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## **History Lesson #6**

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### **Frank Dusy and Dinkey Creek**

Frank Dusy was one of the Valley's earliest pioneer businessmen. He was a man of vision, a dreamer with a practical side. He was a miner, an oil man, an explorer, a rancher, a cattleman, a sheepman, a merchant, a quarry owner, a promoter, a photographer of some note, and a man of deep conviction and firm belief in his own destiny and that of the San Joaquin Valley. He was one of the few early day pioneers who saw the beauty inherent in the mountains, not just seeing them as a source for cattle feed, lumber, or mineral wealth.

Some of the rarest of the early day photographs of the valley and mountains are those taken by Frank Dusy. He trampled from one end of the valley to the other, recording photographic wonders and using a portable developing room. He loaded his cumbersome camera equipment on mules, and took priceless pictures of the then little known Sierras.

In the 1860's, Dusy found evidence of the presence of oil in the Coast Range foothills near present day Coalinga. He organized a company to exploit the riches located underground, but nothing really ever came of it other than a small boom and some financial speculation. Ahead of his time, it wouldn't be until the 1890's that oil production in Coalinga would begin in earnest.

Frank Dusy was one of the notable valley people who, on October 1, 1878, met former President of the United States Ulysses S. Grant and his wife and son as they travelled to Yosemite. Dusy stayed at the Yosemite Hotel in

Madera the night before, and met the President's train at the Madera Depot, which was across the street from the hotel. The President's train car remained at the station as his party travelled from Madera to Yosemite by stagecoach.

Once again ahead of his time, it was Frank Dusy who first purchased, from one Luke David, a piece of land near Raymond, which had a spring and some pretty rocks sticking up from the surface. People nearby began to call it "Dusy's Rock Pile". But in 1888, F.E. Knowles bought the property from Dusy, and organized the now famous Raymond Granite Quarry.

Dusy loved the mountains as much as he did the valley. He and a group of friends, also notables of the area, often could be found seeking out the untold mysteries of the Sierras. It was Dusy's group who first saw the Tehipite Valley in 1869. While hunting on Crown Creek, he followed a bear he had wounded through rough terrain and dense foliage, up and over rocky barriers and massive fallen trees until suddenly and without warning, the bear tumbled over a cliff and fell to his death. But, bursting before Dusy, in grandeur and beauty, he saw the first white man's glimpse of Tehipite Valley. In 1879, he took the first known photograph of Tehipite Dome, and developed it right there on the banks of a small creek in his portable darkroom.

On another occasion, on the bank of a rocky creek to the north and west of what is now Wishon Reservoir, he unexpectedly met another bear. This one was big and old and mean. Dusy raised his rifle, and in the panic of the moment, fired quickly, too quickly for good aim. The slug tore open the bear's side, but didn't kill it.

Now, somewhat upset at the actions of this seemingly insignificant man, the snarling bear charged. Turning to flee, Dusy slipped on the grassy slope, and the charging bear tripped on him and flew over him, missing him only by inches.

Dusy had dropped his rifle and he groped around in the wet grass and mud frantically trying to find it, while wondering if his luck had finally played out, wondering whether death and this ferocious wounded bear were synonymous.

The mad animal reversed himself and came back. But before he could reach his victim, Dusy's little black and white dog sprang into action. He jumped up and sank his sharp teeth into the bear's tender nose, and hung on like a fury. The interruption saved Dusy's life, giving him time to locate his rifle, reload it, and and calmly fire again.

This time his aim was true, and the bear toppled over, dead. But, in those few frightening moments, the big bear's paw had brushed the dog from his nose, as a man would flip away a fly. The sharp claws caught the brave little pooch on the side, tearing him wide open. Whimpering in pain, the dog crawled to his master.

They say that Frank Dusy wept that day, as only a strong man can weep, while he held the mangled body of his faithful and heroic little dog in his arms, and watched him die.

From that day to this, that rocky creek and the area surrounding it where Frank Dusy's dog saved his life, has been known as Dinkey Creek, named after Frank Dusy's little dog, Dinkey.