

HEAVEN ON EARTH

PREFACE - First Paragraph

TABLE OF CONTENTS: The Move

Introduction to Sports - Golf

Almaden Golf Course

Looking Back

The Unusual

Finis

Source consulted: Santa Clara County offices

Lois K. Marron

1689 Santa Barbara Drive

San Jose, California 95125

Telephone: 408-266-7144

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1689 Santa Barbara Drive
San Jose, California 95125
Telephone: 408-266-7144

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Introduction: My husband, a Government agent, and I had lived in various places in the country - Portland, Maine (with its freezing temperatures); Arlington, Virginia; and finally, in San Francisco, California, with its continual drippy fog and chilly temperatures, even in the summer months. To me, the miserable humidity of Cleveland, Ohio, where I had been born and had lived for several years, was preferable to such a climate as that.

The Move

Then, suddenly, in January, 1950, joy descended upon me when my husband's employer transferred him to Paradise - namely, Santa Clara County, City of San JOse, where, at that time the County's population consisted of only 290,547 other souls as lucky as we were...Santa Clara County where the sun shown at the proper time of the year and where the rains usually descended at a specified time of the year. Santa Clara County where flowers grew in profusion and delightful color - what more could anyone desire?

We were most fortunate to sell our San Francisco house to the very first lookers and I couldn't pack our belongings fast enough.

We settled in an area just outside the delightful Willow Glen section in one of four newly-built houses on a street that had formerly consisted of orchards of cherry and walnut trees, two of the latter gracing our own front yard. A cherry

tree was positioned between our property and the adjacent empty lot; as a result, cherry pies and walnut-filled cookies, as well as various other yummy desserts graced our table at almost every dinner hour. Never had I been so thoroughly satisfied with my life. Even my husband, a native of San Francisco, was delighted with our move and wholeheartedly admitted his feelings of pleasure and satisfaction at our change.

At first, one of the main activities thrust upon me (besides baking goodies) was the weeding of our overgrown front yard, during which many long hours of work each day I gorged myself with chocolate candies to keep my labors all the more pleasant and satisfying.

Introduction to Sports - Golf

Just about the same time that I had rendered the lawn as nearly completely weed-free as possible, a more exciting activity suddenly popped up when a newly-acquired friend in San Jose suggested that we learn to play golf. As one of a group of six women, I began taking lessons from George Bruno, the professional at the Almaden course. George didn't give any evidence of particular joy at being saddled with trying to teach a group of obviously non-athletic females the precision game of golf, but he tolerated us nonetheless and did his best to teach us how to wield woods, irons and the putter in the proper manner.

The Almaden Course

At the conclusion of our six lessons, we embarked upon

the adventure of conquering the many yards (over 5,000) of the Almaden course territory. At that time it was a public course and the location then was a most bucolic area. We soon discovered that the premises contained innumerable partially buried pebbles and rocks that had a most unpleasant way of digging holes in our newly-purchased sets of clubs.

The first time I had ever seen the Almaden course was when we had just moved here and my husband suggested going there for dinner. This was when the dining room was on the main floor and overlooked the course itself instead of the parking lot where it was located on the second floor after a fire destroyed the kitchen. I never could understand why those in power at that time switched the dining room in such a manner, but obviously some peculiar bees got into some equally peculiar bonnets!

By the same token, the first time I had ever seen a golf game was when we went to the Bing Crosby tournament at Pebble Beach. When one of the players was located back of a tree and he curled the ball right around the barrier and onto the fairway, it was nothing short of magic to me. In fact, that was when the real charm of the game struck me.

Well, after starting to play I became so totally hooked on the game that four or five days each week found me struggling madly to improve my scores. As though this were not sufficient practice, my efforts continued during my dreams at night when I joyfully drove golf balls down the center of

Meridian Road (later changed to Meridian "Avenue"). The happiest part of these fantasies was the fact that not one shot was ever missed and each hit was right on target. I am certain that all of this extra practice was instrumental in the two holes-in-one that I eventually enjoyed!

Encouraged by my obvious addiction to the game, my husband, not to be outdone, decided to pursue the sport also and became as avid in his joy of it as was I. He played every Saturday with the men and we played together on Sundays.

When a women's group was formed at Almaden, I promptly joined and became acquainted with innumerable lovely women, one of whom became my constant golfing companion. Whenever and wherever there was a women's tournament, we made it our goal to be on hand to compete. Since most of these tournaments were two-day affairs, we would rent adjoining rooms at a nearby motel. Before retiring each night after a real fun day of golf, we usually made a point of enjoying hot fudge sundaes topped with whipped cream and burnt almonds, then laughing uncontrollably about the possibility of gaining unwanted weight. What jolly times they were - all because my husband and I had moved to the County of Santa Clara.

Looking Back

In those years there were innumerable golf courses, both long and short, in Santa Clara County - and at some time or another we played at every one of them. As time passed, however, most of them were phased out for various reasons, frequently for the purpose of covering them with newly-erected

homes. The Hillview Course, the oldest public one in this area, was sold and transformed into a tremendous shopping center - Eastridge - truly an unnecessary and sad loss to Santa Clara County. Some people probably looked upon it as progress but there were definitely many of us golfers who considered it as nothing short of retrogression, for Santa Clara County had been compelled to sacrifice a truly important and much-enjoyed treasure by hundreds, doubtless even thousands, of residents.

When we first began to start playing at Almaden, the course consisted of fairways and greens and it wasn't until considerably later that houses began to line the fairways. We looked at several of the vacant lots with the thought of moving on the course, but we were so thoroughly satisfied with the Willow Glen area that we abandoned the idea of leaving it.

Even our very young daughter took golf lessons from George Bruno and, contrary to his opinion of the older women, he made it known that here was some athletic talent - and she did indeed become a very good golfer.

The Unusual

One winter morning in about 1958 or 1959, we awakened in shock at the discovery that our lawn was covered with newly-fallen snow! What a novelty! Ecstatic, my husband declared that we absolutely HAD to experience the thrill of playing golf in the snow. Out to Almaden we raced and were able to play for a very short time before all the fluffy white stuff had melted and disappeared from sight, leaving

no evidence whatsoever of its former presence. Where, except in Santa Clara County could anyone enjoy such a fantastically unique and idyllic experience?

Finis

Now, forty-six years after first moving here, I am still dwelling in the same house and am more convinced than ever that the best move of my life was the one that brought my husband and me to the most heavenly place on earth - Santa Clara County!