

"Tokens of History"

a monthly column

by

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COPPER CITY HOTEL / I.P. ENGLE / COPPER CITY, CAL. // GOOD FOR / 10 CENTS / IN TRADE

This is a token I picked up this past March after seeing it at a coin show in Sacramento. I initially thought it was wrongly attributed, as it is not listed in any of the usual resources, and I have heard that there may have been more than one "Copper City" in California over the years. However, with a little research I was able to verify that this is indeed from the Copper City here in Shasta County, which now lies at the bottom of Shasta Lake.

The History:



Ira Phillip Engle came out to Copper City from Pennsylvania in 1900, where he and his brother-in-law opened a restaurant. Copper City was a prosperous mining town at that time, and Engle became

the “leading citizen and accumulated a comfortable fortune,” eventually owning a hotel, a store, and being postmaster. The picture above is reported to be Copper City, but I do not know if the hotel depicted is the Copper City Hotel owned by Engle.



Copper City suffered the slow decline of most mining towns, and in 1926 Engle tore down his Copper City Hotel and used the material to construct a new one in Castella, known as the Engle Inn, as well as a number of stone cottages (see old postcard above). Most, if not all, of these buildings still stand in Castella, though the cottages are under separate ownership from the old Engle Inn. In my research I discovered that the cottages enjoyed quite a colorful history during Prohibition and later, being used as a vacation getaway by many famous politician's and entertainers, which has been published elsewhere.



However, the much earlier history of this Shasta County gem (modern picture above) does not appear to be acknowledged anywhere, except for in Engle's obituary (I was not successful in making contact with the current owner to find out if he is aware of this fact). I was very pleased to discover that at least one building survived from the otherwise long gone Copper City, and want to help make sure this fact is not lost to history.

It appears that Ira was both an entrepreneur and an inventor; below is the patent he filed for the design of an "antiskid chain" for autos. Note that Engle is listed "of Ydalpom", which was a Wintu village site near Copper City, and the name of the post office established in Copper City in 1888, of which he served as postmaster. (Y-dal-pom is Wintu for "north-living-place," Hyampom in Trinity County is thought to be Wintu for "peaceful place")

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

IRA P. ENGLE, OF YDALPOM, CALIFORNIA.

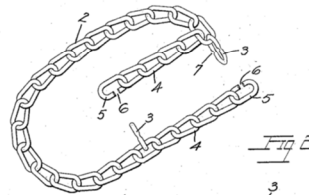
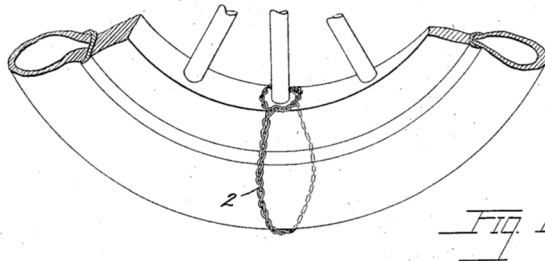
ANTISKID CHAIN.

Application filed January 9, 1922. Serial No. 527,862.

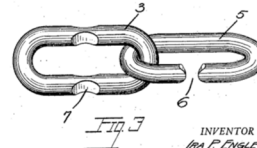
Nov. 27, 1923.

1,475,478

I. P. ENGLE
ANTISKID CHAIN
Filed Jan. 9, 1922

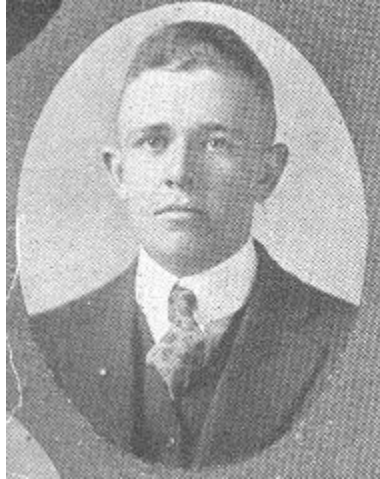


WITNESS
A. E. Allen



INVENTOR
IRA P. ENGLE
BY
White Bird Evans
His ATTORNEYS

Engle died in 1933, and was survived by wife Hattie P. Engle, son Ira Addison Engle, and granddaughter Marjorie Engle, all living in Castella at that time. I found Ira Addison's obituary, the photo is from the 1916 Shasta High yearbook:



Funeral services for Ira Addison Engle of Redding will be conducted at 2p.m. Thursday at McDonald's Redding Chapel. Engle died Monday at Mercy Medical Center in Redding. He was 80. He was born April 27, 1897, in Shasta, and was a lifetime resident of Shasta County. He was a state Alcohol Beverage Control administrator for 26 years. He also was a member of the Redding Masons Lodge 254 in Redding, the Igo Community Church and the Retired Employees Association of Redding. He was a World War I Army veteran. He leaves his wife, Charlotte of Redding, a daughter, Marjorie Ailes of Dunsmuir, and two grandchildren. Casket bearers will be Craig McDonald, Bob Rollins, Phil Hemsted, Lynn McKim, Bill Lloyd and Brennon Witcher. Honorary casket bearers will be George Sturm, Ernie Rouse, Aaron Forschler and Bill Brickwood. Burial will be in Redding Cemetery. The Rev. Sherman Potts and officers of Redding Lodge will officiate at the services.

I did not find any connection between this Engle family, and that of Clair Engle. I don't know if the Engle Inn was built as an exact copy of the Copper City Hotel, or if a different layout was used. I found that Ira Addison was a storekeeper in Castella in 1926, but do not know if he or the family was involved with the Engle Inn after his father's death, or when it became separated from the stone cottages. This last issue could be very interesting, considering Castella's history as Shasta County's bootleg capital during the Prohibition years, and the fact that Ira Addison Engle served as a state Alcohol Beverage Control administrator. Did this come about because he was experienced in dealing with this issue in Castella bootleg days? If so, which side of the issue was he experienced with?

If you have any more information on the Engle family or their businesses in Copper City and Castella, I would appreciate hearing about it: chetsunde@gmail.com, (530) 244-4436.

Additional info found after article was published:

December 25, 1918:

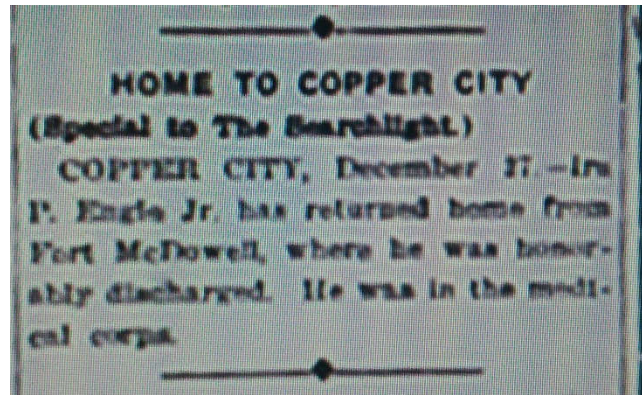


Photo from 1921:

