

THE TRAILBLAZER

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WHO WAS PETER COUTTS?

Jean Baptiste Paulin Caperon was born in Bordeaux, France in 1822 of wealthy parents. He was well educated and cultured. He had mastered seven different languages before he became a banker in his native France. He was also one of the publishers of *La Liberté* a liberal newspaper in Paris. His criticism of Napoleon 3rd through his editorials caused his compulsory exit to Switzerland when he was 51 years of age.

While in Switzerland, Caperon assumed the name of his cousin, Peter Coutts. Coutts had obtained a passport and credentials to enter the United States, but died suddenly, so Caperon took the name of Peter Coutts and used his credentials to come to America.

Caperon now Coutts arrived in Mayfield (now South Palo Alto) with his wife and two children in 1874. The same year he purchased 1,400 acres, just south and west of the Stanford property which he named the Ayrshire Farm. This was originally part of Rancho Rincon de San Francisquito.

Besides his home, Coutts soon built expensive stables, barns, wine cellar, other out buildings, a clock tower and established a fine dairy. Along the banks of Matadero Creek near Page Mill Road he built a tower, made of brick, resembling a fortress. There were no doors to the tower and the high arched windows looked out from an empty shell. The structure was built for and used to support a water tank and today it is one of Santa Clara County's Landmarks, known as the "Frenchman's Tower."

In 1882 Caperon or Coutts was pardoned of his political sins in France, and eight years after his arrival in Mayfield he sold his Ayrshire Farm to his nearest neighbor, Governor Leland Stanford and returned to France.

His farm became part of Stanford University, but the "Frenchman's Tower" remains a landmark, built by Peter Coutts.

AUDITORIUM ROLLER RINK

Leo Sullivan

After the great cataclysm of 1906, the amusement life of San José centered around the Auditorium Roller Rink, a huge structure occupying the site of what is now the United Artists Theatre (formerly "Beatty's American," before that, "The Hippodrome.")

The Rink was another step in the promotional schemes of Thomas Montgomery, local realtor, whose genius, alone, extended the First Street business district several blocks to the south. Serving as a roller-rink, dance pavilion and recreational center, with Victor Hancock as manager, the Rink brings back nostalgic memories to many.

Iver Jones, San José retired fireman, recalls a twenty-four hour roller skating race at the Rink in 1909.

Earl Hambly, remembers the affair as a contest between teams, two men making a team, one man to be on the track at all times.

Louis Sullins, a contestant in the long grind, reports the race as a Regional Affair.

Twelve teams, twenty-four contestants, representing skating centers from San Francisco to Salt Lake City, competed for the roller championship of the Pacific Slope.

Louis Sullins and Fred Marten as one team, and "Wild Bill" Jones and Millard "Baker" Gerow another, represented the host city San José.

In the twenty-four hour period, Salt Lake contenders covered the greatest distance, skating 432 miles, to be declared the victors. (Fred Marten, a member of the San José team, became the two mile roller skating champion of the world at Madison Square Garden, New York City, in 1911.)

Miss Lucile Verdier, as a child, can still hear Madam Schuman Heink singing at a concert the world-renowned contralto presented for children at the Rink.

Frank Rose attended a Grand Ball at the Auditorium on Admission Day, 1910, given by San José Parlor Native Sons of the Golden West, with Thomas Monahan leading the Grand March.

The Roller Rink was the site of San José's first Auto Show according to City Historian, Clyde Arbuckle.

As a member of a cycling group, Ernie Weller, Secretary of Elk's Lodge #522, reports of the many long miles he pedaled (going nowhere) in a modified six-day bicycle race at the Rink.

The writer, too, has memories of the Roller Rink. An eastern promoter "sold" Manager Hancock on the rich financial returns possible from a Marathon Dance Contest. (A marathon dance contest is an elimination affair, the couple in the best physical condition at the end of an allotted time being the "winnah.")

Ballyhooed to the skies, the important night arrived to find the Rink packed and buzzing with excitement. Many leading sportsmen and politicians were in attendance for the big event. The eager contestants got off to a "Flying Start."

Circling the hall (confident in their stamina) the dancers went into their gayest and fanciest steps to the plaudits of friends and admirers. Soon, settling down to the serious business of conserving their strength for the six long days, and "endless" nights ahead. In a matter of hours, trainers and handlers were affording contestants all the facilities of a prize ring.

The final twenty-four hours of a dance marathon are not an elevating sight. The bleary-eyed, unshaven males in a stupor, their halting steps moving but inches, half dragging, half carrying partners asleep on their feet -- crowds cheering, friends urging, handlers advising, backers pleading -- the weird sight takes on an aspect of unreality. As the end draws near, excitement perks up the weary stragglers -- they give up their last ounce of energy hoping to make an impressive finish.

The judges retire for the weighty decision. Mr. Frank Perry. (local horse-shoer) and his fair partner are declared the lucky couple.

After The Ball Was Over, the Eastern promoter, complimenting Brohaska on his music, assured all concerned, that, since every one was greatly fatigued, he would settle financially with the orchestra in the morning.

Brohaska kept the appointment, the promoter did not. "Mr. Slicker" had departed on an early morning train for parts still unknown.

Brohaska's Orchestra learned much about Marathon Dancing -- also slick Eastern Promoters.

* * *

Most of us can remember when you could drive from San Francisco to Los Angeles without passing a stoplight -- the darn things hadn't been invented yet. Now thanks to the new highway system, we can do it again. All it took was 50 years to get us back where we were.

THE DITCH SYSTEMS OF SANTA CLARA VALLEY

Herbert C. Jones

"Water is the number 1 problem of Santa Clara Valley." So stated Governor (now Chief Justice) Warren at the dedication of the Leroy Anderson Dam on April 25, 1951.

The reason for this critical problem is the impact of two conditions -- a semi-arid region, and a phenomenal increase in population. The rainfall recorded at San Jose' over the past century indicates that our average annual rainfall is only 14.16 inches.

The history of our valley shows the rising demand for water, as population increases.

We have had four economic eras or economies here in Santa Clara Valley: 1 - The era of hides and tallow. 2 - The era of grain farming. 3 - The era of fruit production. 4 - The present era of industry.

HIDES AND TALLOW: In the Spanish and Mexican periods practically the sole economic activity was the production of hides and tallow.

In the heyday of the Mission of Santa Clara the plain was literally covered with cattle. In 1834 the Mission owned 74,280 cattle and 82,540 sheep.

Some idea of the number of cattle in this district in these early days may be had from the fact that one ranch owner, Joaquin Bernal, who occupied the Santa Teresa Rancho about eight miles south of San Jose', branded 5,000 head of calves a year.

HAY AND GRAIN: With the discovery of gold and the influx of Americans, the land was put to more productive use. Practically the whole Valley was devoted to the raising of grain. There were ten flour mills scattered from Alviso to Gilroy.

In fact, the first successful combined harvester was operated in Santa Clara Valley in 1854, drawn by 20 head of horses, stretched out with one driver at the head of each span.

As late as the beginning of the present century, a threshing machine operated on the land at the site now occupied by the home of Mr. John Crummy on Park Avenue.

Neither the raising of cattle nor the fields of grain required water for irrigation -- they depended solely on dry farming.

FRUIT INDUSTRY: While Pierre Pellier as early as 1856 discovered the aptitude of the soil of this Valley

for the raising of French prunes, it wasn't until the 70's and the 80's when the dried prune became popular, that there was heavy planting of this type of orchard. In the meantime, the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869, made possible the shipping of fruit to the East. This gave a great impetus to the horticultural industry. The acreage planted to fruit and nuts increased phenominally, from a total of approximately 20,000 acres in the late 80's to a maximum for Santa Clara Valley of 110,000 acres in fruits and nuts in 1930. Then it was that Santa Clara Valley became known as the dried fruit center and the canning fruit center of the world.

The requirements of water to irrigate the orchards steadily increased year by year.

DITCH SYSTEMS: Many of the orchards were first located near the banks of the Los Gatos and other streams from which water could be diverted by ditches.

No less than five ditches diverted water out of the Los Gatos-- on the west side the two Page Ditches and the Statler Ditch, and on the east side the Kirk Ditch and the Duncan Ditch. George W. Page, prominent ditch operator, claimed that he carried water by gravity through one of his laterals from the Los Gatos Creek across Stevens Creek Road as far north as the Protestant Cemetery at Santa Clara.

In addition, there were the Masson Ditch leading out of the east side of the Capitancillos, now generally called the Guadalupe River; the Pioneer Ditch out of the east side of the Alamitos, more often called the Almaden, and the Auzerais Ditch out of the Penitencia.

The maximum use of ditches in the Valley for diversion of Spring run-off is said to be during the decade from 1893 to 1904, when there were from 12,000 to 14,000 acres of orchard irrigated by ditches.

DEVELOPMENT OF WELLS: The usefullness of ditches was necessarily restricted in that they could only supply water for the brief period when the streams were flowing in the Spring. They were used primarily by owners, located near creeks, who utilized winter run-off to flood their lands by means of these ditches.

The dependable supply of water, however, was from wells. Such water was available whenever the pump was started. Soon all irrigation came to depend upon wells. Today they have approximately 4,000 wells in the Valley.

DEL MONTE LIMITED

Arthur M. Fisk

October 11, 1965 the Interstate Commerce Commission turned down a request of the Southern Pacific Company to discontinue the Del Monte between San Francisco and Monterey. A similar request was denied the Southern Pacific by the State Public Utilities Commission in March 1964.

The Del Monte is the oldest named train in the United States in continuous service.

The "Del Monte Limited" was inaugurated April 28, 1889 as trains number 13-12 between San Francisco and Monterey. June 15, 1890 the train numbers were changed to 15-14 and the service extended to Pacific Grove. June 25, 1899 the train numbers were changed to 3-4. April 1903 the name was changed to "Del Monte Express" and the train numbers to 27-28. June 1927 the word Express was dropped and it became the "Del Monte". April 24, 1932 the numbers were changed to 35-36. July 10, 1947 the "Del Monte" again changed train numbers to 77-78. February 1955 the "Del Monte" became powered with diesel-electric locomotives and maintained the fastest main line schedule on this district.

I can't help but reminisce a little bit, as I was engineer on the "Del Monte" for five years, 1954 through 1958. It was a three hour run from Pacific Grove to San Francisco. Around the beautiful Monterey Bay with its fleet of fishing boats, and out into the sun between the lettuce and artichoke fields near Castroville, then along the still inlets of Elkhorn Slough where the big white cranes walk on stilts and pick up a morning frog for breakfast. Out amongst the apple blossoms in Pajaro Valley, up through Chittenden Pass and out in the open once more among the prune and apricot blossoms of the beautiful Santa Clara Valley. On through the traffic congested San Francisco Peninsula to the city by the Golden Gate.

Everybody knew everybody else on the "Del Monte" and coffee was a must in the club car. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the "Del Monte" returned with the same passengers and everybody knew if you left the spoon in the coffee cup, the coffee wouldn't slop over the edge.

Before World War 2 the "Del Monte" was curtained and tasseled and boasted of green plush seats with anti-macassars. All the BIG people rode down to the magnificent Hotel Del Monte. Presidents and bankers and stock

brokers. The ambition of every small boy was to be the engineer on the "Del Monte", with a striped cap, a hand on the throttle and the lonely whistle blowing for all the grade crossings.

"Singing through the forests,
Rattling over ridges,
Shooting under arches,
Rumbling over bridges,
Whizzing through the mountains,
Buzzing o'er the vale.
Bless me! This is pleasant,
Riding on the rail!"

* * *

THE KELL HOUSE

Arthur M. Fisk

Thomas Kell Sr. married Margaret Murphy at Frampton, near Quebec, Canada. Margaret was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Murphy Sr. In the Autumn of 1841 the Kell's moved to Missouri. In 1844 Martin Murphy Sr. and his family made the hazardous overland journey to California. The glowing reports about California by Murphy, caused Kell to decide to cross the wilderness too. With his family they left Missouri May 11, 1846, arriving in California, October 11, of the same year. After recuperating for a short time near Sutter's Fort, they continued on to the Martin Murphy Sr., ranch, near the present City of Morgan Hill.

In 1847 Kell established his own home on a ranch about two and one-half miles south of San Jose' near the present Curtner Avenue-Almaden Road intersection, where he built his house of redwood, hewed and sawed by hand, from the forest in the mountains west of Gilroy. This house is still standing and, as far as known, it is the oldest frame house in Santa Clara County.

Thomas Kell died March 8, 1878, and his wife, Margaret on December 30, 1881. They were the parents of a large family, consisting of six boys and two girls.

The Kell property has been sold and most of the land will be developed for a shopping center. Today, vandals and thieves are carrying the Kell House away board by board

* * *

Every 24 hours, the nation's railroads pay about \$2.4 million in taxes.

By-Lines from the President

Minnie L. Clark

We need to preserve and protect our early heritage, to save items of historical interest which will show not only where we are going but where we have been.

There is another reason for saving history. People need roots. They need to know that they are part of a way of life. If we are going to save Santa Clara County as a County we must make our citizens realize that Santa Clara County existed as an entity for generations before the mass migration of the last few years.

Our early settlers had problems and solved them, and we can show the rapid progress and advancement over this short span of years from the time of our pioneers to the present day.

We hope, along with the other plans already started toward our San Jose' Historical Complex to have a museum that will house just such historical information.

Each of us may have items that are of historical value.

Among some of the things I have and hope to see in this museum are two quite interesting articles. One is a home spun spread embroidered with cord or heavy thread by my great grandmother for her hope chest in the year 1812. It was called a candle wick spread, as this same type of thread or cord was used as the wick in the candles which they made.

Today these same types of spreads are made by machinery with much the same design, and are known as heirloom spreads.

Another item I have is a blanket made of virgin wool, sheared from the sheep. It was picked, carded, spun and then woven on the loom in the attic where women in early times spent their afternoons.

They made their own dye of two basic colors, indigo and brown, and in many homes a dye tub was placed in one corner of the kitchen.

If each of our over 750 members had an item of historical interest, we would have a wonderful display for our museum.

I would not care to lose the past
For riches there are stored,
In wealth of knowledge gained through years
In these states which they explored.

HISTORIC MUSEUM COMPLEX?

Theron Fox

(President, San Jose' Historic Landmarks Commission)

Although not specifically mentioned, the San Jose' Historic Museum Complex (Pioneer Town) will benefit to the amount of \$156,000 if Proposition G on the San Jose' Bond election passes next February 1. Proposition G is for the sum of \$9,621,000 under the heading of Parks and Recreation.

Those interested in the progress of the historic museum complex must not be alarmed by the wording of the ballot which seems to include everything but the museum. However, on the detailed breakdown included in City Manager A. P. Hamann's original report--there it is--Historical Museum \$156,000.

The allotment has been confirmed in talks with both Mr. Hamann and Frank Bramhall, director of Parks and Recreation for the City. In addition it has been agreed that the money for the museum will be available almost immediately if the bonds are successful.

Heretofore, all money and properties amounting to a value of over \$600,000 have been voted out of operating funds and current income by a very favorable City Council. All museum boosters have been particularly appreciative of the Council support.

The \$156,000 will provide money for capital improvements for the next three years. By that time the Bohnett collection should be paid for, and the Council will be in a better position to add to the figure from current incomes. One last word-- Vote YES on proposition G.

* * *

Frank Bramhall acted as master of ceremonies in place of City Manager A. P. Hamann at a ground breaking ceremony on December 6, at the south end of Kelley Park for our Pioneer Historic Museum Complex. Immediate construction will begin on several warehouses in which we can store the Lew Bohnett collection and other artifacts.

From proposition G--Parks and Playgrounds there is \$1,853,000 earmarked for Kelley Park for construction of a swimming pool, picnic areas, parking and development of the Historic Museum Complex, which would include our Pioneer Town and construction of a fireproof museum building. It will take a two-thirds majority to pass proposition G--VOTE YES. Editor

LOOK FOR IT HERE

MARRIED -- Howard Sevier and Elba Hurst in Carson City, Nevada, September 28, 1965. Our congratulations.*

17 members over 85 years of age were honored at our quarterly meeting on December 4th. Those present were: Harriet Burnett, Josephine Franklin, William F. James, Herbert C. Jones, Della Montgomery, Ernest O. Pieper, Edna Clinton Ridley, Mildred Robinson, Ida Skow, J. Winter Smith, Mary D. Warburton. Those that could not be present were: Mary D. Ferry, Una B. Hughson, Lavinia Lindemann, Mabel G. Ogier, Mildred L. Overfelt and Emma Rutan. ***

Mike Patterakis, our golden voiced baritone and his carolers were greatly appreciated by a large attendance at our Christmas Party on December 4th. Mr. Patterakis was first introduced by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fisk who were co-chairmen in 1959 and has been with us each year since, with one exception. ***

To determine the feasibility of publishing, in one volume, essays by San Jose State College students on the history of Santa Clara County, a survey will soon be made. Feasibility depends on the number of orders at a cost of between four and five dollars. ***

The old Leland Stanford home on the Stanford University Campus has been torn down to make way for the new \$3,000,000 unit of the Stanford Children's Convalescent Hospital. ***

Several months ago the San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission recommended to the City Council that it rename W. Taylor Street between The Alameda and Bascom Avenue to Naglee Avenue, as General Naglee figured more importantly than General Taylor in the history, growth and development of the City of San Jose. It has been changed back to Naglee Avenue. ***

The San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission is responsible for the bronze plaque dedicated on November 12, 1965 as a tribute to A. P. Giannini. It is located on the east side of the new parking garage at 79 North Market Street, on the site of the old Swiss Hotel where Giannini was born May 6, 1870. ***

Ralph Rambo's newest book on Santa Clara Valley "Remember When" is now on sale at Books Inc., 420 Town & Country Village. It's loaded with "That-Was-The-Time-That-Was," and is slanted on the humorous side. ***

The Post Office contemplates making the use of zip codes mandatory. Please, include it in all correspondence with us. Thanks to those who have already done so.

OBITUARY - - Silver Coins, died 1965, executed on orders of the "Great Society." (Article 1, Section 10 of the Constitution of the United States, "No state shall make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts.")

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Aleen V. Abelson, Alwine Bushong, Ross Bushong, Florence A. deFreitas, Winifred M. Gansel, Henrietta Gaston, Ivah Goff, Melba E. Hodges, Mamie Ivancovich, Emma Knoepfel, Louis C. Lassabattere, Helen Malarich, Audrey C. McIntyre, Isa S. McIntyre, Pearl A. Meredith, Laura Morrison, Burnetta J. Nelson, Emma J. Nelson, Viola E. Payton, Martin Prolo, Rose Prolo, Hazel Taylor, Leo E. Taylor.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

Mrs. Margaret Hubbard and Mrs. Esther Ibanez have been reported ill. Our very best wishes and hope for a rapid recovery are sincerely extended.

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the conditions of any ill member, and report any sickness or death to the chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Ruth M. Heath. Phone 292-2609.

* * *

BEYOND THE SUNSET

From our chain these links have fallen,
In our land their stars have set;
But enshrined on memory's tablet,
Their true worth we'll ne'er forget.

Gertrude Woelffel

June 20, 1881 - November 27, 1965

Elise Feigion

November 24, 1864 - December 16, 1965

(101 years of age)

In behalf of the officers and members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, the TRAIL-BLAZER 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 call Mrs. Kate L. Owen, 295-1153.

BUS TOUR information for members of the Pioneer Society may be obtained from Miss Gertrude A. Bernhardt, phone 293-3087.

PIONEER SCRAP BOOK items may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95128.

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