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EARLY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS OF
SAN JOSE:

TRIUMPHS AND TRIBULATIONS

PRESENTED TO
CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
of Santa Clara County

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INTRODUCTION

The stagecoaches, trains, streetcars, roads, highways, and streets of San Jose created both triumphs and tribulations. With the new methods of transportation came jobs, excitement, and new methods of communication. These changes were often accompanied by ill feelings, however most changes were steps in the right direction and were warmly greeted.

Prior to the time of civilized man, the human back was a popular means of transportation for many in the Santa Clara Valley. Tule raft or canoe, used in some water areas, were the only other means of transportation, but they were only used for short distances or for fishing.

The Spanish later introduced the beast of burden, and the wheeled vehicle, which allowed them to travel greater distances. They rode horseback and transported most of their possessions on the backs of horses, mules, and burros. Large objects were moved by carreta, which were crude, small wooden carts whose parts were held together by rawhide thongs. This was one of California's only wheeled vehicle used to transport large objects, until the time of the American occupation.

STAGECOACHES

At the height of the gold rush in 1850, when the population accelerated, clipper ships sailed to San Francisco bearing the center of the new transportation system--the Concord coach from New Hampshire. This vehicle was designed to cut down the wear and tear on the horses, not the passengers. These coaches rocked and swayed from San Francisco to San Jose, long before the Wells Fargo Express.

Freight companies came from the northern settlements and eastern connections in Sacramento to merit the large flat bottomed boats tieing in at Alviso. From here, freight would either be carried to San Jose or shipped to San Francisco. San Jose's transports would then be sent to Monterey and ports further away.

William Haun and John Whisman began a transportation system between San Jose and San Francisco in 1849, since they saw the need for connecting stage coach lines with freighters. Whisman and Haun's San Jose-San Francisco Omnibus stages were pulled by mules and mustangs and in order to make the forty-five mile trip in nine hours. The fare was two ounces of gold or thirty-two dollars. During the winter months, the service was irregular and sometimes discontinued because of rain and bad roads. Many times, the stages and other carriages tended to get stuck or lost in the mud. An alternate route was used across the bay with connections in Alviso, but this trip cost a passenger thirty-five dollars, plus the passenger had to

ride with loads of freight.

In April of 1850, a second stage line was opened between San Francisco and San Jose by Ackley and Morrison. They would alternate the trips between them so that daily service was provided. Each stage made three trips a week. The trip required nine hours in good weather, and the fare was two ounces of gold, or thirty-two dollars. Whisman sold his business to Hall and Crandall in September of that year.

The stages left San Jose from the Price's Mansion House on the Alameda and went to Mountain View. A normal passenger load was nine, packed inside the coach, although the preferred seat was on the box beside the driver, because of the beautiful view. A full load was sixteen, with frustrated riders piled on top of each other.

While the stagecoaches were on land the steamboats were making their runs in the water, and competition between the two grew very strong. The boats reduced their fares to sixteen dollars, the stage operators did the same. Shortly after the boats went to ten dollars and in 1853, the stages went to eight dollars, followed by an even lower rate of six dollars in 1854. Despite the tragedy of the explosion of a steamboat known as the Jenny Lind in 1853, the competition kept up. The stages reminded passengers that coaches were safer, while the boats stated, that their customers did not eat dust for fifty miles. However, the competition got greater in 1857, when the rains and trains came.

The stagecoaches were also a new way to spread

communication. For example, on October 18, 1850, when Peter Burnett, the states first Governor, placed himself on the seat along side owner-driver Colonel Jed Crandall on a stagecoach and raced with a competitive coach all the way to San Jose. Crandall waved hats and shared the good news of California's entry into the union. Ironically San Jose, the capital, had not yet heard the news.

In 1856, an omnibus line was opened between San Jose and Santa Clara by the Crandall Brothers. Stage lines were extended south from San Jose to the Millins settlements at the base of the canyons, to the quicksilver mines at West Almaden and other settlements which preceded the rails.

EARLY STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

The first highways in the county were designated by the Court of Session in July of 1850. Most of the roads had been in use since the early life of the Pueblo. The main artery running north, started in San Jose and extended past Mission San Jose to the county line at Sunol's Ranch. Another ran south from first street as far as the road to Monterey. Santa Clara and Alameda extended west to the Old Indian Village and county line in Mountain View. Fourth Street went through Los Gatos, over the Santa Cruz Mountains to the county line. These roads received little care except for bridges being built, and occasional repairs when high water or flooding damaged the routes. During the winter the roads were ruined by the wagon wheels digging holes in the soft, muddy trails, but in the summer they were clouded with dust.

To help control the muddy areas along the Alameda, it ran in back of the old fairgrounds along Meridian and Park Avenues. In 1862, a franchise was granted to the Alameda Turnpike Company to improve the Alameda and to collect tolls to help the expenses. Gates were put up at both ends but the roads were still dangerous during heavy rains. In 1868, the county bought the turnpike franchise and declared the road free. In 1871, county authorities felt that the row of willow trees that ran along the middle of the Alameda should be removed to allow the road to dry out more thoroughly. Though this action received protests from tree lovers, it was not until 1887 that this was

done and an electric street car was installed. Bit by bit, the road's surface was covered with macadam.

Santa Clara Avenue, which extended to Alum Rock Park, was improved in 1872 and was named Alum Rock Avenue. In 1861, the San Jose and Alviso Turnpike Company set up gates and collected tolls on Santa Clara Avenue until it was purchased by the county in 1863. The Los Gatos, Santa Cruz, and Pacheco Pass were freed from tolls in 1878-1879. Other tolls had been put up at Arroyo Los Gatos and Arroyo Quito for road improvements. A single team of horses cost fifty cents, four horses cost ninety cents, and one pedestrian cost ten cents to go through the gates. This practice of tolls caused a great deal of protesting by those who traveled into the hills for lumber or the valley for grain.

One of the biggest road projects in the county began in 1875, when James Lick began planning his observatory on Mount Hamilton. The road took two years to build at a cost of \$73,458. After a survey of the route was made, bridges were built and grading began. The work was slowed temporarily from fear that Lick would not complete the observatory. Eventually, however, construction was completed. By January of 1877, an inspection was made of the road, and it was called "one of the finest mountain roads in the state". Several thousand people went to the mountain to celebrate its completion.

There were 494 public highways laid out, improved, and named, by 1880. They were kept graveled and sprinkled during the dry seasons by horse-drawn watering tanks which made

regular runs throughout the town from their watering stations along the streets.

By 1918, thirty-six miles of roads were paved with macadam, this put an end to the mud and dust. By 1928, 119 of the 180 miles of streets were paved.

EARLY ROADS AND USES

Travel in and out of San Jose in the 1700's followed the dusty, obscure trail of the El Camino Real, also known as "The King's Highway", which stretched from San Jose to San Francisco. It linked the missions by a day's walk between each. In the winter months, when there was a lot of rain, the trail became covered with water or rutted mud.

An increasing amount of traffic used the Real, as the mission and the pueblo in the valley prospered. Pack trains that brought supplies from Spanish ships through Alviso came from the north. In addition, Indian trails were used to go through the Santa Cruz Mountains.

About the time of the turn of the century, Father Magin Catala and 200 Indians planted three rows of willows that bordered the section of the El Camino Real that connected the Guadalupe River and San Jose to the mission. Father Catala, the "Holyman of Santa Clara Mission" staked out and planted the entire three miles of the Alameda, which means; "a grove of shaded trees". As the trees grew they provided more and more shade for travelers along the Alameda, as well as protection from the cattle.

Travel on the Alameda was both difficult and dangerous. There were lots of little brooks, marshes and small lakes. On Sundays, the road was lined with well dressed San Joseans on their way to church. At other times herds of sheep or cattle would be driven to canals along this route.

The Alameda was virtually terrible during the winter months. After heavy rains, anyone from San Jose that wanted to reach Santa Clara had to travel about six miles out of the way. This was true for about six years, until the county graded and improved the road for year round traffic.

The Alameda has seen nearly every type of travel, from the wooden carreta to the modern automobiles of today. It has 179 years of Spanish, American, and Mexican history in it.

In 1856 Crandall Brothers started an omnibus line. From 1868 to 1878, the San Jose and Santa Cruz Horse Railway made its slow but sure way, and in 1870, they were granted the right to use steam, pony, or pneumatic power.

An attempted underground trolley system was flooded in 1886. With the introduction of street cars in 1887 came the destruction of the center row of trees along the Alameda. Gradually, the trees that once marked one of the most beautiful and romantic highways has fallen to the march of time or progress.

A franchise was granted to Hiran Shartzer for his Alameda Turnpike Company in 1862, for improvements and maintenance of the road between San Jose and Santa Clara. The tollgate was built, and the fees included a dime per buggy, and a dollar per day for stagecoaches. The toll didn't last long, however, because of all the complaints of the people in the valley.

STREET TRANSPORTATION

In order to provide public transportation between San Jose and Santa Clara, S. A. Bishop built the first tracks for horse-drawn streetcars in 1868 along the Alameda. The cars made regular runs from First Street in San Jose to Main Street in Santa Clara. In 1869, the line was extended east along Santa Clara Street to Coyote Creek Bridge. In 1870, the transportation was extended to McLaughlin Avenue.

The first narrow gauge tracks laid in the county extended from the San Pedro Street depot, along San Pedro, Julian and First Streets to Reed Street in 1870 as part of the Bishop system. Later, Bishop sold out to Jacob Rich, who made lines conform to the general system of street railroads operating them from the Market Street depot, along First, Willow, Lincoln, and Minnesota in what was then known as the Willows.

In 1876, a franchise was given to C. T. Bird and other San Jose businessmen to organize the Market and Willow Glen Railway Company. The line started at Market and Julian, ran along Market, San Fernando, San Salvador and Bird Avenue, and continued on to Willow Street. Bird Road was discontinued from Delmas on South First, when the First Street Railroad Company operated a line in 1877 from Second and San Fernando Streets to Market and Santa Clara and to the Alameda. In the 1890's, all of these early lines come under the ownership of Rich, as the People's Horse Railway Company.

Electricity began replacing horsepower, by 1887. Since the public didn't agree with the idea of overhead trolleys, an underground power system was installed. Disturbances would often occur along the line when they were short-circuted with umbrellas.

The People's Horse Railway Company was taken over by L.J. Hanchett, after financial difficulties. Hanchett united them under the Peninsula System. By this time all horse cars had been replaced by ones that were electrically powered. Hanchett then sold the lines to the Southern Pacific, who named them the San Jose Railroads. The Southern Pacific also gained control of the Alum Rock Park, Berryessa, Toyon Station to the east, The Willow, Los Gatos, Campbell, Saratoga, Cupertino, Santa Clara, Los Altos, Palo Alto, Mayfield and Stanford University lines. By 1900, San Jose had over one hundred miles of track.

These early transportation lines were replaced by motor vehicles, as the automobile production was increased. Recognizing no trace of their past benefits, the tracks were torn up and the streets were repaired.

San Jose's early day horse car system went southward down the Alameda, and then returned from Santa Clara. A franchise was granted to Samuel Addison Bishop by the California Legislature in March of 1868. In order to construct a horse railroad along the Alameda from San Jose to Santa Clara, it was henceforth granted to Samuel Addison Bishop by the California Legislature in March of 1868. Bishop was referred to as San Jose's "father" of the local transit system.

The San Jose and Santa Clara Horse Railroad Company ran its first horse car on November first of this same year. It started at First Street in San Jose and went to Main Street in Santa Clara, which was a distance of three and a half miles and forty-five minutes traveling time. Three days later a regular service between the two towns was in service and the West received its first interurban horse car. The fare was ten cents if one rode only to the Fredricksburg Brewery; stages were charged twenty cents for the same distance.

In 1892, a passenger could board a car on Jacob Rich's First Street Railroad at Hobson Street in San Jose and ride to Oak Hill Cemetery for five cents. Until the line was discontinued in 1918, one could ride to a point 1,200 feet from Tully Road. In 1892 one could ride the line's westward extension from First, Walnut, and Hedding Streets without transferring. Jacob Rich was the line's owner. By 1892, he controlled ninety percent of this city's transit.

THE RAILROAD ERA

Fourteen years after the plans for better transportation between San Jose and San Francisco were discussed by the legislature, that met in 1849, rails for the iron horse came to San Jose. Though surveys were made, subscriptions were given and ground work was laid in 1851, it was not until the Civil War that men were pushing to organize the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad, so that construction could begin. This line was needed in order to bind the Pacific Coast to the Union.

On January 16, 1864 an immense crowd waited at the new railway station on San Pedro Street for their first glimpse of the bulbous stack of the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad engine bringing in the first train. This triggered a three-day celebration of those who came from Santa Cruz, San Joaquin Valley, and San Francisco. Wild cheers, and a thirty-six-gun salute fired by the California Guards, were followed by a community barbecue as a part of the festivities.

In those days a railroad was aimed towards passenger traffic as well as freight. Sixteen thousand passenger trips between San Francisco and San Jose were made in the first month of the railroad service. The next month a regular passenger and freight service was in operation, with passenger fare of only two dollars and fifty cents per trip rather than the ten dollars by stage. A depot was built on San Pedro Street.

In 1862, the Western Pacific Railroad was organized to connect Sacramento and San Jose. By 1866, when the line was

taken over by the Southern Pacific, it was extended west from Sacramento to Niles Canyon. The Southern Pacific was operated by "The Big Four": Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Mark Hopkins and Charles Crocker, who later become multimillionaires from the investments in railroads, land, and mining.

The first train came to San Jose via this line from Oakland in 1869. That same year the famed golden spike was driven into the ground with hopes of connecting the Central Pacific, which went east out of Sacramento with the Union Pacific that came west from New York. Obviously, the transcontinental railroad linkage was as important to the west as the Erie Canal was to the Ohio Valley. For the first time, western fruit and grain was moved to the east and machinery and other manufactured goods came quickly to the west. San Joseans now found that they could make the 3,095 mile trip to New York in eight days. Isolation from the rest of the world had come to a close.

The Southern Pacific Coastal Railroad was organized in 1876 to connect Alameda to Santa Cruz with a narrow gauge track. The rails reached San Jose in April of 1878.

The main use of the train was for freight, pulling two heavy trainloads of lumber from the mills in one day. The engines burned wood. They used up to a cord of wood every eight miles. The new Baldwin engines burned coal on the main line but the spare lines to the Almaden mines and to Saratoga used wood. In 1887, this line became part of the Southern Pacific system. The narrow gauge was gradually replaced with

standard rails and the whole line was rebuilt after the 1906 earthquake destroyed tunnels and tracks with landslides.

CONCLUSION

Stagecoaches, The Alameda, streetcars, tollgates, and trains have all had great influences in the changes of the transportation industry. Transportation started out on the backs of humans and has proceeded to high-tech automobiles and jet airplanes; however, I have only discussed the main transportation systems through the train era.

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