

— 1987 —
2nd Prize
\$250.00

MARY BENNETT:
THE BLACK KNIGHT'S LADY

by

Joan B. Barriga
21425 Shady Lane
Los Gatos, Ca. 95030
Tele. (408) 353-2546

Submitted to

California Pioneers of Santa Clara County
Essay Contest
April 27, 1987

Not to be reproduced in any form without the
express written permission of the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	iii
Mary Bennett: The Black Knight's Lady	
I. Prelude to an Ambush	1
II. The Lady	4
III. Enter the Black Knight	15
IV. The Black Knight and His Lady	19
V. Shoot-Out on Grant Street	21
VI. Sic Transit Gloria	24
Footnotes	27
Bibliography	29

PREFACE

Some people read about history while others live it, simply by being in the right place at the right time. Mary Bennett was one whose life mingled with important people and events for a quarter of a century while she lived in Santa Clara.

In many ways the town of Santa Clara was a microcosm of all that was happening in 19th century California. When Mary arrived there in 1845 she got a first-hand look at what secularization had done to the Mission and its Indian charges. She saw -- and took part in -- the break-up of the huge Spanish land grants when American settlers began arriving in increasingly larger numbers. Her sons were active participants in the early attempts to break away from Mexican control; they rode with Frémont and Weber's Rangers. Mary herself was in the front ranks at the Battle of Santa Clara. Another son joined the Gold Rush, and like so many others, returned home wiser if not richer. When the widespread turmoil of the times threatened their way of life, they saw the rise of the Vigilantes. It was an exciting time, a time when the individual was all-important and made his way through life by direct action.

But for all her participation in history-making events, Mary Bennett's life centered on her family, and she might have ended up being chiefly remembered in family anecdotes (and there were many) told by her children to their children, had it not been for Harry Love. Wherever Harry Love went, nothing was ever the same afterwards.

Whether Love was the "mean-looking, mustachioed bucko with narrow-slitted eyes", described by Richard Dillon, or the "bold and intrepid lion, with a voice of thunder," as Mrs. Vielé, an Army officer's wife, saw him, can only be judged now by his actions. It is probably safe to say that both descriptions fit him.

When the paths of these two independent, self-willed people finally crossed, they set into motion forces that were beyond their comprehension and over which they had no control. And thereby hangs a tale ...

MARY BENNETT:
THE BLACK KNIGHT'S LADY

by
Joan B. Barriga

I. Prelude to an Ambush ...

About eleven o' clock on a warm summer morning at the end of June in 1868, a resident of Grant Street in Santa Clara might have seen an interesting sight had he stirred himself to look out the window. Harry Love, the infamous "Black Knight of Zayante", was about to pay a rare visit to his wife. What might have aroused the local resident's interest even more had he known, was that Harry was carrying a small arsenal with him: a brass-butted Colt revolver, a double-barreled shotgun, and a murderously sharp bowie knife.

The dusty express wagon with its ominous cargo rattled down the street without incident, however, and turned in at the gate to 1385 Grant Street, where Harry climbed out, closed the gate after him, locked it, and led the span of horses into the yard. J.L. Duff, a painter who was working on the new house for Mrs. Love, later recalled that "When he came in he said his name was Harry Love ... that he had come here to stay... had locked the gate but would open it for Mrs. Love or her daughter but the Dutchman should not come in except over his dead body." ¹

The "Dutchman" referred to was Christian Fred Iverson, a German fore-

man hired about two months earlier by Mrs. Love to assist her around the place. Since this was Duff's first acquaintance with the formidable-looking Black Knight, and having no desire to become involved in a family dispute, he went back to his work on the roof. Calvin Russell, a carpenter working inside the house, had previously made Love's acquaintance: "Love came here last Saturday and tackled Fred and then tackled me and I don't know what for." ² When he looked out into the yard he observed that Harry was heavily armed and had taken up a position behind the locked gate.

Charles Kidder, another painter, made the all-time understatement about the gathering storm when he observed that "There seems to be a family quarrel about the German employed by her." [Mrs. Love].

Besides the two painters, the carpenter, an Indian gardener, and another workman identified only as "Owens", Mrs. Love's daughter Clementhia was also at the house that morning. She arrived at her mother's house about nine o'clock to keep an eye on the workers while Mrs. Love and Iverson went to San José to transact some business. According to one report ³ Harry had been seen around San Jose during the past week or so; he had spotted his wife and Iverson in town that morning and decided that the time to take decisive action had finally come.

Clementhia saw Harry Love drive in, but since she had "not spoken to him but once in seven years, and that was about a year and a half ago", ⁴ she did not go outside. In fact, after seeing him talking to the workmen, she assumed that he had gone uptown, until Mr. Owens came into the house just before noon, saying, "What an old fool Love is: he has come to take possession of the place." Clementhia laughed at the idea and told Owens she supposed "...he would take possession of all of us." Owens and the other workers went off to eat their midday meal, while Harry and the Indian gardener stayed by gate, waiting for them to return. At one point Harry took time out for a bite to eat -- J.L. Duff saw him: "When I went to my dinner he was still at the gate and said he had camped there. He had a small bag of crackers and a teapot of water and said that was the way the Texas Rangers lived when they camped." Duff also noticed that Harry had a shotgun, a "five or six shooter", and a sheath knife with him at his campsite.

Up to this point the six people around the house had chosen to give Love a wide berth, perhaps thinking that he would tire of waiting and go back

to his cabin at Zayante up in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Russell, the carpenter, even admitted that he took as much time over his dinner as he possibly could and still get in the required work for that day, but when he returned, Harry was still there, waiting at the gate. Hoping to avert the confrontation that would surely occur when the couple returned from San Jose, Russell tried to persuade him to come into the house and help him hang some doors; but by now Harry was becoming more and more agitated. He had been waiting for two hours, pacing back and forth between the gate and the house, expecting his wife and Iverson momentarily, and Russell's suggestion did not set well with him.

"He ripped out a great oath and said that he was going to stop there," reported Russell.

Love then went to his wagon where Clementhia, watching from inside the house, saw him drinking from a bottle. Owens, returning from his dinner, stopped to talk with Russell and evidently decided that matters had reached a serious point. He went up to the house to warn Clementhia that trouble was brewing. Russell joined him, and, according to Clementhia, said, "I hate a row but your mother is in danger ... take care of her." As Russell left the house he called to Owens that there was someone lying in the grass near the fence and added that it would be too bad to let Mrs. Love and Iverson come home without warning them.

It was now about one o'clock, and the intensity of the summer sun added to the heat of an already explosive situation. The workmen nervously returned to their jobs -- Duff and Kidder up on the roof, Russell to his carpentry inside the house, and the Indian to the cornfield. Clementhia went out into the yard to get a better view of the street and saw a small cloud of dust down Grant Street-- the buggy returning from San José. She ran to the gate and Harry, having no particular quarrel with his stepdaughter, unlocked the gate without a word and let her out. She ran toward the approaching buggy, desperately trying to signal the couple inside to stop or turn back, but Iverson evidently misinterpreted her frantic gestures. He whipped up the horse and approached at a faster pace.

Duff, watching the developing drama from his perch on the roof, later testified: "When Love saw the buggy...coming towards the gate... he called to the Spaniard [Indian] who was working in the corn to come and open the gate and let Mrs. Love in. He then called to us to come down from the roof and see what trans-

pired. I told him I did not wish to get in the way of anybody's shooting and that they could do their own shooting." The Indian apparently felt the same, and ignored Love's order to open the gate.

Clementhia, meantime, had managed to stop the buggy by catching the horse's bit, and as she was warning the two passengers of their danger her mother began to scream, "There he comes! There he comes!" . Clementhia turned in time to see the muzzle of a shotgun poking through an opening in the fence, and almost simultaneously heard the roar of the discharge.

II. The Lady ...

It could be assumed that Harry Love had been driven to this desperate state by all-consuming jealousy over a young and beautiful wife, but this would be only partly true. Jealousy did indeed enter into the situation, but the Black Knight's lady deserves closer inspection. In June of 1868 Mary Bennett Love was sixty-five years old, the mother of a family of eight (the oldest of whom was forty-nine, the same age as her husband), and an imposing figure of a woman by anyone's standards. Edwin Bryant, visiting the Santa Clara Mission in 1846, politely described Mrs. Bennett as "an American lady of amazonian proportions...";⁵ Bancroft, in his Pioneer Register, wrote that Mary "was a good woman, but one of masculine attributes, who 'had a mind of her own', and a body also; in many respects the head of the family..."⁶

When Mary's great-granddaughter, Mabel Dorn Early, a Santa Cruz attorney, was interviewed in 1967 she said, "Mary Bennett was a tremendous woman. She stood more than six feet tall and weighed 350 pounds." During a later interview Mrs. Early described Mary as being six feet four inches and weighing more than three hundred pounds. Allowing for the inevitable exaggerations that occur when stories are passed down through the generations, Mary's bulk was still considerable.

"Mary grew so heavy," according to Mrs. Dorn, " that she had to have help in getting in and out of her buggy. She and Mr. Love were not living together, so she hired a man to accompany her when she drove into San José. ...Mr. Love became jealous of this man." The mental picture of an amply-proportioned lady being

hoisted in and out of a buggy by her hired hand is hardly conducive to thoughts of romance. But if jealousy over a real or imagined romance wasn't the cause of Harry's violent reaction, what was? More than likely it was something much more prosaic: wounded vanity and a dispute over property.

When Mary arrived at Santa Clara Mission in 1845 she had reached the end of an overland trek that started May 16, 1842, at the Missouri border. The Bennett family, Mary, husband Vardamon, and eight children, were part of some two hundred pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail that year, headed for free land in the Willamette Valley. Their group of 105 people was headed by Lansford W. Hastings and missionary Elijah White. Hastings is now chiefly remembered for his somewhat less than accurate guide book used by the unfortunate Donner party in 1846. Elijah White went as the bearer of ill-tidings from the Foreign Mission Board in Boston. He carried a letter from the Board notifying Dr. Marcus Whitman and Reverend Henry Spalding that their missions at Waiilatpu (near Walla Walla, Washington) and The Dalles, Oregon, were to be closed. White, "a pompous little busybody", and Hastings, with his "almost psychotic need to control others",⁷ inevitably clashed from the beginning of the journey. The train, stopping at the Kaw River in Kansas because of a measles epidemic, got into a raging argument about dogs. White insisted that all dogs accompanying the train must be killed, to prevent their barking from disclosing the train's location to hostile Indians. Hastings was pro-dog in the dispute, but his group lost out to White's demands. When the wagons moved on relations were already strained.

Most of the immigrants were owners of small farms who had sold their homes and property to outfit themselves for the Oregon journey, after trying for years to compete with large plantation owners and slave labor in the South. They were rugged individualists, used to taking care of themselves, and not too receptive to advice from outsiders -- and anyone who was not a member of the family was an outsider. Fortunately, the train had Broken-Hand Fitzpatrick, an experienced mountain man, as their guide; but even Fitzpatrick could not hold the group together once it reached the Green River in Wyoming.

White was all for getting rid of the cumbersome wagons that slowed travel and could never make it over the rugged mountains now barring the way to Oregon. The eight men with families objected to abandoning their wagons and house-

hold possessions, and Hastings sided with them because his primary purpose in organizing this migration was to bring American settlers into British-held Oregon Territory. The company split at Green River; White's group loaded their possessions on pack horses, while Hastings' party destroyed the worst of the wagons and reconstructed eight vehicles from the salvaged parts; they pushed ahead with a new guide, Stephen Meek.

By the time they reached Ft. Hall even Hastings recognized the futility of trying to take the battered wagons any farther, and persuaded the stubborn immigrants to exchange them for pack horses and supplies. With everyone now mounted, the two groups -- still traveling separately -- followed along Idaho's Snake River. White reached the Whitman mission first, delivered his message to a stunned Dr. Whitman and his wife Narcissa, then pushed on toward the Spalding mission. Hastings' party, including the Bennett family, straggled into Waiilatpu a few days later. From this point on they followed the Columbia River, battered by wind-driven sandstorms, until they were forced into the Cascade Mountains beyond The Dalles. Indian guides finally led them to the Falls of the Willamette on October 7, where John McLoughlin was about to establish a new Hudson's Bay Company town, Oregon City. Their overland crossing had taken six months.

The land of promise was not quite what the immigrants had expected. Rain fell in torrents all winter long; roads became streams of mud; bedding and clothing were always damp, and the roofs leaked. It was, in fact, depressing. The disgruntled immigrants must have had some interesting conversations with Lansford Hastings during that wet winter, because by the beginning of summer they had decided to move on -- to where the sun always shone and land was available simply for the taking: California. Their destination was Sutter's Fort, which had a reputation even at this early date of giving immigrants a friendly, hospitable reception.

By July 6 of 1843 Hastings' California-bound party was almost within gun-shot of Sutter's Fort; in fact, one of the men at the fort overheard some gun-shots that day. The immigrants had run into a group of unfriendly Indians and were carrying on a battle with them. Winston Bennett, Mary's oldest son, described the scene some years later in his memoirs. He had just killed two Indians hiding behind a tree with one shot (!) when he heard Mary call out, "Why,

Winsty, you have killed two of those poor creatures!" Looking around, he saw his mother out in the midst of the fighting. He said she told him "she couldn't stand to be in under shelter when her boys were out liable to be killed." Mary was never one to hide from a fight, and was prepared to personally join in, if necessary. George Bellomy, a member of the wagon train, received a tongue-lashing from the imposing Mrs. Bennett when he hesitated a bit too long. "Shoot, damn you, Bellomy," she roared at him, "or give me the gun!"

A contemporary, Margaret Hecox, described Mary's language as "not elegant enough for general usage in the parlor."⁹ A later historian was more direct: "She had an extensive vocabulary of profanity with a deep, commanding voice."¹⁰ But for all her intimidating appearance and manner, there was another side to Mary Swain Bennett, which was revealed to her family. "She was fond of joking, very friendly ... everyone liked her," said her great-granddaughter.¹¹ As a kind of afterthought, she added that Mary ate too much -- a matter of some concern to her daughters as she grew older.

Mary had been born in Wayne County, Georgia, in 1803 and was well acquainted with frontier life and its hazards. The Swain family were fighters from the early days; her grandfather was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill, and her mother had been captured by Indians, a favorite story often requested by the grandchildren. She was an expert equestrian, according to Mrs. Early, which should not be surprising in light of the overland crossing to Oregon. Vardamon Bennett (from an English family with aristocratic ambitions) seems to have been overshadowed by his independent, outspoken wife, who herded her eight children across the plains and was more than ready to join in a skirmish against hostile Indians.

At New Helvetia John Sutter was looking for settlers to take up land around the fort, and received the newcomers warmly. Micheltorena, the Mexican governor of California, had granted him the right to issue passports, which he handed out free of charge to all newly-arrived Americans who wanted them, in an effort to keep them at New Helvetia; but only a few chose to stay. The others moved on, hoping to find the free land that had brought them to California. One of those who stayed on for a while was Hastings, who had visions of a town on the west side of the Sacramento River. He even went so far as to begin mapping it out before more interesting matters caught his attention -- a growing mood of revolt against

Mexican control among some of the American settlers.

The Bennett family continued south, stopping for a while at John Younts' ranch in the Napa Valley, then returning to build a cabin near New Helvetia. By December 1843 they had moved again -- to Yerba Buena -- where the padron of 1844 listed Winston, Jackson, Dennis, and their father, Vardamon Bennett, as carpenters.¹² At this point Vardamon tired of the incessant moving and set up a bowling alley and groggery on Pacific Street between Dupont and Kearney, about a block from the old waterfront; a choice location for a choice clientele. The older Bennett boys were not quite ready to settle down, however, and July 4, 1844, found Winston visiting the pueblo of San José, where he reported that there were only four houses on Market Street.¹³ Jackson wandered off to see the redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains and ended up building a sawmill in the Zayante area, where Winston joined him, farming on Isaac Graham's ranch.

By now Mary and Vardamon had reached a parting of the ways, possibly over the questionable environment of the grog shop as a suitable place for the younger children; and in the late summer of 1845 a "Mr. Bennett [Winston] and family" arrived in Santa Clara County.¹⁴

Since there was already a cabin near Jackson's sawmill, Mary and the children decided to move to Zayante, a mistake which soon became evident. Zayante was at that time a gathering place for ne'er-do-wells: sailors who had jumped ship, unemployed trappers and hunters, and general rabble-rousers, chief among whom was former Kentuckian Isaac Graham, who operated his own sawmill, in addition to a tannery and distillery. Graham had recently returned from an enforced trip to Mexico in 1840, because he and a group of malcontents were accused by the Mexican government of a conspiracy and deported to San Blas. Upon his return to California Graham sued the Mexican government for damages, and there were rumors (never confirmed) that he received as much as \$36,000 for his inconvenience. In 1841 he bought a sawmill at Zayante from Joseph Majors (also known as Juan Crisóstomo, who had taken a Spanish name and a Spanish wife in order to get some Spanish land). Graham entertained himself and his friends by staging horse races on a track he built, and arguments were frequent and lively over the outcome of some of the races. Zayante was the scene of violence, murder and general lawlessness in the 1840s, and trouble started almost immediately for the Bennetts. Graham, as usual, was at

the bottom of it.

As Bancroft delicately put the matter: " In 1845 he induced a young American woman to live with him, her mother making an effort through Consul Larkin and the alcalde to oblige him to marry her, but apparently without success; though Graham claimed that she was his wife, and so she appears in the padron of '45, when Graham was 46 years old. At this time twenty of Graham's foreign fellow-citizens signed a petition to the prefect for his expulsion from the community, as a dissolute, lawless, quarrelsome corruptor of the public peace and morals. I think the woman left him in '49, about the same time as some of his children by a former marriage came to California."¹⁵

The young American woman was Mary's daughter, Catherine Tillantha. Shortly after this episode, Mary Bennett and the rest of the children arrived at Santa Clara, asking for permission to live on the mission property. She had asked for a separation from Vardamon, "complaining to the authorities of her husband's failure to provide for herself and eight children."¹⁶

Mary turned once again to Thomas Larkin for help. "On June 6, 1845, Larkin requested the San José alcalde to provide protection for Mary Bennett from harassment from her husband, and Larkin thanked Padre Real for providing her with a house in the mission orchard."¹⁷ Mary settled into the adobe house in the orchard, where Edwin Bryant met her the following year and enjoyed a gift of some pears from the "amazonian" lady who now called herself "Widow" Bennett.

By this time the three older Bennett boys were grown men. Winston was twenty-seven, Dennis was twenty-one, and Jackson was nineteen; the ages of the other children are not known, but they are all presumed to be younger, since Mary was sixteen when Winston was born. During this year of 1845 Governor Pico granted a 355 acre tract of land lying between what is now Saratoga Avenue and Homestead Road, west of Santa Clara, to a Narciso Bennett.¹⁸ The grant was finally patented to Mary Bennett by the U.S. Land Commission in 1871. There is nothing remarkable about this grant nor the length of time required for the patent, considering the tremendous backlog of land title disputes after California officially became part of the United States at the close of the war in 1848. What does give one pause is the name of the grantee: Narciso Bennett. All the Bennett children had fairly standard English names: Winston, Jackson, Dennis, Mansel,

Catherine, Clementhia, and Julia; suddenly we are confronted by a Spanish name -- Narciso. It is possible, although no mention is ever made about it, that Mary had one more child after reaching California in 1843. She would have been forty years old at that time, and although it seems unlikely that she would still be bearing children, it is certainly not impossible. There were laws at that time prohibiting land grants to foreigners (non-Mexicans), and there is no evidence to show that Mary ever became a Mexican citizen, although Vardamon applied for citizenship in 1846. Even Bancroft, chronicler of the prolific and peripatetic Bennett family, couldn't account for Narciso. His entry in the Pioneer Register reads: "Bennett, Narciso: grantee of land in Santa Clara in '45; perhaps another son of Vardamon's ..." ¹⁹

By the time the Bennetts settled in the pear orchard, Mission Santa Clara had fallen on hard times. Secularization of the missions in the mid-1830s destroyed the old feudal system of the mission as the self-sufficient center of life and spiritual guardian of the primitive Indians surrounding it. Lands which once supported thousands of cattle and sheep were now in dispute by settlers seeking land of their own; the Indians, supposed to be the eventual beneficiaries of the mission system, scattered in all directions; some returned to their hunting and gathering ways, but more often they went to work on nearby ranchos when they found that their old way of life could no longer survive in the post-mission era. Gardens and orchards were neglected for lack of workers; the padres found their churches crumbling away, along with their authority.

When Edwin Bryant visited Mission Santa Clara on September 20, 1846, he wrote: "I did not notice a foot of ground under cultivation, except the garden enclosure, which contained a variety of fruits and plants of the temperate and tropical climates. From want of care these are fast decaying. The picture of decay and ruin presented by this once flourishing establishment, surrounded by a country so fertile and scenery so enchanting, is a most melancholy spectacle to the passing traveler, and speaks a language of loud condemnation against the government." ²⁰

This language of condemnation against the Mexican government came to a somewhat less than dramatic climax during the winter of 1846-7, when discontented American settlers began organizing into a militia led by Carlos Maria Weber, Prus-

sian-Mexican citizen and horse-collector extraordinaire. It culminated in the Battle of Santa Clara, called the Battle of the Mustard Stalks by those who were not impressed, on January 2, 1847. During this winter there were only a few families living near the mission. British Consul James Forbes and his Californio wife had their quarters at the mission; old Isaac Hitchcock and his widowed daughter Isabel Patterson lived there, as did George Washington Bellomy, who had married María Bernal and was now operating a tannery. The other family was the "Widow" Bennett's, which occupied the little adobe in the orchard.²¹

"Widow" Bennett's boys were not about to miss out on the excitement of possible military action. Winston had already followed Frémont south and Dennis and Jackson were riding out with Weber's Rangers, gathering horses and livestock from nearby ranchos. The methods employed were nothing short of rustling, and many Californios soon found themselves without sufficient horses to round up whatever stock was overlooked by the raiders. In one case a young messenger was not only deprived of his horse and forced to walk, but his saddle, bridle, spurs, and riata were also confiscated.²² Weber's Rangers claimed to be acting under Frémont's orders, but Frémont claimed to know nothing about any so-called orders, although Weber's tactics had an uncomfortable similarity to those employed by Frémont's men.

While the Rangers were rounding up food and transportation, not to mention personal articles like blankets, clothing, riding gear, and household articles, Frémont ordered the newest group of immigrants to take refuge in the Santa Clara Mission. Ferol Egan declared that Frémont had a policy of "creating a reign of terror in order to avoid what might happen."²³ Herding the frightened immigrants into the dank, crumbling mission buildings during the extremely rainy winter of 1846 almost proved their undoing.

More than one hundred were crowded into the mission buildings, many of which were windowless, without fireplaces, and with leaky roofs. In order to provide some degree of privacy the rooms were partitioned off with calico cloth; beds had to be made on the dirt floors, and the only light was from tallow candles. Dr. Isaac Isbell, the only physician at the mission, was himself ill with typhoid fever, carried with the immigrants when they crossed the plains. As a result of these conditions fourteen people died of typhoid fever within nine days at the mission. Compared to this, Mary Bennett's little adobe must have seemed

quite commodious and comfortable. Later, one new arrival said that she could never understand Frémont's order, because "the Mexicans with whom we met treated us most kindly." ²⁴

Captain Joseph Aram was put in charge of defending the mission inhabitants, who were mostly women and children, since all but twenty-five of the men had gone off to join Frémont. When the food supply began to dwindle, Capt. Aram ordered his men to go out to a nearby rancho and shoot two steers, and announced that he would continue this policy until there were regular deliveries of cattle by the rancheros. To prevent Aram from killing their cattle, the Californios began bringing two steers a week to the mission and the people survived on this and a small amount of wheat which they ground into flour in a coffee mill.

As rumors continued to circulate about an impending attack by the Californios, the Americans began preparations to defend themselves; they formed the Mission Santa Clara Company and, over the protests of Padre Real, chopped down a number of the willow trees planted along The Alameda to make a barricade at the mission. On the morning of January 2, 1847, observers at the mission were treated to the spectacle of a few Californios displaying feats of horsemanship by galloping over the muddy plain. There was the rousing sound of an American cannon, which had been laboriously hauled through the thick mud all the way from Yerba Buena. The cannon carriage was in fact mired down by this time and the American forces were unable to move it any farther. Capt. Marston, in charge of the Santa Clara Expeditionary Force, reported: "The only time we were in difficulty was in a very miry place, the Marines up to their knees, and the gun over the hubs in mud." He added a "P.S.": "I have just heard that we did not kill or wound any person. A horse was killed by a cannon shot, the man slightly injured himself by his fall. Many of them had thier clothes and hats cut."²⁵

Nevertheless, this was a sight not to be missed, and the occupants of the mission scrambled for vantage points to view the conflict. The church tower offered the best location, and the two Bennett girls, Clementhia and Julia, were determined to see the spectacle even if they had to resort to violence. "William Haun said that when he tried to climb into the belfry he was pushed off the ladder by the Bennett girls, and consequently he saw nothing of the fight," reported an interviewer.²⁶

While Clementhia and Julia were engaged in this unladylike conduct, their mother had, typically, joined the Volunteers behind the compound barricade, and was berating the men for their lack of courage. This is how the scene appeared to Margaret Hecox:

"...She waltzed back and forth in front of the Mission yelling orders at the top of her voice. Growing more excited she ran forward and grabbing up a large bone lying in the yard, rushed up to a man who had refused to fight, saying that he had no gun. Stopping squarely in front of the startled fellow she thrust the bone into his hands and shouted, 'take that, you puppy, and go out there and bat the brains out of some Mexican or I'll use it on you...' " ²⁷

One suspects that Mrs. Hecox, the wife of a Methodist lay preacher, may have cleaned up Mary's language a bit before handing over her memoirs for publication.

It remained for one other member of the Bennett family to gain further dubious distinction during the hour-long battle. Some of the Americans, hidden in the trees, tried to rout the enemy from an oak forest by firing on them. Jackson Bennett had the distinction of being one of the only two Americans wounded in the fight -- but not by the enemy. Marston, his commanding officer, reported that "Jackson Bennett was slightly wounded in the ankle", and another report stated: "... the wounded men on our side were not touched by the enemy, as they at first supposed and so reported, but hurt themselves in the oak bushes..."²⁸ So much for the Battle of the Mustard Stalks, the last battle between Americans and Californios in northern California.

To celebrate their rescue from the blood-thirsty Californios (who were in reality a few rancheros protesting raids on their stock) the people at the mission invited the Yerba Buena Company, the Marines, and the sailors who had camped outside the compound after the battle to join them for a feast. Asst. Surgeon Duvall, who attended the grand affair, described it: "... we 'fed with eagerness and pleasure'. What rendered the fare sweeter, and the scene more agreeable, was the circumstance of its having been prepared and served by the fair hands of our native and courteous and pretty countrywomen, the wives and daughters of those gallant men..."²⁹

Even allowing for Duvall's gratitude for a home-cooked meal after days

of slogging through the mud, he surely wasn't referring to the "Widow" Bennett, so it must be assumed that those "courteous and pretty countrywomen" included Clementhia and Julia. Duvall also mentioned "the bountiful table set before us" and the "comfortable night" he spent in Dr. Isbell's quarters, which casts some doubt on Mrs. Hecox's complaints about having nothing but beef and bread to eat while at the mission. The disparity was probably caused by the different circumstances: Duvall arrived as a conquering hero, while Mrs. Hecox spent three months huddled inside the mission nursing a sick husband, in fear of being attacked.

Once the excitement was over and the fighting moved south, life at Santa Clara Mission resumed its former sleepy ways. Settlers around the mission were again treated to the sight of the "Widow" Bennett making her daily rounds. She rode on the back of a small burro which was almost overcome by the bulk of its rider, whose dangling feet nearly brushed the ground. "A grotesque sight," remarked one historian.³⁰

In 1849 word reached the "Widow" Bennett that she was indeed a widow: husband Vardamon, of the aristocratic ambitions, had died at his grog shop in Yerba Buena. The Bennetts had come into a bit of property, and that, together with the land grant, put Mary on the way to becoming the "wealthy landowner" described by Sawyer.³¹ The boys were striking out on their own; Winston had wandered off to try his hand at gold mining when the rush started, but returned empty-handed. He spent time between Santa Clara and Santa Cruz, and for a time he was a constable and then a deputy sheriff, finally settling on a rancho at Pescadero in 1853. Periodically he suffered small disasters -- a broken leg (falling through his barn roof), a broken wrist (when his horse fell on him) -- and he returned home to Santa Clara until he was nursed back to health. Jackson continued to operate the sawmill at Zayante, and his errant sister, Catherine, met a logger and got married in 1850.

There was talk everywhere in Central California in the early 1850s about a blood-thirsty horse-rustler called Joaquin Murrieta who roamed up and down the San Joaquin Valley, gathering vast caballadas of stolen horses which he and his gang ran down to Mexico and sold for a handsome profit. Ranchers were beginning to clamor for somebody to put an end to the marauders, and they blamed

the Murrieta gang for almost every unsolved crime in northern California committed between 1849 and 1853, when Joaquin's career allegedly came to an abrupt halt, thanks to the fearless Capt. Harry Love and his California Rangers.

III. Enter the Black Knight ...

Harry Love appeared in California about 1849³² after a checkered career in Texas as a soldier of fortune, military spy, express rider, scout, and by his own claim, a member of the famous Texas Rangers, although there are no records to substantiate this last claim. It is possible, however, that he might have attached himself to this group in an unofficial capacity. After the Mexican War the lure of gold attracted Harry to California, but along the way to the southern mines he stopped off in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara long enough to work as a deputy sheriff. In 1853 Harry Love was at Quartzburg, a now non-existent gold mining town near Hornitos. Ranchers in the area were complaining about outlaw gangs running off their horse herds, and a rancher friend of Harry's, P.T. Herbert of Mariposa County, persuaded Gov. Bigler to create a company of California Rangers for the express purpose of ridding the ranchers of this plague. --And who else but Harry Love was so eminently qualified to lead this distinguished band of twenty tried and true men?

The Rangers were to receive \$150 a month for three months while scouring the Inner Coast Range and the San Joaquin Valley in search of a gang of Mexican rustlers headed by a man named "Joaquin"; his last name was variously given as "Muriati", "Ocomorenia", "Valenzuela", "Boteller", and "Carrillo". At any rate, there were five opportunities to bring in Joaquin (or five Joaquins), and since this was a common Spanish name, the Rangers felt confident about success. To sweeten the deal, the governor offered a \$1,000 reward for proof of Joaquin's capture.

Capt. Love (rank and title bestowed by Gov. Bigler) set about recruiting, and the muster roll included such illustrious names as Jim (the "Terrible Sailor") Norton; Billy Henderson, reputed to have hanged a man without any help; and John White, described as a soldier of fortune and dare-devil, who later was killed in a quarrel with a soldier at Ft. Tejon. None of the Rangers, with the

exception of Bill Byrnes, ever claimed to have laid eyes on the Joaquin they were sent out to run down. Besides the twenty official Rangers there were a number of hangers-on; adventure-seekers who were attracted by the rumored \$200,000 in gold purportedly hidden in the Tres Piedras area by the bandits. It almost goes without saying that this fortune in gold was never discovered, but it served its purpose in spurring on the search for Joaquin.

Riding out through Pacheco Pass on July 10, 1853, Love and his Rangers traveled through the 100+ degree heat of the pre-irrigation Central Valley for three days, finally arriving at San Juan Bautista -- a distance of almost one hundred miles. Their term of enlistment would be up in a few weeks and it was now or never if they were to capture Joaquin and collect the reward. But there was no sign of any gang of horse-thieves. On July 24, hot, tired, discouraged, and almost ready to give up the chase, Love and about seven Rangers camped near Cantúa Canyon, seven miles east of Coalinga. The other Rangers had been sent back to W.J. Howard's ranch near Quartzburg with fifty abandoned horses picked up along the way.

At dawn the next morning, the encamped Rangers noticed a wisp of smoke curling out of the canyon and decided to check out the source. Approaching quietly, they saw a small group of vaqueros cooking breakfast. Capt. Love approached one of them who was lounging on the ground, resting on his saddle, and while they were talking Ranger Byrnes rode up, drew his gun, and shouted, "There's your man, Captain! That's Joaquin!". The Mexican reached under the saddle blanket for his gun and fired at Love, the shot grazing his right temple and cutting off a lock of his abundant black curly hair. There was instant pandemonium in the camp; the lounging vaquero leaped on his bareback horse and was pursued by Billy Henderson; another, an Indian named Chappo, who had been grooming a horse down in the creek-bed, was pursued by John White and other Rangers and shot down. Later they discovered that he was unarmed.³³ Two prisoners were taken -- one later drowned crossing a slough while tied to his horse; the other was duly delivered to the Martinez jail and promptly lynched the following night. As Ranger Howard later said, "We didn't take any wounded prisoners."³⁴

The remaining vaqueros had scattered during the gunfight. Love later reported to Gov. Bigler that the Rangers had killed four and taken two prisoners.

As proof that the infamous Joaquin (Muriati, Ocomorenia, Valenzuela, Boteller, or Carrillo) was indeed dead, Love ordered that his head be cut off and brought back as a trophy; as an afterthought, perhaps, the Rangers also cut off the hand of the vaquero who so nearly put an end to Capt. Love's career. The right hand had the index finger missing -- proof enough to the Rangers that they had also disposed of "Tres Dedos"--"Three-Fingered Jack" -- a particularly blood-thirsty member of the gang. A missing index finger was not unusual among vaqueros; it sometimes occurred when the finger was caught between the saddle horn and a tightening riata during steer-roping. But this did not detract in the least from the Rangers' conviction that they had more than ~~than~~ accomplished their mission. After ransacking the corpses, slitting the boots, belts, and shirts in a fruitless search for gold, (they overlooked \$100 in gold hidden in the coffee pot) they paused to consider the problem of getting their trophies back to civilization through the blistering valley heat.

When the Rangers started off on their quest for Joaquin the Bandit they carried with them two five-gallon tins filled with alcohol, intended to preserve any trophies proving the success of their mission. But after being carried through the San Joaquin Valley in the heat of July, the contents of the two cans seemed to have evaporated considerably; only about a quart of alcohol remained in the bottom of one can, despite the tight-fitting friction lids specifically designed to prevent such accidents. According to one Ranger's account. "...there was just a little alcohol left in the bottom of one can and the temperature was at least 110 degrees. So we drank what alcohol was left..."³⁵ Whether the alcohol evaporated, was accidentally spilled, or disappeared down the Rangers' dry throats is a matter of conjecture, but the problem remained. Love sent a pair of Rangers off to escort the unlucky prisoners to jail, and assigned Bill Byrnes and Ranger Sylvester the job of taking the grisly trophies to Ft. Miller where they could procure alcohol from the post surgeon.

Capt. Love lost no time making his report to Gov. Bigler. The fight at Cantúa Canyon occurred on July 25 and by August 4 the governor had the report. By August 29 Love and his Rangers received the reward money; each Ranger's share of the \$1,000 amounted to about forty-two dollars; a rather meagre amount, considering the discomfort and danger they had endured for three months. Harry's friend,

Assemblyman Herbert, certainly agreed with Harry that forty-two dollars didn't begin to cover his expenses, much less show the public's gratitude to the man who rid California of the Bandit King. So Herbert proposed to the State Legislature that an additional \$5,000 be paid to Love. To be sure, there were a few Doubting Thomases who claimed that the preserved head was not that of Joaquin. Chief and most vocal among these doubters was the Alta California, which protested the Act of Relief for Capt. Harry Love: "A proposition for the relief of Capt. Love is before the Legislature. Of what Capt. Love wishes to be relieved is not stated in the Legislative Report but probably it is of an empty pocket." ³⁶ When the preserved specimens appeared on exhibition at Diamond Springs, where Joaquin Murrieta was known, angry citizens tried to dump the exhibit into the street, claiming it was a fraud. ³⁷

But despite the uproar, Harry received his \$5,000. There is no evidence to show that Love shared his reward with any of the other Rangers, although Ranger Pat Connor made it a point to be on hand when Harry received the money. The much-publicized head and three-fingered hand went on exhibition -- first at Mariposa, then at Stockton, where Love obtained a large glass jar for better viewing by the public, and finally on to San Francisco where it could be studied at John King's saloon. Tickets cost one dollar and posters were printed up advertising the coming exhibit. ³⁸

For a while Harry Love rode the crest of popularity and enjoyed his wealth. He took part in a parade, and was described by one reporter as "...a tall, manly figure, with sparkling eyes, long curling hair falling down his shoulders, with his knightly sword hanging by his side." Others didn't find Harry quite so appealing. "He looked more like a large-sized ape than a man ... he was illiterate and a coward." ³⁹ Bancroft said, "Harry Love was a law-abiding desperado... [who] greatly enjoyed slaying human beings, but he did not like so well to be hanged for it; so he asked the legislature ... if he might go out and kill Joaquin." ⁴⁰ Obviously, people were either wild about Harry or they couldn't stand him.

The following year, when public interest began to wane, Harry decided to take a voyage back East aboard the Yankee Blade, but before the ship could reach

its destination he was involved in another questionable, news-making incident. Evidently, from a newspaper report of the matter⁴¹, Harry and six other male passengers took exception to the behavior of a Mr. C.E. Bingham, who insisted upon forcing his unwanted attentions on a lady passenger. A "vigilante committee" was organized and the group went ashore at Colon, Panama, with Bingham in tow. They loaded six guns with powder and a seventh one with a bullet, blindfolded themselves (and Mr. Bingham, too, we hope), and all seven men fired. Harry had no way of knowing if his was the bullet that cut short Mr. Bingham's shipboard romance, but had he chosen to claim this additional honor it is doubtful that any of the "committee" would have argued about it.

IV. The Black Knight and His Lady ...

By 1855 Harry was back in California, and before November of that year the paths of the illustrious bandit-slayer and the Widow Bennett crossed, in, of all places, Zayante. Love was in Zayante to buy a sawmill, and the one he bought belonged to Jackson Bennett. As Mrs. Early tells it: "After Mr. Love got his share of the reward he used the money to buy land and a mill from Jackson Bennett, a son of Mary Bennett. It was near where Ben Lomond is now. The creek still bears Love's name. There he built a log cabin and became a neighbor of the Bennetts. Mary Bennett's old cabin still stands in the Ben Lomond district."⁴²

Some time before November 10 the flamboyant "Black Knight" took as his lady the Widow Bennett. Notary Public Thompson of Santa Cruz County recorded in the Book of Deeds: "...personally appeared Harry Love and Mary Love, his wife, known to me, and acknowledged the foregoing conveyance..."⁴³; aforesaid conveyance was a piece of land deeded to Mansel V. Bennett. The independent Mrs. Love signed "Mary Bennett" on the document which was dated November 10, 1855.

If ever two people were headed on a path of destruction, it was this newwed couple. They were both strong-willed and independent; they were both accustomed to being in control; and both enjoyed a good fight. Mary's great-granddaughter summed up the situation: "She always had been used to running her own business and family and she objected to Mr. Love having anything to say about either. So they quarreled and spent most of the time separating and making up."⁴⁴

Mary had the advantage -- she outweighed Harry by at least 150 pounds and had the experience of age. She was sixteen years his senior and would no more take advice from him than she would from her son Winston, who was the same age. Why did the famous Harry Love choose to marry a 350 pound woman who was old enough to be his mother? Probably for the same reason that he took on the job of tracking down Joaquín -- there was money to be had. And the well-to-do Widow Bennett? She undoubtedly was flattered by the attentions of a younger man whose reputation as the capturer of Joaquín El Famoso was well-known all over California. And everyone knew that Harry Love had collected a \$5,000 reward; he certainly didn't need to marry for money. Mary must have believed that this was truly a union of kindred spirits.

The arguments began almost immediately. Between domestic quarrels Harry occupied himself by building a road -- Love Grade -- to haul logs to his mill. He began affecting the style that earned him the title of "The Black Knight of Zayante": long flowing black hair, black beard and moustache, black clothing, and of course the ever-present sheathed bowie knife, which had looked like a "knightly sword" to the impressed parade reporter. It wasn't long before Mary had had more than enough of this nonsense and moved back to Santa Clara. Harry continued to make the most of his declining fame by astounding willing listeners in saloons with tales of the Battle of Cantúa. Although he did not claim to have personally killed Joaquín (that honor had been given to Billy Henderson), he did count Three-Fingered Jack as his personal trophy. At the Sperry Hotel in Murphys he regaled an enthralled group: "We each of us singled out a man. I singled out 'Three-Fingered Jack' because he was the ugliest in his crowd and I considered myself the ugliest in our crowd." ⁴⁵ When he stopped off in a Santa Clara saloon, someone was bold enough to inquire whether the pickled head in the glass jar really belonged to Joaquin Murrieta. His answer was a noncommittal shrug of the shoulders.

Although Harry stayed at Zayante most of the time, he had a disconcerting habit of dropping in unexpectedly at Mary's house in Santa Clara. These visits inevitably led to arguments, usually over property, and the newspapers and courts were kept busy dealing with their disputes. Harry wasn't above making

his point forcefully if necessary, and Mary began to live in fear of his visits. "For a number of years she refused to live with her husband because of his cruelty," wrote Sawyer. "He was, so it was said, in the habit of beating her when he could find her alone and unprotected." ⁴⁶ Daughter Clementhia, who lived near her mother, testified: "Mother has told me several times lately of having trouble with him ... Mother has attempted to tell [me] of their trouble several times but I always stopped her by telling her I didn't wish to hear anything." ⁴⁷ This may seem rather cold, but perhaps Clementhia had tried to persuade her mother not to marry Love in the first place, and when her advice was ignored, she chose to have no part in the family arguments. In desperation, Mary finally hired a German immigrant, Fred Iverson, as a combination foreman-bodyguard, and the Black Knight took this as a final insult. He would not be publicly humiliated and laughed at by his saloon cronies for having his wife flaunt her newly-acquired male companion around the town. Never mind that she was sixty-five years old and big as the broad side of a barn; the humiliation came from his lack of control over her. He had been out to the Grant Street house just last Saturday and ordered Iverson off the property -- even though Mary claimed that it was her property and she'd do as she pleased. She was his wife, and, by God, she'd do as he said.

The volatile situation had finally reached the danger point, just like old dynamite that needed only one instant of careless mishandling to explode. When Mary and Iverson drove into San José that June morning in 1868, they unwittingly provided that instant. Harry grimly untied his team, got into the wagon, and set out to ambush his tormenter, the Dutchman.

V. Shoot-Out on Grant Street ...

Fred Iverson jumped from the buggy when Clementhia grabbed at the horse's bit -- something was wrong at the house. Was one of the workmen hurt? They stood in the dusty road talking, their backs to the house.

"Love is hiding behind the fence -- he has a shotgun and says he's going to kill you."

Mary, fearful of Harry's violent temper from past experience, watched tensely from the buggy. There was a slight movement inside the yard near the gate,

then something caught her eye -- a gun barrel protruding between two slats of the fence.

"There he comes! There he comes!" Mary screamed as the gun roared.

The startled horse turned sideways, dragging the buggy across the road as Mary continued to scream and Clementhia struggled to control the animal. Iverson spun around, fumbling for his pistol; some of the shot from the second blast hit him in the face, and Clementhia felt a bit of the spent shot graze her hand, but she held onto the horse, trying to calm it.

Iverson ran toward the gate and vaulted over it, only to be struck by Love, who was wielding the empty shotgun like a club. When Harry saw the pistol in Iverson's hand he threw down the useless shotgun and drew his Colt revolver; he began retreating toward the house, firing as he ran.

"The firing now became so continuous," said Clementhia at the inquest, "that I could not tell how it occurred for I was trying to get hold of the horse to help Mother."

From inside the house Russell, the carpenter, saw Iverson fire at Love as he retreated, and this time the bullet took deadly effect. "Love's arm fell as if hit," he recalled. "Love called to me to protect him. I said come into the house and I will, but Love then went to the German and he drew his pistol and struck him down..." Evidently Iverson was ready to quit after wounding Harry, and had put up his pistol, but this new attack was too much. The two men struggled on the ground until Duff climbed down from the roof to separate them.

"When I saw him knocked down I got down from the roof as I did not wish to see him beat to death."

The carpenter came out of the house to help. He remembered that "Fred said he has shot me; he hit me in the street. The blood was running from Fred and I could see he had been hit ..."

Once the fight had been stopped, Russell and Duff helped Love into the house, and Clementhia joined them. The first thing she did was to remove Love's bowie knife from its sheath and put it out of reach.

"He said he was a murdered man," Duff testified. "That the wimmin were murderers and had hired this German to murder him."

After trying to stop the flow of blood from Love's shattered arm as

best he could, Russell sent one of the workmen for a doctor.

Two doctors arrived about thirty minutes later, almost at the same time -- Dr. A.B. Caldwell, a surgeon, and Dr. Whipple, who described himself as an anaesthesiologist. Dr. Whipple was an up-to-date physician and took pride in the fact that he used chloroform to anaesthetize his patients. After a lengthy consultation, Dr. Caldwell determined that Harry's arm was beyond repair and would have to be amputated, so he sent for additional assistance. Dr. Robinson, also a physician and surgeon, said that he was sent for to assist with the operation "about three o'clock this afternoon." The fight was over about 1:30, and Love had been bleeding profusely since then. Dr. Caldwell testified that while dressing Harry's arm "he was continually raving like he was intoxicated from the delerium caused by the blow on his head."

Later testimony by the three doctors revealed that Harry Love was, from their point of view, a difficult patient to deal with. In spite of the loss of blood that would have killed a weaker man, Harry continued to thrash about and rave until Dr. Whipple administered his new wonder-medication, chloroform. Love's reaction to this miracle-worker was not satisfactory. Dr. Caldwell blamed Harry's incoherent raving for interfering with the failure of the anaesthetic: "We administered Chloroform but failed to produce complete anesthesium. While dressing the arm he was very much excited and talked incoherently and just as we were putting in the last suture he attempted to raise up and fell back and expired. He was very hard to manage during the operation."

Dr. Robinson wanted no part of the new-fangled anaesthetic: " Dr. Whipple administered chloroform -- he stood it very bad." To which Dr. Whipple remarked defensively, "I will corroborate everything the doctor has said except in relation to the chloroform. I think that produced no deleterous effect whatever." It appeared to be a classic medical case; the surgeons had performed the operation efficiently, the anaesthetic had been properly administered; the operation was a success, but the patient died.

There are certain discrepancies in the testimony of the witnesses at the inquest, which is not surprising under the circumstances; they were shocked by the ferocity and bloodiness of the event. The hearing was hastily called, and the witnesses and jurors met while the subject of the inquest was barely cold.

Dr. Robinson said at one point that he had been summoned to the house on Grant Street about three o'clock in the afternoon; a few sentences later he said, "It was three or four hours after the accident that I saw him." This would put his arrival at 4:30 or 5:30 in the afternoon, an unusually long time to respond to an emergency call. Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Whipple both stated that when they arrived Harry was "lying on the ground back of this building", referring to Mary's house. Yet Calvin Russell's testimony was quite clear about helping Harry into the house and bandaging his arm.

"He did not want us to leave him alone as he said they would kill him," he testified.

There is no reason to suppose that the two doctors were being inaccurate about where they found their patient, so the question is: who moved Harry out into the back yard, and why?

Stranger still, two of the principal witnesses, Mary Bennett and Fred Iverson, were never called by the coroner to give testimony. Perhaps Mary was hysterical and unable to answer any questions, and Iverson had been wounded, but not seriously enough to prevent his being taken to jail, where he was held until being acquitted by the verdict. Also, Charles Kidder, the painting contractor who was working with Duff, and whose testimony is included in the coroner's report, was a member of the inquest jury. Clementhia Bennett contradicted herself, first claiming that there was no trouble between Love and her mother, then saying that Mary had told her several times of trouble between herself and Harry. The inquest sometimes seems to raise more questions than it answers, but the coroner's decision was clear enough:

"Harry Love came to his death by a pistol shot in the hands of Christian Iverson the same being in self defense."

VI. Sic Transit Gloria ...

Not long after the grim episode on Grant Street, Mary Bennett Love became ill, and was moved to daughter Catherine McClusker's home at Elkhorn Slough near Moss Landing. There she lived quietly, subdued by the chain of events that

had put her in a position of dependence for the first time in her life. Josephine McClusker, Mary's granddaughter, told about Mary's last days: " My mother [Mary's daughter Catherine] thought that she ate too much and several times told her that if she did not cut down she would get to weigh four hundred pounds. She seemed in no pain and was happier with my mother than she had been for many years."

The summer drifted away into autumn and Mary sat with her crocheting, watching the fog moving in, and perhaps thinking about the hectic excitement that had marked her life for so many years. The quietness around Elkhorn Slough was in direct contrast to the bustling activity of Grant Street in Santa Clara, where people were constantly coming and going, and the noise of wagons and carriages passing up and down the street provided an accustomed backdrop of sound and movement. It had been a reassuring noise that hadn't even been noticed, until it was gone.

"One day she said to my mother, 'Get me that crocheting I was working on; I want to finish it.' When it was finished she handed it to my mother, saying, 'There, now, you see, I never did get to weigh four hundred pounds,' lay back and died." ⁴⁸ It was December 19, five and a half months after the tragedy on Grant Street.

It was typical of Mary to have the final say, but little could she have known that long after she and Harry Love were gone she would, indirectly, be responsible for the Black Knight's final humiliation. Mary Bennett had been such a long-time resident of Santa Clara that it was assumed her grave was in the cemetery in that city. Not until the subject came up during Frank Latta's interview with Mabel Early in 1967 was the truth known.

Mrs. Early recalled that her mother told her that Mary's grave was in the Pioneer Cemetery at Freedom, and she went to the cemetery and pointed out the leaning headstone. Latta included a photograph of it in his book, with the inscription plainly visible on the shield-shaped stone:

Mary Love
Born Oct. 25, 1803
Died Dec. 19, 1868

But then, who was buried in the Santa Clara cemetery? Mabel Early went to Santa Clara and examined the grave marker in question. The name that had been read as "Mary Love" for almost a hundred years was so crudely chiseled in the stone that the first letter of the name was almost illegible. Upon close examination, Mrs. Early concluded that what had been read as an "M" for so many years was actually a poorly chiseled "H", and that Harry Love had been buried -- and forgotten -- in the Santa Clara graveyard.

Today Padre Real's willow trees along The Alameda have been gone for so long that they are not even a memory. The crumbling little Mission Santa Clara has been rebuilt and is now part of a large complex of buildings at the University of Santa Clara, and busy El Camino Real has replaced the dusty Grant Street that Mary knew so well.

Zayante is a forgotten place in the dark canyons of the Santa Cruz Mountains, and Harry Love's sawmill is long gone; but the creek bearing his name still flows under the bridge at Ben Lomond. In 1983 a massive mudslide roared down the canyon of Love Creek, obliterating everything in its path and covering the last traces of the Black Knight of Zayante.

FOOTNOTES

1. Inquest Report, Coroner of Santa Clara County, June 29, 1868. Testimony of J.L.Duff. A copy of this report appears in Frank Latta's Joaquin Murrieta and His Horse Gangs: the original document is in the Santa Clara Co. Museum. Original language and spelling is retained in all quotes. Hereafter referred to as "Inq. Rep."
2. Inq. Rep., testimony of Calvin Russell.
3. Eugene T. Sawyer, History of Santa Clara County, California, p. 107.
4. Inq. Rep., testimony of Clementhia Bennett.
5. Edwin Bryant, What I Saw in California, p. 318.
6. Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California, Vol.II, p. 716.
7. David Lavender, Westward Vision, pp. 344, 353.
8. Winston Bennett, "Memoirs of a Pioneer of '43" , San Jose Pioneer, May 26, 1877.
9. Ralph Rambo, Adventure Valley, p. 18.
10. Dorothy F. Regnary, The Battle of Santa Clara, p.93.
11. Frank F. Latta, Joaquin Murrieta and His Horse Gangs, p. 308.
12. Bancroft, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 763.
13. Bennett, op. cit., June 2, 1877.
14. Sawyer, op. cit., p. 10½ .
15. Bancroft, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 762-3.
16. Bancroft, op. cit. , Vol. II, p. 716.
17. Regnary, op. cit., p. 96, footnote 40.
18. Clyde Arbuckle, Santa Clara County Ranchos, p. 14.
19. Bancroft, op. cit.
20. Bryant, op. cit.
21. Regnary, op. cit., p. 54.
22. Regnary, op. cit., p. 22. Letter from Washington A. Bartlett to Capt. John B. Montgomery, Nov. 6, 1846.
23. Ferol Egan, Frémont, Explorer for a Restless Nation, p. 339.
24. Margaret M. Hecox, The 1846 Overland Trail Memoirs, p. 44.

25. Regnary, op. cit., p. 90. Letter from Ward Marston to Comd. J.B. Hull, Jan. 2, 1846.
26. Regnary, op. cit., p. 96, footnote 39.
27. Regnary, op. cit., p. 93.
28. Regnary, op. cit., pp. 91-2. Report of Charles E. Pickett.
29. Regnary, op. cit., p. 93.
30. Ibid.
31. Sawyer, op. cit., p. 107.
32. Bancroft cites Society of Calif. Pioneers records to show 1843 as a possible date, but Texas Archives records show that Love was in Texas until mustered out of the army in 1848. Mrs. Early also gives 1849 as the date of Love's arrival in California.
33. Latta, op. cit., p. 535.
34. Remi Nadeau, The Real Joaquin Murieta, p. 86.
35. Latta, op. cit., p. 595. Testimony of Bequette.
36. Richard Dillon, Humbugs and Heroes, p. 223.
37. Latta, op. cit., p. 596. Testimony of Hank Hawn.
38. William B. Secrest, "The Horrifying History of a Highwayman's Head", The Californians, Nov./Dec. 1986, p. 30.
39. Nadeau, op. cit., p.65.
40. Bancroft, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 435.
41. The Alta California, July 3, 1854.
42. Latta, op. cit., p. 305. Interview with Mabel Dorn Early.
43. Book 3, Deeds, Santa Cruz County, p. 201.
44. Latta, op. cit., p. 306.
45. Nadeau, op. cit., p. 93.
46. Sawyer, op. cit.
47. Inq. Rep., testimony of Clementhia Bennett.
48. Latta, op. cit., p. 308.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

- Arbuckle, Clyde. Santa Clara County Ranchos (Rosicrucian Press, San Jose, Ca., 1968).
- Bancroft, Hubert Howe. History of California , Vols. II, III, IV, and VII. (Santa Barbara, Ca., Wallace Hebbard, c. 1966).
- Barrett, Dick. Dick Barrett '66 (Harlan-Young Press, San Jose, Ca., 1966).
- Brown, Dee. The Gentle Tamers, Women of the Old West (Bantam; Toronto, New York, London, 1974) Pathfinder Series.
- Bryant, Edwin. What I Saw in California (reprinted from 1849 Appleton edit., c. Lewis Osborne, Palo Alto, Ca., 1967).
- Dillon, Richard. Humbugs and Heroes (Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1970).
- Dana, Julian. Sutter of California (The Mac Millan Co., New York, 1936).
- Egan, Ferol. Frémont, Explorer for a Restless Nation (Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1977).
- Engelhardt, Zephyrin, Fr. O.F.M. The Missions and Missionaries of California (James H. Barry Co., SanFrancisco, Ca., 1912).
- Hecox, Margaret M. California Caravan: The 1846 Overland Trail Memoir of ... Ed. Richard Dillon (Harlan-Young Press, San Jose, Ca., 1966).
- Hoover, Mildred B., Rensch, Hero Eugene, Rensch, Ethel Grace. Historic Spots in California (Stanford University Press, Stanford, Ca., 1966) rev. ed.
- Horn, Huston, ed. The Pioneers (Time/Life Books, New York, 1974) Old West Series.
- Jackson, Joseph Henry. Anybody's Gold (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1970).
- Latta, Frank F. Joaquín Murrieta and His Horse Gangs (Bear State Books, Santa Cruz, Ca., 1980).

- Lavender, David. California: Land of New Beginnings (Harper and Row, New York, Evanston, San Francisco and London, 1972).
- _____. The Great West (American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., Bonanza Books, New York, 1965).
- _____. Westward Vision (Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., Frontier Library, 1963) The American Trail Series.
- Lewis, Oscar. Sutter's Fort, Gateway to the Gold Fields (Prentiss-Hall, Inc., Engelwood Cliffs, N.J., 1966) The American Fort Series.
- McLean, Angus. Legends of the California Bandidos (Pioneer Publishing, Fresno, Ca., 1977).
- Nadeau, Remi. The Real Joaquín Murieta (Trans-Anglo Books, Corona Del Mar, Ca., 1974).
- Nevin, David. The Texans (Time/Life Books, New York, 1975) Old West Series.
- Rambo, Ralph. Adventure Valley (Rosicrucian Press, San Jose, Ca., 1970).
- _____. Pioneer Blue Book of the Santa Clara Valley (Rosicrucian Press, San Jose, Ca., 1973).
- Regnary, Dorothy F. The Battle of Santa Clara (Smith and McKay Printing Co., San Jose, Ca., 1978).
- Reisenberg, Felix Jr. The Golden Road (McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, Toronto, London, 1962) The American Trail Series.
- Sawyer, Eugene T. History of Santa Clara County, California (Historic Record Company, Los Angeles, Ca., 1922).
- Sutter, John A. New Helvetia Diary (Grabhorn Press, San Francisco, 1939).
- Watsonville Chamber of Commerce. Watsonville, The First 100 Years, 1952.

Periodicals:

- Dillon, Richard. "The Black Knight of Zayante", The American West (July 1970, Vol. VII, No. 4).
- Secrest, William B. "The Horrifying History of a Highwayman's Head" The Californians (Nov./Dec. 1986, Vol. 4, No. 6).
- Wood, Raymund F. "The Life and Legend of a California Ranger", The Californians (July/Aug. 1985, Vol. 3, No. 4).

Newspapers:

- Alta California , July 3, 1854.
- San Jose Mercury News, February 16, 1986.
- San Jose News, July 23, 1981.
- The San Jose Pioneer, May 26, 1877 and June 2, 1877.