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Number 4

SCENTED PEARLS: THE HEADY HISTORY OF THE GILROY GARLIC FESTIVAL

By Chuck Myer

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is excerpted from an essay by Gilroy resident Chuck Myer which was an entry in a California Pioneer Essay Contest)

The community of Gilroy, 30 miles south of San Jose, is the southern gateway to the fertile Santa Clara Valley. Situated in South Santa Clara County at the crossing of U.S. Highway 101 and State Highway 152, Gilroy is a growing community with a population of 31,000. The City is known for its quiet residential neighborhoods and parks, "11-hole" golf course and recreation programs, and for its "urban forest" or street trees which have won many awards.

But since 1979, Gilroy is best known as the "Garlic Capital of the World" and home of the annual Garlic Festival. Food connoisseurs have thrived on the Gilroy Garlic Festival, which is held annually on the last weekend in July. "Gourmet Alley's" open-air kitchens and wide variety of foods dominate the event, which cooks up to eight tons of garlic, as well as 3500 pounds of shrimp and 10,000 pounds of calamari each year. Two hundred other booths vend garlic wine, braids, souvenirs, etc. It is a full-scale celebration of the "pervasive presence of the stinking rose," and the festival gave Gilroy the title, "Garlic Capital of the World."

The town is named after the area's first

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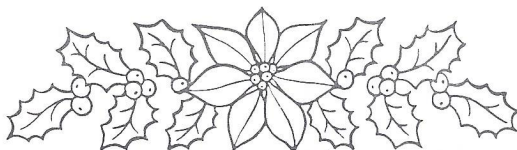
non-Spanish settler, John Gilroy. A Scottish sailor, Gilroy separated from his ship in Monterey harbor, and settled on the Ortega rancho, later marrying the heiress of the land on which the town now sits. Gilroy's inhabitants, buffered by mountain ranges to the east and west, enjoy a mild, temperate climate. Since its incorporation as the City of Gilroy in 1870, the town, once called Pleasant Valley, has flourished.

Gilroy's agricultural roots go back to the end of the last century, when the railroad made it an important juncture in the fertile Santa Clara Valley. Regular train service was provided by the Southern Pacific Railroad to the Gilroy depot, where steady stagecoach service picked up guests who sought out the healthful waters and quiet beauty of Gilroy Hot Springs.

Gilroy's growth between 1910 and 1930 was propelled largely by immigrants from southern Italy. Finding the climate similar to their native land, and finding it impossible to acquire land in crowded Italian provinces, they came to California where they saw vast, fertile soil awaiting their farming and dairying talents. This wave of Italian immigration was the beginning of Gilroy's long association with garlic. Similarly, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Hispanic and other ethnic groups were attracted to the valley.

A building boom came in the 1920's. One of the most instrumental philanthropists who funded many of the new buildings was Lin Wheeler, owner of a seed company. Other agricultural businessmen became leaders of the community as it continued to grow.

In the 1960s and 70s, new industry found its way to the valley and new shopping complexes reached west along Hecker Pass Highway and east along Tenth Street. Mature neighborhoods now blend well with newer homes to create an ambient atmosphere for residential areas, served by nearby schools, parks, and churches, and just the right combination of suburban and rural amenities. And along the streets extending east and west is found a historical heritage and a community spirit as rich as that of any other California city. Knowing they had a community of which they could be proud, civic leaders in the 1970s searched for a way to express their pride.



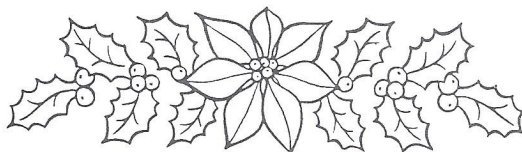
President's Message

---Miriam Clark

On Page 2 of the Peninsula/Local Section of the October 21, 1993, edition of the SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS was an article entitled "Decrepit Cemetery Gets Attention after 70 Years of Neglect--Renewal set for Hacienda." It began: "Dick Hill spends his days worrying about a group of people who haven't taken a breath in roughly 100 years..." The article continues on to report the untiring efforts Richard Hill and his committee continue to put forth towards the eventual and total restoration of the Hacienda Cemetery.

I hope you saw the article and realize we are making slow but sure progress to restore the Hacienda Cemetery and enable those who visit it a chance to get acquainted with the people who once lived in the Almaden Community and the history that is a part of it.

Our December Program is sure to warm your hearts and get us all into the holiday spirit. The Board and I take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry holiday season, and we look forward to a wonderful and adventuresome New Year.



BIRTH OF THE GARLIC FESTIVAL

Gilroy's annual Garlic Festival began with a "one-time" salute to the city of Gilroy and the garlic processing industry. The first garlic gala was inspired by reports of a tiny French town, Arleux, that drew 70,000 to its yearly garlic fete. Since Gilroy and its surround region produced and processed 90 percent of the U.S. garlic crop, in addition to processing imported garlic, why shouldn't Gilroy cash in on some of the action?

The precursor of the festival was a luncheon celebration held at Christopher Ranch, sponsored by the Gilroy Rotary Club in early November 1978. The host, Don Christopher, was one of the nation's leading producers of fresh garlic. The celebration was organized by Gavilan College President Rudy Melone, and featured garlic chef Val Filice and his friend Florio Gennaro. Garlic dishes were served, and spirits soared. Visiting food editors were very impressed. It was clear that community organizers were on to something. It was then that Gilroy proclaimed itself the Garlic Capital of the World, and a legend "sprouted."

Community leaders loaned \$7,000. to a committee to organize a permanent festival. The first public festival, which achieved worldwide headlines, was held on the Bloomfield Ranch property south of Gilroy. About 20,000 people attended, quickly overwhelming the facilities at the site. Chefs quickly ran out of garlic, scampi and other supplies, and cars were dispatched to obtain more from local stores and restaurants. As if to underscore the staggering success, a 5.9 earthquake rumbled through town the next morning (August 8, 1979).

In 1980, festival organizers wisely switched locations to Gilroy's Christmas Hill Park, and quickly drew up the plan which would serve for years to come: a world-class food fair, over the course of one weekend (then in early Augst), combining gourmet cooking demonstrations and tastings with entertainment and frolicking good fun.

FRED GARDNER JOINS PIONEER BOARD

Our new chairman of the Audit Committee, Fred Gardner, and his wife Marilyn, are both Life members of the California Pioneers.

Fred is a native California, having been born on Oak Street in Saratoga in 1924. His grandfather, Daniel F. Gardner, and grandmother, Sarah F.

Kenyon Gardner, lived on a ranch on Gardner Lane, which is now a part of West Valley College. Fred lived on Gardner Lane until his parents moved to San Jose in 1929.

Fred says he is a San Josean, having graduated in 1943 from San Jose High School when it was located at 7th and E. San Fernando Streets. San Jose High is celebrating the big 50th, and Fred has supplied much of the information and many pictures for their special publication.

Fred worked with the Bank of America in the San Jose area before retiring after 36 years of service.

Fred is a member of the Saratoga Historical Foundation, and says he is a "self-appointed historian". He has been a Docent at the San Jose Historical Museum since 1985, leading tours there as well as at the Japanese Friendship Garden and also the Downtown Walking Tours.

He has served on the audit committee of the Stone Church and has also served there as a Deacon and Historian.

He says he is pleased to be on the Board of the California Pioneers and to chair the audit committee. Jokingly he says, "My knowledge of local history would not reach the bootstraps of the one and only Clyde Arbuckle."



Fred Gardner

WHALE BLAZERS

SAN JOSE, Sept. 1912...Ten owners of automobiles and motorcycles paid traffic fines amounting up to \$125. in traffic court for exceeding the 20 mile-per-hour area speed limit.

SAN JOSE, Sept. 9, 1912...A caravan of Native Sons and Daughters left here for Stockton where they took part in the City's Admission Day festival. A live bear, their mascot, led the local celebrants.

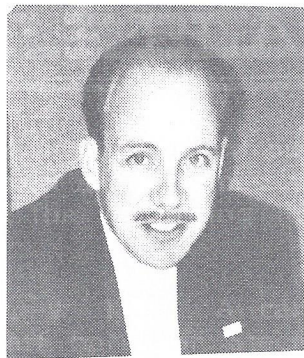
SAN JOSE, Sept., 1912...Plans for the erection of a 16-room concrete school building to cost \$60,000. for use as the Hester District, was accepted by the school trustees.

SEPTEMBER, 1912...The State Board of Prison Directors had threatened to bring suit against cattle tycoons such as Miller & Lux to recover the excess they received from excess prison-made burlap sacks they contracted to use to sack their grain for profit.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1912...Dr. and Mrs. Morris E. Dailey, back from their honeymoon, were hosted at an elaborate banquet and reception at the Hotel Vendome by the faculty of the State Normal School and friends.

SAN JOSE, 1912...Out in the Dry Creek area, folks were said to have been looking for a sparrow who had taken up cigar smoking. It appeared a hugh palm tree some 40 feet high had burst into flames attracting throngs even along with a surprising number of 'gas buggies'. Since there were no electrical wires in the vicinity, the firemen agreed it was all due to a bird who had picked up the likes of a 'hot' cigar in its overdue nest building efforts.

OCTOBER 7, 1912...Vendome and San Jose Parlors of the Native Daughters were honored with a banquet by members of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County.



Vice President David McKinney was in charge of arranging for our Christmas Musical program.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The Spring Luncheon will be on Saturday, March 5, 1994. Call 554-7587 by Wednesday, March 2nd to make your reservation.



SANTA CLARA, 1922...

OLDEST JAIL IN STATE TORN DOWN

Said to be the oldest jail in California, erected at Santa Clara in the days before the gold rush of '49 had been razed in order to make way for a modern building. The ancient calaboose, which was built of adobe by the Indians was about 100 years old. The affair boasted two rooms, a jail cell, containing rings in the floor and walls to which prisoners were chained, and a kitchen. The jail had no windows and had been used by the Mexicans until 1846, until William Haun, father of Judge Haun and John Haun of Saratoga arrived as the appointed alcalde. Haun was in charge of the jail several years. Later the old site was abandoned as a jail being converted into a storeroom for the use of the Hauns, now the site of Harrison and Jackson Streets.



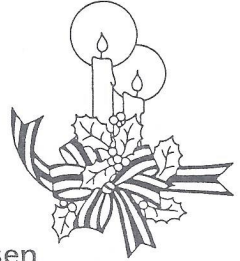
Beyond The Sunset

Norman Huber
Helen S. Martin
Anna Escover
Agnes Warburton

Helen Rines
Marline Jo DaVeggio
Marcellus Thompson

On behalf of the members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, the TRAILBLAZER extends sincere sympathy to the relatives and friends of our departed members.

Welcome New Members



Joyce B. Grisham
Virginia T. Adams
Helen C. Richmond

Sallie Mae Jensen
Dorothy E. Creffield
Janet Harner

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE LUNCHEON
ON DECEMBER 4th

UNDER THE WEATHER

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the condition of any ill member and report any sickness or death to the chair of our SUNSHINE Committee --

Irene Johnson
445 North 15th St.
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 275-1389

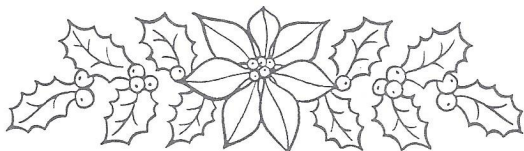
History Written in the Blossoms

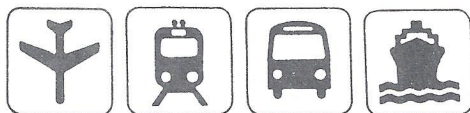
by

Mary Margaret Lewis

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mary Margaret Lewis describes the beauty of the Marchese cherry orchard located at Lawrence and Homestead Roads in Santa Clara, the first time she saw it. This was taken from an essay Ms. Lewis submitted to the California Pioneers)

I remember the impact the orchard had on me the first time I saw it. Just having arrived in California, I was driving in to Santa Clara to look at an apartment that was for rent. It was a late summer afternoon, and I was headed east on Homestead Road when I caught my first glimpse, of what was to become my visual refuge over all the years I was to live in Santa Clara. There was the cherry orchard, in full summer bloom, acres of trees, their leaves the dark shiny green they get in the deep afternoon sun. At that time the Marchese family was still selling cherries from the orchard. I looked at the long driveway leading up to the house, and envied the people who lived there. The orchard was something special. I still remember the way it made my heart leap. I had heard that the valley was once alive with farmland and fruit trees, but here was living proof. It was an invaluable glimpse of the land we lived on. And of what it must have been like for those who had come before. I remember multiplying the orchard many times in my mind trying to imagine the magnitude of the beauty that this valley must have had.





Touring With The Californians

DECEMBER 16, 1993, Thursday.

SACRAMENTO AT CHRISTMAS

Visit the old Governor's Mansion (dressed in its holiday finery), the State Capitol, the California Vietnam Memorial and the Crocker Museum. \$26.00 per person. Space is still available, but CALL SOON! For reservations call: Nancy Hill, (408) 258-3449, mornings.

APRIL 23-30, 1994.

SAIL THROUGH PARADISE!

We approach the Hawaiian Islands as the early Polynesians did, from the water. The many tropical trees, flowers and shrubs will be in bloom. Choosing to go by cruise ship allows us to be relaxed and lazy. No days are wasted in airports, and you need unpack and pack only once. Details in a special brochure available at the December 4th Pioneer's luncheon.

ONE DAY TOURS.

Our one-day tours are always popular, so come to the December luncheon and see what the committee has in store for your pleasure in the winter quarter of 1994.

After the quarterly luncheons, flyers may be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed, legal size envelope to:

THE CALIFORNIANS
800 Blossom Hill Road #362
Los Gatos, CA 95032.



This is your BILLING NOTICE that Membership Dues of \$7.00 are due for 1994 on Januaty 1st. Save 58¢ postage by paying the 1994 dues at the December luncheon. If you pay by mail, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of your membership card. Mail to:

CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
P. O. Box 8208
San Jose, CA 95155

HELP! Our membership is currently at 922: RECRUIT!

Any questions? Call Tommy Warren at 241-8942 for membership information.

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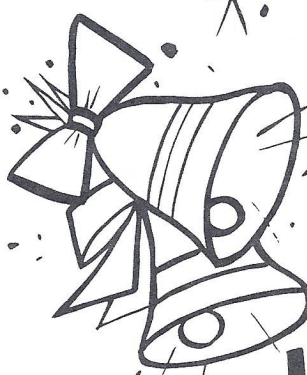
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— OUR —
CHRISTMAS
LUNCHEON
Sat. Dec. 4 ... \$11:00
Stuffed Breast of Chicken,
tossed Salad, Vegetable Sherbert
beverage ... 11:00



LOU'S VILLAGE
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12 NOON FEST ...

24 HOUR PHONE SERVICE .