

THE

TRAILBLAZER

QUARTERLY BULLETIN
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY
INCORPORATED 1875

Vol. 14

Spring 1974

Number 2

ESTABLISHED IN 1849.

ROWE AND CO'S

VISITS SAN JOSE IN 1857

PIONEER

CIRCUS

OF CALIFORNIA

The advertisement is enclosed in a decorative border with floral motifs at the corners. At the top, it states 'ESTABLISHED IN 1849.' Below this is a large banner with 'ROWE AND CO'S' written across it. In the center, a woman in a circus costume is riding a horse. A diagonal banner across the middle reads 'VISITS SAN JOSE IN 1857'. Below the horse, the word 'PIONEER' is in a small box, and 'CIRCUS' is in large, bold letters. At the bottom, it says 'OF CALIFORNIA'.

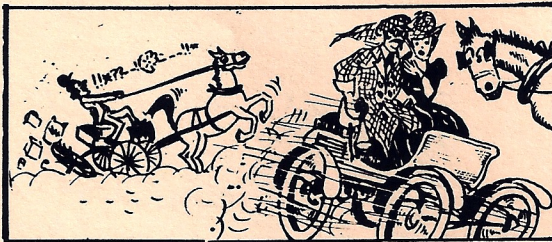
Display Advertisement for "California's Pioneer Circus"

WHALE BLAZERS

In 1898 the startling automobile made its chugging debut along the streets of Oakland, the first horseless carriage on the Pacific Coast. This outlandish contraption was built by W. L. Elliot who exposed his back-firing curiosity to the amazed folks and frightened animals. However, the highlight of Elliot's efforts was when he navigated his automobile up Mt. Hamilton, a run of 56 miles, on the 13th of September, 1898, time 5 and a half hours,

using five gallons of gasoline.

David Starr Jordan, then president of Stanford University went along with Elliot and had this to say about the trip. "The machine crept gingerly up the 26 miles of sharply winding roads to the summit, and in coming down wore out all the crude brakes devised by the inventor. But the essential fact remained that a horseless vehicle built in California had successfully climbed 4,209 feet of the mountain."



Mrs. Sarah Winchester had a boat landing at Coyote Point in San Mateo County. It was here where she took refuge after the 1906 quake on a palatial house boat that became her home for over five years.

Kermit Butler was head timber faller for Hubbard & Carmichael's mill above Saratoga in the 1890's. A burly muscular blond well over six feet, he was a master woodsman. Butler had no fingers, born without them, just short stubs and a pair of hefty thumbs. His axe was said to be the fastest and most capable in this entire timber area.

OUR DARK MOVING MOUNTAIN



LOMA PRIETA, the lengthy dark blue mountain that skirts miles of our southern skyline, was once called Mount Bache after Alexander Dallas Bache, grandson of Benjamin Franklin and superintendent of the U. S. Coast Geodetic survey group from 1853-1867. Under a curious error the peak appears on old maps as Mt. Umunhum, the name of another mountain five miles to the north, but the mistake was rectified by changing Mt. Bache to Loma Prieta (Spanish for dark mountain).

The mountain gets its opaqued hue because of the dense growth of chaparral and Douglas oak.

In 1930 Dr Bailey Willis a Stanford geologist who measured the mountain, said it's heading south at

rate of six feet every 25 years in the general direction of Morgan Hill. Dr. Willis had this to say regarding the meandering mountain: "Loma Prieta is an outstanding example of a mountain moving. Its wedged-shaped bottom is like the bow of a ship pointing southwest. Pressure against it from the ocean forces it toward the southeast and also raises it into the air. It is not, however, moving at the rate that should disturb real estate values." He estimated the peak should reach Morgan Hill about the year 26,934 or 25,000 years from now. Loma Prieta, our blue ridge carpeted landmark which towers 3,806 ft. above the sea, already has its itinerary planned---according to Dr Bailey Willis.

H.C.

HOT ROCK CANYON

Ruth Heath

Do you remember the Alum Rock "Meteor" which lay so long undisturbed until its value was finally discovered during World War I?

Old pioneers insisted it was a meteor, but engineers say it was a large outcropping of a ledge of rock containing manganese.

The "meteor," which has so often in past years been the subject of controversy, is said to have fallen from the heaven in 1848 supposedly witnessed by several old-timers who believed it to be a foreboding of great calamities to occur. But Old Tom Brown, as he was known, had no fear and immediately left on a search for its location. He came upon it one week later, at what is now the Penetencia Creek entrance to Alum Rock Park. According to Tom Brown, it was still hot. "The gol darn thing was so hot," he said, "that when I put my finger on it, it began to sizzle."



Other reports were that the "meteor" was first discovered in 1856. According to an early pioneer, his father prospected the range of hills on the east side of the valley from Coyote Station to Alum Rock Canyon. It was then that they came upon the "meteor."

Samples of the rock were brought back to San Jose and shown to a miner who was certain that he knew what minerals they contained and bought up the entire claim for ten dollars.

Since that time the "meteor" passed through several hands and finally came into the possession of the city through the purchase of Alum Rock Park.

It immediately became of great interest to travelers and the story of "the missile from the heavens," was sent to other states and countries as an inducement to tourists to visit San Jose. Pathways leading to it were constructed and a sign was erected giving the weight as 220,000 tons.

In 1916 the rock was assayed and it was ascertained that it contained manganese. The idea of disposing of it was considered since an offer of three dollars a ton was made by a large mineral company situated at Pittsburg, California. A controversy arose over the sale and it was left untouched. Later Observatory Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West were able to have it preserved as an historic landmark.

At the outbreak of World War I, when the demand for manganese, which was used in the manufacture of guns, caused it to rise in value, the idea of mining it was again considered with the result that the project was undertaken by the city. The Native Sons had previously waived, at the request of the government, their previous objection.

Work was undertaken in September 1918 and five carloads were shipped and ten thousand dollars was received. The money was to be used to pay for the construction of the Santa Clara Street bridge at the Los Gatos Creek and the San Carlos Street bridge over the Guadalupe Creek.

With the cessation of hostilities stock quotations on the "meteor" took an awful slump. The bottom dropped out of the market and the city's dream of unlimited funds dropped proportionately. Finally, with the signing of the Armistice the city received the news that no more shipments would be received.

Sawdust & Gold Dust

"CALIFORNIA'S PIONEER CIRCUS"

Third Night!

ROWE'S PIONEER CIRCUS!

CORNER FIFTH and M STREETS.

The Performances of this popular Equestrian Establishment have been nightly received with the heartiest applause and the most intense admiration!



Joseph A. Rowe . . . Proprietor and Manager
H. W. Franklin . . . Equestrian Manager
J. R. Marshall . . . Riding Master
Nat Austin Shakesperian Jester
Hiram Franklin Clown

PRICES OF ADMISSION:

Boxes One Dollar. Pit Fifty Cents.

(Upper half of faecimile program)

JOE ROWE'S incredible Pioneer Circus was introduced to San Joseans on July 22 1857. This sparkling cavalcade started off with ringmaster Rowe and his steeds, Hatred, Terror and Despair, in a remarkable bit of horsemanship; followed by a nimble footed petite equestrian. A strong man up to his neck and ears in cannon balls, acrobats, prankish clowns, surprising chain "scapes, a freakish rubber man and dramatic readings were all supported by a rousing string and brass band.

Circus owner, Joseph Rowe, was a crack promoter and a master wood engraver. Many of his talent-splashed ads were designed and engraved by him. Our front cover illustrates this skill.

Gold Rush lured, this East Coast big tent arrived in San Francisco by ship on Oct. 12, 1849. After an extended stay, it left for Sacramento where "Easy Come, Easy Go" Sam Brannan, financier and circus fan, built Rowe a show place. This, however, failed to entice Rowe, for he later left to zigzag throughout the gold country. By now the Pioneer reckoned San Francisco would be more profitable and returned. Shortly the thirft for travel caught up with the company and they set sail for the South Seas and Australia to entertain.

Rowe flourished, even without peanuts, popcorn or wild animals. He celebrated his homecoming in 1854 with the purchase of Rancho Santa Anita in Southern Calif. for \$33,000, an area now taking in the cities of Sierra Madre, Arcadia, and Monrovia. H. C.

Will Perform This

FRIDAY EVENING APRIL 3d, 1857.

PROGRAMME:

GRAND STAR AND WALTZ ENTREE—Composed of eight Gentlemen, each mounted on beautiful and highly caparisoned steeds, led by Jos. A. Rowe.
HERCULEAN FEATS, with Cannon Balls, by J. R. Robinson.

TUMBLING—by the Company.

Mr. Rowe will introduce his Leaping Mare, VIRGINIA.

ZEPHYR AND FLORA, by Mr. and Mrs. Austin.—A beautiful and elegant act on two horses.

LA PERCHE EQUIPOISE—By Franklin and Fisher.

THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR, by Hernandez.

CORDE VOLANTE, by H. Franklin—Who will hang by his hands, heels, and finish by the neck.

CORDE ELASTIC—By Madame Austin.

THE OLYMPIANS—An elegant act on two Horses, by Franklin and Hernandez.

BAR, OR DEVIL ACT, by John E. Fisher—On his highly trained California steed, Wild Bill.

PRINCIPAL ACT OF HORSEMANSHIP, by James Hernandez, the greatest Equestrian Artist in the world, whose style and execution has generally pronounced the perfection of art.

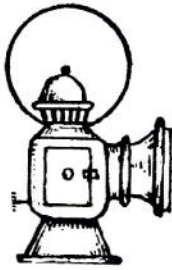
MONS. D'EVANT, in his extraordinary and astonishing Contortions.

The whole to conclude with the laughable Airpiece entitled **THE TWO CLOWNS**, or Boundary on a Large Scale.

Doors open at 7 1/2—Performance to commence at 8.

(Lower half of faecimile program)





PIONEER SPOTLITE

Hank Calloway

Last Nov. 27 an early afternoon raging flash fire destroyed one of San Jose's leading paint manufacturing plants. This belching ordeal of flame and smoke failed to budge Ora Schrenk, the company's spunky high geared office manager. Straddling files and ledgers, Ora stood fast as the blazing fury moved closer.

"My books! My books!" she shouted, "Save my books!" Exhausted plant workers fought their way to the threatened office area and speedily led a concerned but unafraid Ora and the company records to safety.

Intrepid five foot Mrs Ora Schrenk, a widow, is the 82 year youthful spirited office manager for the Tresco Paint Company, and has been for 22 years.

With a day off while temporary office quarters were being located, Ora was back on the job. "Oh, yes," she beamed, "Just time enough to wash my hair and sharpen my pencils."

"Ora is the commander-in-chief here," says Larry Rouleau, co-owner of the paint concern. "Our accounts are nation-wide and Ora handles them without a hitch. "Wow," he adds, "I don't know what we'd do without her."

Ora Schrenk was born on her father, John Shepherd's Berryessa fruit ranch, a remnant of a once sprawling 1835 Mexican land grant.

This animated, rosy-cheeked, pompadour hair-styled ageless hurricane attended Berryessa Grammar School and San Jose High School. She went on to graduate from California's first state normal school in 1917, now California State University San Jose. The adventurous scholar was employed as a government clerk at the Hoppa Valley Indian School in Humboldt Co. in 1916 and 1917 while still harvesting college credits.

In 1918 Ora married John Schrenk, a San Jose baker, a love affair lasting 50 years. Her only child, Robert, is a Denver, Colorado sales representative.

It was 1919 when Ora became the private secretary to Dr. Stanley Fuller, a Palo Alto electrical engineer and

associate to Lee DeForest who pioneered the development of radio, sound pictures and wireless telegraphy.

This perennial sprightly regardful person is nourished by hard work and loving people. She is an active Rebekah and Past Noble Grand of her lodge. Ora, too, is a Past Matron of the Eastern Star. She takes part in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary as well as a proud member of The Daughters of Union Veterans. Ora belongs to the Willow Glen Business and Professional Women's Club and is a firm card holder in our own Pioneer Society.

We recently called on Ora and asked, as she relaxed, fresh as spring, between her bulb planting and homemaking when she intends to retire. "Heavens!" she answered with an impish smile, "There's too much fun work to do."

BY-LINES FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

C. Kelly Canelo, M.D.

Our June Quarterly Luncheon Meeting will be held at Lou's Village on Saturday, June 8th at 12 Noon. Your Board of Directors extended an invitation to the students of the eight colleges in Santa Clara County to present a Historical Essay on Santa Clara County. We will award two prizes and the winner will be the speaker at our June 8th meeting.

Please note that the date for the June meeting this year will be the second Saturday of the month---June 8th.

RESERVATIONS: A Business Reply Card will be found in this Trailblazer so you can mail in your reservation without having to go to the Post Office to buy a stamp. We pay the postage. PLEASE send in your reservation before June 1st.

For our March meeting we received 430 reservations, but only 350 showed up at the luncheon. We must make every effort to give Lou's Village a more accurate estimate, so if you send in a reservation and later find you cannot attend, please phone: Curt Bailey 244-1360 or Dr. Canelo 243-5752.

Our Book: Did you get a copy of our first book: "Santa Clara County Pioneer Papers-1973"? If not, you will have another opportunity at our June meeting.

It has been a great privilege to serve as your president for the past year. I am grateful for the fine support I received from a most enthusiastic and cooperative Board of Directors, and very appreciative of your fine

attendance and your cooperation in accepting our new system for reservations. I'm sure this procedure will be continued if you will make every effort to keep it as accurate as possible.

LOOK FOR IT HERE

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

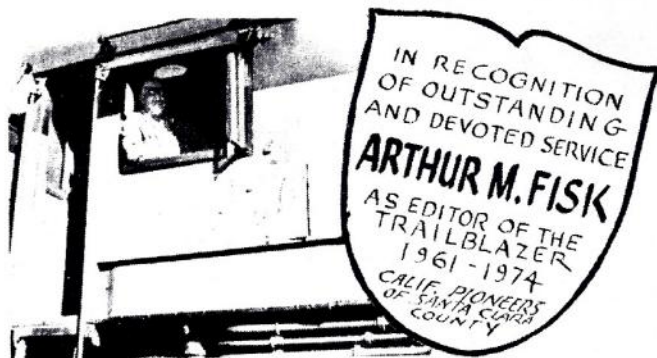
The SOCIAL CLUB of our society meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month. For further information call Mrs. Frances Grant, 292-3852.

Over 400 concerned "amigos" and benefactors attended the Peralta Adobe Restoration Kick-Off Fund Drive on Mar. 1st. Our 184 W. St. John St. adobe is already a designated historic landmark. This long-overdue restoration will take a leading part in San Jose's Bicentennial Celebration in 1976-77.

Work Progress on Historic San Jose at Kelley Park: The Dashaway Stable is slated for completion in June, with the Pacific Hotel and Empire Firehouse scheduled next.

Your fledgling editor is indebted to Ralph Rambo for his incredible talent and patience towards my first Trailblazer.

Arthur Fisk, editor emeritus, and his late wife Marjorie, were paid special tribute at our March 1st quarterly luncheon. An attractive plaque acknowledging an unselfish contribution to our society was presented.



"Smooth Runner" Art Fisk smilingly awaits for "BOOAA-RRDD" at the throttle of the Daylight Limited at San Luis Obispo 1951.

Welcome New Members

Geneva Alford	Evelyn Lasley
James R. Alford	Helen Jeanne McDonald
Marie Bakmas	Frank L. McLeod
Frank Bandoni	Muriel McLeod
Rive J. Barrow	Mary Miholovich
Jeanne M. Baysinger	Mary M. L. Moro
Victoria Briggs	Paul Niccolls
Estel L. Brown	Jeanne N. Noonan
Rose M. Carpita	Lorene Pierson
Mary Church	Ralph W. Randall
Vivian C. Cortese	Minerva H. Reiswig
Eunice C. Daley	Zoe Reynolds
Ruth A. Danker	Dorothy Ruth Rose
Carolyn deVries	Thomas E. Rose
Grace Duncan	Gladys M. Rundle
Hazel Gerdts	Blanche E. Russell
Henry Gerdts	Hazel C. Smith
Bernard Heiner	Dr. Cletus S. Sullivan
Marie Heiner	Marie Sullivan
Daniel Heinrichs	Marie C. Sullivan
Hulda Heinrichs	Mildred P. Thompson
Shirley C. Hopkins	Chester A. Topham, Jr.
Ruth Keddington	Maxine Trivelpiece
Donald G. Keener	Alice E. Williams
Emma Keener	Leatha Wilson



Beyond the sunset

June 14, 1903 -	LEITA B. KELLY	- Jan. 11, 1974
Dec. 20, 1882 -	BELLE J. O'DAY	- Feb. 25, 1974
Jan. 22, 1893 -	EARLE O. BERGER	- Mar. 14, 1974
Oct. 9, 1893 -	EDNA STANISH	- Mar. 17, 1974
Mar. 15, 1887 -	CLAUDIA BENOIT	- Mar. 30, 1974
Dec. 27, 1900 -	DR. STANLEY M. INNES	- Apr. 7, 1974
Aug. 31, 1882 -	NINA MOON	- Apr. 14, 1974

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Associate Editor: Laura C. Calloway
Editor Emeritus: Arthur M. Fisk
Staff Artist: Ralph Rambo
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* * *

DUES: \$3 per year (tax exempt) To Curtis S. Bailey,
390 N. Winchester Blvd. 9C, Santa Clara, CA 95050
Phone: 244-1360

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP - ADDRESS CHANGE: To Bernice
Van Gundy, 561 Fuller Ave., San Jose, CA 95125

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