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*Inside this issue:*

Governor Burnett's Office in Suñol House	1
President's Message	3
Wooton's Rotary Desk	5
June Quarterly Luncheon	6
Recognition from National Parks	7
Russians in California	8
Docents Luncheon	10
A Civic Improvement Society	11
Motorman Amos Davis	13
Sketch of Collins School, 1893	14
Silicon Valley Bikes	15
San Jose State's Hidden History	16
Memorial Day Tradition	17
New Pioneers Members & Report	18
San Jose Japantown	19
Pioneers Gone To the Golden Hills	19
2014 Board of Directors	20

## Governor Burnett's Office in Suñol House

By Paul Bernal

The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County is creating a display that will highlight the personal belongings of the first civil governor of California during the American period - Peter Hardeman Burnett. Burnett (1807-1895) was also a justice of the California Supreme Court.

Burnett's desk has long been in storage but will be part of a re-creation of the governor's office at the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House. He acquired this desk after his brief governorship. Production of Burnett's desk dates

from c1876 to 1878. The "partner's desk" has "working ends," allowing two people to work independently while facing each other. Four of the corner drawers swing out on pivots, exposing internal cubby holes for document storage. The drawers are hand carved with flora motifs. Leather covers the expanse of the desktop.

Burnett probably would have used this desk for his law practice, his writings, and his business. Burnett founded the first law firm in San Jose - Burnett, Ryland, Van Voorhies and Hester. Burnett was later a partner in the law

Ryland on North First Street between Santa Clara and San Fernando Streets.

Wallace and Ryland were Burnett's sons-in-law. Burnett's daughter Martha Leticia Burnett married city councilman, Speaker of the Assembly, and Judge Caius Tacitus Ryland; and his daughter Ramietta Juettt Burnett married Justice William Thompson Wallace of the California Supreme Court. It is possible one of these law partners used one end of Burnett's desk, or perhaps a law clerk of Peter Burnett's occupied the space, or maybe the whole desk remained entirely for Burnett's use. *(Continued on pg. 2)*



Photo: Paul Bernal

*Peter Burnett's desk in the Suñol House*

## Burnett's Office (Continued)

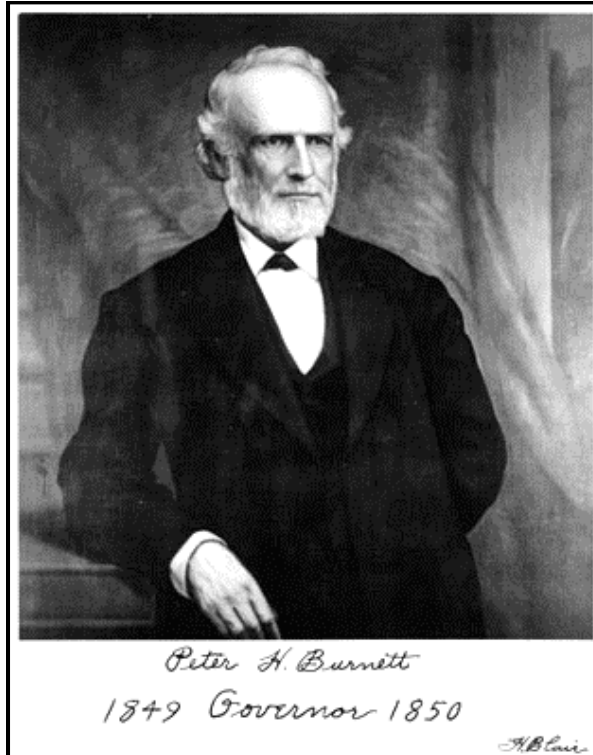
From 1863 to 1879 Burnett was president of the Pacific Bank in San Francisco. This desk could have been used for Burnett's banking business.

From this desk, Burnett may have written his autobiography, *Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer*, published in 1880. He remained a lawyer until his death in 1895.

Along with the desk will be books from Burnett's library. Two of the books in his collection he authored, and some of them have personal inscriptions in the front matter. Burnett's *The Path Which Led a Protestant Lawyer to the Catholic Church* was a best seller after it was published in 1859. It went through several re-printings. Its 741 pages can still be read at Google Books, online and free.

A copy of the original handwritten 1849 ballot that elected Burnett governor is being re-framed for the interpretive room. Other items that will be on display include: Burnett's oil portrait from the Pioneers collection; an image of the governor's mansion, which was a simple house on South Second Street; his wife Harriet Rogers Burnett's dress, allegedly worn by her during Burnett's inaugural ball; and other artifacts. The Pioneers thanks History San José and Charlene Duval for their help on this exhibit.

The desk and books were recently received as permanent loans from Francisca Burnett Allen, the great-great-granddaughter of Burnett. The desk, books, and ballot were handed down to her in the Burnett family. Since Peter Burnett's arrival in San José in 1849, the Burnett family has



been known for its long line of notable attorneys. Peter was an attorney, as were his direct descendants for six generations: John Burnett, David Burnett, John Burnett, Francisca Burnett, and John Allen. Francisca's husband is local attorney Doug Allen, who is the son of Judge Bruce Allen. Interestingly, Francisca Burnett Allen and her son John Allen became deputies district attorney, like their relatives District Attorney Peter Burnett and Santa Clara County District Attorney Luis Arques.

Peter Burnett was born November 15, 1807, in Nashville, Tennessee. He lived primarily in Missouri, but moved around frequently to escape debt from failed businesses. He was admitted to the bar of Tennessee in 1839.

In 1839 Burnett was a defense attorney for Joseph Smith Jr. and several other Mormon leaders who were under indictment for treason, arson

and robbery. Prior to trial, the defendants broke out of custody and escaped to Illinois. Smith was later the founder and prophet of the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons).

Burnett was appointed Tennessee District Attorney in 1839 and served until 1843.

Concerned over the continual illness of his wife, and his mounting debts, which had come to \$15,000.00, he organized a wagon train and left on May 22, 1843, with a party of about 850 men,

women and children for Oregon. In Oregon, Burnett was named to the Oregon Provisional Legislature. He also served on Oregon's Supreme Court.

Burnett remained bankrupt. When gold fever struck in California in 1848, Burnett led a company of 150 men who cut an overland trail to the mines. He later estimated that at least two-thirds of the male population of Oregon started for the gold fields. In late 1848 or early 1849, the unsuccessful gold seeker left the diggings to practice law in San Francisco.

In May 1849 he became the attorney, general agent, and business partner of John A. Sutter Jr. (the son of Captain Johann Sutter of gold rush history.) They sold farm lots in Sacramento. In one year, Burnett made \$50,000 in Sacramento sales.

*Continued on pg. 4)*

# Message From the President



Photo: Tim Peaddy

**Ken Machado, President**

California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

“If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito.”

I am not sure whose line this was, but it reminds me of what it takes to be a volunteer. Volunteers come in many sizes, shapes, walks of life, economic backgrounds and colors. Some bring academic skills, others, skills in the building trades or in communication. Some of our volunteers have vast historical knowledge while others, maybe just a love of old ways. Each is different; each is essential; each can be very effective in providing services and life to an organization.

I have spoken before about the great volunteers of this organization and what they mean to us. We are, after all, a group of volunteers, all who essentially have the same goal, i.e., the fulfillment of our mission statement to **preserve, promote and celebrate the history of Santa Clara County and the heritage of its past generations.** Each, however small, brings something unique and meaningful to the group as a whole and each helps to keep us vibrant and in touch with our members and our mission.

This month two of our board members, who have given many hours volunteering for the Pioneers, stepped down from our board and in their place two new, enthusiastic women stepped up to fill their shoes...they are not easy shoes to fill. Among other things, **Bev Blockie** has been stewarding the docent program at Paulson House for the past few years and has done a tremendous job recruiting and training our fine docents in the skills they need to guide and educate our home’s visitors.

Our other departing board member is **Rose Marie Beebe.** Rose Marie, as many of our members know, is a professor of Spanish Literature at Santa Clara University. She has enlightened us with her many books on California history and has shared some of her vast knowledge as a guest speaker at our quarterly luncheons. Both of these women bring different skills as volunteers yet both are equally important and effective.

In their place, we welcome two fantastic new board members, **Jonna Baker** and **Mary Hanel.** Jonna comes to our board after having been a standout docent in Bev’s program and she has agreed to take over the reigns as our new docent coordinator. Mary has recently retired after 23 years of service with the City of Santa Clara, the last ten as the Library Program Coordinator-Local History & Genealogy at the Santa Clara City Central Park Library Heritage Pavilion. We have been trying to recruit Mary for many years and are thrilled to now have her on our board. Again, each brings a different skill set as a volunteer and each is essential in helping us fulfill our mission.

I once again encourage our members to get involved. Please volunteer to help

in any way you can, large or small. Everyone has some skill that can make a difference. As described briefly in the examples above, each person has some positive attribute that can be shared and that can be an effective force...just like that tiny mosquito.

I will end this message with one more quote regarding volunteers, though this one I can attribute to **Maya Angelou** who said, “I’ve learned that you shouldn’t go through life with a catcher’s mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back.”

I want to thank our departing board members and all of our very effective volunteers who are constantly throwing something back. Thank you. ❖

**Ken Machado, President**  
California Pioneers  
of Santa Clara County

## Trailblazer

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Gayle Frank, Editor

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## Burnett's Office (Continued)

He earned enough money to pay off some of his debts in Tennessee and Missouri.

In 1849, Burnett set up a law practice in San José. Burnett was elected a member of the first California Legislative Assembly, took a leading part in its proceedings, and helped frame the State Constitution. He was appointed judge of the Superior Tribunal in August 1849. In September 1849 he was chosen Chief Justice of the Superior Tribunal.

In 1849 Peter Burnett decided to run for the new California territory's first civilian governor, replacing a string of military governors from the United States military during the time between Mexican and American reign. On November 13, 1849, he was elected governor, easily beating the other four candidates, including Johann Sutter.

In the small town of San José, Burnett knew Antonio Suñol and did business with him. When California's First State Legislature convened in 1849, Suñol threw the legislators memorable parties at his town adobe (where the Wells Fargo Bank is today on South Market Street), and possibly also at his brick home on Rancho de los Coches (today 770 Lincoln Avenue)<sup>1</sup>. Present at Suñol's house were the first US California politicians. A guest list does not exist today, but it would have likely included General Mariano Vallejo of Sonoma; Governor Peter Hardeman Burnett; Col. John Fremont; Judge K.H. Dimmick; Secretary of State William Halleck; Senator Dr. William Gwin (who later authored the federal

Act that caused Californios to prove their land grant titles); Pablo de la Guerra of Santa Barbara; Alexander P. Crittenden of Los Angeles; Joseph Aram of San José; Dr. Benjamin Cory of San José; and George Tingley of Sacramento. They no doubt enjoyed Suñol's wines, which were known to be good. Perhaps the new government toured his vineyard and commented on the first brick house they had seen in California.

Suñol and Burnett were together at the Grand Ball that celebrated the new legislature. It took place in the Capitol on December 27, 1849. The Capitol was about where the Fairmont Hotel is today on South Market Street. Suñol was also among those who threw another party at the Capitol to which Burnett was invited – a Washington Birth-Night Ball for the movers and shakers of the town.

When foreigners needed loans or advice, they went to Suñol, including Johann Sutter who got loans from Suñol to start his Sutter's Fort. On credit, Suñol provided the lumber, cattle, horses, wheat, flour, corn, supplies and Native American labor for Sutter to build his fort. Sutter amassed a huge debt and never paid Suñol. Governor Burnett had to advance Sutter \$10,000 to pay off the last of Sutter's debts – to Suñol.

This speaks to two interesting points: Suñol extended enormous credit to Sutter (\$10,000 was an incredible amount to extend to someone in the 1840s), and, sadly, Sutter did not "take care" of the first person to extend him credit – Suñol was the first to give, and the last to receive. ❖



Photo: Paul Bernal

***One of four  
sunflowers  
carved  
into the  
Burnett desk.***

<sup>1</sup> The only reference to legislator parties at Suñol's Rancho de los Coches is "Land Grant to Landmark" by Frances Fox. No primary source was cited.

# Wooton's Rotary Desk by Paul Bernal

The desk formerly owned by Governor Peter Burnett, and now in the possession of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County, is a Wooton's Rotary Desk.

Entrepreneur William S. Wooton established an Indianapolis desk company in 1870 to get America organized. Wooton was born in 1835, the eighth of thirteen children. In 1868 he patented his design for a schoolhouse desk with a novel fold-up seat. He entered his desk in the 1872 Indiana State Fair and won the \$5 first prize for design.

Wooton began making very high-end cabinet secretaries (desks) for businessmen. Their distinctive characteristic was the array of many pigeon holes for documents. Wooton advertisements proclaimed: "With this Desk one absolutely has no excuse for slovenly habits." The "King of Desks" were sought out by the rich and powerful as status symbols. Clients included U.S. Presidents Grant, Garfield and Harrison; Queen Victoria, John D. Rockefeller, Joseph Scribner, Joseph Pulitzer and Jay Gould.

In 1884, Wooton left the furniture business to become a Protestant preacher. Other companies continued his line of desks. Production continued until 1898 when modern manila folders and file drawers ended the usefulness of the pigeon-holed Wooton.

The patent for Wooton's Rotary Desk was filed in 1876. That year it was hailed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Burnett's "Model 8" Rotary Desk was sometimes referred to as "The Lawyers Own."

Burnett's desk probably dates from c1876 to 1878. The stylized carved sunflowers are similar to carvings on other Wooton desks produced between c1874 to 1878. The Burnett desk is not completely unadorned like the Wooton Rotary Desks produced after 1880. In 1880 the company discontinued its decorative carvings in line with the popular principles espoused by writer and Aesthetic Movement proponent Charles Eastlake: simple, straight

lines, less excessive ornamentation and "honest," undisguised construction.

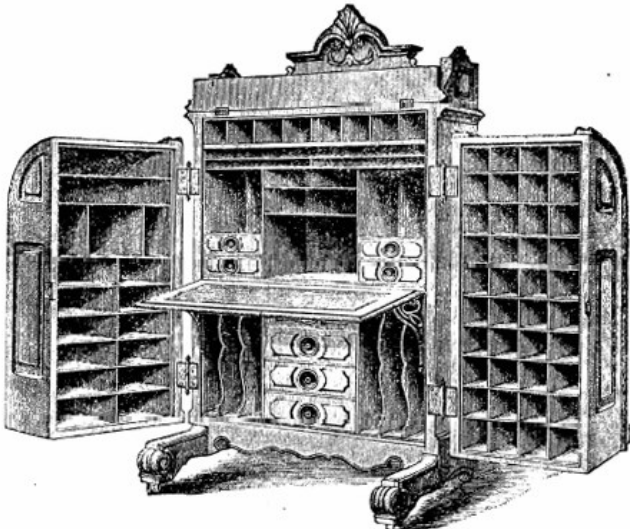
Burnett's desk is "standard grade" in wood and ornamentation. It has wooden pulls instead of the optional metal pulls. The desk is unique in having four pivoting drawers (one on each corner of the desk) rather than two. There is no known reference to, or image of, this four rotating-drawer model. ❖

**THE KING OF DESKS.**

**Wooton's Patent**

**CABINET OFFICE SECRETARY.**

COMPACT, NEAT AND USEFUL.



THE ABOVE CUT REPRESENTS DESK OPEN.

For Full Information, Catalogues, Testimonials, &c., call on or address

**THE WOOTON DESK CO.,**

DESIGNERS AND MANUFACTURERS,

**INDIANAPOLIS, IND.**

See preceding page.

ADVERTISEMENT from *Indianapolis City Directory*, 1876. (Photograph from the Library of Congress.)

An Early Ad for one style of a Wooton Desk

# Pioneers Quarterly Luncheon

**Saturday, Sept. 13th, 2014**

**11:00 AM to 2:30 PM**

**THREE FLAMES RESTAURANT**  
Banquet Room—1547 Meridian Ave. in San Jose

**Luncheon Presentation**

**The Letcher Garage Murder**

presented by

**Judge Paul Bernal**

Official Historian of the City of San Jose

**Make Reservations by Wednesday, Sept. 10th**

E-Mail - copy & paste [scfpioneers@aol.com](mailto:scfpioneers@aol.com)

or call 408-554-7587 with your menu selection

**If, after reserving, you cannot attend the Luncheon  
PLEASE call or e-mail to cancel your reservations.**

**We have to pay for no-shows !**

**Luncheon cost is now \$30**

Please make checks payable in advance to  
California Pioneers and bring to Luncheon.

## Menu Selections

**Three Flames Special Steak**

tri-tip steak topped with sautéed mushrooms

**Tilapia**

Both selections above served with Anna potatoes  
and fresh vegetables

**Pasta Primavera**

Veggies tossed with Penne Pasta and Marinara Sauce

All of the above served with Salad, Coffee and Dessert  
No Host Bar for soft drinks, beer and wine

*Parking is limited in front of the restaurant; however, ample parking  
is available in the rear and close to a separate banquet room entrance.*

## About Luncheon Presentation

San Jose's Letcher Garage on Saint James Square was included as a contributing structure on the National Register of Historic Places. Clarence Letcher opened one of the first automobile garages in the United States.

It was recently razed to make room for proposed high density housing. The garage is now gone, as are the Letchers. In 1926, Clarence Letcher was murdered in his garage by his wife Helen. She then killed herself. The interesting facts surrounding the historic garage and the murder-suicide will be explored.

## New Board Members



*Mary Hanel*



*Jonna Baker*

Congratulations to **Mary Hanel** and **Jonna Baker**,  
new Members of the California Pioneers of  
Santa Clara County Board of Directors.

# Recognition by National Parks

## Roberto Adobe & Suñol House Honored

The United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, has included the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House as a major historic site on the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Our museum now appears on National Park Service literature and websites. On their maps, the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House is on par with the California missions and presidios!

The museum received this distinction because of its connections to the Anza Expedition of 1775. One of the interpretive nodes within the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House will be the story of the Anza Expedition, and why Pueblo San Jose and Mission Santa Clara were founded as goals of this expedition. Native American Roberto Balermينو worked as a cook for Mission Santa

Clara. Antonio Suñol was married to Dolores Bernal, a member of an Anza Expedition family.

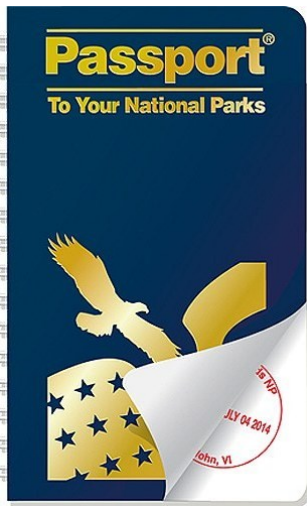
The Roberto Adobe & Suñol House museum now has a National Park Passport Stamp for visitors who are taking a California trip or for those who find our museum via the National Park Service website. The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County will also use the stamp in our school education program, stamping booklets for field trip students. In addition, we will have a national park ranger on site for our special open-house community programs.

The National Park Passport Stamp program began in 1986 and now nearly all of our country's national parks have one or

more cancellation stamps. The program is maintained by a non-profit organization named Eastern National. When visitors arrive at a national park or site, their passport booklet is stamped as proof of the visit.

The passport booklets can be purchased through Eastern National but the cancellation stamps for the booklets are free. For many, collecting as many stamps on their passport booklet as possible has become an adventurous hobby.

❖  
*National Park Service Interpretive Specialist Hale Sargent was instrumental in the Pioneers receiving this honor. For more information, go to <http://www.nps.gov/juba/planyourvisit/nps-passport-stamps.htm>, or search NPS Passport Stamps Anza.*



*The Passport Stamp*



"Vayan Subiendo!" "Everyone mount up!" was the rousing call from Juan Bautista de Anza. In 1775-76, Anza led more than 240 men, women and children on an epic journey to establish a mission and presidio at today's San Francisco.

Visit [www.nps.gov/juba/historyculture/people.htm](http://www.nps.gov/juba/historyculture/people.htm) to view the map and list of participants who traveled along a 1,200-mile historic trail from Nogales, Arizona, to the Bay Area.

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail commemorates, protects, marks, and interprets the route traveled by Anza and the colonists during the years 1775 and 1776 from Sonora, Mexico (New Spain), to settle in Alta California. The Anza Trail was designated a National Historic Trail by Congress in 1990 through an amendment to the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241-51).

# The Russians in California – Part I

By Mary Lou Lyon

The Russians were here...Why? A good story should begin with "Once upon a time..." Back in the 1700's when the main countries in Europe were sending off ships to explore, find new land and trade goods, the Pacific Ocean hosted their ships. The primary countries who were seeking to annex new land in the Americas included Spain, England, the new United States and Russia. This was a time when exploration by land was high on their lists, followed by many hunters who trapped animals for their furs. China was eager to exchange their gold, silver, gems, chinaware, gun powder, silks and spices for the desirable furs. Lining long silk robes with fine furs faced towards the body would help them stay warm during cold winters.

Spain had claimed much of South America and the coast of California. Francis Drake had raised the British flag in 1579, over an area now in Marin County, California during his circumnavigation of the world. Of course, he couldn't go back the way he came because he had raided too many Spanish ports and ships - they were watching for him. The Americans were also nosing around, chasing whales for whale oil and baleen, trading with the Orient, and sending fur trappers out across the mountains. The Russians were exploring east in their vast land until they reached the Bering Straits and the Aleutian Islands in 1741. Then they built ships and formed permanent settlements in Alaska to gather furs for trade.

Spain became nervous about other countries' expeditions, so they decided to colonize with a string of missions to convert the Indians and to establish four presidios for protection of the holy fathers.

The permanent Russian posts in Alaska were not governed by the crown, but by a merchant named Grigory Ivanovich Shelikhov, who settled permanently on Kodiak Island in 1784. Spain, England and the United States became alarmed at the Russian land hold. Spain sent naval

expeditions as far as Unalaska (an island in the Aleutians) and established their chain of Missions, beginning with San Diego in 1769. By 1776, a presidio and a mission at San Francisco were established. Great Britain sent Captain James Cook to search for the North West passage in 1778. The U.S. established a claim to the northwest coast of mainland America in 1787-88, followed by Lewis and Clark's expedition in 1804-1806.

Back in Alaska, when Shelikhov died in 1795, his widow and a business partner combined with another competitor in 1797 to form what became known as the Russian-American Company which was chartered by Czar Paul I. This company, like the Dutch East India Company, or the Hudson's Bay Company, was authorized to explore and colonize unoccupied lands. The Czar's family and other high-ranking nobles held shares in the company. By 1808, they established a permanent headquarters on Sitka Island and Alexandr Andreyevich Baranov, appointed by Shelikhov earlier, managed the trading company. He filled that post until just before his death in 1818. Baranov's assistant was Ivan Alexandrovich Kuskov, who had supervised colonies in California and Hawaii.

It was Baranov who sent an exploratory hunting expedition to California in 1803 in a joint venture with an American sea captain, Joseph O'Cain. They found the otters to be plentiful, down as far as Baja California, although their fur was not as thick as those in colder waters.

## Russian Settlement Hardships

One of the main problems for the Russian settlement on Sitka Island was food. Neither the Kodiak nor Aleutian islanders ate the kind of diet that agreed with the Russians. The climate was harsh and the winter of 1805-06



Portrait of Nikolai Rezanov, c. 1803

was especially severe. Supply ships failed to come; crop farming was unsuccessful. The staples ran out and their meager diet led to malnutrition, scurvy and sometimes death. Finally, a high-ranking official from St. Petersburg arrived on the scene, Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, Imperial nobleman, statesman and son-in-law of Grigory Shelikhov. He was appalled at the disastrous situation, so in 1806, he bought a ship from some Americans in Alaska and sailed to San Francisco Bay to purchase or trade for supplies. He knew that the Spanish were forbidden to trade with foreign countries, but still held hope to establish commercial relations.

## The Romance

Rezanov sailed down to San Francisco Bay and was ordered to anchor. The commandant, Don José Dario Arguello was away so Rezanov was met by his eldest son Don Luis Antonio Arguello and by several missionaries. Reportedly, "The soldiers through a speaking trumpet asked, "What ship is that?" We replied, " Russian." They shouted at us to anchor and we shouted back, Si, Si, and ran up past the fort and their guns

*(Continued on pg. 9)*

## Russians (Continued)

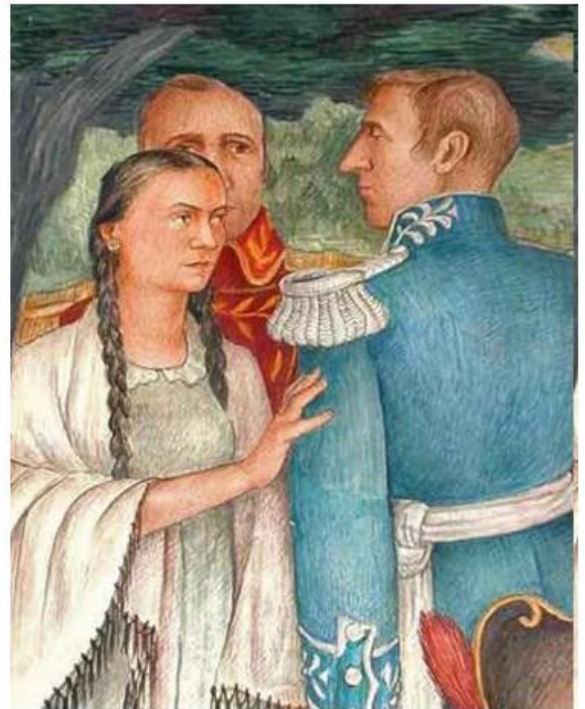
to drop anchor a cannon shot's distance away." They were received in the most hospitable manner by Señora Arguello, "esposa" of the "comandante permanente" and her family. She was the mother of 15 children, of which 13 were living at the time. Some of the sons were on military duty while the grown up unmarried daughters remained at home. The daughter that charmed Rezanov was 15 year old Dona Concepcion. She was "distinguished for her vivacity and cheerfulness, her love-inspiring and brilliant eyes and beautiful teeth, her expressive and pleasing features, shapeliness of figure and a thousand other charms."

The Russians spent days with the family and Rezanov changed his original plan to one of marriage to this girl who had won his heart. (He was 42 and a widower.) She was entranced with the idea of being related to the Russian Royal Court and the recipient of so much attention by such a suave diplomat. Somehow they managed to converse,

although neither knew the other's language. Her parents were shocked and urged her to refuse him, but she would not. The missionaries were no help, just leaving the final decision to the pope in Rome!

Finally, a written agreement was made with consent given on condition that the marriage plans were kept secret until the Pope made his decision. Rezanov belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church, so he intended to ask permission of his Imperial master in St. Petersburg. He would also agree to go to Spain, if necessary, to facilitate trade.

Rezanov sailed back to Alaska with provisions, then to Kamchatka and Siberia to report to the Czar and his home office. On the way, weakened by fever, he fell off of his horse and



**Concepcion Arguello and Nikolai Rezanov as depicted on a mural at the Post Interfaith Chapel at the Presidio of San Francisco**

died of injuries a few days later, on March 1, 1807, at Krasnoyarsk in Siberia. It was several years before the news got back to Dona Concepcion.

Meanwhile, Dona Concepcion, assumed the habit of a nun, and dedicated her life to the instruction of the young and consolation of the sick. When the first convent and seminary for females in California was founded at Monterey in 1851 by the Dominican Sisters, 60 year-old Dona Concepcion was the first Novice to enter. This convent was later moved to Benecia and there she lived as Sister Maria Dominga, until her death on December 23, 1857. Her body rests today in the convent cemetery. ❖

*(Part II to be continued in December issue.)*

-Caughey, John & LaRee, *California Heritage*, "An International Romance," The Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, 1962.

-Kalani Lyn, Lynn Rudy, John Sperry, *Fort Ross*, Fort Ross Interpretive Assn.

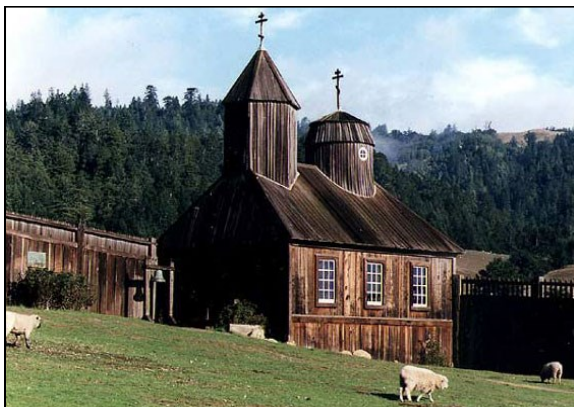
-Farris, Glenn J., Ed., *So Far From Home: Russians in Early California*, Heyday, Berkeley, CA, 2012.

Also see: "Concepcion De Arguello" by Bret Harte, *Collected Works*, Boston, 1902.

## CCHS Fall Symposium

### Visit the Russian Settlement at Fort Ross

The California Conference of Historical Societies is planning a symposium in Sonoma County on Oct. 23-25. Program highlights include a tour of the Japanese Buddhist Temple to gain a better understanding of Japanese farmers before and after World War II, Western Sonoma County history honoring the Pomo Indians, and our first ever trip to Fort Ross. While at Fort Ross, you will see the Call House, the Fur Warehouse and the Rotchev house. There will also be plenty of time to enjoy the Fort and all it has to offer at your leisure. For details, visit [www.californiabistorian.com/fall\\_symposium](http://www.californiabistorian.com/fall_symposium). ❖



**Fort Ross**

# Docents Attend Thank-You Luncheon



On the tour of the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House, Paul Bernal, on the right, tells the Paulson House docents the features and history of the site.

From left to right, attendees are: Jonna Baker, Virginia Rose, Melita Kelly, Judith Mabie, Wayne Mabie, Kathleen Dolci, Mary Mueller and Madeline Streight.

The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County docents, who serve at the Paulson House at History San Jose, were invited to a thank-you luncheon at the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House on Saturday, May 31.

Three tables, nicely decorated by Patty Machado, were placed on the peaceful patio for the docents and Board members. Sandwiches and salads were served.

Paul Bernal gave a tour through the house and the adobe and then unveiled the models that illustrate future plans for the site. Next year we may be searching for additional docents to show off the Roberto Adobe and Suñol House and all its historic displays.

If you are interested in serving now as a docent at our Paulson House, contact our new Docent Chair, Jonna Baker, at [J234belle@yahoo.com](mailto:J234belle@yahoo.com).

We open the Paulson House on most Sunday afternoons. Docents enjoy greeting the visitors at History San Jose.

**The Pioneers  
Thanks  
the Docents  
for their Service!**



Tables set on the patio of the Roberto Adobe & Suñol House for the Docent Thank-you luncheon.

*(Photos:  
Bev Blockie)*

# A Civic Improvement Society By Mary Hanel

## The Founding of the Santa Clara Woman's Club

The Santa Clara Woman's Club was formed at the request of the Santa Clara Commercial League, forerunner of the Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce. The group sponsored a publication called *Progressive Santa Clara \*1904\** to try to attract the "right type of people" to town. Commercial League President, A. F. Killiam, noted that, "the town needed a group of public spirited women to help in its development." He may have originally envisioned a women's auxiliary to the Commercial League.

However, on March 24, 1904, when a group of eleven women including Killiam's wife and the wives of several other prominent or pioneer town citizens met, they decided to form their own organization, the Santa Clara Woman's Club. They elected as their President, Mrs. A. E. (Margaret) Osborne who was already serving as an officer of the San Francisco District of California Federated Woman's Clubs. She had in fact, about a year earlier, in the Sunday

newspaper (San Jose Mercury Herald, April 26, 1903), been interviewed for an article entitled: "Mrs. A. E. Osborne, Santa Clara, Discusses Value of Clubs to Woman—Their Future: There is no Incompatibility Between Home Life and Club Life for Women." Her husband, Dr. Antrim Edgar Osborne was a leader in the mental health field in California and, in 1904, they were the proprietors of Osborne Hall in Santa Clara, a private sanitarium for the "training of children suffering from nervous disorders or arrested mental development."

New members of the Santa Clara Woman's Club paid a \$1.00 initiation fee and annual dues were set at \$1.00 per year. Charter year membership was left open until September 1st, so the Club grew from the eleven charter members to about 70 that first year. These women represented town society and "the best minds of Santa Clara." After first assembling at member's homes, the women secured the Grove

Building on Main Street for their meetings. This was the Club's headquarters until the building was structurally damaged by the Great Earthquake of 1906.

As its first major undertaking, the Santa Clara Woman's Club decided to rejuvenate the Santa Clara Town Plaza, a park near Main Street which had once been a recreation and market place of the area's early Spanish settlers. It even included a bandstand. However, it had been neglected for many years and "became a lounging place for the undisciplined youth of the town where they ate ... and left their garbage strewn about." To pay for the restoration work, "enough money was raised from an entertainment given, for which the public responded generously..."

The Plaza ground was cleared of weeds, plowed, fertilized, and sown to lawn. Red geraniums (the Club's official flower) and shrubs were planted, by the women themselves. A lawn mower and other tools were purchased.

Fences and benches were painted. Drinking facilities were supplied. A rubbish box was installed. A gardener was engaged at a salary of \$25 per month.

The Town Treasurer even donated one-fourth of his salary to Plaza work saying

*(Continued on p. 12)*



*The ladies from the Santa Clara Woman's Club planting in the Santa Clara Plaza, c. 1905.*

# Improvement Society (Continued)

that “he didn’t like to see the ladies kneeling in the dirt doing such work with the men of the village just standing by.” After this, the gardener did all of the manual labor. Two other subsequent Town Treasurers continued to devote a portion of their salaries to Plaza work.

In early 1906, the Santa Clara Woman’s Club published a small pamphlet titled *Santa Clara*. It listed the 1905-06 officers of the Club, included a “Sketch of the Santa Clara Woman’s Club” and a description of the town of Santa Clara. The photos illustrating the pamphlet were taken by Alice Hare, a Santa Clara professional photographer and a charter member of the club. It stated that the “Santa Clara Woman’s Club is distinctively a civic club.” Besides describing the Plaza improvement project, the pamphlet went on to note that “the club also interested itself in straight-

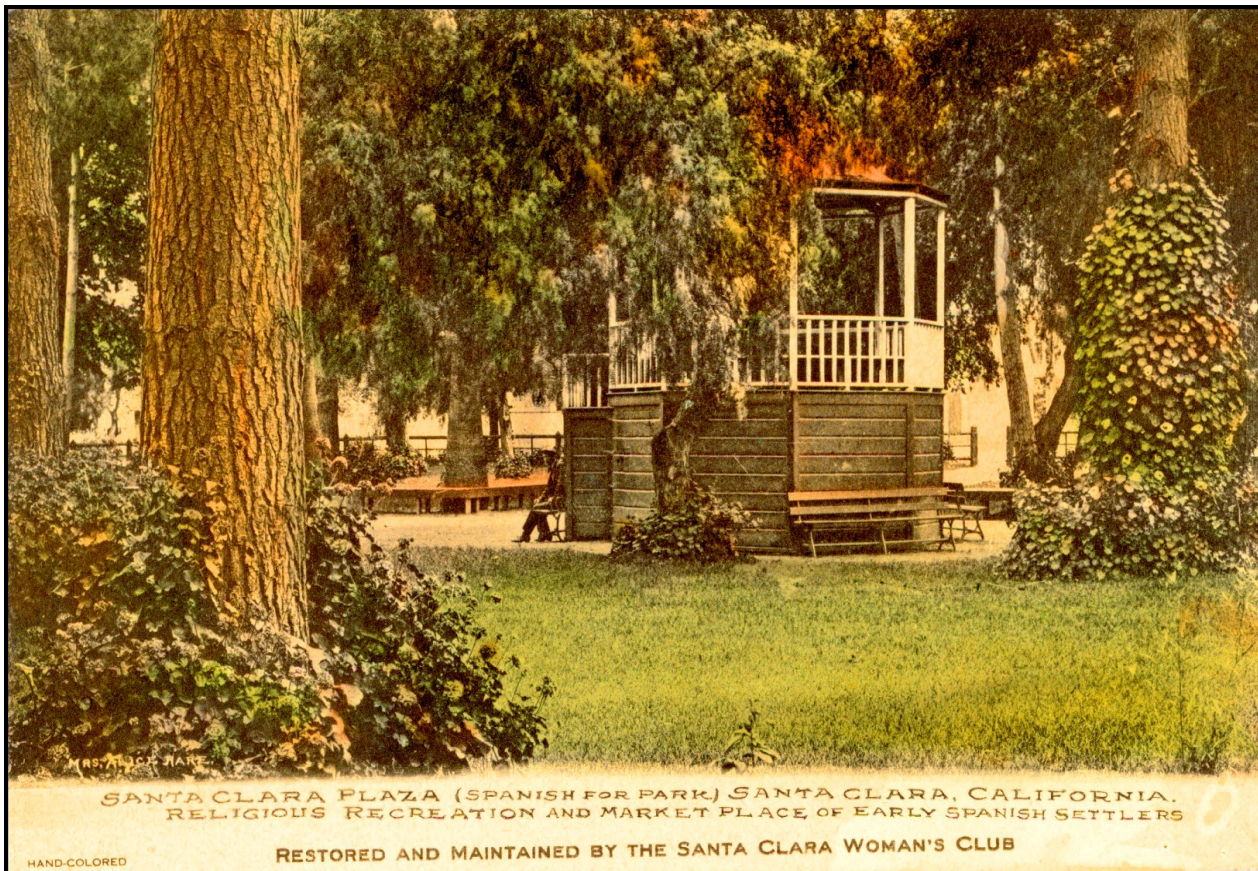
ening Franklin Street and in improvements at the depot... [that resulted]...in the planting of a large grass plot at the depot, which will be beautified by palms and geraniums, surrounded by a neat fence.”

“The purchase of a triangular plot by the Town Board will straighten Franklin Street and afford a terminus for a new street car system on one side and a boulevard for automobiles, carriages, etc. on the other. The promised new depot will be situated opposite the base of the triangle, which will be a very convenient arrangement for the public. Said triangle also provides a resting place and beauty spot for the benefit of citizens and travelers of whom there are many, Santa Clara being a union depot.”

In 1904 and 1906, the Woman’s Club also assisted the Grand Army of the Republic [Civil War] veterans at their Memorial Day exercises. Red Geraniums were also

planted at the post office plot. Arrangements were made to have public water troughs painted inside and out.

From these beginnings, the Santa Clara Woman’s Club continued to grow. Within a few years it made more improvements to the Plaza park; established an annual spring Santa Clara Civic Housecleaning month; it edited a special Easter [March 1910] issue of the Santa Clara News, it became involved in the suffrage movement, and acquired and refurbished the historic Pena Adobe as its headquarters in the 1913-1914 period. The restoration of the Adobe brought the club recognition from both the California Federated Woman’s Clubs (which it had joined) and the Hon. James D. Phelan. The Club had only four presidents in its first thirty-five years thanks to the exceptionally long service of two of those women, Mrs. A.E. Osborne and Mrs. H. Luke Warburton. It continues to thrive to this day. ❖



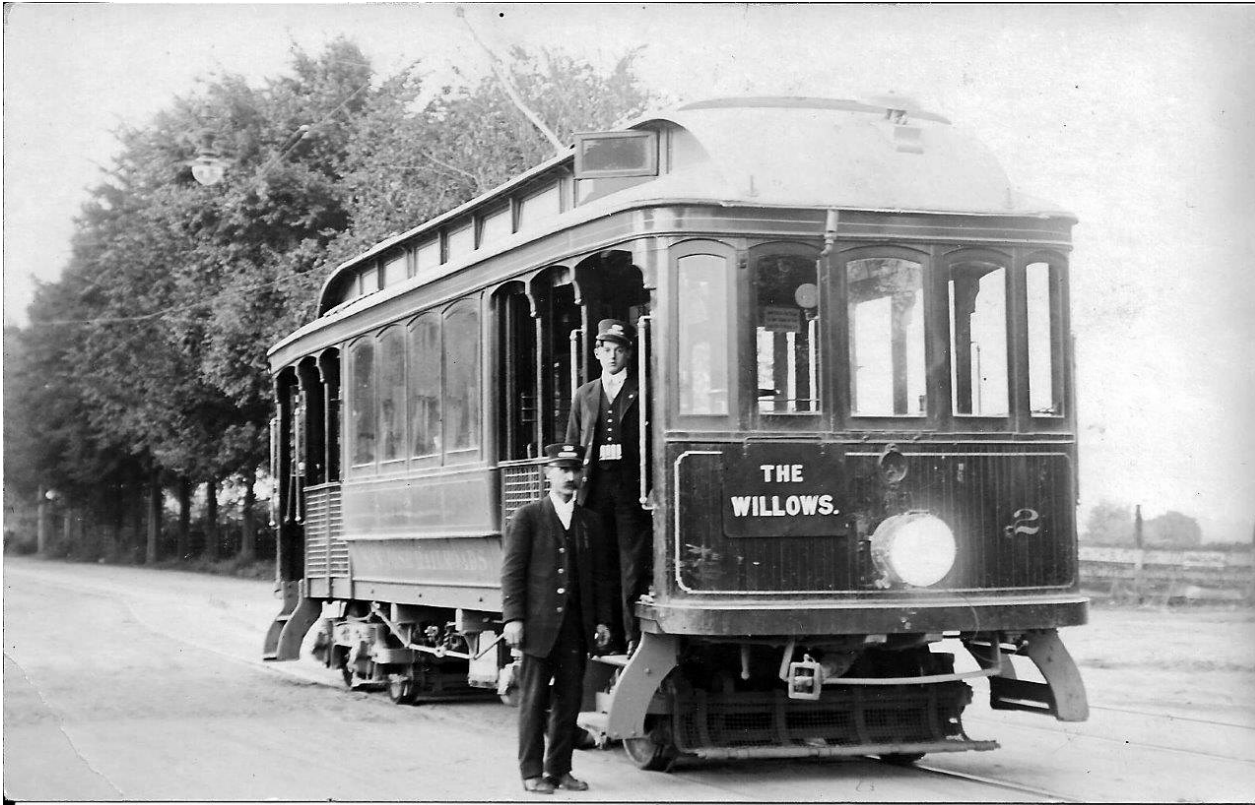
*A post card:*

*The Santa Clara Plaza, restored and maintained by the Santa Clara Woman’s Club, early 20th century.*

*(Images courtesy of Santa Clara City Library)*

# Motorman Amos Davis

Submitted by Janey Baker



*Motorman Davis, standing on the ground next to his streetcar.*

Amos Alfred Davis was a motorman in San Jose between 1920 and 1940. The 1920 census states he was a conductor on a railroad and on the 1940 census he was listed as retired.

The following is an excerpt of a letter written by Davis' youngest daughter, Marthell Clarisse Davis Barshow to John Emerson. Emerson is Amos Davis' grandson. The letter describes Davis' life as a motorman:

"You must remember he [Davis] worked a 7-day workweek and only in the last few years was it a 6-day week. Five-hour shifts (or runs, as they were called) were assigned by seniority after being bid on. Much of the time he had the early run, and it was up at 4 am to make his oatmeal mush and be picked up by the work car at 10<sup>th</sup> and William Streets. It was a big sort of red flat-bed gondola car with big wooden spools of wire, much like the PG&E and

Pacific Bell supply trucks for repair work. Your mother had to be sure she was home from a date before he got up. I've heard her tell stories that she almost didn't make it.

One of Amos' runs was 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Berryessa. My dear friend, Lola, rode the car home from work at night and she was always glad to get his car, called a dinkey car. They bounced around a lot. Another run was to Bascom and San Carlos that was scary because he was robbed several times; but only small amounts of money were taken. This was an easy way for someone who was broke to pick up a few dollars... many out of work during the depression. Another run was a big car from Santa Clara University to Alum Rock Avenue and King Road or White – I'm not sure.

Bob Cipperly [Davis' grandson] was going to Roosevelt Jr. High. He rode

his bike and the boys would grab a bar on the back of the car and hitch a ride. Well, of course Papa caught him at it but he told Bob he wouldn't tell on him, just not to do it on his car. It must have been fun, though very dangerous.

One of Amos' last street car runs was 17<sup>th</sup> and Santa Clara Street to University of Santa Clara. Al [Barshow] used to ride home that way when he was going to Junior College – a part of San Jose State then, when we first were dating.

The last few years Amos drove a bus. The electric traffic lights had signals that said stop and go which helped in the center of town. But Amos couldn't see the difference in red, green and yellow lights. He was color blind as was Bob Cipperly and my son, Dick." ❖

# Collins School, Cupertino, 1893—A Sketch By Jim Campbell

On the corner of DeAnza Boulevard and Homestead Road in Cupertino, the initial one-room schoolhouse called Collins School was built in 1869 on a portion of the ranch once owned by Lamuel Perry Collins, an early Collins District Trustee. In 1889, the “modern” one room school, shown in the

illustration, was built on the same site. The architect was Joseph O. McKee and the builder was Enoch Parrish.

This schoolhouse is a typical example of a country school during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In this small school house, a

teacher taught first through eighth grade. Children from six to 18 were all in one room, and from 20 to 40 pupils made for a busy day for the teacher.

A one-room school like this was heated by a potbelly stove in the winter months, and cooled by open windows during warm weather.

The one-room school illustrated here was expanded in 1908. A second school room was added to the west, and the old bell tower was replaced with a new bell tower between the two rooms. The bell in the tower is believed to be the bell from the original 1869 school. When Homestead Road was widened in 1959, the building was moved to the east where it stands today and still appears as it did after the 1908 alterations.

The Cupertino women of the De Oro Club raised funds for the former school’s restoration and rehabilitation. The club’s members included descendants of early Cupertino vineyard and orchard property owners. Today, the building still serves as the meeting place for the De Oro Club. The history of the Collins School is displayed inside the building. ❖



*Editor's note: See a 2014 photo of the De Oro Club on page 15.*

# Silicon Valley Bikes at History San Jose



## Passion, Innovation & Politics Since 1880

Visit History San Jose and see the first-ever comprehensive museum exhibit on the history of cycling in the Santa Clara Valley. This one-of-a-kind exhibit in the Pacific Hotel, History Park, explores San Jose's growth of cycling through clubs like the Garden City Wheelmen, racing events at local velodromes, and local innovations including later community activism, such as support for bike lanes.

This exhibit examines the many ways the City of San Jose has changed – and continues to change the world of cycling.

At the Member Reception Preview on July 25th, the Gallery in the Pacific Hotel was dedicated to Clyde Arbuckle, avid cyclist and founder of History San Jose (and prominent member of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County.) ❖

This is a Lefebvre Velocipede, believed to be one of the world's oldest human-powered vehicles. Alexandre Lefebvre, a French immigrant blacksmith, built it in 1842. The two-wheeled wonder is powered by treadles connected to cranks on the rear wheel. This velocipede's treadles used an up and down motion, more like the propulsion used by a steam engine. Lefebvre brought his velocipede with him when he immigrated to San Jose in

1861. Here he worked as a locksmith and mechanic before settling in San Francisco. His descendants donated the velocipede to History San Jose in the 1950s. The French created the name "velocipede" in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The term "bicycle" was not widely used until the 1860s when several individuals sought credit for the invention.

*Source: History San Jose*

## De Oro Club Today

The photo on the right is of the former Collins School, now the Cupertino De Oro Club, taken in 2014. It is beautifully maintained and serves as a place for meetings and events for the women's club.

The former school sits on Homestead Road just east of De Anza Boulevard in Cupertino. It has changed a great deal since the sketch on page 14, which was how the Collins school looked before "modernization."



*Photo: Gail Frank*

# San Jose State's Hidden History & Identity

By Michael Harold

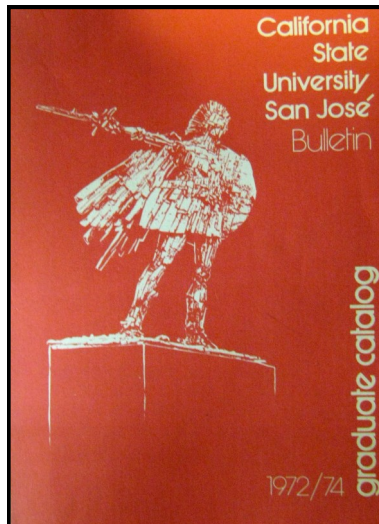
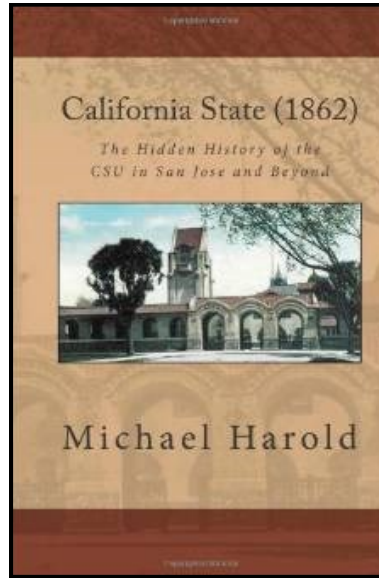
A new book written by Michael Harold, *California State (1862) – The Hidden History of the CSU in San Jose and Beyond*, explores San Jose State University's history as the founding campus of the California State University (CSU) system. The book looks back almost 500 years to explain the development of "California" and "San Jose" identities, and why the original California State campus in San Jose devolved into San Jose State.

The book begins with the Spanish Catholic colonization of California and the establishment of the missions and early San Jose. Next, upheavals and rebellions are recalled that led to the establishment of the State of California in 1850 and the founding of the California State Normal School in 1862. It then explores how the Cal State normal school grew and spread from San Jose to the rest of the State, as well as how the early campuses lost the "California" part of their name around the time Stanford University was being founded.

A version of the Great Seal of California was the school's official seal for most of its history. Originally, San Jose State claimed 1862 as its founding date, but it was later changed to 1857. The book examines how the changed year of establishment helps hide the school's original identity and how historical records and artifacts were changed.

The institution that became both SJSU and the CSU system was called the California State Normal School, and State Normal School at San Jose until 1921. After the curriculum expanded beyond teaching teachers, the school was named California State College and then San Jose State College.

The school was renamed "California State University, San Jose" in 1972, but the



alumni association convinced legislators to rename the school San Jose State University in 1974. The brief restoration of San Jose State's CSU identity from 1972-1974 is explored in the book, along with the evolution of the school's relationship with the greater CSU system. Historic details of a recent movement to restore the school's Cal State identity are also revealed in the book.

The second half of the book is an essay about the ramifications of the loss of the school's Cal State identity and how its restoration can help San Jose State, the CSU system and the City of San Jose. It suggests a legal framework for addressing the concerns of CSU-oriented alumni with the school's identity and direction. ❖

*"California State (1862) – The Hidden History of the CSU in San Jose and Beyond," is published by the California State Press, an arm of the California State Alumni Association, Inc. The book is based on ten years of study of California State, CSU and San Jose State history, and political activism related to restoring a California State University identity to the school. For more information, please visit [www.csualumni.org](http://www.csualumni.org) or email [support@csualumni.org](mailto:support@csualumni.org).*

***Below, the second California State Normal School building (1881-1906) with students in foreground.***



Images courtesy of Michael Harold

# Memorial Day Tradition at Hacienda Cemetery

On Memorial Day, the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County followed a long tradition of placing flowers on Eugenia (Jenny) Danielson's 1888 grave at our Hacienda Cemetery in New Almaden.

On July 27, 1888, the pretty, blue-eyed little Jenny, less than two-years old, died. The grieving Danielson family kept flowers on her grave. Jenny's half-sister, Lydia Innes, who was born about a decade after Jenny's death, related stories she had heard. In 1893, at John Danielson's (Jenny's father) deathbed, the family promised him that Jenny's memory would stay alive with flowers being placed on her grave each Memorial Day. John Danielson also asked his best friend, Alex C. Innes, to take care of his wife and two of his living children (Emil and Josephine). Later, Jenny's mother, Lydia Danielson, married Innes. They had three children: Lydia, Cecil and Stanley.

The close-knit family members continued to place flowers on Jenny's and John



Photo: Tim Peckdy

*Flowers placed on Jenny's grave on Memorial Day, 2014.*

Danielson's graves. Eventually Jenny's half-sister Lydia and Jenny's brother Emil Danielson, with his son Warren, took over the job. Lydia Innes continued the remembrance until she had to move away from San Jose. Innes wrote to the Pioneers, "Would the Pioneers

please place flowers on Jenny's grave each year on Memorial Day?" The Danielson/Innes family left a monetary gift to the Pioneers to carry on this tradition. The Pioneers have owned the Hacienda Cemetery since 1974.



**The Danielson/Innes Family: Top row: Emil and Josephine Danielson. Bottom row: Cecil Innes, Lydia Danielson Innes, Stanley Innes, A.C. Innes, Lydia Innes.**

John Davidson had been a master metal smith. He repaired and installed cables at the New Almaden Mines. Alex Innes also had worked at the mines for 54 years as a machinist, in addition to serving as the Mine's Justice of the Peace for 25 of those years. Innes wrote a history of the New Almaden Mines. But most importantly, he kept his promises to his good friend John Danielson.

Lydia Innes' story appeared in a *San Jose Mercury* article by Richard Battin, printed on July 11, 1974. In the article she told her family's history and discussed the mining community where there was, "a common love of the country and of family life. It was like a company policy...a living spirit." ❖

# Welcome New Pioneers Members!

**Joe Coughlin** was born in Chicago and came to California in 1987. He is interested in California history.

**Bobbe George** was born in Paso Robles and graduated from San Jose State. She is a former teacher who has many California pioneers in her family tree. Her family came to California in 1892. Bobbe is a member of the San Jose Historical Museum Heritage Circle and Les Amis de Sourisseau at San Jose State University.

**Teri Rogoway** is an educational coordinator for the Open Space Authority. She was introduced to the Pioneers by

Mary Berger who is a good friend. Teri is especially interested in the Gold Rush era.

**Ken Schroeder** is a California native who lives in Fremont, CA. He is a construction manager and his membership was proposed by Walt Gil. Ken has participated in restoration and repair work at our Roberto Adobe & Suñol House.

**Steven Tollner** was born in San Jose and was an accountant. He is a cousin of Board Member and Past President Jim Zetterquist. His ancestor is Jose Robles (1790). ❖



Would you like to **go green** and read the Trailblazer online? Do you toss the Trailblazer after reading it? Why not save paper and receive an email notification and link to read the newsletter online? Just notify **G a y l e F r a n k** at [GayleFrankCA@gmail.com](mailto:GayleFrankCA@gmail.com) and you will receive an email with the Trailblazer link as soon as the newsletter is ready. Using less paper means saving trees and reducing water consumption from paper manufacturing.



**Have you paid your dues?  
They were owed on January 1st, 2014!**

## Membership Report

The membership dues for the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County are due on January 1st every year. If you haven't paid your annual dues for 2014, you may pay them at the September luncheon or you can mail them to CA Pioneers, Membership Chair, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA, 95155.

You will see the various benefits and categories of membership if you go to

*CaliforniaPioneers.com* and select "Membership Information" from the menu on the left. Additional donations or higher membership levels are always appreciated.

And please don't forget the Pioneers in your estate planning.

If you have questions, please contact April Halberstadt at 408-293-2860 or email her at [aprilhalb@gmail.com](mailto:aprilhalb@gmail.com). ❖

### California Pioneers of Santa Clara County Membership Categories

Individual	\$25
Family Level	\$45
Loomis Level	\$75
Lifetime Level	\$250
Arbuckle Level	\$500
Younger Level	\$1000
Murgotten Level	\$5000

# Time Travel

**San Jose, 1899:** “Because of a predicted meteor shower which failed to appear, Mayor Charles Martin issued a proclamation that the city fire bell would be rung if the shower came so as to save those interested from the loss of sleep.”

**San Jose, 1902:** “The Council decided to enforce the ordinance regulating the driving of cattle herds through the city streets. A special permit where more than four cattle were to be driven would be required.”

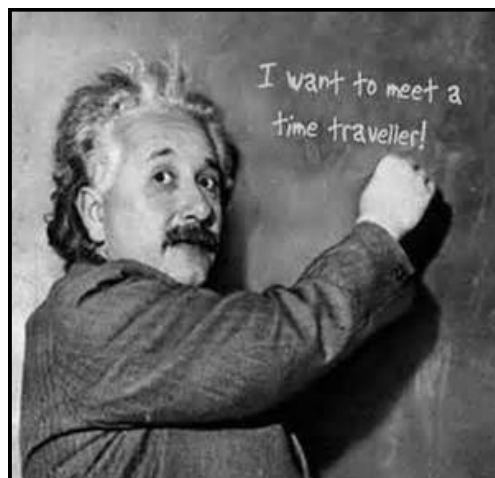
**Palo Alto, June 1900:** “Mrs. Leland (Jane) Stanford was conferring with Murray Harris, famed Los Angeles organ builder, for an organ of 2800 pipes costing \$15,500 for the Stanford Memorial Chapel. The contract specified

that all parts were to be made in California and of native materials.”

**San Jose, 1901:** “The Board of Education ruled that high school teachers had to wait two months for their pay because of the economic condition of the school treasury.”

**San Jose, 1901:** “Members of the Trinity Episcopal Church protested to the police and fire officials about the location of Joe Lockwood’s saloon at St. John and First Streets, declaring it was within forty feet of the church premises which was defined as illegal.

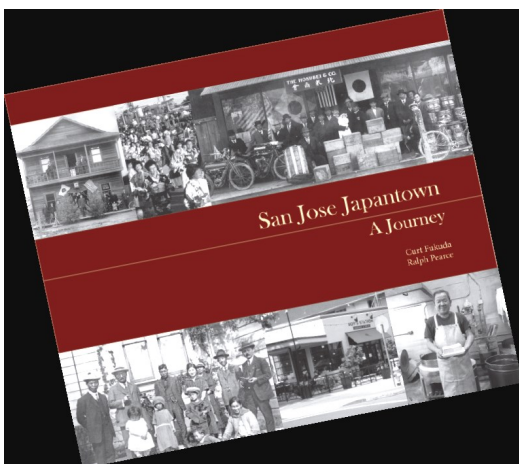
Later the local Elks protested the use of the name “Elk Saloon” in



connection with a saloon also at the corner of First and St. John Streets. The owners insisted it was called “The Shamrock,” but the Elk name persisted.”

*(Past news from San Jose Newspaper archives)*

## San Jose Japantown, A Journey



A new book will be coming out this fall titled *San Jose Japantown, A Journey*, written by Curt Fukuda and Ralph Pearce. This 300-page, full color, hardbound book tours through the streets, structures and people of the Japantown community. Fifteen years of extensive research, over 100 interviews and hundreds of

collected images, many unpublished, are included in this definitive work of San Jose Japantown’s history. It is published by the Japanese American Museum of San Jose. For more information, please visit [www.yu aikai.org](http://www.yu aikai.org) or [www.jamsj.org](http://www.jamsj.org).

## Pioneers Gone to the Golden Hills

*Virginia Louise Sorensen*

*Joanne D’Ambrosia*



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Our Mission is to promote, preserve, and celebrate the history of Santa Clara County and the heritage of its past generations. We collect, archive, educate and encourage research and scholarship.