

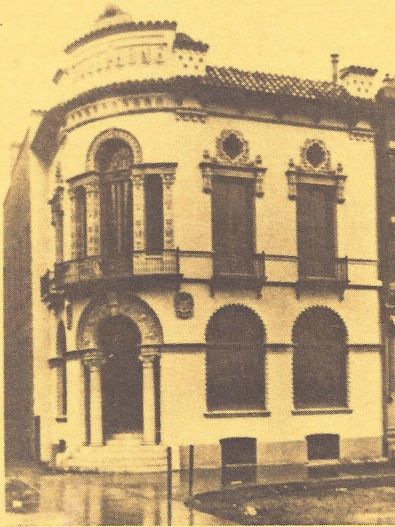
QUARTERLY BULLETIN  
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS  
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY  
INCORPORATED 1875

Volume 27

August, 1986

No. 3

## SAN JOSE'S SUNSET TELEPHONE COMPANY - 1902



This was the local office located at 130 South Market Street opposite the City Plaza in 1902. Here eighty-six operators were employed, each working eight hours a day at different shifts. There were thirty-six operators on the local board and seven on long distance.

The girls were well cared for. Each had a recess of fifteen minutes twice a day during their shift. A large well equipped room was available where they were served substantial meals without cost. A matron in charge prepared the meals for

the girls. Girls who worked during the late afternoon and early evening had an hour for supper, taking turns in warming their meals and washing dishes.

The social hall and restaurant area was fitted with lockers, one for two girls. Here, also, was a telephone for their exclusive use. The entire building was heated by a coal furnace. During the summer electric fans cooled the busy atmosphere.

The telephone was just three years old when San Jose's first exchange opened on March 10, 1879. There wasn't much of a rush at the time to have a phone because there was nobody to talk to. The first telephone "book" here was just a single sheet of paper listing 82 costumers by 1882.

# ▼▼▼ WHALE BLAZERS ▼▼▼

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SAN JOSE, 1903- The idea of moving the site for the state capital was still a hot issue. Members of the state legislature were here inspecting the advantages claimed for San Jose. The splendid offer of twenty acres of Naglee Park in the most attractive section of the city was highly considered. Fresno was also trying hard to get it. Mayor Stephens of that city was fully convinced that the raisin city was the proper place to make the laws of California. The principle argument was that Fresno being in the center of the state was therefore more accessible for all than any other city in California. "Fresno is willing to do all and more than San Jose in the way inducements," said Stephens. However, on March 3, 1903 the capital measure for the removal of the state capitol was defeated by a vote of 13 to 25.

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SAN JOSE, August 1903 - The Petaluma Egg Eaters, a baseball team, brought their eager team down from the land of incubators where they played Mike Steffani's Prune Eaters. The Prune Eaters shelled the Egg Eaters by a score of 7 to 3.

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CAMPBELL, August 1903 - With the rush of the prune harvest came the usual scarcity of help and it was keenly felt here. Many ranchers were paying fancy prices for the prune picking box with youngsters earning wages that were said to make a man's \$2 a day look small.

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SAN JOSE, August 1903 - Hotel men here were convinced the tourist season had arrived. The Vendome Hotel was practically full of guests for more than a month. The overland train had just brought 29 eastern people to the St. James Hotel alone. The problem of hotel accommodations appeared to be a serious one was the belief of hotel men.

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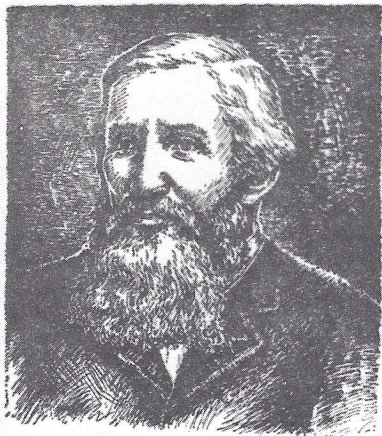
January 1911 - A bill was introduced in the California State Senate making it unlawful for intoxicated persons to drive an automobile.

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SAN JOSE, July 1912 - The Board of Supervisors voted in favor of establishing a free library for Santa Clara County.

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July 1912 - The State Board of Health unanimously adopted a resolution condemning hat pins, and as a safety measure ordered that the point such pins should not protrude more than an inch beyond the hat.



William L. Manly



L. Dow Stephens

## THE LAST JAYHAWKERS

by Bill Chivers

Rush of 1849 was the crossing of Death Valley and the giving of its ominous name.

The four survivors who ultimately settled in Santa Clara Valley were William Lewis Manly, Lorenzo Dow Stephens, Thomas Shannon and Henry Wade. Manly, one of the heroes, wrote "Death Valley in 49," still the top authority on the Valley's discovery. Stephens mined and farmed in various parts of the state until 1883 when he settled in San Jose. He wrote a book titled "Life Sketches of a Jayhawker of 49," published in 1916. He purchased the patent of the Garden City Windmill and engaged in its manufacture. Thomas Shannon served under Zachary Taylor in the Mexican War, and when the Civil War came, enlisted in the Seventh California Infantry, Company B, and served 18 months on frontier duty in Arizona. Shannon Road in Los Gatos bears his name. Henry Wade was the first of the four to settle in Santa Clara County. He too had tried his hand at mining but settled in Alviso to become a teamster dealing in hay and grain. He also had a hotel in Alviso at one time.

The story of the Jayhawkers and Death Valley started October 1849 when a group of 107 wagons left Salt Lake City for California with Captain Hunt, a Mormon guide. The caravan was made up of many companies, some with interesting names; such as, the Sand Walking Company (It is said the original name was the San Joaquin

The name Jayhawkers is synonymous with the naming of Death Valley, and four of their survivors have an integral connection with Santa Clara Valley, having become prominent citizens of this county. On the the most famous stories of the Gold

Company), the San Francisco Company, the Mississippi Boys, the Georgians, or the Bug Smashers, and a group calling themselves the party of nine or eleven, and the most famous group, the Jayhawkers.

These people had been warned against going over the Sierra Nevada Mountains that late in the season, and they all had heard the tragic story of the Donner party, so they went south by way of the old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. For the major part of the distance, the trail was plainly marked and good.

It was normal for every argonaut to think of the riches awaiting him in California, and gold fever created impatience and doubtless Captain Hunt would have had plenty of dissension to submit to without what was about to happen to his wagon train. A California bound pack train lead by Captain Wesley Smith soon overtook the Hunt group. Smith's group was faster than Hunt's long train, but he camped with one group long enough to open a pandora's box of trouble. Chief of these was the fact that he had a map showing a cutoff from the old Spanish trail west to Walkers Pass that would save weeks on the trip to the gold fields.

Originally, all but four wagons turned off the old Spanish trail to follow Smith's map, but when they came to a sheer precipice of a thousand foot drop, most of the wagons returned to Captain Hunt who was again leading approximately two-thirds of the Sand Walking Company, and proceeded to the springs known as Las Vegas.

The determined Jayhawkers found a descent and twenty-eight wagons, consisting of the Mississippi and the Georgian groups, worked their way to the floor of the desert valley. Soon they broke up into their original units and tried to cross the burning barren desert wasteland the best they could. Little did they realize it would take fifty-two days to cross that hell hole and get out. They finally had to burn their wagons for firewood and kill the starving oxen and dry the meat for food.

It became evident that someone had to go ahead and try to get help. Two of the Jayhawkers, Manly and Rogers, who were young and strong, decided to take some of the meager provisions and walk ahead to get help. They climbed the Panamint Mountains and went down steep canyons, over more hot valleys, across alkaline flats of what today is called China Lake. Fate had decreed that bones of Manly and Rogers would not bleach on the shimmering desert for they finally reached the San Franciquito Ranch near the present town of Newhall, California. Here they bought three horses and the mule with supplies and water and hurried back to the stranded

Jayhawkers. The pack horse soon gave out and died, so they loaded all they could on the little mule and buried the rest. Their two riding horses soon gave out, and they had to turn them loose to their own fate. Manly and Rogers walked leading the mule through the canyons and mountains. As they approached the desert, they found the bodies of two friends, Isham and Fish, who had tried to get out but died of thirst. They soon found another body that of Captain Culverwell. On February 4, 1850, they saw the wagons they had left, now only four. They fired their guns to tell the survivors that after twenty-five days they were back. The tattered thirsty half starved survivors finally scrambled out from under the wagons, and after a joyous reunion came to the grim revelation that 250 miles of rugged deserts and dead mountains stood between them and the first settlement. They would have to walk every step along that tortuous trail, and here they must leave the remaining wagons and every personal treasure they contained. They finally reached the beautiful Ranch San Francisquito and after some rest and hospitality they went their own various ways throughout the golden hills of California.

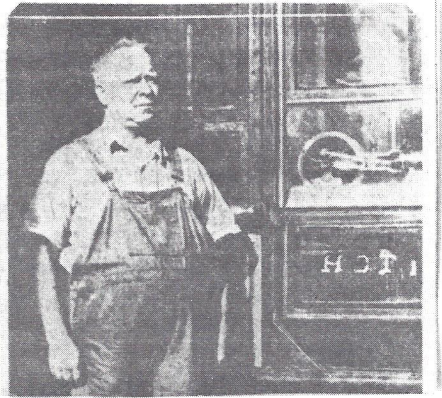
Most of these survivors of the Death Valley crossing kept in touch with one another. Every year beginning February 4, 1872, the survivors would have a reunion, February 4 being the day Manly and Rogers returned to save the stranded Jayhawkers. Reunions were held either in California or the the Midwest. Over and over, incidents of the 1849-50 trek were recounted, and as the years passed it brought ever smaller numbers of the Jayhawkers to the reunions. The boundaries of the reunion were expanded to include all of the other groups who shared the Death Valley crossing. The last reunion held February 4, 1918 at Stephen's home in San Jose was the forty-sixth time these pioneers had met together. There were only two men left - John Burr Colton (87) of Galesburg, Illinois, and Lorenzo Dow Stephens (92). There was nothing more to say - it had all been said before. Colton died October 23, 1919, and when Stephens died February 10, 1921 in Oakland, California, it was the end of an epoch.

All of these Death Valley survivors deserve a special place in America's Hall of Fame for they conquered against the heaviest and cruelest odds. Their story will long be a most special chapter in America's heritage and the history of the West.

# SAN JOSE'S POPULAR POPCORN MAN

by Hank Calloway

After more than thirty remarkable years, on a late 1941 November evening, George Buzzell and his venerable red popcorn wagon rolled away from its well worn First and Santa Clara Street, First National Bank corner, for the last time. It was here where Buzzell had



launched an enterprise in the very center of activity that had grown to equal the heart beat of the community. Within earshot of dingy trolleys and loud-voiced newsboys, it had become the meeting place for shoppers, business men, ranchers, and lovers. It was this long faithful downtown legion of the popular popcorn man who soon learned he was confined at home, the victim of a stroke.

In just weeks came a harrowing December 7th followed by a declaration of war on the 8th. As another intensified war year passed George Buzzell's 'troops' continued to meet and cross the still empty wagon emplacement with thoughts of their esteemed popcorn man of ever returning. On April 29, 1943 it was certain he never would. George O. Buzzell, a widower, had died in San Francisco where he had moved months before.

Before George had taken over the concession at San Jose's busiest intersection, he and his wife, Jeannie, had operated a popcorn and confection stand on East San Fernando Street. He was also employed as a late night yard man for the Southern Pacific. In a mid-depression venture he had also operated a super service station on The Alameda near Morrison Ave.

Buzzell often recalled the 'good old days' when he would realize frequent ten dollar days in his popcorn and peanuts business. During hard times he was fortunate to muster a four dollar day after subtracting the \$20 per month portion concession fee required by the city plus the cost of his wagon's merchandise. Despite the trends he managed to modernized his "plant" with a remarkable steam operated revolving popping pan and heated peanut cupboard. Even

though wholesale, peanuts had jumped in price he still sold them in the same size bag for just a nickel. Popping corn, too, had gone up but this did not disturb him as much for he raised his entire years supply in partnership with a Watsonville grocer on land they owned in nearby Aromas.

Hugh Edes, a long retired police officer, informs the Trailblazer how a family member of the local Amos O. Williams undertaking firm kept the sparkling machinery on Buzzell's 'popping wagon' in tip-top condition.

George was also an ardent sports fan and enjoyed swaping stories on perhaps a Dempsey-Firpo fight or the antics of the Pacific Coast Baseball League leaning most often on the San Francisco Seals.

Reputable Buzzell also considered himself a popcorn farmer. "I have orders out of Monterey to San Francisco from many folks who all say my popping corn is the best they ever used."

Mrs. Mabel Nichols, a long time Pioneer member, still cherishes a pint of Buzzell's popping corn belonging to her late husband who was a zealous popcorn lover who always insisted on Buzzell's corn when he went on one of his frequent popcorn sprees, Mabel reveals.

On a late November 17, 1931 evening things were still popping for George Buzzell. As he was towing his peanut wagon home to 1015 South First Street, three thugs forced him to stop near Virginia Street. He was ordered to leave his car at the point of a nickel plated revolver and compelled to uncouple the popcorn wagon from his red roadster. Two of the armed men got into Buzzell's car with him, speeding south on First to Tully Road with their companion following their own car. These two cars turned east on Tully then came to a stop near Senter Road where Buzzell was thoroughly search and dumped. The culprits then fled with Buzzell's car. A nearby rancher aided Buzzell in contacting the police sheriff's office.

Buzzell's presence of mind in hiding his days receipts, said to have been a tidy sum, in the peanut wagon which had been left behind foiled the main purpose of the robbers. Assisting in the final capture of the trio was credited to Buzzell's housekeeper who gave a good description of the trio, who prior to the kidnapping, ramsacked the house with a loss of a few jewelry items.

Buzzell's 'hospitality wagon' was the good cheer center for downtown folks. Although most of his patrons were people, a large fluffy pooch would often entice its master for a close up of the wagon where Buzz would filp it a peanut or two, downing shells and all.

Some years prior to Buzzell's entry into the popcorn and peanut world, there existed a local 'Peanut Alley.' It was located on a back lot off Lighston Alley between West Santa Clara and Post Streets. It was here where wholesaler and 'peanut king' Simon Gray held forth. In an interview extended in 1905, he estimated he disposed of a ton or more of peanuts in a 90 day period. It was here where he stored and supplied in great quantities of bags and sacks for his two huge wagons which were constructed of the finest steel while

his roaster and corn poppers, operated on board, were said to be made up of 'complicated machinery.' Each week his operation used 35 gallons of gasoline, 80 pounds of creamery butter, and a hundred pounds of salt. Fruit coloring tinted the popcorn bricks a tempting shade while fruit syrup held the blocks in shape. The wagons, considered stores in themselves, would start out at ten in the morning and return to their stalls by midnight.

Gray looked after the needs of carnivals, itinerant circuses, bike and auto races, balloon ascensions, plus the processions of tamale carts, charcoal popcorn vehicles and other itinerate booths that were fixtures every evening upon the town's street corners. Scheutzen Park, Cedar Brook Park, Luna Park, Agricultural Park were crowd gathering sites for such operations.

Gray's peanut sources were the peanut farms of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. He also purchased quantities from peanut growers in Orange County, California.

Simon Gray was credited to be a man who could school on how to handle a corner-stand venture from pink popcorn bricks to scarlet hued lemonade. George Buzzell was such a scholar. It has also been noted that Simon Gray began his career at the same long First and Santa Clara Street emplacement championed by George 'Buzz' Buzzell who had given downtown San Jose some of the best years of its life.

## ESSAY PARTICIPANTS ENTERTAIN PIONEERS

Our annual June Historical Essay Contest awarded cash prizes and achievement certificates to one high school student and to four in the adult category.

Student prize winner Eric Bowman of Leland High described the "San Jose Tribune, a Pro-Southern Paper in a Pro-Northern County" during that newspaper's frenzied three years in San Jose during the Civil War.

There were four adult prize winners with Kevin Fish capturing first award with his 52 page "Alviso's Relationship with San Jose from the 1820's to the 1980's."

Bea Lichtenstein, a Santa Clara Landmarks Commissioner, did an excellent paper on the "History of the Santa Clara Fire Department." Last year Bea entered our essay contest capturing second place on a brief "History of Santa Clara School District."

Joan Barriga submitted "The Women of Santa Cruz Mountains" while Phyllis Gernes unfolded early family life in the uplands above Los Gatos.

Our president, Wade Brummel, who served as essay chairperson for two years, believes perhaps our \$200 first prize money is just not sufficient to attract more to our essay programs and believes a \$500 prize would attract the dedication needed by history scholars who are also biting the evils of inflation .



## NEWS 'BOUT' MEMBERS

Aileen Dixon was an employee of Hales Department Store just as the hundred or so who still muster every December for their annual reunion. Among the faithful attendees is agile 92 year Agnes Spellman who was the librarian when the firm had such a service. Some may recall Aileen's dad, James W. Dixon, A leading harness and leather craftsman for over fifty years on South Second Street.

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We like to regard Mrs. Marie Campbell as our 'Fair Lady'. Marie was on the original Santa Clara County Fair Committee when land was first purchased for such a site in 1941. She organized the first exhibit of woman's domestic handcrafts in a tent. The persentations were publicized as "the outstanding show of its kind in the state." This long time Fair Director, now retired, has been honored with countless awards for her outstanding contributions by numerous service organizations. Two county roads in the Mt. Pleasant area are named for her contributing ancestors, Martin and Kohler Avenues.

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Mary G. Watson of Santa Clara responds with a unique family background. Her parents, Manuel and Mary Garcia, were from the Madeira Islands. They married in Hawaii, Establishing themselves on a coffee plantation in Kona, Hawaii. Mary says the original homestead is still standing where she grew up with her brothers and sisters. It is also the mountain slope where her father raised wine grapes, selling his wine achievements to distributors in Honolulu. "Prohibition came along," says Mary, "and the wine market collapsed." The family moved to Santa Clara in 1920 when Mary was a youngster.

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Thelma Rhinelanders is a Los Gatos native and was just a tike when the 1906 earthquake hit but recalls the early morning of terror when her father carried her from her bedroom down the stairs being bumped from wall to wall in the effort. Thelma's father, Elmer E. Springer, was the town's sixth marshal from 1900 to 1908. Before this he drove a meat wagon serving the town and hillside sections. Thelma's husband was a druggist who started his pharmaceutical career in 1919 at the long familiar corner drug store at Santa Cruz and Main.

## *Welcome New Members*

Clyde L. Adamson	Marge Heintze	Mildred B. Simons
Corinne Allen	Patricia Lopes	Orpha A. Simpson
Florence M. Brentlinger	Dominica T. Manzano	Lois B. Steiling
Levia F. Clark	Antoinette McCarthy	Rose A. Sundown
Jean Couzin	Mary L. McDonald	Anna P. Tremelling
Helen F. Hawkins	Alda B. Nerell	Nancy P. Vierra
Pauline Hawkins	Barbara-Elise Pierce	Betty Wells
Carl Heintze	Anthony Quartuccio	Joan Zerbini
	Joe Zerbini	



*Beyond the sunset*

Agnes G. Barry	Loretta W. Hughes	Mabel H. Noonan
Charles W. Down	Leon A. Jenkins	Patty Oneal
Edna L. Elrod	Dorotha B. Kimberlin	Gladys Richards
Howard P. Foley		Loraine Vick

Membership in the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County is open to those of good character, who have resided in the State of California for 50 years or more and every person who is a descendant of one who lived in California 50 years or more. A wife or a husband of less years may apply for associated membership. Being a Pioneer member can qualify your children and grandchildren for membership on the age of 18.



## Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS by phone begin on Monday, Sept. 8th, for MEMBERS ONLY. Call Ruth Gross at 294-9830 ONLY BETWEEN 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon Monday through Friday. After Ruth confirms your reservation, make check payable to The Californians and send to P.O. Box 32121, San Jose, CA 95152. After the quarterly meeting, a Trip Brochure and Flyers can be obtained by mailing a stamped, self-addressed legal size envelope to the above address.

The Tour Committee, Barbara Johnsen and Alice Vetterle, have planned interesting one day trips in October, November, and December. For the gamblers and the 'just viewers of the Sierra scenery' there will be an overnight trip in late October.

Many have asked for a trip through the PANAMA CANAL. Here 'tis'. This is one on the Exploration Cruize Line with shore excursions at Panama City, Colon, San Blas Islands, Portobelo (a Spanish Main Port), Toboga Island, Darien Jungle, Choco Island Village, in addition to a daylight transit of the Canal. February 24 to March 2, 1987.

Reservations for all of the above to begin at Sept. 6 Pioneer's Luncheon.

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To Henry Calloway, Editor

The last issue of the Trailblazer was outstanding! Every article was interesting and please extend my appreciation to Laura for her excellent story on the Santa Cruz Boardwalk and to Bill Chivers on the Ferry Morse Seed Company tale. Your most interesting article on the Ostrich Farm filled in a lot of gaps about this interesting bygone legend of San Jose. Of course, I was intrigued with the Pellier Nursery House story. Keep up the good work.

Historically yours,  
Leonard McKay  
Past President and Lifetime Member

*(Retiree Leonard, a former San Jose Historical Landmarks Commissioner and long time publisher-printer and avid sportsman is preparing to open his store-museum fitly called "memorabilia of San Jose" specializing in books - art - postcards - artifacts - as well as appraisal service. Location just off Notre Dame Ave. on W. St. James.)*

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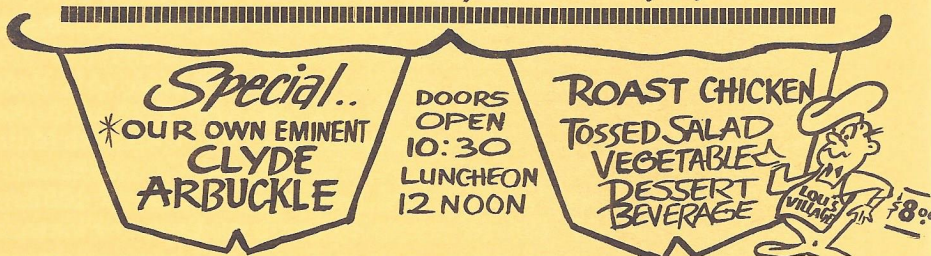
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THE TRAILBLAZER issued February, May, August and November.

Editor - Henry Calloway, 1899 McDaniel Ave., San Jose, CA 95126

Associate Editor - Laura Calloway

Assistant Editor - Bill Chivers

Staff Artist - Ralph Rambo

Subscription rate to non-members \$4 per year.

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