

Sidney Flat

This area was the original site of the coal mining town of Somersville. The town was located here because of the availability of good drinking water. When the railroad arrived in 1866, water could be hauled from the San Joaquin River and the town was moved closer to the mines. A rancher later established a brothel here that included the unusual feature of a tunnel connecting the building's rear entrance to a nearby ravine, allowing customers to avoid being seen by passers-by.

In 1904, the land was sold to coal field residents Leyshon and Lizzie Lougher, whose family remained on the land until 1956. Leyshon used materials salvaged from structures in the abandoned coal mining town of Nortonville to construct the house located across the road. A sheep barn and baseball field were built where the park headquarters now stand. In 1977, Sidney Flat was purchased by the East Bay Regional Park District and became part of Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. The ranch house is currently used as the park residence.

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*Jointly sponsored by
Joaquin Murrieta Chapter No. 13 E Clampus Vitus
and the East Bay Regional Park District*

*Background: Lougher Ranch house at Sidney Flat,
facing north, circa 1912.*

Courtesy of the Jack Lougher Collection



*Lizzie and Leyshon
Lougher wedding photo,
June 1909.
Courtesy of the Amelia Ginochio
Peel Collection*



*Amelia Ginochio, sister to Lizzie
(Ginochio) Lougher, at the
Lougher Ranch, 1916.
Courtesy of the Betty Maffei Collection*



*Elmer (Jack) Lougher at Lougher
ranch, circa 1930s.
Courtesy of the Jack Lougher Collection*



*Somersville baseball team,
circa 1890s.
Courtesy of the Jack Lougher Collection*



*Sidney Flat, circa 1926.
Courtesy of the Louis Stein Collection*