

QUARTERLY BULLETIN  
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS  
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

INCORPORATED 1875

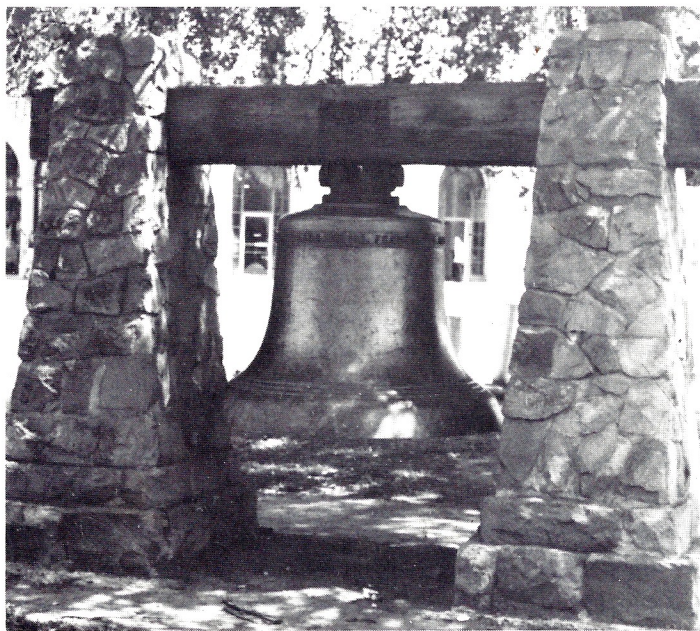
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Volume 22

May 1982

Number 2

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**1891 FIRE BELL**

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SAN JOSE, 1881: — “Perils of a Dandy” The young ladies organized a club for the protection of the young men of the city. In appreciation the young men established an anti-mashing league for the ladies’ protection. It was their prime purpose to introduce the ladies to the science of mashing, then teach them its perils!

SAN JOSE, May 1888: — “Ironing Things Out” Wooden benches in St. James Square were constantly being defaced, so iron seats were recommended. It was suggested that castings be made so to separate the seats and thus prevent idlers from reposing on them.

SAN JOSE, July 1896: — “Caught Chiseling” Charges against a fireman for not responding to three alarms were dismissed. His plea was that he worked in a marble yard and the noise of the stone cutting drowned out the alarm bell.

SAN JOSE, May 1908: — “Post-Age” Again Postmaster Hawley issued a warning that it was illegal to hitch horses to mail boxes and warned the law would be enforced.

CAMPBELL, May 1910: — “A Devil in His Flock” The pastor of a local church was concerned about his rooster who actually grew horns.

PALO ALTO, August 1910: — “Hanging Out to Dry” Twenty students at Stanford University offered themselves as “human guinea pigs” to determine once and for all whether or not sulphuring of Santa Clara Valley dried fruit was harmful to consumers.

SAN JOSE, September 1910: — “First Gas War” Normandin-Campen, a carriage firm, announced a “buggy sale” stating it was their intention to clear their carriage inventory so they could concentrate completely on the automobile.

SARATOGA, 1922: — “Never a Dull Moment” The Saratoga Shaving Parlor, between artistic haircutting and shaves, sharpened scissors, knives and saws, also, repaired and cleaned watches, clocks and jewelry. If you had no hankering to being “next”, a pool table was available.

H. C.

# HENRY MILLER

BY BILL CHIVERS



One of our nation's great collectors of land and cattle had his home and headquarters in Gilroy and his summer home at Mt. Madonna. Born Heinrich Alfred Kreiser on July 21, 1872 in Germany, he emigrated to New York City when nineteen years old where he worked as a butcher boy.

In 1849 gold was discovered in California, and Heinrich Kreiser followed the hordes to California. He had bought a ticket on a ship at a bargain price from a shoe salesman who at the last minute decided not to make the trip.

When the young man boarded the ship, he looked at the ticket and to his dismay he saw "NOT TRANSFERABLE." At the head of the gangplank stood the purser checking the passenger list. "Name please?," the purser asked. The young man looked at his ticket and read off the name "Henry Miller." Unwilling to admit the fraud, he continued to use the salesman's name. It wasn't until eight years after he arrived in San Francisco that he had this name legalized by a special act of the California State legislature.

From the beginning, the gold mines had no lure for Miller. In 1851 he opened his own butcher shop in San Francisco. He could see the population of California increasing. He knew these people had to eat, and meat — great helpings of it — was what they wanted. By 1853 Miller had saved enough money to buy the first herd of American cattle ever driven into San Francisco. They were far superior to the small local Spanish animals. Thus, he started to buy land for his cattle to graze on.

Originally, Miller had a partner, Charles Lux, who handled the marketing and the city aspects of the business; hence, the properties were always known as "Miller and Lux Holdings," although Lux had died in 1887, and Miller had bought out his partner's shares from his heirs.

It is estimated that at the peak of his career, near the end of the last century, Miller owned twenty-five square miles of land south of Gilroy where his home ranch called "Bloomfield" was located. He also owned over twenty-two thousand square miles of land, and through leases controlled over ten times that much land in Oregon, Nevada and California. He had well over one million head of cattle and one hundred thousand head of sheep, plus hogs, horses, and even a herd of elk. His motto was "Wise men buy land, fools sell."

Miller put raising of livestock into a systematic business. His firm had the largest wholesale and packaging meat business in the West. He helped develop the white faced Hereford, a breed of cattle particularly suited to the West. He improved the breeds of sheep, and is credited with being the first to experiment with the strange new crop called "alfalfa." He was among the first to plant cotton and rice. He was one of the first to perceive that water was more precious to California than gold.

He built thousands of miles of levies and irrigation ditches, three major canals and a dam across the San Joaquin River, and by his court battles, he shaped the laws pertaining to water rights in the Far West.

Though land and livestock were his primary interests, Miller owned just about all the property and businesses in the three San Joaquin towns of Los Banos, Firebaugh and Dos Palos.

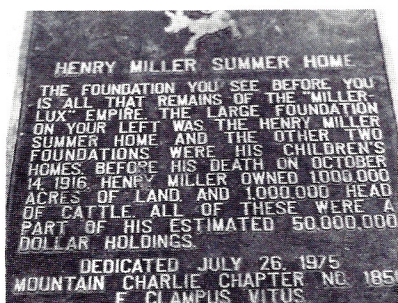
Miller personally directed his large holdings down to the most minute detail. Miller lived to be eighty-nine years and continued to direct his activities until his death on October 14, 1916. He left a large sum of money to his home town in Germany and to the poor people of Gilroy. He left three hundred thirty thousand dollars to build a hospital in Gilroy. Although the hospital was never built, the money was held in trust until his grandson died in 1962. At the time, the bequest had grown to six hundred thousand dollars, and it was used to build a wing on the Gilroy Wheeler Hospital called the "Henry Miller Memorial Wing."

Henry Miller's estate was valued at forty million dollars which comprised land and cattle spread over one million eight hundred thousand acres of land in three states. Most of his estate was left in trust for the third generation. It was not possible to find another who could hold such an em-

pire together. Poor management of the land and cattle by the heirs and suits by the State and Federal governments for taxes, and an epidemic of hoof and mouth disease nearly broke the Miller fortune.

The heirs began selling off the land in 1923. It was in 1927 that the Mt. Madonna property was acquired for a county park, and the last of the Miller-Lux land of seventy-five acres near Gilroy was sold in the late 1950's.

Thus, an empire that flourished for almost one hundred years came to an end, and Henry Miller, this unique man of great importance to California, has passed into local and western history.



Mid the rumble of traffic and the blast of air horns on the southern tip of the Market Street Plaza hangs the long retired and silent 1891 fire bell of the San José Fire Department.

On June 20, 1937 after forty-six years of loyal service, this three thousand pound bronze and silver "fire alarm system" of another day was crowned with retirement. Present at this eventful downtown ceremony were

civic, church, fraternal groups and a remembering audience at a location still known by most as City Hall Park.

Displayed, to this day, from a massive twelve foot redwood beam between seven foot piers of reinforced concrete, two bronze plaques, one on each pier, recalls the city council of 1891 and names of earlier fire chiefs. The plaque on the beam which bore the dedication of San José Parlors of the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West has since disappeared.

The dedication was made by Eldred L. Meyer, Grand President of the Native Sons. Rev. John J. Laherty, S.J. of St. Joseph's Church offered the benediction. Ed Haley, the only surviving fire chief at the time was the speaker. Haley recalled that just forty-five years before on July 2, 1892 the very same bell called out firemen for duty to a blaze that went on to destroy half of the business district.

Erupting on the north side of East San Fernando Street, near First, the fire consumed the prominent Lick House on First Street. At Second and San Fernando the imposing South Methodist Church fell victim. The raging tide of flame moved north on Second claiming the elegant California Theatre, then going on to deplete an entire block of supply houses, stores and restaurants. Nearing Santa Clara Street, the furious blaze jumped to the east side of Second where in total disrespect ruttled Krumbs Brewery and the Empire Fire House where Ed Haley himself was a driver of the Empire Hose Wagon. A last ditch stand was made at Krighen-

# 1891 FIRE BELL

By Henry Calloway



berser's Iron Works on Third Street before the fifty-eight hour ordeal was contained.

"This devastating fire," says City Historian Clyde Arbuckle, "was attributed to a prankster who flipped a cigarette into the middle of a small fireworks display at the entrance to a shooting gallery."

City records indicate the bell was ordered on May 7, 1891 from the San Francisco Globe Brass and Bell Foundry who cast the huge bell on July of that year at a cost of \$1,150. The bell soon after was belfried at the Torrent Engine House on North Market Street, previously the 1855 City Hall.

As noted in the *San José Mercury Herald*, Judge Martin Welsh, a San José native, traced a number of interesting duties concerning the bell at the ceremony. "It was just three years old when it summoned the militia from strike duty to protect the United States mails," said Welsh. "It pealed a plea for volunteers in the 1898 Spanish American conflict so effectively that replacements for M Company 8th Infantry were on their way to debarkation point in less than twelve hours. It mustered aid in 1906 to quake-stricken San José and called men to Mexican border duty in 1916. It clanged a call to arms and to Liberty Loan drives in World War I."

Rev. Mark Rifenbark, rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church, invoked blessings saying, "This bell recalls the citizens and events of earlier days and will become a permanent stimulus to our civic pride."

Fire Chief Charles Plummer in a closing reflection said, "I accept with pleasure this bell as a token of respect for the men departed and for all living firemen."

The original wish was to sound the bell whenever a fireman or prominent citizen passed on.



Belfry and Engine Company No. 1  
and Chemical Engine No. 2 — formerly



# President's Message



John W. Clark

Clyde Arbuckle, San José City Historian, was honored by way of this California Historical Landmark tablet No. 945 on March 6, 1982. This memorial recalls the introduction of the honeybees into California in 1853 by Christopher Shelton. Located near the main entrance to the San José Air Terminal building, it sits on land once part of the sprawling Mexican rancho where Shelton started his apiary.

At this dedication Clyde Arbuckle was paid tribute for unexhaustible contribution to our valley's history. Our past Pioneer president Leonard McKay read and presented Mr. Arbuckle with an official state resolution in his honor before an engrossed turnout.

Our gratitude is extended to E Clampus Vitus Mountain Charlie Chapter 1850 for spearheading this meaningful endeavor.

The interest in the annual Historical Essay Contest has been great and the judges will have a real task in deciding on the winners. The committee, the judges and all those who entered the contest deserve your support. Please show your support and your approval for this annual event by attending the June 5th Quarterly Luncheon at which time you will hear the contest results.

The annual election of the Board of Directors will be held at the June Quarterly Meeting. The nominating committee composed of Rupert Moore, chairman, Frances Fox and Leonard McKay will present fifteen names of candidates for membership on the Board. Nominations may also be made from the floor. This election is an important event. The directors are always open to suggestions and will always welcome volunteers that wish to serve on committees or help in some manner.

**FORBES MILL** in Los Gatos is State Registered Landmark No. 458. Built on a creek as a flour mill in the early 1850's by Jim Forbes, it was the first enterprise to offer employment in the vicinity now called Los Gatos. Thanks to the Eureka Savings Foundation the mill has been restored into a delightful museum for all to enjoy — free of charge — at 75 Church Street, Los Gatos — open Wednesday through Sunday. The museum imparts photographs and artifacts of colorful periods of life in Santa Clara Valley.




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THE TRAILBLAZER GOES A CALLING

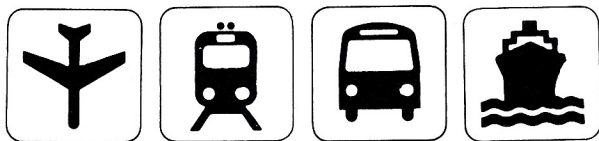
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**Ethel Berryessa Hill** — “My father, Alexander Berryessa, was a descendant of Guadalupe Berryessa who came here from Spain with the De Anza Party.”

**Christie Muirson Wright** — “I am the great great granddaughter of Alexander Muirson and Eliza McKay Muirson. They were both natives of Scotland and buried in Oak Hill Cemetery of San José. Their son, George Alexander Muirson, was first associated with the San José *Morning Times*. Later, he founded the Muirson Label Company.”

**Duncan Oneal** — “My maternal great grandfather, Henry Messing, left Germany in 1849 on a honeymoon arriving in S.F. in 1850. One of their children, my grandmother Dora, married F. D. Hatman. Hatman and Amos Normandin established the carriage making business under the name of Hatman and Normandin, later Normandin-Campen after Grandfather Hatman retired.

“My paternal great grandparents started west by wagon from Missouri. Great Grandfather was reported killed in a gun fight in St. Joe, MO. Great Grandmother drove her own wagon across the plains with her children, one of whom was my grandfather George Washington Oneal. Settling near Winnemucca, Nevada where they ranched until about 1888 when my grandmother, Sarah Trousdale Oneal came to San José with her three children, one of whom was my father, Louis Oneal.



## Touring With The Californians

Reservations for the following trips will be accepted at the June 5th Luncheon and by phone to Ruth Gross at 294-9830 beginning June 7 between 9am and noon, Monday through Friday. Members of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County are given preference over guests with reservations taken on first-come, first-served basis. Reservations for MEMBERS ONLY will be accepted for the first week after each quarterly luncheon meeting; thereafter, non-members will be welcome. Subject to this rule, anyone may sign on a waiting list. The right is reserved to decline or accept any person as a member of any tour.

"The Californians," P.O. Box 2007, Los Gatos, CA 95031.

Tuesday, July 6 ... Look in on MONTEREY'S HOTEL DEL MONTE now marking its 100th anniversary. A naval facility since 1942, the fabulous Del Monte is affectionately referred to today as the "Annapolis of the West."

Saturday and Sunday, August 7-8 ... This will introduce a "WEEK ENDER" for Californians who are occupied during the week. Details at our June 5th Luncheon!

September 11-25 ... COLORADO GRANDEUR ... We have just a short waiting list on this nifty led by Austen Warburton. Call NOW if interested.

NEW YEARS ... A 1983 "eye-opener" — Pasadena Rose Parade — 3 days.

TRAVEL ALERTS for 1983 ... ARIZONA in the spring ... SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES in the late summer ... CANADIAN ROCKIES in the autumn.

Lost and not Found ... A woman's purple jacket belonging to one of our steadfast tour committee people was lost at our last luncheon. It can be returned at 294-9830.

WAITING LISTS: If you are interested in a trip that is full, we do encourage you to sign up on the "Waiting List."

# Welcome New Members

Gertrude E. Boyle  
Helen Louise Buell  
Clara Burks  
Helen DeLorenzo  
Ethel E. Emerson  
Fred R. Escobedo  
Bernice Fields  
John T. Floersch  
Sandra Floersch  
Velma E. Gordon  
Dan Guasticci  
Joya Guasticci  
Merle E. Hippler  
Robert F. Hippler  
Mrs. Leon Jenkins

Mrs. Harold Johnson  
Elizabeth Jung  
Eugene Jung  
Elsa A. Lawrence  
Stanley G. Lawrence  
Roberta Lindsay  
Frank J. Maggi  
Margaret Maggi  
Phoebe Moore  
Agnes M. Nelson  
Mildred Nelson  
Elsie E. Norman  
Irene Panighetti  
Gladys M. Rundle

Barbara Sawyer  
Alice Marie Schwoob  
Frank W. Schwoob  
Gertrude M. Seimers  
Doris M. Straley  
Florence M. Togni  
Courtland Watson  
Jeanette Watson  
Mimi F. Wells  
Elbert T. White  
Wanda White  
Esther Winslow  
Kenelen B. Winslow  
Lynn Young  
Agnes E. Yuseff



*Beyond the sunset*

Lillian Anderson  
Bernice Arnerich  
Fanny Barton  
Emerson Brooks

Adela F. Coolidge  
Francis Crofut  
Nova F. Finley  
Norman J. Gallant  
Eileen L. Harper

Edward S. Hart  
Natalie Morris  
Amy W. Parker  
Clara C. Seebach

**TRAGIC** — Over 100 of our members have been lost due to non-payment of dues. Please send payment (\$3) to our concerned Financial Secretary, Bob Armstrong, 751 So. 12th Street, San José, CA 95112.

**MOVING ?** Make it easier by letting the mailman and the *Trailblazer* know about it.

HERE 'TIS

**JUNE 5<sup>th</sup>**

# Summer LUNCHEON

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*Featuring Our Historical Essay Contest Winners, 1982*

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6:50

LOU'S VILLAGE

**ROAST CHICKEN**  
**JELLO SALAD**  
**RICE - VEGETABLE**  
**CAKE - COFFEE**

SO WE CAN PROPERLY PREPARE...  
PLEASE CALL THIS NUMBER ANYTIME.

## 247-6606

PLEASE CALL THIS SAME NUMBER...  
IF YOU MUST CANCEL.

DOORS OPEN 10:30 -- LUNCHEON 12:15 H.C.

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