

VOLUME 38 MARCH, 1997 NUMBER 1

### PAUL BERNAL

Our speaker, a Life Member of the Santa Clara County Pioneers, and a native of San José is descended from Juan Francisco Bernal who came to California in 1776 with Juan Bautista de Anza. with him were his wife Maria Josefa de Soto and seven children. His eldest son, Josef Joaquin Bernal, served as a soldier at the San Francisco Presidio and at Santa Cruz before being granted the Santa Teresa Rancho in 1834. He and his wife, Maria Josefa Daria Sanchez had 13 children. His original adobe was where the Fairmont Hotel now stands. His sister Teresa's adobe stood where Wells Fargo is today and his son, Juan Pablo's where the Sainte Claire Hotel is today. On the female side, he is also related to the Alviso, Berryessa, Sunol, Pico families and to José Ortega (who was the first to see San Francisco Bay.)

Paul is a Deputy District Attorney for Santa Clara County, Chair of the Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission, on the Board of the Preservation Action Society of San Jose, a member of the Bench and Bar Historical Society and Los Fundadores. He gave us part 1 on September 2, 1995.

### CONSTANCE BRONER KAMBISH PERHAM

was honored at the December meeting with an Honorary Membership in the Pioneers of Santa Clara County. Connie is truly a Californian. She traces her lineage on her Mother's side back to José Maria Soberanes who came to California in 1769 with Portolá. He returned in 1776 with Juan Bautista de Anza and became a permanent settler in Spanish California,

owning Rancho Buenavista, Monterey in 1795.

Connie's grandmother Fabiana Soberanes was his great grand-daughter and daughter of José Ygnacio Culupso Soberanes and Maria Raymunda Castillo who had been married at Mission San Antonio and buried at the Presidio Chapel in Monterey, grand-daughter of Mariano de Jesus Soberanes and Ana Josefa Castro, married and buried at the Presidio Chapel in Monterey. Fabiana married Constant Broner, an immigrant from Switzerland at San Antonio Mission, Monterey County. Connie's Mother was born in Millbrae and married James Edward Healey, son of an Irish immigrant who had been born in Hartford, Connecticut, although he spent his youth in South San Francisco. After the couple were married in 1899 in San Mateo, they made their home in San Francisco until the 1906 earthquake when they moved to Oakland. It was there that Connie was born March 14, 1908.

Connie graduated from the University High School in Oakland and the Children's Hospital in San Francisco as a nurse. She married Anthony Kambish in 1932 and had three children, Francis, John and Greg.

Connie's father invented a water softener that was used in steam boilers at the mines in New Almaden. He often brought his wife and daughter with him when he called at the mines on his monthly visits. Connie's interest in New Almaden was started early. In 1914, 6 year old Connie was introduced to mercury, the fourth heaviest metal and the only liquid metal, by a miner who asked her to push down on it, which was impossible. She never lost her fascination for the metal.

In 1926, her parents bought the Carson Adobe in the Hacienda Region of New Almaden for a vacation cottage. Connie vowed that some day she would have a museum there. Her father died in 1940 and her mother in 1942. Connie moved her family into the adobe in 1943 and has lived there ever since. On June 15, 1950, she opened her New Almaden Museum. On September 24, 1977, the museum was named a Bicentennial Heritage Landmark.

In 1953, she took Douglas Perham as a business partner in the museum and they later married. At the request of the Santa Clara County Educational Department, they broadened their collection to include California Indian artifacts. They studied the Yokuts tribe by living with them summers between 1956 and 1961 and acquired a fine collection. Most of the Indian artifacts were sold to Austen Warburton when the museum closed and remain in his collection in Santa Clara. Douglas Perham in his 77th year constructed a new wooden museum building for that collection. Today, it is rented to the Santa Clara County Parks for their New Almaden Museum until their proposed building becomes reality. The contents of the Santa Clara County Museum are those that Connie had collected over the years and sold to the County when she closed her museum.

In June, 1975, the New Almaden Mercury Mine finally closed and the Santa Clara County Parks bought the land for open space. This historic mine was the first mine of any kind in California and the first mercury mine in the United States. It produced more than \$70,000,000 in quicksilver. It also broke a monopoly on mercury held by the Almaden Mines in Spain. Because of this mine's mercury, the miners in the Sierra Nevada and the Comstock Lode were able to free their gold and silver from its matrix. Because of the mercury, President Lincoln had funding for the North in the Civil War.

The local Capitancillos Indians mined the cinnabar ore for body paint. Andres Castellero, a Spanish soldier from Mexico recognized the cinnabar ore markings on the Indians as cinnabar in 1845 and the reason for their painful deaths. He began working the mine. Later, he leased the land to Barron Forbes of Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico who took possession and worked the mine until 1858 when the United States served an injunction which started an 18 year lawsuit. The mine then passed into American hands.

In 1864, Samuel F. Butterworth took management of the Quicksilver Mines of New Almaden. In 1870, James B. Randol arrived as the new general manager for the bonanza

years, retiring in 1892. Robert Bulmore followed him as General Agent and Pacific Coast representative for the company until 1899. At that time, production was down. The Bulmore family were the last official occupants of the Casa Grande. The price of mercury rose during World War I and production increased under the expertise of W.H. Landers. During the Depression, Mine Hill was the site of a C.C.C. camp. Unfortunately, part of their work was to tear down all remainders of both Englishtown and Spanishtown on the hill but guided tours will point out to you where they once were.

During World War II, the demand for mercury again increased and the mines were leased to the New Almaden Corporation under the managership of C.N. Schuette. that lasted until 1946. Even with limited production, the mine yielded a third of the mercury mined in the U.S. between 1940 and 1948. A U.S. Geological Survey concluded there is still mineable mercury in the hill that is like a gopher colony with tunnels and adits to a depth of 2,400 feet. They reported there are at least 35 miles of underground works in two square miles.

After 1952, a local group acquired the mine and worked it under the direction of Jimmie Schneider. One of the last miners was Greg Kambish, Connie's son. If you would like to know more about the New Almaden Mines, do visit the museum and view Connie's collections or consult the following sources in the library.

Bertha Marguerite Rice, *The Women of Our Valley, Vol. 1*, 1955

Kenneth M. Johnson, *The New Almaden Quicksilver Mine*, The Talisman Press, Georgetown, CA 1963

Milton Lanyon & Laurence Bulmore, *Cinnabar Hills, The Quicksilver Days of New Almaden*, The Village Printers, Los Gatos, CA, 1967.

Mary Hallock Foote, Edited by Rodman W. Paul, *A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West*, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, 1972

Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*, Doubleday & Son, 1971

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Pioneers,

We were pleased with the attendance of approximately 250 members at the December luncheon and hope the attendance will continue to improve. We are trying to make the program as interesting and varied as possible.

Lou's village management has asked us to assist them selling luncheon tickets and this we are determined to do as it will eliminate the long line to buy tickets. Tickets will be sold from about 11:00 AM by Fred Gardner, our Audit Chair. If there is anyone who would like to assist, please let us know at or before the March meeting.

I would like to thank the members who have been distributing the name tags before the meeting. It is a nice way to get to know each other. While I'm at it, I would also like to thank the members who work at every meeting taking in money or signatures for memberships, tours and other activities. This kind of assistance is what makes everything work so well. Thanks so much!

At a recent Board meeting, a motion was passed to purchase a book in memory of Victoria Malatesta, a Past President. A copy of *Santa Clara Sagas* by Austen D. Warburton, edited by Mary Jo Ignoffo, was purchased and presented to the California Room of the Martin Luther King Library of San Jose in December, 1996.

Our next meeting is Saturday, March 1, 1997 at Lou's Village. See you there.

Bob Fisher

DUES for 1997 are due and payable. Over 240 of our membership have not paid their \$7 dues. Check your mailing label to see if you are up to date. If you are attending the March luncheon, please see Bob and Irene Johnson there. If you are not attending, please send a stamped, self addressed envelope with your check so your membership card can be returned to you. Mail to Bob & Irene Johnson, 445 North 15th St., San Jose, Ca 95112-

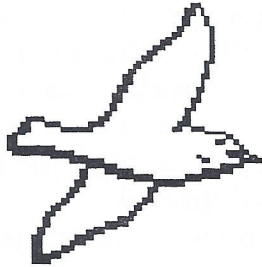


## NEW MEMBERS

LUCINDA M. BEHNES	LEWIS PALMER
ROBERTA DEXTER <i>Anderson</i>	VERLA PALMER
MIRIAM EADS	CONNIE PERHAM
GERALD FITZGERALD	CATHERINE PHILLIPS
MILDRED FITZGERALD	MARIE RIDER
CAROL LA LIBERTE	ROSE RUGGIERO
FRANCES MAGGIO	RICHARD THAW
DONALD MIRASSOU	RAE MAREE TROWELL
JOYCE MIRASSOU	MARILYN UZZARDO
GEORDINA MOLLER	WADE WILSON
TAMI OKAGAKI	WANDA WILSON
<i>TOMI</i>	MARY LOUISE WREN

## GONE TO THE GOLDEN HILLS

JAMES BROWN (12/8/96)  
DERWARD BURBANK (8/16/96)  
PATRICIA CADOGAN (12/22/96)  
AILEEN FREDRICKSON (11/27/96)  
HAROLD GASS (1/7/97)  
EDWIN KAFFER (12/19/96)  
JOSEPHINE LAZETERA (11/16/96)  
CLARA METRESSAT (8/30/96)  
*2* GRACE MIGUELGORRY (1/6/97)  
GRACE ROBERTSON (11/27/96)



OBIT FOR MY FRIEND, CHET SPINK, 1917-1997

by Leonard McKay, January 7, 1997

Shed no tears for me, for I've not gone  
Hear me still in the mockingbird's song  
See me in the glint of a hummingbird's throat  
I'm like the lap of water alongside the boat.

You can smell perfume of the rose called Peace  
Or hear the murmur of the high flying geese,  
Sometimes I appear in a youngster's smile  
Or in a walker's joy, mile after mile.

I'm up there in the stars twinkling light  
At the top of a redwood's magnificent height  
When you walk through mustard stalks, gold and green  
Give me your hand, I'm by your side, though sight unseen.

Native San Josean Chester Henry Spink died of lung cancer, January 7, 1997. A life long smoker, he was diagnosed about a year ago. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Jane White Spink, their four children, Susan Jane Johnson, Candace Foster, Craig Dowell Spink and Ford Collins Spink plus seven grandchildren, Chet's brother, Ronald Spink and sister, Ina Mae Holt.

Chet came from a musical family and performed as a child singer, accompanied by his brother on the piano at the old Victory Theater during the 1920's. He attended San Jose High School where he became extremely interested in journalism and worked on the newspaper. He graduated in 1935 but returned so he could continue to edit the paper and graduated again in 1936.

Chet became enamoured of a girl friend who lived in Ohio, and it being the depression, he rode the rails to visit her. Upon his return, he cut his foot and it became infected. He realized he could not ride the rails as a hobo with an infected foot and wired his father for bus fare home. His father sent him the money on the condition that he would go to work for Southern Pacific Railroad as a signal lineman, which he did. After two years on the job, he fell from a telephone pole and decided that he had enough of that.

In the late 30's, he attended San Jose State College and worked on the *Spartan Daily*. When World War II started, he was at first a recruiter, then put out a ship's newspaper in the Pacific. In Saipan, he worked as a photographer for the base newspaper, then was sent to a *Stars and Stripes* assignment over Japan. On August 9, 1945, the day after the second atomic bomb attack, he was aboard a B-29 on a mission of mercy to drop food and clothing to prisoner of war camps in Japan. The mission was successful, but his personal

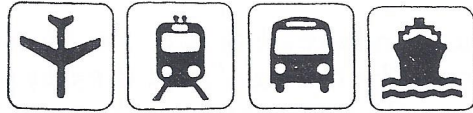
objective of photographing the damage at Nagasaki was not because of clouds obscuring the Speed Graphic negatives.

At the end of the war, he became copy editor for the *Advertiser*, a Honolulu daily newspaper and put out a publication for the Military Air Transport. Later in the '40's and 50's, he worked on the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the Salt Lake City *Tribune* and the *Arkansas Gazette* in Little Rock. He also worked for a radio station in Little Rock.

It was in Tallahassee, Florida that he met Jane White, a newspaperwoman. After a short courtship, Chet lost his job and headed west but could not stand the separation. Jane said she did not know how much he missed her until he appeared on a Tallahassee street corner as she happened to be riding by. She peeled off the bus and into his arms. The marriage lasted 46 years until his death at the age of 79. He was committed to her and their family although his career reflected much change. He was not very social, saying that he wanted to be with her. "That's why I married you."

In 1954, Mr. Spink returned home to put out an electronics magazine, *Pactronics* and a magazine for the Radio Television Association and a publication for the California State Electronics Association. His next job was selling television and appliances for Telesound, then as a department manager for the Emporium. Commissioned sales paid better, so he gave up the department head job.

In 1967, Chet Spink went to work for Smith & McKay Printing, became sales manager and stayed. Leonard McKay commented that it was a "job shop". It did the job of whatever came in the door. McKay said his friend of more than 40 years was a shy man-a bashful salesman. He made the calls and did the job, but was horrified at the idea of speaking to a San Jose State journalism class about magazine editing and publishing. He retired in 1982 and as western bureau chief for *Collision Magazine* wrote about such things as West Coast Lighthouses, the Loma Prieta earthquake and a pacemaker implanted in his chest.



## Touring With The Californians

Rose Crimi-Tour Director

Nancy Hill-Phone Reservations (258-3449 before noon)

Fern McLaggan-Treasurer, 60 Palomar Real, Campbell, CA  
95008-4207

Register for our Spring Trips at the March 1 luncheon or call Nancy Hill beginning March 3. Guests and non-members may register beginning March 10.

MARCH 14-21, 1997 MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRUISE ON THE AMERICAN QUEEN TO THE NATCHEZ SPRING PILGRIMAGE. Space on the boat is sold out. Anyone who is interested may be on a stand-by for cancellations. Brochure is available.

APRIL 25, 1997, FRIDAY, STOCKTON ASPARAGUS FESTIVAL. One of the San Joaquin Valley's most delicious products is celebrated at the 12th Annual Asparagus Festival. Enjoy asparagus every which way, deep fried, stir fried, with pasta or beef, in soup and burritos. Other attractions include entertainment on three stages, juried arts and crafts, classic car show with over 100 entries, cooking demonstrations and local micro-beers and wines. Join the fun.  
Leave 9:30 a.m. Return 4:30 p.m. Price \$16.

MAY 20-21, 1997 TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY  
HISTORIC WOODLAND AND FEATS OF CLAY EXHIBIT, Woodland is in Yolo county, named for the oak forest along the west Sacramento Valley. It was settled by disappointed gold seekers who found their reward in agriculture and dairying. Our visit will include a tour of the 1896 Opera House, bus and walking tour of historic downtown and its

handsome Victorian homes, the Gibson house modeled after Andrew Jackson's "Hermitage," and the Hayes Antique Truck Museum. We will also visit the annual "Feats of Clay" exhibit in Lincoln at the historic Gladding-McBean clay-tile factory where much of the terra cotta ornamentation in San Francisco's old buildings was made. The exhibit also includes contemporary pottery. A separate flyer and registration form will be available at the luncheon. The price is \$110. For single occupancy, add \$15.

#### JUNE 19, 1997 THURSDAY HISTORIC MARE ISLAND

Mare Island Naval Base and Shipyard deactivated in March, 1996, after 142 years of service. We will tour with docents of the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation. This organization along with the City of Vallejo is preserving and restoring the unique features of the base. Among the areas we will be seeing are St. Peter's Chapel with its 29 Tiffany stained glass windows, Officers' Row Mansions, beautiful wooded park settings, drydocks and construction shops. Lunch and a slide show at the Vallejo Naval and Historic Museum will be included. Leave 8:30 a.m. Return 4:30 p.m. Price \$32.

#### NOVEMBER 4-15, 1997

##### CARIBBEAN AND PANAMA CANAL CRUISE

We sail on the Holland-America Line *Noordam* from Acapulco with ports of call in Costa Rica, San Blas Islands, Cartagena, Grand Cayman Islands and Tampa, Florida. Price \$2400 including airfare, port taxes and baggage handling. Brochure will be available at the luncheon.

#### ARGONAUTS TRIP

June 8-12, 1997 CATALINA ISLAND AND SANTA BARBARA Call Fern McLaggan for details 371-9169

APRIL 30-MAY 13, 1997 HISTORY MUSEUMS OF SAN JOSE TRIP ON AMTRAK TO NEW ORLEANS & CRUISE TO YUCATAN, GRAND CAYMAN & JAMAICA. Call 277-3780

# OFFICERS - CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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## Jane Brown-ton-Corresponding Sec

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## & President Emeritus

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408-293-0896

Submissions to the Trailblazer For the June Issue must be received by May 1

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## Joseph (Bud) & Marie Amaral

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## Evelyn Ucovick

## Parliamentarian

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95125-1431 408-287-8413

## Hacienda Cemetery

## Richard Hill

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## Bud & Marie Amaral

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## Californians Treasurer

Fern McLaggan 60 Palomar  
Real, Campbell, CA 95008-420

P.O. BOX 8208 SAN JOSE CA 95155  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

# PIONEER LUNCHEON

SATURDAY, MARCH 1 1997  
AT NOON LOU'S VILLAGE

## PAUL BERNAL THE MOST NOTORIOUS MURDER CASES IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY,

PART 2

554-7587

BREAST OF CHICKEN  
SALAD & ROLLS

RESERVATIONS

FRESH VEGETABLES

BEFORE

MASHED POTATOES

WEDNESDAY,

ICE CREAM & COFFEE

FEBRUARY 26, 1997

\$14

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