

Volume 14

Winter 1974

Number 1

HISTORICAL LIBRARY

Clyde Arbuckle

Though "prefab" houses have come in for a good deal of attention lately, we had lots of them here in San Jose over 100 years ago. Commodore Stockton alone imported 14 for erection on his Alameda Gardens subdivision. Most famous of them was the "White House," which stood on ground now occupied by the main building at the old Municipal Airport. Other places in the county had 'em too. Peleg Rush erected 23 in Santa Clara in 1850. Martin Murphy Jr., put up a beautiful one in what is now Sunnyvale, and his brother, Bernard, did likewise near the present San Martin. ***

The bend in So. First St., between Oak & Virginia, and Market street takes off at an angle just north of Reed. Streets don't conform to the otherwise geometric pattern of the neighborhood, but there's nothing wrong with them. They simply followed El Camino Real as it swung around an old-time marsh caused by Canoas Creek. In fact, West Virginia St. was known for many years as Pond Street because it once ended in the Acequia Pond, also caused by the Canoas. ***

How many hometowners remember when Heald's College occupied the floor above the old Morehead-Fleming Drug Store on the northeast corner of 2nd & San Fernando Sts.? How many remember how the college phonograph used to fill the afternoon air with strains of "Under the Double Eagle" and "Repasz Band" marches, metronomed by a rhythm of typewriters? And how many remember the tunnel on the old Alum Rock Park car line, just across from the Alum Rock, and how mama used to caution Junior to keep his head inside or he would get it knocked off? ***

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

How do I say farewell to a publication and a group of people with whom I've spent the best part of more than thirteen years and with whom I've had such a good time. This my last assignment as editor of The Trailblazer is probably the hardest. But, I'd better get started. Just as in every assignment it means putting words on paper. That fear of placing a blank sheet of paper in the typewriter and asking yourself, "How do I begin? How will it end? And what will I put in the middle?" I suppose I can begin, by recalling some of the things I've done in over thirteen years of collaboration---writing captions, making layouts, hours of research, choosing photographs, creating titles, answering letters and fielding phone calls; wrestling with the dictionary for just the right word or phrase. Over thirteen years of trying to put the right words in the right place, the right pictures in the right space and hoping I'd caught all the typos before the issue went to press. But there was never a day in which it wasn't a lot of fun. Through all of this I did the best job I could. Those readers as I well know, are the silent partners in my labors.

So to you, the readers of The Trailblazer I bid a fond farewell. You have provided me with an incentive that can never be measured in dollars and cents. I hope I have made some impact on your consciousness, helping you to visualize and understand the history of Santa Clara County a little bit better.

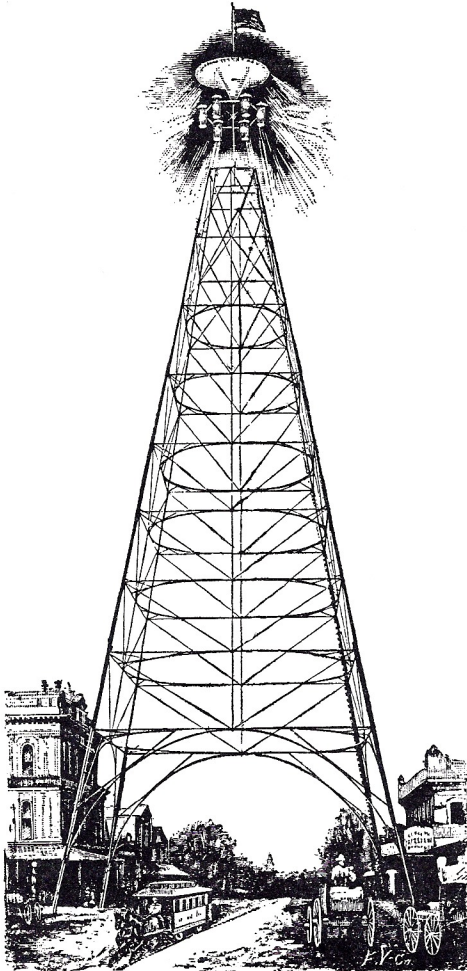
I have enjoyed working, corresponding and visiting with you, as your Editor. I am sure the pleasure of our acquaintance will be renewed from time to time at future meetings of our great organization.

It has been a warm experience that will be remembered always! The only thing I can say now is what I should have said at the beginning and left it at that. But whether at the beginning the middle or the end, to all of you an affectionate good-bye.

Arthur M. Fisk

SAN JOSÉ DAILY MERCURY

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER 25, 1881. SUNDAY MORNING



WOOD CUT FROM SAN JOSE MERCURY (SEE DATE ABOVE)
FROM "ADVENTURE VALLEY" BY RALPH RAMBO

THAT FAMOUS OLD SAN JOSÉ ELECTRIC TOWER



THE PURPOSE OF THE ELECTRIC TOWER WAS LIGHTING OF SAN JOSÉ'S DOWNTOWN AREA. IN 1881, J.J. OWEN, S.J. MERCURY OWNER RAISED \$3500 BY CITIZEN SUBSCRIPTION, IN THOSE DAYS, SUFFICIENT TO COMPLETE THIS PUBLIC PROJECT.

CONSTRUCTED OF IRON PIPE AND BRACE RODS, THE TOWER ROSE FROM THE FOUR CORNERED INTERSECTION OF MARKET AND SANTA CLARA STREETS. THE APEX HELD A PLATFORM CLUSTER OF POWERFUL CARBON ARC LAMPS CASTING THEIR LIGHT OVER THE FEW CENTRAL CITY BLOCKS.

ACCOMPANIED BY A PUBLIC CELEBRATION, THESE LIGHTS WERE TURNED ON DEC. 31, 1881. ACCORDING TO PIONEERS, THE EXPERIMENT WAS A SUCCESS. THE TOWER RECEIVED NATION-WIDE PRESS PUBLICITY INCLUDING A SPREAD IN HARPER'S WEEKLY.

YEAR AFTER YEAR THE TOWER BECAME A BRILLIANTLY LIT CHRISTMAS TREE AND FIREWORKS BURST FROM ITS TOP EACH JULY FOURTH.

BUT FINALLY THE OLD TOWER FELT THE WEIGHT OF YEARS AND ON DEC. 3, 1915 AT 11:55 A.M., A WIND STORM SPELLED DOOM. WITH LOUD WARNING GROANS, THE RUSTY 200 FOOT SKELETON SLOWLY FOLDED LIKE A JACK KNIFE AND EASED ITS WEARY BONES TO THE STREET BELOW. NO ONE WAS INJURED.

FOR 34 YEARS THIS FAMOUS LANDMARK HAD GIVEN THE CITY OF SAN JOSÉ A DISTINCTION AND CIVIC PRIDE NEVER AGAIN TO BE EQUALED.

—Adios *R*

OUR FIRST ELITE SUBDIVISION

Henry Calloway

El Potrero de Santa Clara, later known as The Stockton Ranch, was destined to be our town's first grand subdivision, heralded as THE ALAMEDA GARDENS.

Former military governor, Commodore Robert Field Stockton U.S.N., who with his squadron assisted in the conquest of California at Monterey in 1846, acquired title to this land shortly after from James Forbes who was granted this one square league (4,439 acres) in 1844 by Governor Manuel Micheltorena.

This acreage deemed as one league was bounded by The Alameda and Guadalupe River to a point just north of Santa Clara. A survey in 1850, however, proved this league to be only 1,939 acres. Accounts say Stockton paid \$15,000 for his "short league."

This was California's golden era; trails were well endowed with professional men and trained farmers. Many looked to established areas such as Sacramento, San Francisco and San Jose. A generous portion of this migration readily recognized our town and valley as "the end of the rainbow".

Stockton did not debate long, and immediately started a plan to build, sell or lease parcels to eager settlers. By 1852 Stockton had appointed James F. Kennedy to be his associate and manager. The latter at one time served as sheriff of Santa Clara County.

The ALAMEDA GARDEN'S project proceeded to take form but with some difficulties. Timber was bountiful in our nearby hills, but sawmills were few and primitive in production techniques. Handicapped by the lack of manpower due to the gold rush, Kennedy was determined to overcome these obstacles by shipping "prefabricated houses" from Philadelphia around the Horn to San Francisco. This he did. The first cargo of homes to arrive was bad news. The entire shipment of 14 houses was destroyed by fire in San Francisco harbor. Another consignment of houses, after weathering fierce storms, reached port safely, transferred to a schooner, put in at Alviso and were hauled to the Stockton Ranch by ox team.

No bungalows, these "imports" were two stories with three rooms downstairs and four above with ample and usable attic space. The front door opened to an expansive hallway extending to the rear. The nine foot ceilings like the walls were concealed with fabric and then papered. Floors were planking an inch and a half thick and ten inches wide. Each home had a lavish-sized fireplace

that enriched the front rooms. These clipper-shipped houses were the popular Eastern style, with white clap-board siding all of sound dressed pine and cedar. The major sections such as stairs, roof and wall members were carefully numbered for easy assembly. All joints were mortised and held firmly with wooden pins. Roofs were shingled as well as all porches which embraced the entire front.

The last structure of the once elegant Alameda Gardens, with a cupola on top was standing until 1947 at the end of Spring Street near Newhall, a location now part of the San Jose Municipal Airport approach runway. A spokesman at our city Historial Museum states that, "several of the window shutters that graced the Spring Street Stockton house are now in the custody of the museum."

The residence of Judge Hester, (later moved to 968 Emory Street) was said to be one of the New England shipments.

These hospitable and majestic homes of another day have all since disappeared.

* * *

TRAIN WHISTLES

Arthur M. Fisk

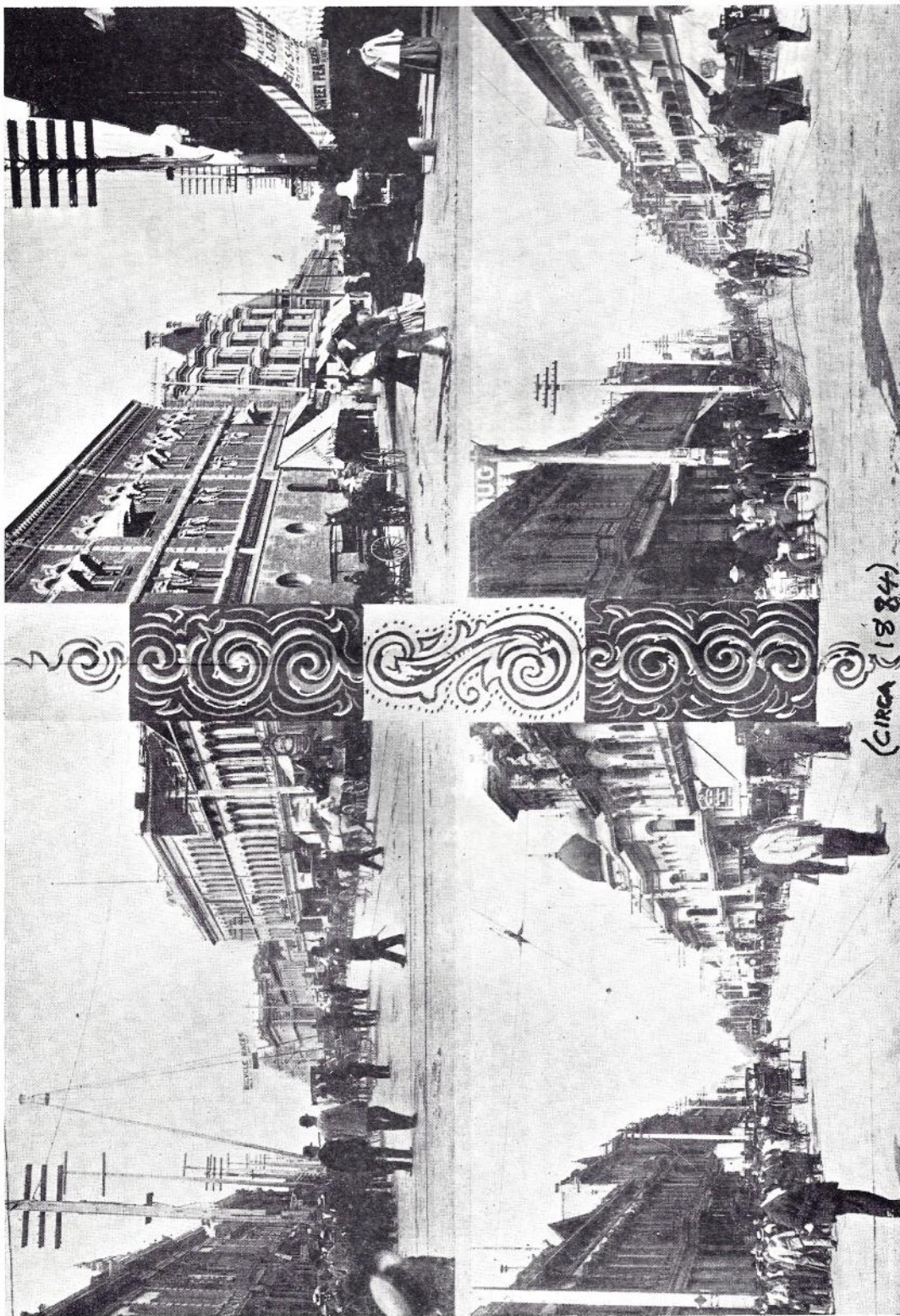
Do you remember the long, lonesome-sounding whistles that floated far across the hills and meadows?

In the canyons and hill country the calls echoed back and forth from one hillside to another. On the prairies, the calls rolled far across the level land; the high pitched, poignant notes traveling a long distance.

Thin echoes of those whistles have come floating down the years in a man's memory. One long, trailing whistle announced the approach to a passenger station. Two long and two short, slurred whistles were the familiar calls of warning approaching a railroad crossing a mile down the track. The calls from steam engines are no longer heard---but the sounds that one remembers were a cry of triumph as men pushed the nation's frontier ever westward.

The whistles in the night were especially appealing. As a small boy listened in his bedroom to the calls of the night flyer in the valley, he could visualize the picture. The lights from the car windows of the long passenger train made him think of a jewelled snake. Some day, this boy thought, he would be blowing the whistle on that long train and riding away to life's adventure.

* * *



*Santa Clara Street — Looking West from First Street.
First Street — Looking North from Santa Clara Street*

SAN JOSE STREET SCENES.

*San Fernando Street — Looking East from First Street.
First Street — Looking North from San Fernando Street.*

PIONEER PICNIC

"The Pioneer" forerunner of "The Trailblazer" gives the following account of the Pioneer Society's first picnic that took place at O'Donnell's Gardens at Tenth and William streets in San Jose June 22, 1876:

"The California Pioneer Society, organized June 22, 1875 voted to hold its first annual picnic in O'Donnell's Gardens, June 22, 1876. (The second memorable event took place September 8, 1877 to celebrate the admission of California into the Union.) The parade was one of the largest ever seen in San Jose. It consisted of the Native Sons, San Francisco Pioneers and the Santa Clara County Pioneers.

There were floats representing pioneer times such as "On An Emigrant Train" and the "Steamer California," manned by men who came on that vessel. There was also a mining scene, "Working the Claim". A local ox carried a pack of an emigrant's outfit. To make the parade seem real, one of the valuable oxen hauling the emigrants, dropped dead while on the march. At O'Donnell's gardens one of the largest barbeques in the history of the State was carried out successfully. In a trench 200 feet long, 3 feet deep and 3 feet wide, there were spitted 27 hogs, 25 sheep and 16 beeves. Over 10,000 people were introduced to one of the finest meals they ever tasted. An English guest said he had eaten the roast beef of old England for 40 years, but he felt that he had never partaken real roast beef until that Saturday. Uncle Ike Branham was chief cook."

* * *

Taken from "The Pioneer" August issue 1897:

"The Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County held its annual meeting at A. O. U. W. hall July 31, 1897. The reports of officers showed the society to be in good condition. Twelve new members were elected.

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, James E. Gordon; Vice-Presidents, Page Hollister and Mrs. Phil Herrold; Secretary, Alex P. Murgotten; Treasurer, Daniel J. Porter.

The next banquet will be held September 25th.

During the past year, eight members have died: R.F. Peckham, John Balbach, Benjamin Burt, William Gardner, J. G. Jefferds, Charles E. Stevens, Rev. A. P. Anderson and Mrs. Mary H. Bose.

The Society expects to give a midwinter evening entertainment with a strictly Pioneer flavor."

* * *

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT
C. Kelly Canelo, M.D.

As we enter into a new year, we are forced to consider the many serious problems which we face as a nation and probably the one which will affect us most is the Energy Crisis. We sincerely hope that restrictions will not prevent the fine attendance which we have had at our Quarterly meetings.

RESERVATIONS -- Many thanks for the way which you have accepted our new method of reservations for our Quarterly Meetings. We will continue the same method, since it has proved so satisfactory.

In the center of this Trailblazer you will find a Business Reply Card for the Quarterly Meeting which will be held at Lou's Village on Saturday, March 2nd at 12 noon. Please return these cards no later than February 23rd so Lou's Village can make proper preparations for all who wish to attend.

PROGRAM -- At our meeting on March 2nd Clyde Arbuckle will talk on: "Sidelights of California History." We are extremely fortunate to have such an outstanding historian as a member of our organization. I'm sure you will not want to miss this program.

DUES -- If you have not paid your 1974 dues of \$3.00 you will have an opportunity to do so at the March Meeting. Dues to this organization are income tax deductible.

OUR BOOK -- Did you purchase a copy of "Santa Clara County Pioneer Papers -- 1973?" If for any reason you have failed to obtain a copy, you will have another opportunity at our March meeting. Don't put it off till the issue has been exhausted; this would be a serious loss to you.

Many thanks for your cooperation and attendance at our 1973 meetings; I hope you will continue your enthusiastic response to our outstanding programs in 1974.

May the New Year be a Happy, Healthy Year for each and everyone of you.

* * *

LOOK FOR IT HERE

Our next quarterly meeting will be held Saturday, March 2nd, 12 o'clock noon at Lou's Village. Our program chairman promises us an exciting program.

THE SOCIAL CLUB of our society meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. For further information call Mrs. Frances Grant, 292-3852.

1974 DUES are \$3 and may be paid to our financial secretary, Curtis S. Bailey at our next meeting or mailed

to him at 390 N. Winchester Blvd. 9C, Santa Clara, CA 95050. ***

FOR TOUR INFORMATION call Mrs. Esther Adams, 264-8119 or Miss Alice Vetterle, 294-7510 between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, Monday thru Thursday. Address 2150-97 Almaden Road, San Jose, CA 95125. If you need a tour brochure, send a stamped, self addressed envelope to above address.

HAWAII - April 2 to 12. Fascinating 11-day tour. We will visit the islands of Kauai, Hawaii, Maui and Oahu. On Maui we will see the Volcano National Park, drive to the top of Haleakala, see the famous "Needle" and the largest Banyon Tree. On the Island of Hawaii we see the famous Volcano House, Thurston Lava Tube, the Black Sands Beach, relaxing at the lovely Kona Inn. Kauai--the "Garden Island," we visit the Fern Grotto and the "Grand Canyon of Hawaii." On Oahu is the city of Honolulu and many sights to see including the Polynesian Cultural Center and a Laua at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Reservations now open. Deposit of \$100.00 with balance due March 2, 1974. Twin accommodations \$585.00 per person. ***

\$170.77 was contributed by the members present at our December quarterly meeting for the handicapped children in the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center Pediatric Ward. ***

About 500 members and guests attended our December meeting and enjoyed a very fine Christmas program, presented by the San Jose Boys Chorus, also at this meeting we honored our members 85 years of age or older. Those present were: William Calvert, Minnie Creighton, Eleanor Dale, Inez Getchell, John Hasen, Isa McIntyre, Robert Maxwell, Ida Skow and J. Winter Smith. Those who could not be present were: Joe Antine, Stella Baggs, Embert Brown, Mary Ferry, Georgia Hanjes, Henry Hazen, May Kirk, Annie Mandala, Marie Menuier, Helen Mignon, Tina Minor, Nina Moon, Kate Owen, Ernest Pieper, Naomi Pinard, William Serpa, Lewis Waldron and Jessie Waldron. ***

The San Jose City Council has approved a \$250,000 plan to restore the 169 year old Don Luis Maria Peralta adobe at 184 St. John Street and buy the adjoining land for a city park. They also gave the go-ahead signal to finish the first phase of the Historic Museum in Kelley Park which they hope will be ready in time for the bi-centennial celebration in 1976. ***

Considerable restoration work is going on at the Winchester Mystery House, particularly room 13 which was Mrs. Winchester's favorite room. The State of California has named the House on Winchester Blvd., San Jose, for its historical significance a State Registered Landmark.

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Aldine Rose Bernal, Clement A. Bernal, Angelica R. Bianco, Beatrice E. Carder, Walter B. Carder, Carl A. Carlson, Mrs. C.A. Carlson, Marc A. Clark, Charles E. Dalzell, Helen B. Dalzell, Jeanne Estes, Fred Gardner, Marilyn Gardner, Ruth Gould, Maude Keffer, Gertrude L. Kohler, Maxine Lewis, Minna D. Malosky, Janice B. McGuire, William J. Miller, Ethel V. Murie, Mary Hoyle Page, Anna Ray Reynolds, Edith V. Roszman, Mervyn E. Rothe, Fay H. Schoonover, Frances Schwalenberg, Anna Leland Seeman, Robert C. Seeman, Leontine B. Seidel, Robert Seidel, Charles H. Spencer, Inez Spini, Mrs. Raymond R. Stegall, Duncan Stewart, Mrs. Duncan Stewart, Duane E. Vannum, Diane P. Williams, Lee H. Young and Lucile E. Young.

* * *

BEYOND THE SUNSET

Malva B. Roth

January 20, 1900 - October 17, 1973

Walter E. Richardson

October 24, 1881 - October 18, 1973

Anne Evans Topham

December 2, 1881 - November 16, 1973

Arthur R. Lack

December 31, 1888 - December 1, 1973

May K. Kirk

October 27, 1876 - December 3, 1973

William R. Noble

August 9, 1909 - December 5, 1973

May H. Ferry

- January 8, 1974

In behalf of the officers and members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, the Trailblazer extends their sincere sympathy to the relatives and friends of our departed members.

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SAN JOSE, CA 95155
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Assistant Editor, Henry J. Calloway

Staff Artist, Ralph Rambo

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Officers for 1973-74

President C. Kelly Canelo, M. D.

1st Vice President. O. J. Schmaelzle

2nd Vice President. Anthony R. Sapena

Recording Secretary Byron K. Bullard

Corresponding Secretary Lynn L. Vermillion

Financial Secretary Curtis S. Bailey

Treasurer Donald E. Tustin

Directors: Clyde Arbuckle, Henry J. Calloway, Arthur M.
Fisk, Marjorie Rusht, Madeline Smalley, A. Bernice Van
Gundy, Gene E. Venum and Austen D. Warburton.

* * *

PLEASE SEND DUES to Curtis S. Bailey, 390 N. Winchester
Blvd. 9C, Santa Clara, CA 95050. Phone 244-1360. Tax
exempt dues are \$3 per years.

SEND APPLICATIONS for membership and address changes to
Bernice Van Gundy, 561 Fuller Ave., San Jose, CA 95125.

SICKNESS and DEATHS please notify Mrs. Ruth M. Heath
390 N. Winchester Blvd., 3-3G, Santa Clara, CA 95050.....
Phone 241-4436.

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Please reserve _____ places for me at the Pioneer Quarterly

Meeting which will be held at Lou's Village on Saturday, March 2nd, 1974
at 12 noon.

Signed _____

**Note: DO NOT send payment with this reservation. Pay for your lunch at
Lou's Village on March 2nd, 1974 AS USUAL.**