

# Passion for the Land



*A Collaborative Project to help rural residents share stories about preserving community heritage while protecting agricultural lands & natural resources for future generations*

## A View From the Barn by Rick Roberti



When I was a child my grandmother told me that in her day when people went looking to buy a farm or ranch, the first thing they looked at was the barn. For farmers like my grandparents, a good barn was even more important than a nice house.

This is the Wherity barn, and it has been an important part of Sierra Valley for well over 100 years. The barn is named after the Wherity family, who owned the land before Alfred and Josephine Roberti purchased it in 1924. My name is Rick Roberti, and I am their grandson. Along with my parents, brothers and our families, we are privileged to ranch on the land that surrounds the Wherity barn.

I often think if this old barn could talk, what stories it could tell of the people from at least six generations who have come and gone. From dairy cows to beef cows, from pitchforks and wagons to trucks and hay squeezes, from bib overall to shorts ...this old barn has seen it all.

This grand old barn has been home to birds, rabbits, horses, skunks, cats and lots of cow and calves. Though the outside walls show their age and a tin roof has replaced the old shingles, the barn's views haven't changed a whole lot over time. Looking west, it has a clear view of Beckwith peak and the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The north end of the barn stares at a huge pile of old baling wire. It's a reminder of past hay seasons and hundreds of hot summer days. To the east you see the meadows that have produced the hay and forage for livestock, long before the barn was built. Irrigating, haying, grazing, and wintertime feeding...as the barn remembers that has pretty much been the routine for years.

And due south of the barn there are fields that are still native pastures. Other fields are being farmed, and there are also fields that were once plowed that have returned to their original state. The hard working people who settled this valley are gone now, replaced by more good people taking care of the land.

All in all, Sierra Valley hasn't changed that much over time and though we complain about the cold east wind, the lack of moisture, or that hard frost in June or July, we know we've been truly blessed to live in this unique place. It's my desire, along with many other landowners, farmers and ranchers to leave this land in good shape for generations to come.

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Project  
Co-Directors

**Holly George**, 530/283-6270, [hageorge@ucdavis.edu](mailto:hageorge@ucdavis.edu)  
UC Cooperative Extension, Plumas-Sierra Counties, 208 Fairgrounds Road, Quincy, CA 95971

**jesikah maria ross**, 530/320-1819, [jmross@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jmross@ucdavis.edu)  
UC Davis Art of Regional Change, Davis Humanities Institute, One Shield Ave, Davis, CA 95616

[artofregionalchange.ucdavis.edu](http://artofregionalchange.ucdavis.edu)

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