

Volume 25

February 1984

Number 1



SMITH CREEK HOTEL

A SMITH CREEK HOTEL CHECKS OUT!

It was George Washington's Birthday in 1937 when a determined swarm of mauls turned to chopping down the long revered Santa Ysabel Smith Creek Hotel on Mt. Hamilton Road out of existence. In the midst of a rice fish and game belt it had become the rallying point for sportsmen and tourists who often shared hotel register space with royalty and notables. The hotel and stable complex was on the 6000 acre Halls Valley Ranch purchased by Tom Snell in 1883. Tom's popular retreat was established in 1885, three years before Lick Observatory was

completed in 1888. Occupying a flat on Smith Creek, it was the last of three stage coach stops where fresh horses were provided for the sheer six-mile ascent to the summit.

Snell's 'country club' was later on lease to the San Jose Vendome Hotel from where four-horse drawn stages set forth daily for Smith Creek and Mt. Hamilton.

In 1900 William Brokey acquired the lease. Brokey ran a careful operation as some of his house rules would suggest: "Baths must be ordered in advance. Only one bath per week permitted."

There were several operators, none successful, until Albert Vogel arrived in 1928 and motivated things with camp sites and swimming pool. Sadly, the exhausted landmark was taken over in 1936 when Vogel's lease was terminated by Joseph D. Grant interests. With the passing of Mr. Grant in 1942, the ranch passed on to his daughter, Josephine Grant McCreery. Upon her death in 1972, the ranch was willed to the Save the Redwood League of which Mr. Grant had been one of the founders and to the Menninger Foundation in Kansas. According to Richard Gonzales, superintendent of the Grant County Park, its now 9,850 acres was recovered by the county in 1980. Nonetheless, the wildwood still continues to snuggle the quiet confines of Tom Snell's long cordial Santa Ysabel Sanctuary.

▼▼▼ WHALE BLAZERS ▼▼▼

SAN JOSE, 1899: - Because of a predicted meteor shower which failed to appear, Mayor Charles Martin issued a proclamation that the city fire bell would be rung if the shower came so as to save those interested from the loss of sleep.

SAN JOSE, 1899: - Hit tunes included: "We Can't Forget the Maine," "Zizz Ze Zum Zum," "My Gal is a High Born Lady," "Oh! Melinda," "You Got to Play Ragtime," and "Stars and Stripes Forever."

SAN JOSE, 1899 - Normal School girls were protesting against vaccinations in the arm and under sanction were permitted to have them on their legs.

SANTA CRUZ, 1902: - Clergymen deplored covered bridges as temptations to "spoon" in buggies.

SAN JOSE, 1902: - A new invention known as a "cash register" was attracting attention among local business men with its demonstration here. The machine had a total and detail adder and change drawers, all adding to the efficiency of the operator.

SAN JOSE, 1902: - The Council decided to enforce the ordinance regulating the driving of cattle herds through the city streets. A special permit where more than four cattle were to be driven would be required.

SAN JOSE, 1911: - Chief of Police Kidderd urged a flashlight and telephone system be initiated in the police department as a means of better communication among patrolmen.

JANUARY 1911: - For the first time in the history of aviation in this country, a live bomb was dropped from an aeroplane on Camp Selfridge Field at San Francisco and exploded. The experiment was made by Lt. M.S. Crissy of the Coast Artillery.

SAN JOSE, 1913: - Councilmen made it known there was only four hours in each twenty-four when the city would be without the service of a patrol wagon. It was explained only two patrol wagon drivers were employed and they were on duty only ten hours each which left four hours every day not covered.

SAN JOSE, 1927: - Purchase of the Mt. Madonna Park of 2,934 heavily timbered acres of rolling land in the Santa Cruz Mountains for use as a County Park was assured when the Board of Supervisors declared to buy the land for \$60,000.



WILLIAM GARDNER - FOUNDER GARDNER SCHOOL AND DISTRICT

Mrs. Alyce Walker and her loyal husband, Joe, have a stout relationship with the Gardner District. Alyce's great-grandfather, William Gardner founded it and Joe was born in the heart of it.

"Grandpa was a man of no little means," begins Alyce, a trim vivacious mother of two daughters who have gone on to introduce the Walkers to the realm of great-grandparenthood also. "Grandpa Gardner had four children: Ida B., Mary Ellen, George W. and Eliza B., all born in the East. He settled in this then remote section of San Jose in 1885 bounded approximately by Bird Ave., W. William and Grant Streets to the Guadalupe River along Home Street, then back to Bird. The ranch home remained at 659 Delmas Ave. until it was razed to make way for Highway 280 in 1970."

City directories of the early 1880's list William Gardner as a farmer with a dwelling at First and San Carlos Streets. Timeworn family photos show it in the midst of an established fruit orchard. Hales Department Store once occupied most of the property.

"About this time," Alyce states, "Grandma Mary Ellen Rhodes had just been widowed and returned from the East to be near her parents, Sarah and William Gardner. She had two small children, my mother and uncle. She was given the home at First and San Carlos by her father. San Jose downtown was growing rapidly and moving so close to her dwelling she believed it necessary to move it out in the country onto her father's prune ranch on Delmas Avenue. It was also considered to be a better place to raise the children." Alyce can remember her mother, Ida M. Bishop, telling her how they continued to live in the house as it rolled towards its new location and how she looked for its whereabouts each day, for three days, on the way home from Lincoln School.

Gardner at the time was very active in getting people to settle in his section and interested others to do the same. One of his first community efforts was to urge and finally accomplish the construction of a wooden drainage ditch to carry off surface waters from the area to the Guadalupe River. He was also instrumental in getting Delmas Avenue through the tract.

Handwritten journals by Gardner himself are in the custody of the Walker family today. This relentless ancestor, born in Hudson, New Hampshire on January 16, 1829, had scribed in vivid detail several of his trips west. One adventure had him crossing the steaming Isthmus in 1852 and another around the Horn. His last venture was to the Sandwich Islands, now our tropic state of Hawaii, in 1878.

In 1892 near the west end of William Street, near Bird Avenue, on prune orchard land donated by Mr. Gardner, the school had its beginnings. After a dubious struggle the following two years, a two room structure was finally realized. Mr. Gardner assisted in the subscription for organizing the school district to take care of the sizeable influx of families already settling in the new subdivision. When the question of a school trustee came up, this honor was offered Gardner, but he refused. In appreciation the residents named the school after him. Frank Bartel, A San Jose Normal School graduate, was elected principal. A Miss Stevens and Miss Puritan, who were also Normal trained, were named teachers.

Mr. Gardner retired from active business and lived quietly until his death at the age of sixty-eight at his Delmas Avenue home in August 1897.

In 1904 according to the San Jose News of October 29, 1929, during one of the largest down pours the county had ever known an attempt was made to pass bonds for a new school bulding. For three days previous to the election the rain fell in torrents and it was only by a supreme effort on the part of a few loyal citizens did enough voters respond to carry the election by a small margin.

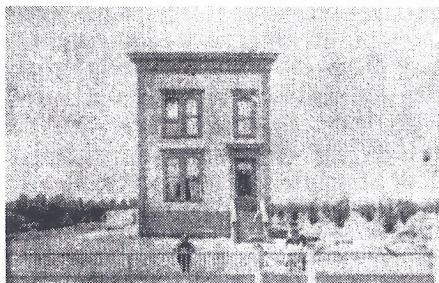
Honors were attributed to the accomplishments of William Gardner when on March 16, 1911, San Jose's first annexation absorbed the Gardner district.

In 1924 there had been a good deal of agitation to change the school name to "Edwin Markham School" in memory of Santa Clara valley's most noted poet. It is still the Gardner School on Illinois Ave.

As of September 1983, City Historian Clyde Arbuckle says there has been two thousand three hundred eighty-one annexations into San Jose since that of the Gardner District.

"Grandpa Gardner was a Godly man," Alyce voices with dedicated devotedness, "well educated and loved by his children and grandchildren. His great-grandchildren revered him and respected his memory."

Yes, William Gardner, a valorous member of the California Pioneers left his mark!



Gardner Home and Fruit Ranch
First & San Carlos Streets
San Jose, 1880's



The Home Today
at 689 Delmas Ave.

The following are brief accounts taken from Gardner's Journal:

"On the fifth day of March 1852 I started from New York on the S.S. Promethen for California by way of Nicaragua and the San Juan Del Norte River. The verdant foliage of mahogany, orange, palm, banana and plantation trees were covered with flowers and vines of extraordinary beauty. Tropical birds, monkeys and beasts of the torrid zone mingled in strange confusion with their varied cries of joy and rage."

May 1852 . . . Gardner was already plying his luck at 'diggings' in the vicinity of Mariposa, Columbia, Jamestown and then Shasta City. "Finding I had arrived at the wrong season, I contented myself awhile with work in a hotel and later as a cook at a ranch on the American River. I found cooking unpleasant and started for the mines again. I took my shovel and pick with a will and had very good success."

March 16, 1875 . . . "This trip to Las Vegas (New Mexico) has been the most foolish of all my travels except for the one to Caribou, British Columbia in 1862. I have no hesitancy in pronouncing New Mexico the most God forsaken of the two. May I never again be so foolish as to go on the frontier of any country, but leave it to the roughs and adventurers. The renegade whites and sickly natives living on nothing but torteas, beans and peppers . . . I have been successful beyond my expectations in my business and yet have done nothing worth recording . . . I reflect upon my life, a quarter of a century spent in selfish pursuit. I have felt ashamed of my bad moral condition. I fear I will make a poor soldier in the army of saints."

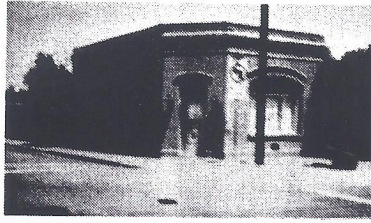
BOLD ROBBERY — 1906

By Bill Chivers

The people of Campbell were shocked Monday morning, December 17, 1906, when it was announced that an attempt had been made to rob the Bank of Campbell, and a steady line of people could be seen hurrying to scene of the daring holdup. From the best obtainable information secured, there were three men in the affair, possible four, and a clue that a woman also had a part to play. As nearly as can be ascertained, the robbers came to town near midnight Sunday, as at least one passenger coming on the 12:00 o'clock street car passed a man standing in a shadow as he went to his room in the Sutter Building. Howard Buffington, Campbell Peace Officer, came on the same car and as he turned the bank corner tried the rear door, as was his custom, but saw no one. The robbers secured an entrance to the bank by pounding out the panel in the rear door with a sledge hammer which they had secured by breaking into J.C. Lloyd's blacksmith shop, and stealing in addition a number of other tools for use in getting into the vault and safe.

Before starting in on their nefarious job, it is pretty sure they tried to get away from the night watchman at the J.C. Ainsley Cannery, Wm. Carney, for he heard a mysterious rattling of the front door shortly after midnight, but at the time he thought it was made by a dog. Had he ventured out of the door at that time, he would undoubtedly have been sandbagged or otherwise dealt with, as it was dark.

After the robbers had broken a hole in the bank door, one or two entered, while one or two remained as sentinels on the corners. Two sharp Southern Pacific picks had been stolen from the tool box at the San Jose Narrow Gauge Depot. These were used to pick a large hole in the brick vault. The robbers evidently believed that an entrance could be gained into the vault this way. After going through three tier of bricks, the attempt was given up, and they resorted to dynamite. It was the picking and falling of bricks that first aroused the nearby residents, for several persons heard the noise. It was not long until a sharp report was heard about 2:15 a.m., being the explosion of a dynamite charge placed in the upper left and corner of the vault in an effort to break the hinges and locks. Both charges were ineffectual and only tore off a part of the outer one-quarter inch plate and bending in the inner doors. After the first two failures, a third charge was placed in the door but was left. The robbers found it necessary to get away in a hurry after the explosions had occurred, although as a matter of fact, they could have worked away for a couple of more hours without much danger of being bothered.



**Old Campbell Bank
Now Campbell Historical Museum**

As the robbers were about to retreat, Dr. Cooper came out on his back porch to see what was the matter. He heard one fellow say, "Get back there" or something to that effect. He thought it was a row between some of the boys and paid no attention to them, but returned to the house not knowing that two of the shots which had just been fired had been aimed at him, and the bullets had hit his porch a couple of feet from where he had stood. His wife thought that he should investigate more carefully. Dr. Cooper went over in the dark and finding the doors locked, went to bed and slept until 5:00 a.m. when Mr. Chas. Sutter came to his house telling him that he was certain a robbery had been committed. They both went over and found the hole in the back door. They entered, turned on the lights and found the robbers' tools, and on the floor in a broken bottle some nitroglycerin which had been used in conjunction with the dynamite.

At the time the two shots were fired at Dr. Cooper, the lookout fired two shots in the air, probably to scare him. William Carney heard these two shots from in front of the cannery and suspected something wrong. He then fired three shots into the air. It was thought that it was this that caused the robbers to put off up Central Avenue on the run. People living along this street heard them running and talking. It is now that the woman enters the affair. It was believed that a woman had a team in waiting to carry off the booty and which served to bring the two picks from San Jose. On Central Avenue towards Hamilton Avenue were many prints of women's shoes under the shade of the trees, the inference being that she was standing watching the developments, for the prints were facing Campbell.

On the run from town, one of the robbers threw off his coat, in the pockets of which were some matches which corresponded to those left on the bank floor. This is the only clue the officers had. The thieves were provided with a dim light, made out of a large apricot can, with bulls' eyes cut near the bottom of the tin in which was placed the stub of a candle.

Sheriff Ross was of the opinion that the robbers were experts and would have succeeded in their work had they not been detected. Had they obtained an entrance to the vault, they would still have had the most difficult job before them in blowing up the steel safe which was made of three inch chrome steel and weighed about 1,000 pounds. The bank officials felt justified in saying the safe could not be blown open, but that additional precautions would be taken to more thoroughly guard the banks interests. No clues had been found thus far that had led to an arrest. While the door of the bank vault was away being repaired, E.E. Weeks was employed a night watchman and armed to the "teeth" for any possible looters.

Many interesting things were related about the robbery: Among them being that Mr. Brundage suspected that things were not right, but did not feel warranted to telephone the sheriff, but that he raised the window and leveled his gun on the lookout in front of Sutters Store, and only desisted from shooting because his wife feared an innocent man might be shot. John Evans on hearing the shots, got up, went to the front gate, but returned to bed not hearing any further noise. George Whitney, next door, on hearing the shots, thought it was the doings of some boys and rolled over for another snooze. George had guns galore, but this was one time he was caught napping.

Upon leaving, one of the robbers hurled a rock through Mrs. Sutter's large window and disappeared into the night never to be heard from again.

* * * * *

SORRY ABOUT THAT MR. LICK!

According to the revised edition of the State of California Historical Landmarks publication of 1982, 951 landmarks are listed. Lick Observatory is not one of them.

Much of the fundamental data on which so much astronomy is dependent came out of Lick Observatory and it has been around for 96 years.

It appears the Commission has shunned Lick's stellar performance for such "historical significant" sites as Dogtown, a reform school, oyster beds, hotels, chicory works and, oh yes, a mystery house!

ANNUAL HISTORICAL ESSAY CONTEST

April 30, 1984 is the deadline for entries to the annual historical essay contest. Any person, subject, or place that concerns the history of Santa Clara County is an acceptable topic for an essay.

Two categories, high school level and general (college and all others), each provide the following cash awards: First prize: \$200. Second prize: \$50. Third prize \$25.

To be considered for the contest, the essay must be a minimum of 3000 words, and include a bibliography. Completed papers should be mailed or delivered to: Austen Warburton, 12th Floor, Bank of America Building, 101 Park Center Plaza, San Jose, CA 95113.

Detailed contest rules are available by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Helen Arbuckle or Linda Larson, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155.

* * * * *

The December Luncheon meeting of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County was indeed a memorable and historic occasion. With the power out and the dining room at Lou's Village in darkness, the Pioneers reminisced of similar hardships their ancestors suffered while crossing the Plains.

We made do with candles, very romantic, but hardly enough light so our authors could effectively display, sell and autograph their books.

The tour and membership committees were also handicapped because it was difficult or impossible to read the tour information and write checks.

But all was not lost. After an abbreviated business meeting, the head table was cleared and the committee chairmen and authors set up shop in front of the opaque glass windows along the west wall that provided enough light to do a thriving business.

Member authors who participated were: Frances Fox, Ralph Rambo, Austen Warburton, Charles Sullivan, June Oxford, Carolyn de Vries, Clyde Arbuckle and Pat Loomis. We thank them for their interest. Shared profits will go toward publication of Pioneer papers.

The two hundred fifteen members who came out that day proved that they are the "Right Stuff" and Lou's Village was definitely cooking with gas.

Helen Arbuckle

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES FOR 1984?

Many thanks to those of you who have responded so well to our earlier request for payment of dues. Even so there are still many members who are now in arrears and stand to lose their membership totally or be removed from the TRAILBLAZER mailing list. Check your membership cards for the date stamped on it. It **MUST** say at least **Dec. 31, 1984** to remain in full standing.

To quote organization policies: "Members are dropped from membership if more than one year in arrears in payments. The TRAILBLAZER is not to be sent out to members whose dues are in arrears after the March quarterly meeting."

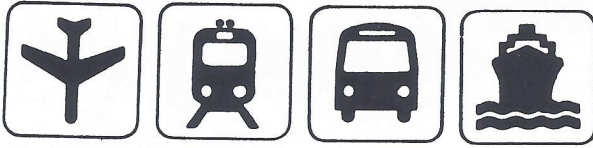
At the quarterly luncheon held December 3, 1983, the members voted to approve a Board recommendation that the organization fees be increased effective January 1, 1984. The increases approved are as follows:

For new members — Admission fee \$3.00 Annual dues — \$5.00
Lifetime Membership — Single \$60.00 Married couple \$100.00
TRAILBLAZER only (non-members) \$4 per year

As always send your check made out to the California Pioneers along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Financial Secretary, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. For additional information or answers to any questions about this please call the Financial Secretary, Mary Wahlberg at 408-246-5503.

Welcome New Members

Chester J. Adams	Elizabeth G. Helmer	Jack C. O'Bannon
Carol Bartholomew	Florence G. Honore	Marcella O'Bannon
Roy L. Bartholomew	Dolores L. Holt	Vinnie B. Peak
Nancy C. Bean	Charles Lavell	Dorothy S. Penniman
Erma G. Bolton	Georgia Lavell	Louise Re
Jane F. Brownton	Josephine Lazatera	Sibyl Resetar
Bonnie D. Burnett	Mary Macaluso	Laura E. Richard
Nadine M. Cardwell	Rose Macaluso	Dale H. Slater
Josephone Colombini	Doris Marshall	Nelma Stafford
Victor Colombini	Gilbert L. Mobley	Virginia M. Stephens
Betty M. Galvan	Yetive Mobley	Darrell Stuart
Adeline Gresham	Olive M. Morgan	Mildred Stuart
Elliott Guild	Albert Musick	Isabel Triqueiro
Mary Guild	Veva Musick	Beula Lee Utzerath



Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS for trips can be made by calling Alice Vetterle at 294-7510 between 9 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday. (Ruth Gross is ill.) 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 meeting; thereafter, non-members will be welcome. Subject 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 32121, SAN JOSE, CA 95152

Space is still available for these. Call Now!

YOSEMITE, May 8 - 9 Take this spring bathed special - all solitude and splendor.

OREGON, June 23 - 27 The Beaver state at its best on this early summer breakaway.

October 23 - November 2, WASHINGTON, D.C. "The City Freedom Built" and the Chesapeake Bay Cruise.

Reservations begin at the March 3 Luncheon for the following trip.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND, May 25 - 28 Austen Warburton is our "pathfinder" on this belt of a thousand wonders - takes to serene Highway 395 on the eastern flank of the Sierras - ghost towns - Mono - Mammoth Lakes - Ancient Bristlecone area where trees over 4600 years old still live. There will be highlights aplenty including Mule Days at Bishop.

The Tour Committee would like to know if there is interest in a trip to China in the fall of 1985.

* * * * *

March 1902: Three high British army officials were in the valley to purchase horses for use by the English against the Boers in South Africa. A short time prior German representatives had purchased horses for use in China.

March 1902: - A.C. Banta and Dr. E. Pieper made the first trip by electric automobile ever known in the valley. They toured the hills of Los Gatos and Saratoga doing 29 miles without changing the batteries.

P.O. BOX 8208
SAN JOSE, CA 95155

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LUNCHEON



DUES: \$5 Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of your membership card. Make checks payable to California Pioneers and mail to Financial Secretary, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155.

THE TRAILBLAZER issued February, May, August and November. Editor - Henry Calloway, 1899 McDaniel Ave., San Jose, CA 95126; Associate Editor - Laura Calloway; Assistant Editor - Bill Chivers; Staff Artist - Ralph Rambo. Subscription rate to non-member \$4 per year.

CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY DIRECTORS 1983-1984: President - John Clark; First Vice President - Victoria Malatesta; Second Vice President - Tony Sapena; Recording Secretary - George Kobayashi; Treasurer - Bryan Millar; Financial Secretary - Mary Wahlberg; Membership Chairman - James O'Connor; Marshall - Mary Simas; Archivist - Helen kuesel; Parliamentarian - Austin Warburton; Historian - Clyde Arbuckle; Corresponding Secretary - Helen Arbuckle; Audit Committee - Al Gauger, Helen Walsh, Bill Chivers; Greeter - Eleanor Venum.

SUNSHINE Please notify of SICKNESS and DEATHS: Mary Simas, 1722 Husted, San Jose, CA 408-448-6102.