May 13, 1859, one on the Cottage House and the other on his the property where his stone store was located. After the Cottage House burned down in the August 1859 fire, Traver sold the land where it had been to John Thompson who built a stone building that was attached to the west wall of the Traver store building. Thompson's building still exists.

An article about the 1859 fire in the San Andreas Independent dated August 17, 1859 stated that the Traver Store and the contents were saved but that article also estimated a loss of four thousand, five hundred dollars to Traver because merchandise stored in out buildings was destroyed. To safeguard his store inventory from future fires, on November 26, 1859, Mr Traver announced that he had "*completed the erection of a first class stone building intended as a warehouse for the storage of every variety of goods for the use of those engaged in the Carson Valley trade."* This building was located behind the Traver Store and was to give traders a safe place to store a portion of their load, while the balance was carried over the mountains. That warehouse is the building where the fire and explosion of 1893 took place.



This print of the store of Peter Traver shows the warehouse behind it.

It is possible that Peter Traver was not a good business man since he took out another mortgage on the store building in 1962. On January 19, 1866 Traver sold the store building to

SHERIFF'S SALE

Under Decree on Foreclosure.

BY VIRTUE OF A DECREE OF FORE-closure of mortgage, issued out of the District Court of the Eleventh Judicial District, in and for the county of Calaveras, State of California, and to me directed and delivered, for a final judgment and decree rendered in said court on the 22d day of January, A. D., 1867, in favor of James Irvine and John Lyons, and against P. L. Traver, et al, for the sum of eleven hundred fifty-nine and 50-100 dollars, principal debt, interest and attorney's fees, with interest on the said sum at 2 per cent. per month from the rendition of judgment until paid, and interest on the sum of forty-one and 50-100 dollars costs at the rate of 2 per cent. per month, together with all costs that may accrue, I have levied upon the following property, to-wit: all that certain lot or parcel of land situated on the north side of Main street, in the village of Murphys, Calaveras county, State of California, beginning at the southeast corner of lot owned by John Thompson, and now occupied by B. Meyer; thence extending northerly along the line of said lot owned by John Thompson two hundred and fifty (250) feet, more or less, to Church street, thence, easterly thirty feet on Church street, to an alley extending from Main to Church streets; thence two hundred and fifty feet (250) more or less, in a southerly direction, to Main street, the place of beginning, together with the one story stone fire proof store and the two story fire proof stone house on said lot, and occupied by P. L. Traver & Company. And notice is hereby given, that on the

23d day of February, A. D., 1867,

at 12 o'clock M., I will sell all the right, title and interest of said P. L. Traver, et al, defendants, in and to the above described property, at San Andreas, in front of the court house door, Calaveras county, at public auction, for cash in hand, to the highest and best bidder, to satisfy said judgment and costs.

JAMES OLIPHANT, Sheriff.

By W. F. Colton, Under Sheriff.

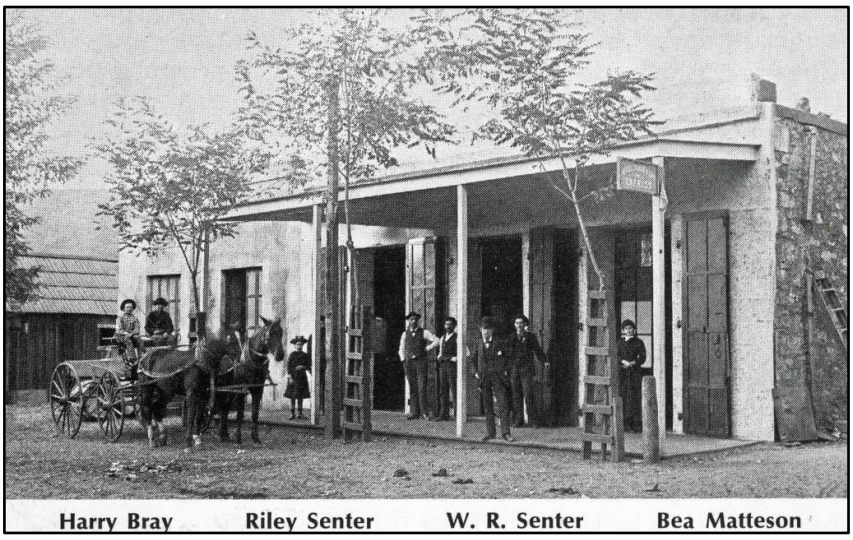
Dated San Andreas, Jan. 29th, 1867. f2:3t.

William R. Williams. Traver also mortgaged his home on Jones Street to Doctor Jones and then Traver and his family moved to San Francisco.

On January 19, 1866 Traver sold the store building to William R. Williams. Traver also mortgaged his home on Jones Street to Doctor Jones and then Traver and his family moved to San Francisco. When Peter Traver's first wife died in March of 1859 in Murphys Camp her body had been stored in a vault house at the back of their garden behind their home until it could be shipped back east for burial. Knowing this story, Elizabeth Kaler, who was born in Murphys in 1876, stated that she and her sisters were afraid of the vault house at the back of the garden. A row of gooseberry bushes lined the path to the vault house and when the Kaler girls visited Eliza Perry Hoyt during the years that she owned the home, she would send them to pick the gooseberries for her. The girls imagined the vault house to be haunted since they could hear weird sounds coming from somewhere near it. Years later they realized that the sounds were the cooing of pigeons belonging to Willie Senter next door. Peter Traver remarried and he and his new wife had a daughter Katie. He also had one daughter, Catherine, with his first wife

Peter Traver was murdered in Mason Valley, Esmeralda County, Nevada in 1880. His oldest daughter visited Calaveras County in 1887 and was interviewed by the Calaveras Prospect. She told them that her stepmother was so devastated by Traver's murder that she had to be committed to an insane asylum. That daughter moved back east to New York. Peter Traver's younger daughter with married and remained in California. The Traver house in Murphys on Jones Street was sold to the widow of John Perry of the Sperry and Perry hotels, Eliza Perry Hoyt. After she died, she left the home and all the furnishings to her friend Annie Kaler.

The store building sale was subordinate to the two loans against it, and it appears that one of the lenders, James Irvine, foreclosed on the property since he was paying the property taxes on it by 1868. Riley Senter took over the building by 1869 and sold it in 1883 to Willis Dunbar who kept it ten months and then sold it to John Manuel. The building was rented out over the years with the Stephens brothers using as it as a store for a time. The description of the interior of the stone store states that the telegraph office and post office combined were in the front right corner, from there extended a long counter with compartments on the front holding nails. On the wall behind the counter were shelves with lamps, milk pails and, tin wash basins, dishes, coils of rope etc. The opposite side of the store were where the dry goods were, button, lace, and fabrics. The sugar, flour and grain barrels were along the back of the store.



Harry Bray Riley Senter W. R. Senter Bea Matteson

A fire started in the stone warehouse behind the store building on July 16, 1893 when it was owned by Manuel and Garland. The fire started in the warehouse about 5 PM and soon after five gallon cans of kerosene stored there began to explode. Then the cry went up that black powder was also stored there and the building exploded, lifting up and spreading out. All the warehouse contents were spread out over the town, in trees and on houses. Everything in the block to the east burnt, except the old Wells Fargo office which was made of stone. The original Peter L. Traver Store was not damaged even though the warehouse that exploded was directly behind it. The little white house that was owned by the Matteson family across Algiers Street from the warehouse also survived with only damage to the back of the home, but the Matteson and Garland Livery Stable on the corner of Algiers and Main Street was destroyed by the fire. Miraculously there were no injuries.

Powder Explosion.

ANGELS CAMP, (Cal.), July 22.—Two tons of giant powder in a warehouse belonging to Garland and Manuel at Murphys, near here exploded last night and set fire to the town. The livery stable, a butcher shop, a saloon and the Native Sons hall all were destroyed. Mitchell's hotel was badly damaged by falling plaster and burning embers. No lives have been lost so far as known. Telephone communication with Murphys is cut off.

After John Manuel died, the owner was the Manual Estate and they kept the property until the end of 1951 when R. Coke Wood and his wife purchased it. John Morley rented it from the Manuel Estate in 1914 and had turned the building into a garage, opening up the

front wall so cars could get in. This seriously weakened the building's structure and it was in very poor condition when Coke Wood first saw it. Coke Wood appears to have rented it from the Manuel Estate at first, as did Morley, since he is said to have been renovating the building at least a year or two before he opened it up as a museum in January of 1951, which was about a year before he purchased the property. The second story was added after Coke Wood purchased the building.



The building has been the Old Timers Museum ever since, even though Wood moved to Stockton soon after opening the museum and it was ran by volunteers. After Wood died, the building was to continue as a museum but in 2017 his descendants sold it. Luckily the new owner allowed the museum to remain but a few years later the museum closed down due to lack of funds. The store building is now occupied by a retail business.

In 1953 the Native Daughters installed a plaque in front of the building.



)EDICATES PLAQUE—One of the highlights of the Murphys Homecoming celebration last Sun ay was the dedication of a plaque marking the Peter L. Traver Building, oldest stone buildin n Murphys, by Mrs. J. R. (Clarice Cook) Knowland, past grand president of the Native Daugh ers of the Golden West. Shown above around the plaque are, left to right, Mrs. Knowland, Jac oinich of Chispa Parlor, NSGW; Mrs. Ethelyn Wood, chairman of the History and Landmark ommittee of Ruby Parlor, NDGW; Ted Mellor of Columbia, District Deputy Grand Presiden SGW; Mrs. Vida Garrett, president of Ruby parlor; Dr. R. C. "Coke" Wood, and J. R. Knowlan