

THE TRAILBLAZER

Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County
Volume 3 Summer 1963 Number 3

The Gay 90's Marjorie B. Fisk

A magnificent hotel often shapes the destiny of the city in which it is located. Men and women of wealth and leisure are attracted by the elegance and luxury, which can be furnished by a hotel of this kind.

The citizens of San Jose early recognized the necessity for providing proper hotel accommodations, and the demand found realization and expression in the construction of the Hotel Vendome. The specifications were so carefully executed that the completed structure was an ornament to the city, and an object of world wide fame. In grace of architecture, beauty of location, and magnificence of appointments, it had no superior on the Pacific Coast.

The building was four stories high, of the Queen Anne style of architecture, presenting a handsome and imposing appearance. Wide verandas furnished opportunity for out door existence which our climate invited most of the year. The furnishings were rich and expensive, and the whole building presented an air of quiet, home-like elegance that was attractive in the extreme. It was the gathering place for many celebrities and the scene of countless social affairs.

The Hotel Vendome was named after the Palais de Vendome in France. It was built in 1888 and early '89, with a grand opening on February 7, 1889. It was located on the homesite of Josiah Belden, the first mayor of the City of San Jose. The total cost of construction was \$285,000. Its buildings and beautifully landscaped gardens occupied the entire block bounded by Whiteman Lane, North San Pedro, North First and Hobson streets.

The proud old hotel closed its doors to the public April 25, 1930, and sat alone among her skirts of oak and lawn and bright flower beds--sat and perhaps brooded over the "gay nineties," watching with dim, old eyes the ghost parade of thousands who had enjoyed her hospitality, for "taps" of sledgehammers in the hands of a wrecking crew would be heard very soon.

via Stagecoach in Santa Clara County

Arthur M. Fisk

A stagecoach driver was a skilled operator, and was treated as such. He was known as, "The Whip" and was the captain of his craft and the admiration of the stable boys. He was rough in his manner of speech, but very accommodating to his passengers. Above all, he was sober and dependable.

In the fall of 1849, John Whistman offered to the public the first stagecoach service in California over a fifty-mile dirt road from San Jose to San Francisco. It did not provide first class service since Whistman's equipment consisted of an old French omnibus and some poorly groomed mustangs and mules.

A nine hour service was maintained, as long as fair weather lasted. The winter rains compelled Whistman to change his route to Alviso where passengers could make connections with steamboats for San Francisco.

In the spring of 1850 Whistman re-established his original route to San Francisco. The fare was \$32.

In April 1850 Whistman had some competition from Ackley & Maurison, who established a tri-weekly service, with new stages and the best horses they could buy. Whistman could not compete with the new firm and sold out to Hall & Crandall during the summer of 1850. These two men had sufficient funds to equip and operate an efficient stagecoach line and improved the service whenever it was required.

California gained statehood September 9, 1850, but Californians did not get this news until it was brought to San Francisco via boat on October 18th. Governor Peter H. Burnett, being in San Francisco chose a Hall & Crandall stage for his ride to San Jose on the following day, October 19th. "Bob" Crandall was the driver. The "opposition line" chose to race Crandall to San Jose. As the Governor put it, "There was some of the most rapid driving I had ever witnessed---as we flew past on our rapid course, people flocked to the road to see what caused our fast driving---I can never forget Crandall's race. He beat his competitor by only a few minutes."

Hall & Crandall, competing with other bidders, were awarded in May 1851 a four year contract to carry U. S. mail between San Jose and San Francisco on a tri-weekly basis, for which they were to receive \$6,000 per year. Later that same year they were able to reduce the fare on their line to \$16.

July 2, 1851 Hall & Crandall extended their service to Monterey. Stages leaving San Jose every Monday and Thursday morning and arriving in Monterey the following evening, with equal service returning.

Hall & Crandall begged the public to, "visit the beautiful and healthful valley of Santa Clara," stating that, "a more charming drive was not to be found in all California, as one is whirled rapidly through the oak openings and across level plains by skillful drivers."

The first stagecoach service between Los Angeles and San Jose was established by J. L. Tomlinson in 1853, with very poor connections at Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo.

January 1, 1854 all the major stagecoach lines in northern California were consolidated and known as the California Stage Co. The first President of this merger was James Birch; J. P. Deigham, secretary and Charles McLaughlin superintendent, with headquarters in Sacramento. This merger absorbed at least five-sixths of all stage lines in California.

In January 1855 the California Stage Company extended its lines south from Oakland to San Jose, via Mission San Jose, and later in the same year provided the first direct stage service between San Francisco and San Jose to Los Angeles.

Also during 1855 the California Stage Company was awarded a contract to carry the mail between San Jose and Santa Cruz for \$1,000 annually. This company was primarily interested in northern California and by 1860 had sold all its stage lines south of Sacramento.

On July 2, 1857, the Government awarded a contract for overland stagecoach service to John Butterfield, William G. Fargo and others. (It was known as the Overland Mail). This service began on September 15, 1858 via Fort Yuma and Los Angeles. The first trip was made in 24 days and 18 hours. San Jose became an important stopping place on this long trek, which had San Francisco for its western and St. Louis, Missouri for its eastern terminus. The arrival of the first overland stage from St. Louis on October 10, 1858, is described in the San Jose Telegraph as follows: "At 1 o'clock on Sunday morning 10th October, the loud, clear notes of the coachman's horns and the rapid rattling of the stagecoach through the streets awakened many of our citizens from their repose. The unusual noise at such an hour alarmed the watchful guardians of yard and stable, and there arose simul-

taneously throughout the city, the loud, deep note of warning from the whole canine race. The Southern Overland Mail which left St. Louis, Mo., on 16th September, had arrived, by way of El Paso, Tucson and Los Angeles, and quickly changing horses, passed on to San Francisco, arriving there at 7 o'clock in the morning."

The Butterfield Overland Mail service between Saint Louis and Los Angeles was discontinued in 1861 when hostilities broke out between the North and the South.

During May 1857, William H. Hoy started a stagecoach line from San Jose to Sonora and operated it on a tri-weekly basis. The fare was only \$10 each way.

In March 1856 Crandall having given up his stage run to San Francisco, started an omnibus service between San Jose and Santa Clara. He operated a two-horse bus, carrying 14 persons, and made four round trips between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The fare was 25 cents each way.

William Pitts with an eye on the stage service to Santa Clara started an omnibus line from San Jose in 1861 in competition with Crandall and continued with this service until 1869.

The omnibus business seemed so profitable in this locality that Levi Millard in October 1863 started the first stage line on the Alameda to McCartysville (now Saratoga) via Santa Clara with a four-horse omnibus.

After the completion of the toll road from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz in 1860 a stagecoach service was inaugurated between San Jose and Santa Cruz. For many years this line was operated by Ward & Colegrove who drove their own stages, it was known as the San Jose & Santa Cruz Stage Line. Stages left San Jose at 10 a.m. daily and returning left Santa Cruz at 7:30 a.m., with a stop each way for dinner at Lexington. On May 15, 1880 the South Pacific Coast railroad began regular passenger train service from Santa Cruz to San Jose, which meant the end of the line for the stagecoaches on this run.

A letter from Sherman Day at New Almaden to his father Jeremiah Day, president of Yale, November 30, 1858, states that, "Two daily stages bring us our letters and papers and take us to town (San Jose) for \$1 per trip."

An article in Harper's Monthly, October 1865, had the following: "From San Jose to the Hacienda, a distance of 12 miles, a more delightful drive is not to be found. Two lines of stages make a daily trip each way, so that passengers from San Francisco can reach the mines within four or five hours."

Eugene Boric operated the New Almaden & San Jose

Stage Line from 1881 until train service began in 1886. Frank Bohlman also operated a stage line to New Almaden at this time, and later with D. C. McCracken purchased the City Stables at 84 W. Santa Clara Street, San Jose.

The completion of the railroad to New Almaden, June 15, 1886 meant the end of the stagecoach business, except from the station to the Hacienda and Englishtown on the hill.

July 5, 1865 a Mr. Murphy was given a permit to operate a stage line from the Hacienda to the village of Almaden on the hill. In 1886 this service was extended to the railroad station and Joe Henwood held the permit from 1898 to 1906 to operate from the station to English-town on the hill. This service was continued after 1906 by Tom Stile.

In 1877 a stage line was operated from Congress Springs to connecting train service at Los Gatos. It was known as the Congress Springs & Los Gatos Stage Line and at one time was operated by Sewell Bullard.

Many short stage lines were operated in the county at various times. Gilroy Hot Sulphur Springs Stage Co., operated out of Gilroy in 1871 by Ira R. Doolittle. Guadalupe Mines Stage Line, operated out of San Jose in the 70's by C. C. Coffin. Alviso boasted of Stage service as far back as 1849. During the 70's the Alviso Stage Line was operated by H. C. Carter, office at 244 First Street, San Jose.

The stagecoach ride from San Jose to Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton was one to delight the traveler. The distance by road was 28 miles, but only 13 miles by air line. One account of this trip reads, "The road bends into ravines and rounds jutting points, ever rising, the view growing constantly grander and more extended. The valley begins to appear like a map, each orchard with its rows of trees distinctly outlined. Then around hill-sides where black oaks and mountain laurel bend over the road, and wild flowers bloom in profusion."

Horses were changed at Grand View (elevation 1,500 feet) and Halls Valley (elevation 1,543 feet) and the stage continued on over another range to Smith's Creek (elevation 2,146 feet). At Smith's Creek the traveler found a good hotel where fine meals were served. From Smith's Creek to the summit the road was very steep and crooked. Elevation at the Lick Observatory 4,209 feet.

Even now the story isn't finished, for it lives on in the few old timers who drove Tall Coaches down to "meet the train."

By-lines from our Presidents

It has been a great honor to serve as President of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County this past year.

I cannot express in words what I feel in my heart for the loyalty and co-operation of our Board of Directors.

Many things have been accomplished; permanent articles of incorporation have been filed, a revised set of by-laws has been issued, a new roster has been printed, a non-profit organization mailing permit has been obtained for the Trailblazer, and our membership is now 670.

We are making plans for the edition of our scholarship essays, that we may have a record of the valuable research done by these students.

It was a privilege to have had a part in planting three redwood trees on Arbor Day in River Glen Park, which we can always remember as our own.

I sincerely hope our Pioneers will continue in their efforts to preserve our landmarks, looking forward to the fulfillment of our desire for a "Pioneer Town."

I have enjoyed many happy hours with the Social Group, also the many tours to historical places, meeting friends, and renewing friendships dating back to early school days.

A little smile, a little song,
A word of cheer when things go wrong,
It's the only heaven that we know
Along life's pathway as we go,
So let's not forget that little smile
That little kindness all the while.

Minnie L. Clark

Recently I obtained a copy of "Explorations in Kern" by Richard C. Bailey, Director of Kern County Museum. In autographing it for me Mr. Bailey made the suggestion that this was something You could do in Santa Clara County. We have among our membership a group who would be interested in "exploring on foot and with camera, as well as car," some of the historical spots in our county, that we may learn more about the history of this area.

At our September 7th meeting we will be honoring Mr. Richard Barrett, better known as "Share it with Barrett," who through his column has done a great deal to perpetuate and stimulate an interest in local history.

Alice M. Vetterle

PIONEER ANECDOTES

My great uncle Allen Foster, as a pioneer in Monterey County had many thrilling experiences. One was while he was keeper of the general store and stage station at Deep Wells, on the old road between Salinas and Chualar. Vasquez and Chavez appeared one night and robbed him of his purse. They fled in the direction of the Pinnacles where the gang had a rendezvous. At dawn he went out to search for his purse to ascertain if they had thrown it away, instead he found a buckskin sack well filled with gold and silver, which one of the bandits had lost in his flight. It contained more money than the bandits had stolen from him.

Geneva E. Menzel

* * *

My grandfather, August P. Poulain, built the first flour mill in San Jose in 1843. He owned the property between what is now Santa Clara and San Fernando streets along Guadalupe River. He dammed up the river, to furnish power to grind his wheat, and built his water wheel there. The flour was screened through silk screens, which did not remove all the bran and left the flour a yellowish-orange color. Because of the color of the flour, he named the mill, "The Orange Flour Mill," and this property has always been known by that name.

Albert A. Haehnlen

* * *

My father, Andrew Thomas Gallagher, came around Cape Horn from New York on the barque, John W. Carter, and landed at San Francisco in 1849.

My grandfather, John Martin, was a carpenter by trade, and built the wooden cross in front of the mission at Santa Clara. It is incased in the newly built cross, but can be seen through the glass in front.

Mabel Gallagher Luce

* * *

It was a man's job driving a stagecoach on the dangerous Stockton-Mariposa and the Sacramento-Placerville runs, but cigar smoking, tobacco chewing, profane speaking, "Old Charley" Parkhurst did it for thirty years, before death revealed he was a woman and had been a mother.

Arthur M. Fisk

SANTA CLARA COUNTY'S ERA OF GOOD FEELING

Clyde Arbuckle

Whenever our county's old-timers long for the peaceful, law-abiding days of yore, they should take a look at the record. Santa Clara County has matched murder for murder with any mining camp in the west.

We got off to a flying start in 1848. Antonio Valencia murdered Edward Pyle, Jr., and three highwaymen named Davis, Campbell and Freer held up and killed a German returning from the mines with several thousand dollars in gold dust.

A posse soon rounded up the German's murderers and gave them a fine public hanging in the San Jose Plaza. Pyle's killer, caught about a year later, got the same treatment in the same place, witnessed by women and children.

Murders of an unidentified Mexican and three Americans--E. G. Baker, Digby B. Smith and a Mr. Wood--furnished conversation topics in 1849 and '50.

Murder punctuated crime of all sorts continued unabated throughout 1851 and '52. Thomas Pyle, highly respected San Jose rancher, died when a discharged employee shot him in the back in 1853.

But we really got into the swing of things in 1854. Between that year and 1872, we had 54 violent homicides--an average of three a year. And these were only the discovered or reported ones.

Even the 1880's and '90's showed no sign of let-up. Jan Wasielewsky murdered his wife in Los Gatos in 1882. The following year, a saloon keeper named Majors engineered a plot that cost the lives of W. P. Renowden and Archie McIntyre of the same community.

By 1887, however, Los Gatos citizens had begun to lose patience with murderers. They used the Los Gatos Creek bridge as a gallows for Encarnacion Garcia who killed a fellow Mexican on a downtown street.

But if they intended to teach anyone a lesson, they wasted time. Another of their sterling townsmen, Charles Goslaw, soon pummeled an old man named Grant to death. And elsewhere in the county, Jose Ramirez ended the life of Francisco Acero.

San Jose returned to the limelight on Nov. 11, 1892, with the mysterious murder of 25-year-old Henry Planz, bookkeeper for the Fredericksburg Brewery. Early that morning a passerby discovered Planz's body hanging from the limb of a pepper tree near the Guadalupe bridge on

West Julian Street. Evidence indicated that "parties unknown had dragged it to the place of hanging."

Planz's murder was still fresh in the public mind when the county's greatest killing took place in Campbell. On May 26, 1896, James C. Dunham brutally slaughtered six members of Col. R. P. McGlinchy's household--then escaped on a fast saddle horse.

Sheriffs posted Dunham's picture in public places, issued "Wanted" bulletins by the ream, and advertised big rewards for his capture late as 1912. But so far as known, no one who knew him ever saw him again.

* * *

82 YEARS AGO

(From the files of the Santa Clara Journal in 1881)

Town fathers were dismayed to find a woman in a state of intoxication lying on the sidewalk on the corner of Franklin and Jackson streets.

Authorities finally captured local thief and part time stagecoach bandit, "Fellows," who claimed he robbed the rich and gave to the poor.

"Blonde Women" was the subject of the Rev. Clarence Fowler's second lecture in his series of talks on women in Widney Hall.

Moulin's Confectionary and Fruit Store has a pretty good selling point--it is the only place in town where ice cream is sold.

Section 300 of the penal code, which held that saloons should not open on Sunday, was being enforced in Santa Clara, with the result that all of the saloon keepers were put under arrest with regularity.

While San Jose was experimenting with electric lights the Santa Clara City Council said; "WE consider the light a success; however, it will not take the place of gas lamps throughout our city."

Flour from the Santa Clara city mill has reached England and the local industry is prepared to make flour for a world market.

Complaints that Southern Pacific Engineers were so inconsiderate at the Santa Clara depot as to stop their trains for such a brief time, so that the ladies, who had a difficult enough time climbing aboard, could not do so without "assistance of the most vigorous kind."

Progress is reported on the graveling of city streets. Price for hauling gravel is 70 cents per square yard.

* * *

LOOK FOR IT HERE

MARRIED, January 8, 1963, Bernice Schlagl and Arthur Mitchell. They are now at home, 1223 Delmas Avenue, San Jose. Our congratulations.

Eleanor Dale of Mountain View has been a dedicated fighter for the preservation of that community's historical past since the turn of the century, and researching local history has made her Mountain View's unofficial historian. She has also been active in PTA work and served on the School Board. A new school in the "Dale Triangle" -- will be named after her.

Edna Lake, purchased a pair of shoes at Valley Fair, and dropped her ticket in the barrel, then went to Death Valley on a Pioneer Bus Tour. When she returned, look-- a four-door Renault Dauphine! The color--RED!

The Lyndon Hotel in Los Gatos, originally known as the Ten Mile House, when it was located on the site of the Southern Pacific station, reached the end of the line on March 15, 1963, when bulldozers and wrecking hammers demolished the grand old landmark. It was partially destroyed by fire in 1877, then moved to the southwest corner of Santa Cruz Avenue and Main Street, and rebuilt.

Captain Briggs, the fat little sailor figure that stood in front of the cigar store at 84 So. 2nd St. for years, came to San Francisco on a sailing vessel and was brought to San Jose by Ora Merritt's grandfather. Captain Briggs has recently been located in a museum at Shelbourne, Vermont.

Ten Years in Paradise by Carroll has been loaned to a member of our Society. Please return to Ora Merritt.

The Santa Clara City Council appropriated \$70,000 recently to complete the work at Warburton Park. The park was named for Austen D. Warburton and his family, who were pioneer Santa Clara residents.

At our quarterly meeting June 1st, Dr. Gilbert of San Jose State College presented the winner of our scholarship award, Miss Sharon Ray, whose topic was, "Santa Clara County and The Alien Land Initiative of 1920."

A resolution of appreciation for Mrs. Mabel G. Ogier and Mrs. Ora H. Merritt was passed by the Board of Directors, for their loyal devotion to duties and interest in the welfare of our organization.

Your officers elected for the ensuing year, were duly installed at the Board of Directors meeting July 8th. Past President, Honorable Allan P. Lindsay served as installing officer.

Welcome

Congratulations to our new members: Miriam Allen, Ada L. Antine, Joe Antine, Marian Arnett, Lenore V. Austin, Vivian Thornton Brown, Lovesta Dorwin Davis, Eloise Dias, Theron E. Fox, Bluebell Fulton, Laura M. Hall, Isabel C. Johns, Anthony E. Lopes, Magdalen Lopes, Annie Mandala, Carolyn Martin, Jennie Mirabito, Mildred G. McElroy, Otto D. McElroy, Carmelita E. Peters, Gertrude Pozzo, Lois V. Pryor, Florence Reich, Sadie M. Rogers, Victor L. Rogers, Lucille Snyder, Fred R. Tomkin, Laura M. Tomkin, Donald Tustin, Margaret Wibel, Helen Worcester.

* * *

Under the Weather

Mr. Albert A. Haehnlen (91 years young) recently underwent a minor operation, and is now recuperating and doing very well at the Campbell Convalescent Hospital, 3580 Payne Avenue. He would enjoy visiting, and hearing from his friends.

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the condition of any ill member, and report any sickness or deaths to the Chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Lovene Luhrman. Phone 292-0070.

* * *

Beyond the Horizon

Ida Louise Steinagel
January 5, 1866 - April 25, 1963

Abbie S. Borchers
May 12, 1876 - April 25, 1963

Stanley P. Williams
November 26, 1886 - May 18, 1963

Clifton C. Heller
April 22, 1878 - May 29, 1963

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

THE TRAILBLAZER

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* * *

The Social Club of our society meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday afternoon of each month. Card playing and various activities highlight each meeting. For further information concerning Club activities call Mrs. Kate L. Owen, 295-1153.

For information concerning chartered bus tours for members of the Pioneer Society, phone Gertrude A. Bernhardt, 293-3087.

Any items for the Pioneer scrap book may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose 28, Calif.

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