



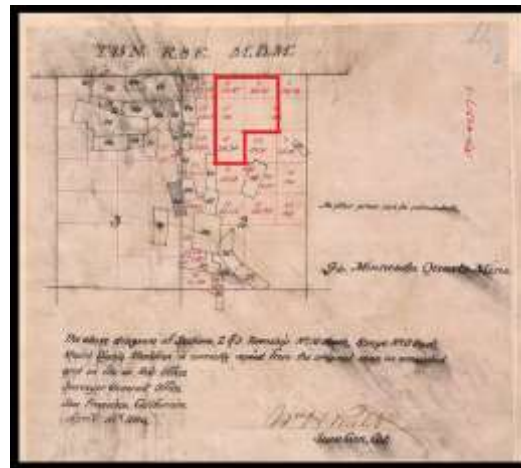
Berriman Ranch in Sec 2 T15 N, R 8E . Photo taken Oct 21 2017 at end of Piccadilly Lane (after timber harvest at start of grading of roads and building sites. Before development of Berriman Ranch Subdivision in 2018/ 2019.

## The Berrimans of Grass Valley

Robert Berriman obtained a U.S. Patent to the land in 1882. It lies within Sec. 2, Twp 15 N, Rg 8 E as surveyed in 1866 for the California Land Office. The property remained in the Berriman family for four generations.

Robert's father, Nicholas, came from Cornwall to Grass Valley about 1864.<sup>i</sup> Robert and his brother, Thomas H. Berriman, engaged in the mining business as engineers. They began to acquire interests in mining companies and purchased various claims.

They acquired mining claims in Sec. 27, T 16, R 8 (now the heart of downtown Grass Valley) and combined their interests into the ***Berriman Consolidated Gold and Silver Mining and Milling Co.*** It was also known as the Dromedary Mine and eventually assimilated into the Golden Center Mine. Much of modern downtown Grass Valley sits on the



Detail of Sec 34, Twp 16, Rg 8 showing Pennsylvania Quartz Mine adjacent to the Liberty Ledge underlined in red. (Bureau of Land Management, California Land Office Survey)

Golden Center Mine land as does the “Golden Center Freeway.”<sup>ii</sup>

In 1876 Thomas H. Berriman I partnered with Richard Oliver and bought the Liberty Ledge in “Oliver’s Ravine” in Sec. 34, T 16, R 8<sup>iii</sup>.

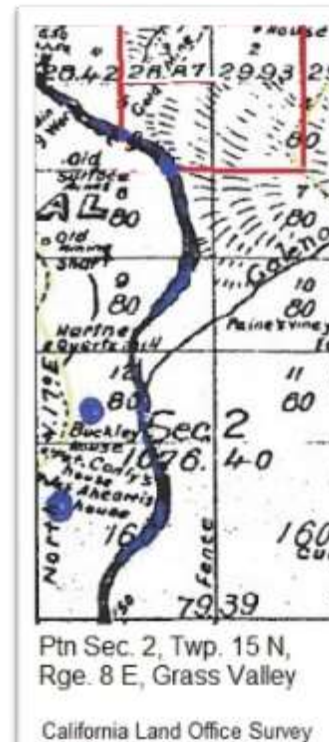
In the meantime brother Robert had bought what became the **Berriman Ranch**.

The Nevada County Tax Assessor assessed the Berriman Ranch in 1890 as follows:

Property of Robert Berriman: west half of lot 6, east half of lot 5, lots 2, and 3 for a total of 120 acres, Sec 2, T 15 N, R 8 E [ a designation which persists until present day.]

Value: land = \$450, improvements = \$225, taxes = \$15.52.

Second parcel, lot 8 (just below lot 6): 8 acres valued at \$8 with \$10 in improvements. The property is described as on “Lower Colfax Road,” and contains 3 wagons, a harness, 3 horses, 4 cows, 2 calves, 50 poultry and 5 hogs.



The very next year Robert Berriman passed away and left the property to his brother Thomas H. Berriman.<sup>iv</sup>

About ten years later in 1912, Thomas H. Berriman, Sr. died. He left the ranch to his children. Thomas specified that title included mineral rights.<sup>v</sup>

In 1912 the County assessed the ranch value at exactly the same amount as in 1890.

The ownership of the property seems to have passed down the line of heirs to the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2002 The Berriman Family Trust sold the ranch to a developer, Joseph Fred Oliver, Asset Builders.<sup>vi</sup>



Looking south from point near highway at B. H. Berriman Dairy Ranch. Irrigated pasture and ponderosa pine. This 170 acre ranch consists of 100 acres timber, 70 acres pasture. Owners sell 50 to 70 cords pine wood a year, price \$10-14 per cord. Nevada Co Image / Looking south from point near highway at B. H. Berriman Dairy Ranch .

"Images from the Wieslander Vegetation Type Mapping Collection are courtesy of the Marian Koshland Bioscience and Natural Resources Library, University of California, Berkeley, [www.lib.berkeley.edu/BIOS/atom/](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BIOS/atom/)."

## Sketches from Local Histories

A website called **Calisphere.org** shows photos and a brief description of the ranch.

The ranch contained irrigated pasture with 80-year old stands of Ponderosa Pine. [Was] a 170 acre ranch with 100 acres timber and 70 acres pasture.

Sources differ as to the precise location of Berriman farms.

### **Thompson and West, *History of Nevada County*:<sup>vii</sup>**

[page 212 ]Berriman brothers 'first ranched in Michigan' and came to Nevada County where they had a ranch on *Colfax Road*. The ranch consisted of orchards, sugar cane, stock and thoroughbred hogs.<sup>1</sup>

### **W.B. Lardner and M.J. Brock, *History of Placer and Nevada Counties*:<sup>viii</sup>**

[page 1094-- biography of Thomas H. Berriman, Jr.] Berriman brothers were Grass valley pioneers, having come to U.S. in 1864. They sailed to California via Panama and were supposedly shipwrecked twice on the journey. They settled in Grass Valley.

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Franklin Berriman also obtained a U.S. patent to a parcel at Champion Gold Mine to the east of the ranch. It seems that he also may have also had a separate ranch near the Berriman Ranch referred to in this report. If that were true, Benjamin's 'ranch' might be underneath the freeway.(SR49).

**Nicholas and his two younger brothers, Robert and Thomas H. Berriman, Sr.** were enumerated in the Grass Valley Census of 1870.

Elder brother, **Nicholas**, acquired a ranch on *Auburn Highway* containing 200 acres.

Youngest brother, **Thomas H.** returned to Cornwall to marry and returned to Grass Valley with his bride, Sarah Pierce. Their son, **Thomas H. Berriman, Jr.**, was born Feb 22, 1883 (married Gertrude Church).

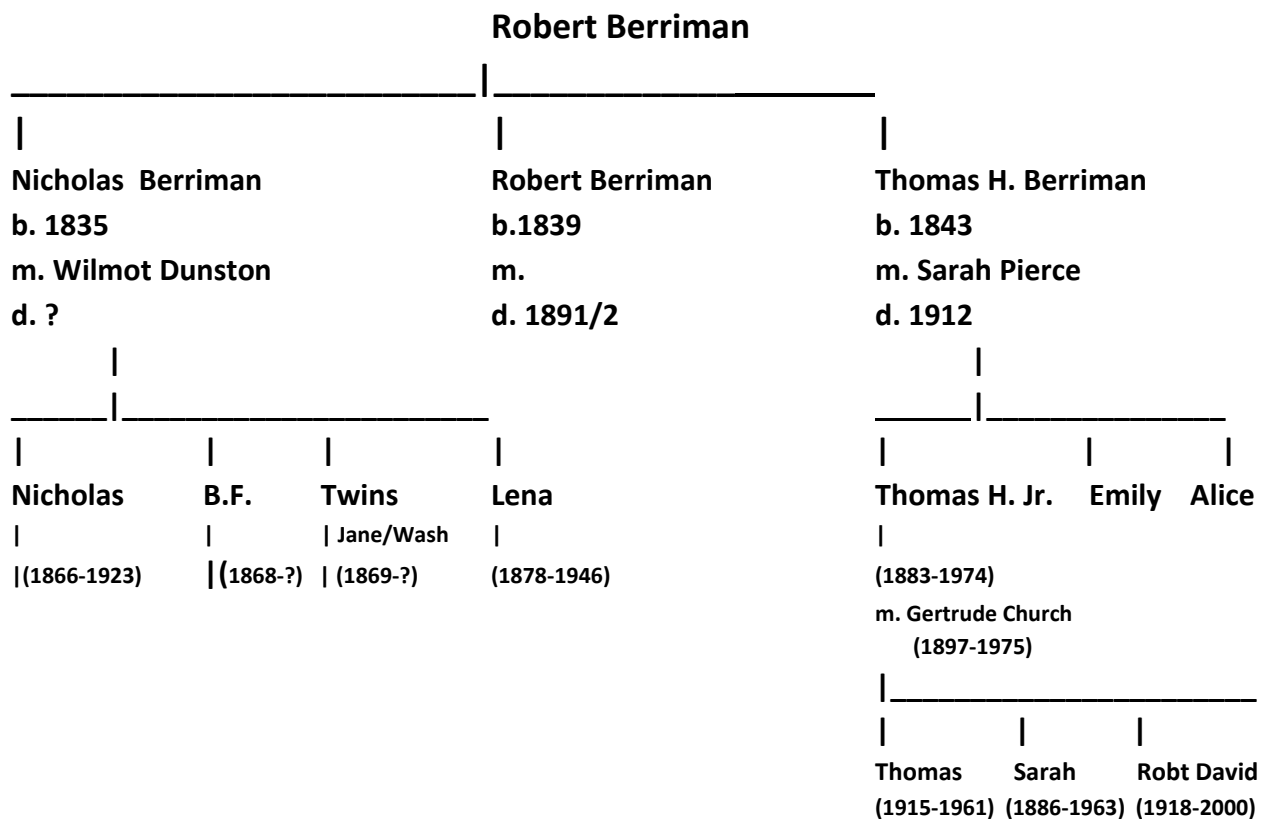
*Robert and Thomas H. Sr.* worked in the mines in Grass Valley and Nevada City. Thomas became Supt. of "Golden West," [sic] mine.

**2008 report on Empire Mine State Park** <sup>ix</sup>

The report includes the following in regard to the ranch:

The Berriman farm on *Auburn Road*: Just downstream, was the **Noon Summer** and **Liberty Hill** claims discovered in 1876 and 1877.<sup>x</sup> The Berrimans and Olivers were among a group of men who had the area surveyed in 1889 showing water-conveyance features on the mineral plat. The group—all English immigrants—consisted of local Grass Valley residents **Thomas H. Berriman, James H. Oliver, John P. Oliver, Richard Oliver, and Thomas Plummer.**

**Brief Berriman Family Tree** (*preliminary and approximate*)

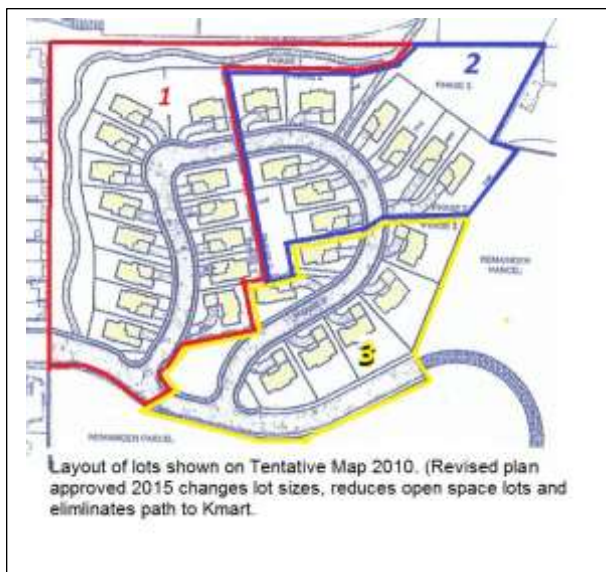


## APPENDIX:

### The Berriman Ranch Subddivision

Thirty residences will soon be constructed on the site of the old ranch in South Grass Valley just south of the McKnight Crossing Shopping Center. Access to the new homes will be from the current dead end of Piccadilly Lane.

Initial development will contain 30 homes on 10 acres on the northwest portion of the old ranch—adjacent to the rear of Gazebo homes on Carriage Lane.



As of spring 2019 road and utilities have been installed. Homes should begin to be built in the summer.

The current owner, Joseph Fred Oliver, Asset Builders, acquired the land in 2002.<sup>xi</sup> His company applied to the City of Grass Valley to split the old ranch property into 4 lots and annex to the

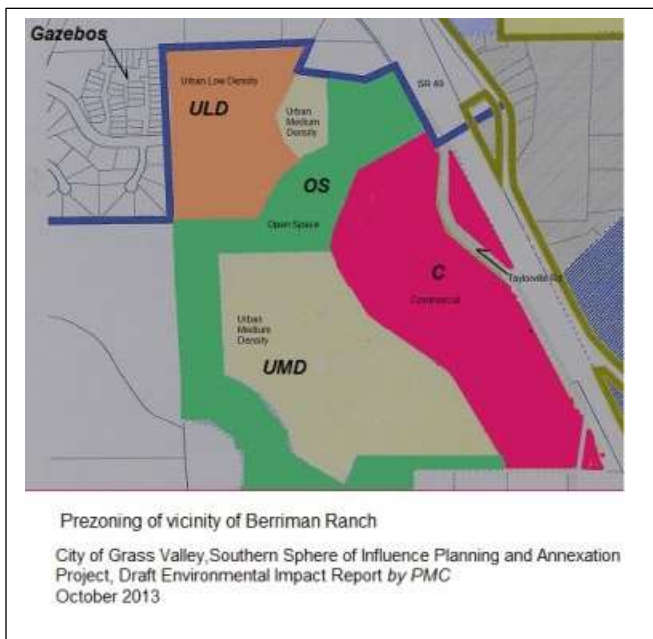
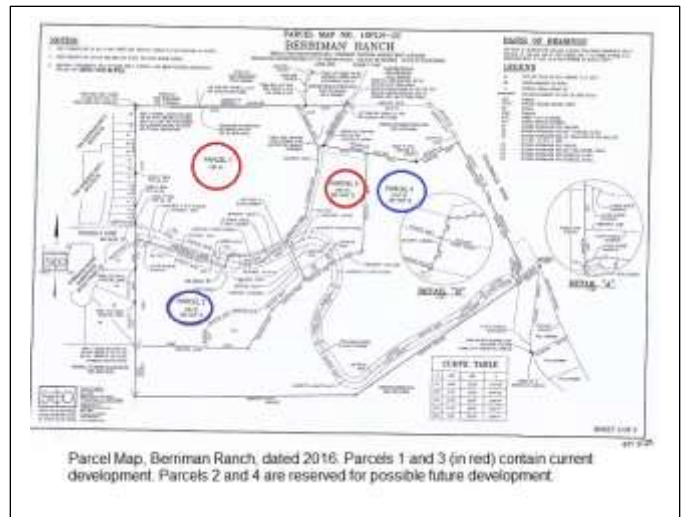
city. The split was approved in 2016.<sup>xii</sup>

For those of you (and your dogs) who have walked the property, note that the old dirt road that extends to Taylorville Road will remain unpaved and designated as “emergency only.” The gate at Taylorville Road will remain closed.

The parcel map at right shows the entire Berriman Ranch as approved for subdivision in 2016. The layout of homes shown on previous page will be located in parcels 1 and 3 (circled in red) on the map.

The size of the lots and homes will be consistent with single-family rural residential zoning as shown in the diagram below. The project falls within the ULD zone (in gold—urban low density). All homes will be single story.

Some Gazebo residents have raised concerns about the use of the remaining land within Berriman Ranch. The total acreage of the ranch is about 121 acres. Future development could occur on parcels 2 and 4 circled in blue on parcel map above. The pertinent zoning in this area as shown at left includes a mix of low and medium density residential (ULD/UMD), and open space (OS), as well as commercial (C) along Taylorville Road.





## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Berriman Family listed in 1870 U.S. Census for Grass Valley. Material found in Genealogical Abstracts from Old Mortuary Records, Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, Volume 1, April 2, 1877-April 21, 1881; March 19, 1889-August 13, 1902; and January 1, 1898-December 17, 1903 prepared by the Capt. John Oldham Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. As posted at Find-A-Grave, Memorial # 100414247, Ancestry.com.

<sup>ii</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Report of the California State Mineralogist --1895-1896. Also known as Roch Roche Consolidated.

<sup>iii</sup> Nev. Co. Deed Bk 76:528. Pennsylvania Consolidated Mining Co. to Thomas H. Berriman, Richard Oliver et. Al, 28 Oct 1876 for land in Oliver's Ravine, East half Sec. 34, T 16N, R 8 E.

<sup>iv</sup> Nev. Co. Deed Bk 76, p. 528.

<sup>v</sup> Nev. Co. Deed Bk 115 pp. 251-252

<sup>vi</sup> Nev. Co., Official Records: 19881616900: Decree of Distribution 23 June 1988, Estate of Thomas H. Berriman III to Robert D., William J. and Howard B. Berriman; 2002170400: Howard Berriman to Berriman Trust, Howard B David R. and Marie C. Berriman; Deed 20025479800 Berriman Trust to East Los Angeles 56, 31 Dec 2002, Ruth W., Howard B., Marie C., and David R. Berriman to Asset Builders.

<sup>vii</sup> Thompson & West, *History of Nevada County*, Rpt. Howell-North Books, Berkeley, CA, 1970.

<sup>viii</sup> W. B. Lardner and M. J. Brock, *History of Placer & Nevada County*, Historical Records Co., Los Angeles, 1924.

<sup>x</sup> Historic context for Sonoma State University, published by Empire Mine State Historic Park Environmental Restoration Project, Department of Parks and Recreation, July 2008

<sup>x</sup> See ref. vi above in regard to Liberty Ledge. Nev. Co. Deed Bk. 76:528, 28 Oct 1876.

<sup>xi</sup> No evidence was found to suggest that Joseph Oliver—a realtor from San Diego—was related to the Grass Valley Olivers who partnered with Thomas H. Berriman in the Liberty Ledge.

<sup>xii</sup> Recorded in Nevada County Parcel Map Book 21, p. 39, 21 Aug 2016.