

Volume 29

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No. 3

San Jose's Short-Lived Guadalupe Lake

It's surprising the number in our midst who recall this lake venture and the water sports enjoyed here after the damming of the Guadalupe River in 1912.

Thomas Monahan, San Jose's mayor at the time, was overly enthusiastic about the project as were other city officials. All believed it would enhance the city's image thereby attracting 'people of means' where their families could enjoy themselves in a pleasant wooded lake-side setting.

Such enthusiasm readily created the San Jose Lake Asso. which hurriedly raised the \$3000 needed for the project. The contract was awarded to George Raggio who began the work on the

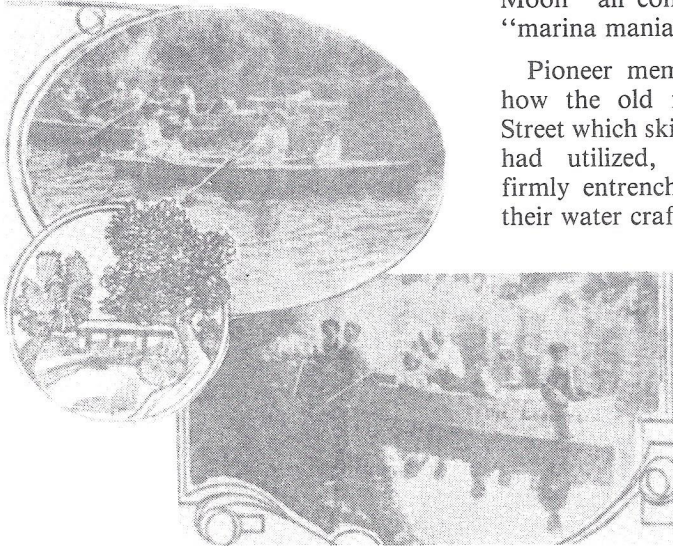
concrete base in October of 1912. The site was 150 feet above San Augustine Street (now W. St. John) in the Guadalupe. The distance from the dam site to the junction of the Guadalupe and Los Gatos Creek being about 100 yards.

By the approaching spring, waters were already backed up as far south as Park Ave. Indications of pleasure rendered from this 'resort' was in evidence everywhere as wharves and boats revealed inscriptions of the pleasure they provided. "Some Chicken", "Baby Doll", "Viola", "September Morn", "Kewpie Doll", "Hunky Dory", "Can't Elope", "Snooky Ookums" and "Honey Moon" all contributing to this era of "marina mania."

Pioneer member Leo Solari reveals how the old family home on River Street which skirted the lake's east bank had utilized, like some neighbors, firmly entrenched pipes as tie-ups for their water craft. The pipes, states Leo, were evident until recent years.

Unfortunately the cork was yanked in 1914 after inadequate winter rains failed to supply enough water for the welfare of its "Hunky Dory's" and "Snooky Ookum's".

H.C.



WHALE BLAZERS

SAN JOSE, 1867 —

A tax proposal suggested, "No man should be entitled to drink unless he first secured a license and any barkeep who would sell an unlicensed party would be subject to a fine and jail. After 21 years of age, besides voting, a man could drink and chew tobacco at a modest fee. The same privileges would be extended to strong-minded women.

SAN JOSE, 1882 —

Painters had just completed work on the broad gauge depot engineers were informed not to have their engines in full throttle so as to prevent another smoke tainted depot.

GILROY, 1911 —

Hard Boiled! A Gilroy chicken literally was laying itself to death. For three weeks the exhausted fowl laid two eggs every day while its frantic owner devised ways to slow-down his red-eyed egg marathoner.

1912 —

'Frisco' was not to be used in designating San Francisco - a decision rendered down by the United States Treasury.

SAN JOSE, 1913 —

The Chamber of Commerce sponsored a plan for planting all vacant lots in the city to vegetables.

June 1931 —

By popular demand the old Spanish name, Yerba Buena, was restored by the U.S. Geographic Board to this island on the San Francisco Bay, long known as Goat Island.

SAN JOSE, 1935 —

The American Legion had discovered American flags used in recent parades and Legion installation ceremonies had been marked "Made in Japan."

SARATOGA, 1938 —

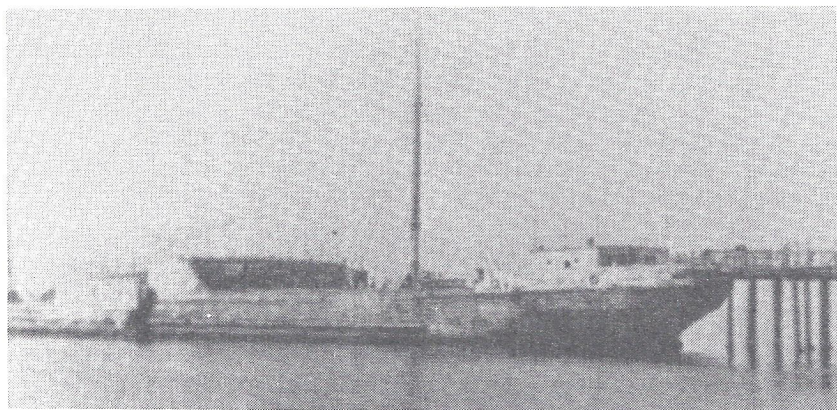
Saratogans who did not know they ever had a jail were for the first time in 25 years would be without one. The discovered one-room wooden structure was sold by the Board of Supervisors to a town resident for \$175.

AGNEW, 1943 —

The state hospital here realized a net profit of \$41,936 from its farm operations. Such production included food processing, poultry and pork, vegetable gardening, field crops and orchard fruits.

The Cement Ship

By Bill Chivers



One of the most popular beaches just south of Santa Cruz is "Sea Cliff," well known for its fishing pier and cement ship at its end. This unique landmark was one of three reinforced concrete ships built by the United States Government in 1918 at the U.S. Naval Shipyard in Oakland, California. The ship that is now at Sea Cliff was named the "Palo Alto." The names of the other two were the "Peralta" and the "Faith" and were to be used as oil tankers, but World War I was over before the ships could be used.

The "Palo Alto" did steam once under her own power out the Golden Gate and turned around and came back to Oakland and remained docked there until 1929. The cement ship "Faith" was the first of the three ships to be completed but never steamed under her own power and was towed to Cuba in 1920 and was reported to be a hulk. The "Peralta" was used as a fish reduction plant near Monterey in the early 1930's, then was converted to a fish canning plant and used in Alaska. After that, she was purchased in the mid 30's by the Pacific Molasses Company and used in the San Francisco Bay as a molasses storage and pumping station. Finally, she was scrapped, and it is said it is now used as a breakwater in the San Francisco estuary.

The "Palo Alto" did have a more dignified life than her two sisters. This 433 foot long and 54 foot wide cement ship was purchased by the Cal-Nevada Company in 1929 from R.C. Porter for use as an amusement center. She was towed by the tugboat "Sea Scout" on January 22, 1930 on a 15 hour trip from Oakland to the point where she now rests at Sea Cliff. The ship was beached stern first, and her six oil storage compartments were filled with sand to act as a permanent ballast to hold her in place. A pier was built from the shore to her stern and was then converted into an amusement center. The "Palo Alto's" 2800 horse power engine and 200 foot long 18 inch diameter propeller shaft were removed. The solid bronze propeller weighed 11 tons with a diameter of 15 feet 9 inches. It was shipped to Germany. The rudder was made of two plates of steel, 1-5/8 inches thick, eight feet wide and 26 feet high. It weighed 15 tons.

The formal opening of the "Palo Alto" as an amusement center took place on the evening of June 28, 1930. She had several concessions on the after deck similar to those on the Santa Cruz Boardwalk. The "Rainbow Ballroom" where the band played for dancing was 156 feet long and 54 feet wide, and took in all of the main deck which is the part that is now broken off and fenced. Amid ship was a big heated swimming pool. The cafe and fish restaurant were built on the super structure. The dining area was 84 feet long and 54 feet wide with almost continuous windows on three sides. There were 23,000 square feet of weather promenade decks and 43,000 square feet of inside deck space. The "Palo Alto's" life as a pleasure spot was a short one. According to reports, the Cal-Nevada Co. went broke in 1932. The first winter after, she closed as a night spot. A huge storm cracked the Palo Alto about midship where the break is now. The super structure and all the improvements were scrapped in 1934 leaving only a stripped hull.

Early in 1934, the Parks Commission of California acquired the ship from an Aptos businessman and let the public use the pier and ship for fishing. A pounding slashing storm five years later broke her back more where the previous crack had been. It was in 1959 that the rotting 76 foot masts were cut down in the interest of safety. As the years went by, storms cracked the ship more, and it sank deeper into the sand. A huge storm in 1982 really tore the pier apart, and the State closed it indefinitely as they were convinced it would cost too much to repair it for public use again, and that they believed no one would really miss it. Well, that wasn't so, as now we will continue the story of the cement ship and of a gregarious lady called Rose Costa.

Rose and her husband, Ed, retired from the restaurant business in San Leandro in 1966 and moved to a white cottage on the cliff above the State Park at Sea Cliff. Rose was an avid fishing person who fished from the pier and cement ship innumerable times and taught many youngsters the fine art of baiting, trolling and of course patience. When the pier was closed, Rose battled the State for five years to rehabilitate the pier and reopen it — "Mostly for kids. I believe if a child is fishing, he or she is staying away from trouble," said Rose. "These days there is little enough for them to do that is wholesome. Stick a fishing pole in their hands and they've got a better chance of surviving."

It was from her contingent of kids most of whom are now adults that she got 41 volunteers to become workers and "Friends of the Pier." In 1984, using private contributions and help from Assemblyman Sam Farr and Congressmen Leon Panetta and Henry Mello, also soldier volunteers from the Army Base at Fort Ord, both the pier and part of the ship was open for fishing. New asphalt was poured over the disintegrated decks of the "Palo Alto," and a diamond steel mesh fence has been erected near the front of the ship to keep people out of the danger areas. New planks have replaced the old rotting ones. Also, wooden grates now cover the old open hatches.

All of this was accomplished by this one determined feisty fisherwoman who can boss grown men around and tangle with politicians without a tremor. When you really get to know her, you'll find that this lady has a soft spot in her heart for people. Today, you will find a plaque at the pier put there by her friends bearing the name "Costa Pier."

The next time you visit Sea Cliff State Park and walk out on Costa Pier to the old cement ship and look at the roosting sea birds and sleeping sea lions and see the people fishing with all the beautiful scenery around you, think of this tenacious lady and just say, "Thank you, Rose."



President's Message

Edward Allegretti

Hello! Another "official" year begins for the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County. I am pleased again to be president; especially when I know that I serve on a board with many fine people.

Often I am asked what our Society does aside from hosting quarterly luncheons and having tours. According to the By-Laws we are; "to form a more perfect union amongst the members; to pay suitable honor to the memory of deceased members; to assist the afflicted; to create a bond of friendship among the members; to maintain a library; collect and preserve articles of historic value of pioneer days; to assemble and preserve information concerning its members, and other pioneers, and data of the pioneer history of the County and State; to receive donations and bequests, to hold and use the same so as to best transmit to future generations a faithful and correct history of the past so as to maintain as far as possible a continuity of historic narrative for the future."

The board tries to carry out these objectives through the luncheon/speakers, tours, essay contest, awards, Pioneer Papers, maintenance of property and artifacts, etc. If you would like to know more about our activities, then please attend any board meeting, all are open to members. We meet promptly at 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. The meeting place is Park Center Towers on sixty North Third Street in San Jose. We usually adjourn about 9 p.m.

If you happen to be at San Jose's city hall, then visit the Council Chambers where Andrew Hill's painting, "The Alameda," is on display. This painting is owned by the Society and has recently been restored.

Often I receive letters of complaint about the luncheon meals or some other matter. This is fine because we want to please the membership. Support through letters and service is needed from every member!

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The Conference of California Historical Societies held in Concord, June 23-25, was attended by your editors, Henry and Laura Calloway. Laura is a Regional Vice President which covers Santa Clara County. Anyone may join the Conference and you will hear what historical activities are happening throughout the state of California.

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Lions Kept the Wolf from His Door

by Hank Calloway

Jay Bruce, Sr. who made his living as California's official lion hunter cut the 500th notch in the stock of his rifle in the remote brushy regions of Siskiyou County in July 1937.

This hefty bronzed native son who claimed to be the only man alive who killed mountain lions for his daily bread was hired for such a task in 1919 by the State Fish and Game Commission.

Bruce declared he walked over 50,000 miles tracking the wary beast which ravaged scores of grazing cattle, goat herds and deer almost the entire width and length of our state.

Already as a youngster of ten he was helping to provide food for the family table. He had already trapped his first lynx cat along with grey fox and tree squirrels selling their hides to a taxidermist realizing twenty five cents for squirrel skins and up to two dollars for the larger pelts.



This relentless stalker was born on September 28, 1881 near Hornitos in Mariposa county where his father, Albert, was employed as a miner mechanic. Two of his paternal uncles, Albert Washburn and Jay Cook, were active, at the time, building the road that established a stage line between Mariposa Grove and Big Trees with headquarters at Clark's Station owned by Galan Clark, discoverer of the huge trees. Bruce's mother, the former Miss Azealia Van Campen, attended San Jose State Normal School and in 1872 was teaching in the town of Mariposa. It was at a school social here where she met Jay's dad.

This incredible woodsman in his book, "Cougar Killer," recalls the thrill of his teenage years when he forked rattlers for cash and supplied all types of small game for guests at Yosemite's Wawona Hotel. He also whipped streams catching almost 4000 pounds of trout in two season. However, when commercial fishing for trout was outlawed at the turn of the century, he looked for other means to carry on.

He turned to the mining sheds at \$2.25 for a ten hour day seven days a week. In addition he often played the mandolin at dances. At this relentless pace he saved enough to enroll at the San Francisco Engineering School of Mines and Engineering but the earthquake and fire quenched this endeavor.

Bruce picked 1927 as another of his adventurous and perhaps his most profitable. With six highly trained and eager hounds he was able to make his largest catch taking 43 cougars, not including the half-grown kits which he captured and sold to zoos.

Mr. Steve Mather, Director of the National Park Service, once paid tribute to Bruce as the "famous lion hunter who was responsible for the marvelous increase of park deer."

On one occasion this resolute man rescued three orphaned spotted cougar kittens in the realm of Yosemite Park. The cubs were readily placed near park headquarters by children of park employees with a cash box beside their cage. The liberated kits brought in over \$5000 for Red Cross needs in just two months after the Park Service adopted them. Meanwhile, a naturalist had disallowed them raw meat, their natural food, after weening. As a result, two of them died in convulsions. On Bruce's recommendation the remaining kit, a female, was given fresh meat and liver and lived her natural life span of over fifteen years in a cage with a male cougar brought from Yellowstone Park.



Ten-day-old cougar kitten.

The Fish and Game Commission had honored bounties on well over 2500 lions in a period of 12 years which began on November 1, 1907 up to January 1, 1919 when Bruce's appointment became effective.

Every one of these claims for bounty was made on an official form and notarized plus the name and address of three witnesses who had seen the fresh hide after the animal was taken. Each hide was then marked "cancelled." Usually the bounty plus the hides condition could bring \$20 to \$35.

In a San Jose Mercury Herald 1923 May day interview Jay Bruce revealed how his four lion hounds: Ranger, Bruce, Pete, and Duke II, were the best in existence having 'treed' 159 cougars. After this feat the lions were usually brought to earthy with the aid of a .22 long Colt pistol. "This amount of dead lion means a saving of about 8000 deer in just one year," Bruce revealed. "Not to mention their natural increases each year. The average lion lives 18 years and in order to live at all has to kill at least 50 deer a year." Bruce at the time was also gathering data for the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California.

Mr. George Ruff, a cattleman who ranched on the headwaters of the Coyote Creek in Santa Clara County, at this very time had been victimized by plundering cougars. In haste Jay Bruce and his 'pack' arrived on the scene. Within 48 hours he and his hounds had ended the exploits of "Big Jim", a 150 pound cougar and two lionesses, one at 85 pounds and the other at 75 pounds.





Bruce and longest lion taken (7'6", 160 lb.)

Our steadfast stalker looked at 1928 as rather stirring. His eldest son, Jay Jr. was along on a hunt but his task was to just operate the movie camera to complete the movie his father had been working on since 1925. This adventure film went on to be featured at San Jose's American Theater in the 1930's with Jay Sr. receiving 'in person' billing.

Jay Bruce married in 1910 and raised a family, a union lasting twenty-eight years and ending in divorce in 1938. Mrs. Bruce preferred civilization while her husband could not endure without his wilderness. He retired in 1947 at the age of 66 paying tearful respects to his faithful canine martyrs of cougar hunts who had achieved the unequalled record of 669 lions taken in the interest of preserving and increasing deer and domestic livestock throughout our "Golden State."

"Yes," he said in an eloquent parting, "I marvel at my good fortune and frequently thank the fates for the opportunity to have spent my life in the primeval forest among nature's wild creatures. I sympathize with those who, seeking to do the same, find civilization is unavoidably causing this opportunity to disappear."

MEMBERSHIP PINS!

Attractive half-inch metal-enameled pins, depicting the State and locating the county with a star, in 3 colors, and identifying the organization on the perimeter, are to be sold for \$2.00 at the September 3 Luncheon. You may obtain your pin at a booth as you enter Lou's Village Fiesta Room. If you are unable to attend the luncheon but wish to buy a pin, call Jim O'Connor at 415-595-1594 (mornings) to arrange delivery.

HOW DO YOU SPELL RELIEF?

L - I - F - E M - E - M - B - E - R - S - H - I - P

The easiest way to provide relief from the reminders to pay your annual dues is to become a LIFE MEMBER. Join the 160 members who are already life members. It is easy: just pay the one-time fee of \$60 for a single member or \$100 for a married couple.

Send your check, made payable to CALIFORNIA PIONEERS, to P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. Your white and gold card(s), hand lettered by Hank Calloway, will be sent to you by mail. And never pay dues again!

Any questions? Please call Membership Chairman/Financial Secretary Alexandra Riddle at 738-1216.

Our 1988 Lynn Vermillion Memorial Essay Winners Announced

Helen MacCarthy, Essay Chairperson

First Award of \$500 to Karen Sue Hockemeyer for her "GEORGE O'DOHERTY AND THE SAN JOSE TRIBUNE."

Second Award of \$250 to Andrew Suian Huang (Leland High School student) for his "THE SAN JOSE TEACHER' STRIKE — 1980."

Third Award of \$125 to Joan Barriga for her "THE HOLY CITY SIDE SHOW."

Three Honorable Mentions of \$25 each went to: Winfred Earl Powell-Clay for "THERE IS A WHOLE LOT HERE: MY STREET BLOCK" (about Burbank); Pamela Griffin (Homestead High School student) for "RALPH RAMBO"; and Heather Menegaux (Willow Glen High School student) for "THE FLEA MARKET: LOCAL BOY MAKES GOOD."

These essays are available for reading at the California Room at the San Jose Main Library.

“Slang’s a Knock Out Even In The Best Circles”

Arthur G. Kennedy, a professor of English at Stanford University during the 1930’s had authored such a book. He conceded that occasionally slang expressions did have an appeal and a certain attractive quality such as: ‘lollapoloosa’, ‘humdinger’, ‘skiddo’, ‘skedaddle’, ‘knock-out’ and still have a place in polite society. All slang was not to be tolerated he believed, however, occasionally a slang phrase can work its way into standard English and be accepted without question. “Often”, he cautioned, “it’s just an acknowledgement of intellectual laziness or linguistic poverty.”

He believed there was no real gain in calling a gun a ‘gat’; a woman a ‘skirt’; to take, ‘snitch’; to date a ‘flat tire’ or be ‘bambozzled’ by some one. Too often the slangy use of words ruins a word already useful and long established, Kennedy believed. The college student at the time was said to have had an effecton for ‘bone up,’ ‘apple polishing,’ and a ‘pipe course’ (easy course).

In the authors defense of slang he wrote, “More over it should be noted slang is no longer predominately of the criminal world; but certain social and professional trade groups in later times will develop a much greater expansion toward special slang expressions of their own. Too often the slangy use of a word ruins a word already useful and long established in the language.”

Among Kennedy’s chief objections was the use of “keen” in the sense of excellent; of ‘all-wet’ in the sense of wrong or mistaken, or ‘boiled’ or ‘pickled’ for intoxicated and ‘canned’ for being discharged or ‘bonehead’ for stupid.

Professor Kennedy was also emphatic when he wrote, “It is not at all ‘apple sauce’ when the meaning of good old words must be guarded and maintained with a certain degree of conscious effort if the integrity of the language is to be preserved.”

H.C.

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This fall Mary Lou Lyon will be teaching an adult education history class at the Markham Center similar to the ones which had been taught by Clyde Arbuckle. Registration begins September 12, 1988.

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Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS by phone begin Tuesday, September 6, for members only. Call Nancy Hill at 258-3449 Monday through Friday, preferably mornings. After Nancy confirms your reservation, make check payable to THE CALIFORNIANS and send to P.O. Box 32121, San Jose, CA 95152. After the quarterly meeting a Trip Brochure may be obtained by sending a stamped self-addressed legal-sized envelope to the above address. We encourage you to use the waiting list if your desired trip is full.

THE BEJEWELLED TOURNAMENT OF ROSES 100th ANNIVERSARY! Dec. 30, 1988 - January 3, 1989. Hurry! Reserve your space now! This dazzling package is almost a close-out! Four fabulous nights at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach; Grandstand seats at Rose Parade; Tour San Juan Capistrano; Visit the "Spruce Goose" and Queen Mary; plus Deluxe Motorcoach transportation; Many more surprises! Coming ALL NEW ONE-DAY TRIPS in October, November and December.

Upcoming! More Titanic Events! Our Californians called on the HEARTLAND OF AMERICA: Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and the unique Ozarks May 1989. Sign up at September 3 Luncheon.

Stand-by for this absolute pleasure-giving voyage in a coastal steamer along FJORDS OF NORWAY to the top of the world in August 1989.

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