



QUARTERLY BULLETIN
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THE DONNER PARTY Herbert C. Jones

(The following sketch brings to mind what far-reaching consequences, in the lives of individuals, may depend upon the most trivial incidents.)

So long as loyalty and devotion are cherished by the human heart, so long will live the memory of Tamsen Donner and her insistence on staying with her husband; and so long as courage and heroism are cherished will live the memory of the Donner Party.

Yet the tragic fate of this Party could have been avoided by any of three incidents.

First, the Party changed its original intention of taking the northern well-established trail into California and instead followed the advice of a passer-by and took the so-called "Hastings Cut-off". On this Cut-off the Party lost more than half their oxen in traversing the Salt Flats during the two extra days around the south side of Great Salt Lake.

Second, if they had not taken this Cut-off they would not have had to break a trail by cutting trees, moving boulders and clearing a path through the Wasatch Mountains, which required more than a week's time.

Third, if the Party had not laid over at Truckee Meadows to rest their oxen and repair their wagons after the laborious journey across the desert; and if they had not had word from Captain Sutter that the snows in the Sierra did not begin until the middle of November, they would have come through safely. But as it was, with these three delays, the Party was caught when the unseasonably early and heavy snowfall began during the last days of October.

LIBERATION!

Lovesta Dorwin Davis

Once, for untold centuries, only Stone Age people roamed the rain-drenched valley, waiting for the warm spring sunshine. Only the indolent aborigines saw the riotous colors of the flowers each spring, for thousands of successive years. Until--one day it happened.

It was then the purposeful Franciscans came, their long brown robes flapping about their legs. They were accompanied by a few leather-jacketed Spanish soldiers. The Christianizing and civilizing of the unsuspecting natives of Santa Clara Valley was about to begin. (1777)

The padres and their helpers were followed within a few months by a small band of pobladores with their families from Mexico. They were bent on founding el pueblo de San José de Guadalupe, and occupying some of the immediate area for their homes and gardens and pasture lands. Then began the steady transformation of the silent valley and its age-old foothills.

Soon flocks of sheep grazed destructively upon the flowered hillsides. Cattle dotted the lush meadows and grassy slopes, ranging freely in the rank growth of spring. Primitive plows, oxen-drawn, haggled up the virgin soil of the level areas for planting of many acres of grains, beans, squash and corn. All too soon some of the original growth began to vanish.

Year after year the poppies and lupines, wild sweet peas, cream cups, and blue eyed grasses, Indian paint brushes, buttercups and fiddle-necks suffered a little more from the grazers, farmers and gardeners. So did the baby blue-eyes and evening snow, meadow foam and red maids, sorrel and shepherd's purse, and the fringe-pods. And how very many more! They bloomed not to be counted and catalogued, so long ago, but to brighten the hillsides and carpet the valley floor with delight.

Through the ensuing years civilization continued to make its callous advance upon nature's Persian rugs. The mission builders garnered their share of the flamboyant growth. Indian converts, at the behest of the Mission Fathers, gathered great armloads of weeds and grasses. They mixed this "straw" with their adobe clay to mold many thousands of 11x18x3-inch slabs. When baked in the sun they became the building blocks of their mission churches and dwellings, store rooms, workshops and walled patio enclosures. The pobladores of the pueblo also made adobe homes and public buildings, all requiring dried grasses, and flowers gone to seed.

Adobe bricks had first been used by the padres for their third church building--on a new site. The two previous missions had been built palisade style of slender young trees, tule-thatched and chinked with mud. The fourth and fifth mission churches, like the third, were also constructed largely of adobe. How many pairs of slim brown hands had gathered the "straw", how many hardened feet had trampled it into the clay until the mixture was ready to be patted into molds to dry!

Throughout the mission period, many floods, earthquakes and fires damaged the adobe buildings. For awhile there seemed no end to the making of adobe bricks, strengthened by dried vegetation. They were always needed for the rebuilding and enlarging of numerous structures within the mission compound. And, of course, for the pueblo buildings as well.

At last things began to happen with startling rapidity. With the influx of the home-seeking Americans more and more of the pristine meadows disappeared forever. Almost concurrent with the arrival of the Americans, the Jesuit Order took over the Mission from the Franciscans who, through little fault of their own, had failed so dismally. The Mexican decree of secularization, and early California misrule had already heartlessly dispossessed and dispersed the Indian converts.

By the beginning of the 1850's the Jesuits at Santa Clara Mission had founded their college, which became the University of today. Very soon they had outgrown their church and other buildings. Alterations and new buildings became a necessity. More timber from the Santa Cruz foothills was used, and so the making of adobe bricks drifted into mission history. But down the years, as subsequent mission buildings had been damaged or outgrown, then repaired, rebuilt and enlarged, some of the materials from earlier structures were often used in the newer work. Thus even today some of the old adobe bricks are still to be seen. One wonders just when they were made, and exactly where grew the flowers and grasses imbedded in them.

The last extensive alterations of the fifth and final adobe church were made pervious to the winter of 1885. In order to enlarge the church the two long adobe side walls were removed and replaced by lumber. The porous old grey slabs were by no means discarded. Broken chunks and all, they were used to pave the patio in front of the church. Welcome addition, for mud was widespread in those days!

The December rains were heavy, and many a well soaked "clod" in that patio felt a "stir of night" that wet winter. Some of the long-imprisoned seeds were freed, and patches of bright blossoms clustered about in the front yard of the Mission--a full lifetime ago! Some species of flowers had not been seen thereabouts for decades, but we may be sure the aborigines had known them all during countless earlier centuries.

Numerous such instances of long-dormant seeds, found at last and made to germinate, are on record. This particular historical footnote is of special interest to visual-minded Old Timers of Santa Clara Valley because of the inspiration the bright blossoms were to those who saw them then.

It was during the College Commencement exercises, that May of 1885. In his address the speaker likened the fresh flowers to the growth of their present college. It was now flourishing, he said in effect, because of the "seeds" planted much earlier by the faithful Franciscans who had labored to bring light and truth to the hearts of the Indians.

Today's philosophical Old Timers may see more truth than this. Those earth-bound seeds may be said to be the seeds of hope, awaiting liberation by refreshing rains. Most surely one day they will blossom forth with joy and gladness.

* * *

SAN JOSE POLICE DEPARTMENT

(Material for this article was furnished by George H. Cannell, Assistant Chief of Police)

During the gold rush days San Jose had its quota of bandits, gambling and riotous living. In November 1849 the town appointed a 12 man police force, headed by James Frazier Reed.

From 1851 to 1874 law and order in San Jose was under the responsibility of the Town Marshal. Our first Marshal was G. N. Whitman followed by George Hale, T. E. Soublette, J. D. Gun, W. S. Paterson, J. C. Potter, A.B. Hamilton, William Sexton and A. B. Hamilton.

Under the new charter in 1874 the office of Marshal was superseded by that of Chief of Police. Our first Chief was James V. Tisdal and the members of the original police department were: Capt. David Campbell, Capt. J. C. Hines, John N. Black, John Guerin, Charles Hertell, Lloyd Buffington, O. D. McCliman, Ray H. W. Starbird, Ben Kelly, James A. Murphy, John Murphy, James Healy, Al

J. Laederich, Edward A. Stough, Theodore Swanson, Louis Sepulveda, Ed. W. Wolford, Van Hubbard, Michael J. Guerin, William J. Jackson, Harold F. Schumaker, H. C. Dennis, A.J. McCarron, Frank Rafferty, Louis Rogge, Martin Harris.

San Jose has had 16 Police Chiefs as follows: James V. Tisdal, Dan Haskell, W. B. Shoemaker, W. D. Brown, Richard Stewart, H. A. DeLacey, James Kidward, Ed Haley, George Kidder, Frank Ross, F. R. Hayward, Dave Campbell (acting), Ben Fuller (acting), J. N. Black, W. C. Brown and J. R. Blackmore since April 1, 1947.

The first records of the police department indicate that, "The city has a well drilled and efficient police force. There are twenty officers and the chief. The city also has a patrol wagon which is on duty day and night." This report goes on to tell how, "the city is patrolled in fair weather and foul," and then gets down to facts and figures with the information that, "the Chief of Police drew down the sum of \$150 a month, two of the patrolmen got \$115 a month (each had to furnish two horses at his own expense) and the rest of the cops dragged down \$75 each and every month."

The report on the police department ends up with a well rounded declaration that, "all officers had to furnish their own uniforms, guns, clubs, handcuffs etc., but that things were in fine shape generally because the department had telephones."

Yes sir! They had twenty of them scattered around the little old town and "any reputable citizen could get a key to a telephone box," and even if a person lived in the suburbs he was pretty apt to be within a few blocks of one with which he could summon aid.

There has been a smattering of changes since those words were penned. There are 418 people who make up the department today and they are housed in the first floor of the City Hall, which was dedicated March 27, 1958.

The new home cost about two million dollars and it is of some interest to take a glance back and see what kind of a waltz-me-around-again-Willie they had to scratch up the cash for the combination of cracks and odors we recently demolished on Market Street.

Back in 1880 the total of 1938 voters went to the polls and 1096 of them indicated that they did not want a new city hall. At the same time 1649 of them voted against cutting Second Street through St. James Park. It appears that 97 voters didn't give a hoot if the park was cut in two or not.

Nothing further was said about the park deal, but it

was reported that another bond election for a city hall was held in 1886 and carried in the sum of \$150,000. These bonds were sold in the due course of time to Adolph Sutro of San Francisco, but the die-hards who figured that the then existing City Hall was good enough brought out the fact that there had been a technical error committed in the matter of advertising the election and the whole deal was declared illegal and thrown out. Another election was held and the bonds passed again. Later a whopping good time was had, burning up the first bonds.

Then somebody got the peachy idea of saving architects fees by sending to somebody's uncle in Germany and getting plans for a city hall that had been built over there on the banks of the River Rhine. The building was put up according to those specifications, all except the river. (The river didn't come with the plans)

The City has now grown to a population of over 360,000 with over 100 square miles. From the old horse and buggy days, we have now gone to the dogs, as we have German shepherds assigned to our Canine Corps. In addition, we have the most modern and up-to-date equipment, and are able to maintain a low crime rate. For several years past we have required at least two years of college police training to be eligible to apply as a police officer. The result being that about 75% of our officers have at least two years of college. To supplement the regular officers we have 150 Reserve Officers who are well trained and able to assist in emergencies.

In 1961 the voters okayed \$1,000,000 for construction of a new police department building, which we are still looking forward to, as we have long ago outgrown our present location. At this time we are attempting to obtain more money, as \$1,000,000 will not be sufficient for the planned future.

* * *

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Fisk:

That was a beautiful story about trains in the Sunday Mercury (Frank Freeman's column). It is indeed a part of our heritage.

Did you know an engineer named Jim Stanly? He ran on the narrow gauge from Alameda to Santa Cruz in the early 1890's and was a good friend of my Dad. When Mr. Stanly made the turn near Santa Clara the train passed our house, and he would give two toots on the whistle. It was a grand sight to look out at the engineer who

waved and threw out the Examiner for us.

Thanks for the Sunday story. My blessing to you.

Emma J. Rutan

* * *

Dear Editor: The Ostrich Farm was located at the N.E. corner of Alum Rock Avenue and King Road. It was a commercial project to market feathers, but it didn't pay off and soon folded up.

Luna Park was originally a baseball park at the present 17th Street and Berryessa Road. Later an amusement section was added between the ball park and what is now Old Oakland Road. The State League played here and the franchise was owned by Mr. Meyers. His son had the refreshment concession. He and I worked jointly on this project. The stand was located under the grandstand near the entrance to the grandstand and the right-field bleachers. We would bag our peanuts before the game, and then take turns peddling our soda pop and peanuts in the stands. No hot dogs in those days. I remember Hal Chase playing first base, and Tay Streib at short stop. I acquired one of Tay's old blue, cast-off suits, and although I looked like a scare crow in it, mother managed to tuck it in here and pin it there, so that I was able to resemble a ball player on Beans Ganshirts East San Jose Sluggers. At that time Beans was not good enough to play, but he was able to make enough money at his parents bakery to furnish the bat and balls, which put us in business. We played many games at Sodality Park, approximately where Orchard Supply is now located on West San Carlos Street.

When business was dull at the refreshment concession at Luna Park I would take off and locate myself in the potato field outside of the park behind the right-field bleachers and wait for foul balls to come over the fence. I would then cover them with dirt, and later would have a nice \$1.25 ball, which I could not afford to buy. Pressure was put on me to furnish the balls by the Priest Street (now 14th St.) gang, made up of Henry Mathews, Roy Emmerson, Roy Field and others.

Scheutzen Park was located beyond the cemetery on South First Street and was famous for its beer garden and turkey shoots. One street car starting from Almaden Road and Alma Street took the customers to Scheutzen Park. It connected with electric cars running from there to First and Hobson Streets.

Agricultural Park was located at the present Hanchett Park area. It housed a race track for horses, a bicycle track and a large area for carnivals etc. On one occasion I attended a carnival with my older brother, and we were standing in front of Boscoe the snake charmers tent, when the pitch man offered a free pass to the one who could shout "Boscoe eats 'em alive" the loudest. My brother did not get a free pass, but he lost the use of his voice for several days. It seems that I can recall Montgomery, the pioneer flyer attempting a balloon ascension from Agricultural Park.

Curt Bailey

* * *

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Fisk:

In 1891, at the young age of thirty-one, my uncle, Herbert Emile Schilling was elected mayor of San Jose. Prior to his election he had been a member of the city council. He did not marry until two years later and was living at the family home which still stands at the corner of Park and Delmas Avenues. During his term of office, a law was passed closing the saloons on Sundays. This made many drinking citizens very unhappy. They gathered in a large angry crowd outside the mayor's home chanting angrily, "We want the mayor, we want the mayor". Inside the house all was quiet for a time and then the doors to the upper portico opened and the mayor's mother (my grandmother) stepped onto the porch. She waited until the cries of "There's the mayor, there's the mayor" subsided and then with great dignity announced "The mayor is not at home." Then, she slowly turned and entered the house, and the crowd quietly dispersed.

I must add, that during Mayor Schilling's incumbency the last attempt was made to have the state capitol returned to San Jose, its original site. The legislature of the State of California passed a resolution removing the capitol from Sacramento to its original site of San Jose upon condition that the citizens of San Jose donate ten acres of land and also \$2,000,000 to cover the expenses of removal. The Naglee estate offered the land but as plans were being made, proceedings were halted by a mandate secured by Sacramento County and submitted to the State Supreme Court. The Court ruled against the legality of the legislature's Act and so ended the last effort to remove the capitol to its original site.

Adele Schilling Grube

By-Lines from the President

Jessie E. Black

With vacations about over, and a new year ahead, we should all be in good trim to help with our new Pioneer Town whenever the occasion arises. We are all hoping that things will be moving along in acquiring buildings and getting the "Townsite" laid out.

You have a wonderful Board of Directors and please feel free to make any suggestions for the betterment of our organization. Be assured they will be given every consideration.

Just one thing--can I stress the importance of giving us your new address if you move, so you will be sure to get the Trailblazer and any other notices. Every copy of the Trailblazer that is returned due to someone having moved, costs our Organization 8 cents. This doesn't seem like very much, but when there is an average of 15 to 20 returned each quarter it counts up, so PLEASE give us your change of address promptly.

I certainly hope that you have had as wonderful a vacation as I did on the trip to the Canadian Rockies. Words can not possibly describe the scenery. Start saving your dimes, as I am in hopes there will be another one next year and that a lot of you can take the trip.

We will make merry with our Christmas program at our next quarterly meeting Saturday, December 3rd. At this meeting we will also honor our members who are 85 YEARS or OLDER. We plan to make it a very pleasant and enjoyable occasion. MERRY CHRISTMAS to all.

* * *

LOOK FOR IT HERE

The P.G.& E. Progress for July 1966 in an article regarding Townes Pass, mentions Capt. Hunt, the grandfather of one of our members, Mrs. Violet Pratt Johnson. "The wagon train of about 200 people, 110 wagons and 500 head of stock was led by Capt. Jefferson Hunt, a former officer in the Mormon Battalion who had taken the first wagons through Cajon Pass. Again following the Old Spanish Trail across the desert to Cajon, Hunt guided most of the emigrants there without incident." ***

The Palo Alto Historical Society is leading a campaign to secure the Squire Mansion on University Avenue, so that it can become a Palo Alto city museum. They are also interested in saving the Rancho Purissima Conception adobe, on Old Trace Road, built about 1850. ***

1967 DUES may be paid now by mailing your \$2 to our financial secretary, Mrs. Eveleen C. Duff, 82 South 9th Street, San Jose, California 95112. ***

The membership seems to enjoy "Letters to the Editor." If you have something interesting about Santa Clara County history or a good family anecdote, send it to the editor. ***

Ralph Rambo did it again! His third book, "Me & Cy" is now on sale at Books Inc., Town & Country Village. It is loaded with cartoons and tall tales of this locality. It's written Mark Twain style, you'll enjoy it. ***

Mrs. Helen Arbuckle has sold an historical article concerning Oak Hill Cemetery to Spinning Wheel, titled, "A Millstone Marks a Grave." ***

Our pianist, Mrs. Alma Andrews an active member of Mu Phi Epsilon and National Association for Music Therapy was presented with a Merit Award at their convention in Portland, Oregon for dedicated volunteer music therapy at the Veterans Hospital in Palo Alto. Mrs. Andrews has clocked over 10,000 hours as a volunteer music therapist with V.A. Hospitals. ***

The California Landmarks Commission has approved a landmark to be erected in the Evergreen area honoring John J. Montgomery, Santa Clara County's pioneer aviator. "The Father of Controlled Flight" conducted 54 controlled glider flights in the Evergreen hills before he was killed in 1911. The landmark will be erected at Yerba Buena and San Felipe roads, with a granite rock base and bronze plaque. ***

The old Thomas E. Marsh (known as Welch home) home built along Saratoga Creek about 100 years ago has recently been moved to Wildwood Park in Saratoga and will be converted to use as a historical museum to be operated by the Saratoga Historical Foundation. ***

100 years ago (1866) the San Jose Mercury reports; "The San Augustine Street bridge is now built across the Guadalupe, and new streets are being opened up. Several new houses are being built on San Augustine and Autumn streets. It is a delightful section of the city."

In 1866 the Mercury also notes that; "William Fitts, the well known and popular owner and driver of the Accommodation Line omnibuses between San Jose and Santa Clara has just unboxed and put on the road a new \$1,000 bus for the comfort and convenience of the traveling public. The bus is a perfect gem. We regard Billy as a public benefactor. He deserves a full load every trip." ***

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Mrs. Harold E. Collins, Frieda Culbreth, Bess Gilliam, Mrs. Harold G. Hunt, Selma Johnson, Mabel Lassale, Viola Copley Lawrence, Mary E. Little, Norman Little, Elizabeth Jo Ann Lucas, Helen Lucas, Lenore S. Mariant, Frances E. Otter, Ella M. Partin, Henry Otis Partin, Frazier O. Reed II, Susan B. Reed, Hobart M. Royce, Ruby P. Royce, Anna Squires and Gilliam H. Squires.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

Miss Gertrude Bernhardt, Mrs. Louise J. Cook, Mrs. Ethel B. Donovan, Mrs. Annie T. Peters, Mrs. Mabel G. Ogier and Mrs. Una B. Hughson 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 condition 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

Not silent are these hallowed dead,
A richer eloquence survives,
We have from those who've gone ahead
The inspiration of their lives.

Edith E. Van Every

January 30, 1895 - July 10, 1966

Margaret A. Peters

- July 31, 1966

William F. James

October 16, 1875 - August 18, 1966

John A. Mirassou

August 29, 1888 - September 17, 1966

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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Editor: Arthur M. Fisk, 1335 Singletary Ave., San Jose'

Associate Editor: Marjorie B. Fisk

Staff members: Olin and Edna Lake

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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 Mrs. Helen F. Arbuckle, phone 269-5324, 10 a.m. until 12 noon only.

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

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