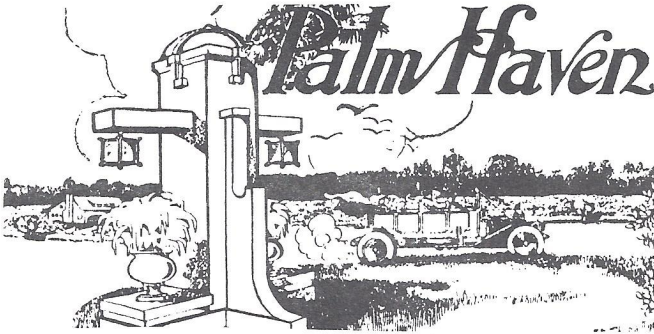


QUARTERLY BULLETIN
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY
INCORPORATED 1875

Volume 27

February, 1987

No. 1



San Jose's Palm Haven today, after seventy four years, continues on as one of our valley's most serene and attractive residential parks. It is also entrenched on land once the realm of hop producing farmers like the Birds, Coes and the Sainsevains who lived and farmed the region in the 1870's.

Plotters of the unique district were Eaton-Vestal and Thomas H. Herschbach, owners and developers who in early 1913 were already presenting a fair idea how the streets were going to look with their sweeping curves and parkways. Sidewalks were about started with full completion slated for springtime. Seven electroliers of concrete were also coming to a finish. A real estate office was also built at the extreme end of the park on Plaza Drive while a handsome interurban waiting station was under construction at the foot of Palm Haven Avenue.

The landscape engineering was under the direction of Arthur Cann, popular San Jose nurseryman whose amusing slogan was "What others can't, Arthur Cann." Mr. Cann said the best nurseries on the coast had been called upon to supply the finest palms available. Some 400 sack-bound palms of the Washingtonia Robusta variety, standing four feet high, had arrived in April on two flat railroad cars.

A club house was also one of the proposed attractions which appealed strongly to the homeseekers.

Building sites ranged from \$950 to \$1,650. The value depended on position and size of lots ranging from 50 to 85 foot frontages. Terms: 10% down and 2% per month. No home costing less than \$2,500 was permitted on the palm destined area.

Next year Palm Haven will add another treasure house... her Diamond Jubilee!

WHALE BLAZERS

LOS GATOS, January 1904: A petition was out to rescind the law and allow automobiles the privilege of using the Santa Cruz Road as far as Alma at reduced speeds, keeping creek-side and blowing horns on approaching curves. Others believed no matter how slow autos went or blew horns, horses were just not accustomed to the new contraptions and the whole idea was just a hazard to man and beast.

SAN JOSE, March 1904: Manager Brook of the Vendome Hotel announced, "So many excursionists are coming here by automobile that we have decided to build an additional automobile barn with enough room for five large machines. "We are going to work hard around here to make this an automobile paradise."

SAN JOSE, 1911: Miss Cecelia O'Neil was elected to the high school faculty while Alfred Lake was appointed attendance officer (hooky cop) by the Board of Education.

SAN JOSE, 1911: Fire broke out in a two story livery stable on San Pedro Street. The fire demonstrated the worthlessness of the two engines belonging to the department, both broke down while in service.

SARATOGA, April 1913: The officers of a ladies temperance group had authorized a letter of commendation be written to the wife of President Wilson for banishing wine and liquor from the tables of the White House.

SAN JOSE, April 1913: Ten water wagons had started out sprinkling the streets due to the hot weather that had arrived early. The street superintendent expected to have the city's full complement of eighteen water wagons doing all day duty by May 1.

SAN JOSE, May 1913: Postmaster John R. Chase announced all rural carriers were to report to proper authorities all forest fires detected along their routes.

SAN JOSE, 1926: The County Supervisors sold, at public auction, a substantial collection of copper stills to local a junk dealer for \$566. The items were seized in raids by Sheriff George W. Lyle.

SAN JOSE, February, 1933: Coast live oak trees, native to California, were replacing the imported acacias surrounding the north and south sections of City Plaza.

History of Santa Clara County

History of this county from its earliest exploration through classroom lecture and 35mm slide presentations by Clyde Arbuckle. Tentative scheduling of field trips will include: Santa Clara County (March), Mystery trip (April), Motherlode (May), and the OCTA Convention, Casper Wyoming (August). Metropolitan Adult Education Program meeting on Wednesday evenings 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Markham Middle School on Cottle Avenue. \$16. fee.

'Kernel' Sewall S. Brown

By Bill Chivers

Apricot pits could correctly be called stones or seeds, but all of us who used to cut cots years ago called them pits. Apricots were cut in half, the pit removed, placed on a tray, sulfured and put in the sun to dry. Our Santa Clara Valley canning and drying industry was widely known, but few people knew or thought about what happened to the apricot pits after their removal from the fruit.

In the early 1920's two men, Sewall S. Brown and Howard Scott, both who had been employed by the California Prune and Apricot Association, developed a way to extract the oil from the kernel which was the soft part inside the pit. Brown and Scott opened their apricot kernel processing company in 1925 in an old red three story packing house built in 1902 and once owned by the California Prune and Apricot Association. Sewall Brown soon took over the business from Scott, and it was then called Sewall S. Brown Apricot Products, locally known as "Sewall Brown's Apricot Pit Plant." This unusual business was located near Vasona Junction on the old Los Gatos-Santa Clara Road, now called Winchester Blvd., between Campbell and Los Gatos.

Brown developed a variety of products made from the apricot pits. At his plant the pits were dried in the open, taken into the plant to be cracked, and the kernels removed and processed for oil. Much of the oil was sent to England where the Yardley Company used it in the manufacture of cold cream and other cosmetics. It is



interesting to note that this oil was shipped to England under the guise of vegetable oil for cooking and not for cosmetics, because there was no tariff on food products. The kernels were also sent to Holland to make Marzipan (a paste of apricot kernels, used as an almond paste made into almond type extract) for making candy. The finely ground pit shells were also sold to a powder mill for packing of dynamite. There were about thirty products made or sold to be made into products. One company in San Jose made wood alcohol and charcoal for them. Another product was an apricot kernel fertilizer which sold for \$2.50 a hundred pound sack; however, the fertilizer was not very strong and did not become very popular. Tons of cracked shells were sold as ground cover in place of gravel, much as the same as redwood or cedar chips are used today.

The Sewall Brown Company's popular red packing house grounds were always open to community picnics and civic affairs. Ever conscious of the youth of the area, Sewall Brown founded Boy Scout Troop 39 of Los Gatos in the mid thirties and opened a headquarters and meeting place for the scouts at his place of business. The Boy Scout Troop had four log cabin type buildings, one each for the Scout patrols of his troop. The logs were salvaged streetcar track ties from the old Peninsular Railway. Brown was a member of the Board of Directors of Santa Clara County Council of the B.S.A., and served many years as Chairman of the camping activities committee for both that organization and for the Los Gatos-Saratoga area.

Brown was prominent in almost every public activity in Los Gatos and participated for many years in the direction of the annual March of Dimes Drive. During World War II, he was a member of the local Civilian Defense Unit and was Chairman of the Los Gatos Red Cross Chapter. Always eager to help young people, he was one of the prime movers of the local Youth Council, and he and his wife raised several foster children. Brown was active in the Community Chest Drive each year. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the First National Bank of Los Gatos and an active member of the Los Gatos Rotary Club of which he was President several times and Secretary for many years. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Los Gatos Elementary School for 16 years and served several times as Chairman of the Board. Brown was an amateur actor and participated in the famous outdoor pageants Los Gatos had in the 1920's and 1930's.

The Town of Los Gatos and the youth of the area were very saddened when in May of 1952 Sewall Brown suddenly passed away in his sleep. His wife and his son kept the business going until the morning of September 20, 1955, when about 2:00 a.m. a fire broke out in this old landmark.

The fire was one of the most spectacular the county had seen, and still after thirty years is quite vivid in the minds of the firemen who

were there. Twenty Central District firemen were at the fire, four pumpers and one tanker under the direction of Chief Fred Luhring, Duty Chief James Ackley and Captain Dell Coombs. Units were called from Cambrian, Quito, Cupertino and San Thomas Fire Stations. Captain Coombs related to this author that the fire was so hot that as he stood on the pumper directing a fire nozzle on the burning building he had another fireman spray him with water so he could fight the fire. The fire could easily be seen through out the valley, and the fire units had no trouble getting there. The heat was so intense that it seared the plants and flowers in the nursery across the street. The three story red painted main plant literally burst at the seams as the wooden siding gave way under the flames and 2,000 tons of apricot pits in burning burlap sacks stacked fifty feet high streamed in huge flowing and smoky mounds from the cracks and corners of the walls. The intense heat caught the power poles and wires on fire, and PG&E was notified to shut off the power in the area. The Southern Pacific railroad tracks ran in front of the plant, and it is said you could fry an egg on the rails.

The fire hydrants and pumpers were on the west side of the track on the street, and the hoses had to be dragged across the tracks. The Southern Pacific office in San Jose was notified of all this because a passenger train was due through there that morning. There were four lengths of hose across the track pumping about a thousand gallons a minute. It's easy to imagine how busy these firemen were and how they might not notice a lone switch engine coming up the track which had not received the word about staying out of the area. Because of the smoke and fire, the engineer might not see the hoses on the tracks. Well it happened. The engine ran over the four hoses cutting them in two with the loss of about 200 feet of fire hose. It must have looked like "Old Faithful" there for a few minutes. New hoses were quickly dispatched to continue flooding the fire. What made it so bad was the tin roofs kept caving in, thus thus the water could not get to the smoldering sacks of pits.

Captain Dell Coombs said he stayed on duty there for the first 36 hours. The firemen would shovel glowing apricot pits into five gallon cans and cook their soup over them. In a few days bulldozers were brought in to spread out the glowing pits, and then they could be soaked down with water. He said that firemen had to be on site for a couple of weeks until every glowing ember was put out.

With the loss of the building and apricot pits, the family decided not to rebuild. This landmark, of course was missed, but most of all this life-long leader in youth activities and civic affairs was missed. Sewall S. Brown is certainly a good example of the interesting and resourceful people that helped developed our Santa Clara Valley.



'Carrie Nation' & 'Nellie Bly'

Warfare At The Ostrich Farm

Bedlam reigned at the San Jose Ostrich Farm at Alum Rock Avenue and King Road one April day in 1907 when feathers, hide and blood were ariborn with cyclonic force.

Again, one of the owners, C. B. Leach, and his able assistants knew the uprising pointed to their star performing ostrich known as "Frank Heney" who had cornered two other ostriches, "Ruef and "Schmitz" to be tortured by the powerful talons of an infuriated "Heney".

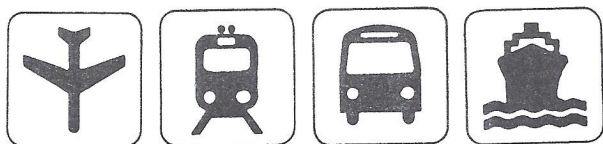
The ostriches involved amusedly were named after the headliners in the long and notorious San Francisco political and labor showdown involving Eugene E. Schmitz, the city mayor, and a corrupt politician and labor leader, Abe Ruef, who was sent to San Quentin to live. "Heney" was the namesake of the San Francisco lawyer, Francis J. Heney who handled the prosecution during the lengthy and vicious action during this era.

The ostriches "Ruef" and "Schmitz" who were hefty one year olds tried to enter the corral where "Heney's" two mates, "Carrie Nation" and "Nellie Bly" were in keeping. It appeared that under ostrich etiquette this was a dreadful offense; so, "Heney" proceeded to show both intruders they could not enter his domain unless invited.

"Ruef" was the first to feel the full weight of "Heney's" devastating talons. For nearly twenty minutes the three birds put up a terrifying battle taking blows with the thrust of a pile-driver. With one mighty kick "Heney" landed "Ruef" over and beyond the corral; then continued his job on the near annihilation of "Schmitz".

"Frank Heney", the farm's heavyweight, was also a confirmed polygamist. Said to be contrary to ostrich laws, he possessed two mates and would behead man or beast who attempted to molest the "Mesdames Heney".

"Frank Heney" was also hailed as the largest ostrich in California, weighing over 450 pounds, while being considered "golden" due to his showmanship.



Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS by phone begin on Monday, March 9th for MEMBERS ONLY. Call Ruth Goss at 294-9830 ONLY BETWEEN 9 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.

Catch our exSIGHTment, Pioneers. Beginning at the March 7 Luncheon sign ups will be taken for our ANNUAL MEMORIAL WEEKEND VENTURE, May 23, 24, 25, 1987. Details at the Luncheon.

June 20-25 THE LAKES OF NORTH WEST Exciting Washington State and Idaho are extending their lavish wonders aboard seaplane and motorcoach on this summer round of pleasures. Cruise on beautiful Lake Coeur D'Alene, enjoy hideaway picnics on one high-wide and bountiful experience. Special brochure available.

October 8-16, 1987 MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRUISE Paddle wheel the upper Mississippi River from St. Paul, Minn. through locks down to St. Louis, Mo. Ports of call include Hannibal, Mo., Mark Twain's hometown. Detailed brochure available at Luncheon.



'Bout Members

104 Candles For An Amazing Lady . . .

Meet our amazing Louella Luhrman, who recently celebrated her 104th birthday at the Veterans Administration's nursing facility at Menlo Park. Spunky Louella insisted on blowing out the candles last year but a little help was needed this time.

Born in Germany in 1881 she arrived in America with her parents, three sisters and a brother in 1884. She attended Hester School and by 1905 she was a graduate from the School of Nursing at Fabiola Hospital in Oakland where she later supervised Surgery for twelve years. From 1917 to 1918 during World War I she served at Camp Lewis, Washington, later nursing at Phoenix, Salt Lake City and Petaluma. In 1932 she nursed at Peralta Hospital in Oakland until 1943.

During this time she brailled for a school in Oakland. Several of her books are in the Library of Congress. When she gave up braille in her mid-nineties, it was with regret.

By 1943 she was in San Jose living in the old family home on South 16th Street. While here she continued her braille for a blind center at the Quito School. By 1955 she experienced an extended trip to Europe and England with old nursing friends.

In 1973 Louella moved to a pleasant retirement complex where her sister-in-law, Mrs. Albert (Lovene) Luhrman, also lived. Making this even more captivating, the late Lovene Luhrman was president of the California Pioneers from 1957 to 1960.

Our "veteran" Louella was also a member of the San Jose Woman's Club and continues her membership with Memory Post 399, American Legion, in San Jose.

As "Aunt Lou" she claims six nieces and five nephews, fourteen grand nieces and eighteen grand nephews as well as sixteen great-grand nieces and fifteen great-grand nephews.

More 'Bout Members

Elroy Christian reports that after more than 125 years the John Christian Mfg. Co of San Jose has ceased operations. This long time perky little blacksmith firm was a major source for replacement teeth for combine harvesters, a market which included California, the Midwest and Canada. Over 300,000 teeth were produced annually by this blacksmith firm, on trip hammers designed and built by Elroy's great-grandfather and his son, Elroy's grandfather. The financial plight of farmers today and the task of training someone skilled enough to carry on what would be enormous, says Elroy. With this sad end of an anvil's echo, we applaud Elroy for what he and his forebears have contributed to our valley's ingenuity.

We find that in 1924 our past president, Dr. C. Kelly Canelo, was announcing the opening of his offices for general practice of medicine in the Twohy Building at the corner of San Antonio and First Streets. Dr. Canelo is a graduate of Santa Clara and also the University of St. Louis. He had just completed his internship at the County Hospital. Dr. Canelo's parents were the co-owners of the Arcade, a popular dry goods store in Downtown San Jose.

Last issue we shared a letter from Ralph Rambo who recalled the flavorful Muir peach. "You could eat a dozen without a belly ache," he wrote. "I haven't seen or heard of this, my favorite peach for 70 years." Well thanks to our Yolanda Hayes, Ralph is enjoying a jar of Muir peaches. Thanks, Yolanda, sweet of you!

Adding to this "peachy" note, Mrs. Hazel C. Smith of Los Gatos writes she must remember Ralph when her Muir peach tree on Loma Prieta provides.

Historic Tour

Say! Join us -- it's the organ, bells and architectural tour of downtown San Jose on March 22, 1987. Sponsored by the California History Room of the San Jose Public Library.

The tour starts at 2:00 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 No. 2nd and will end at St. Joseph's. Participants will be Bernard Hunter, organist of the Bell Ringers of Trinity, and Lyle Settle, organist of St. Joseph's. The two oldest organs remaining in San Jose are the 1886 tracher-action O'Dell organ at St. Joseph's and the 1894 Hook-Hastings of Trinity. Docents from the San Jose Historical Museum will contribute the history.

Our Annual Historical Essay Contest Announced

Increased Cash Awards Await Winners

There will now just be one category with the general public and high schools competing. The First Prize will be \$500, second \$200, and third \$100.

The essays in the English language are to be at least 3,000 words and contain a bibliography. The papers may reflect on any subject, person, or place concerning the history of Santa Clara County.

April 30, 1987 is the deadline to have essays mailed to Austen Warburton, 12th Floor, Bank of America Bldg., 101 Park Center Plaza, San Jose, CA 95113.

For further information, please send a stamped, self-addressed legal sizes envelope to Helen MacCarthy, Essay Contest, California Pioneers of Santa Clara, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. Phone 578-4485.

Pay Your Dues ... Don't Be Left Out!

Annual dues are now past due. All members who have not paid for 1987 by the March luncheon, March 7, 1987, will be considered delinquent. Delinquent members do not receive the Trailblazer until their dues are paid.

Financial Secretary Mary Wahlberg will be available both before and after the luncheon to receive payments and answer questions. If more convenient please call her at 374-5776.

Those who wish to mail their payments can do so by sending their \$5 check along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to California Pioneers, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. Your membership card will be sent by return mail.

Don't forget that a Life Membership would provide a one time payment and you would never again have to think about dues. It is only \$60 for a single person or \$100 for a married couple.

Conservation Series Announced

The San Jose Historical Museum Association will present a six-part lecture workshop series, "Connoisseur Night" dealing with current conservation and preservation practices of antiques and works of art. The series, all aimed for the serious amateur, will be held in the Empire Firehouse Meeting Room on the Museum grounds; Monday evenings, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., March 23 to April 27. Topics to be covered will relate to arts, paintings, textiles, furniture, sculpture, works on paper and art objects. Join us! Contact Milita Rios Martin, Curator of the San Jose Historical Museum at (408) 287-2290.

Welcome New Members

Myron Alexander
Jane Ann Reed
Don Hebard
David Boyarsky
Florence J. Surratt
Mary Kelley
Glenn Coil
Nancy Welchly
Daniel W. Redmond
Betty C. Emery

Flora Feuerman
Richard V. Bettinger
William Reed
Anthony Kelley
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Betty Welchly
Gloria D. McCammon
Jessymae Dodge
Ethel Wilson
Mary Jane Zanolis

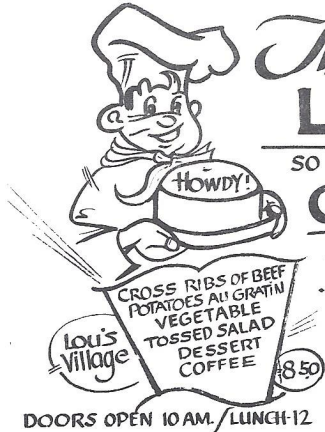


Beyond the sunset

Robert T. Armstrong
Ruth A. Henderson
Lynn Lorraine Vermillion

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