

Volume 28

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No. 4

CAMPBELL BICYCLE FIREMEN



In recent years the Campbell Fire Department has won national recognition for achievement in fire prevention activities.

There has been nothing in the history of the department from its beginning in 1912 on a then volunteer basis to the present that compares to the world-wide publicity the volunteers received

in 1935 with their "Bicycle Brigade Fire Department." Clippings from newspapers of 1935 show pictures of the firemen on bicycles with hoses wrapped around their necks and carrying ladders over their shoulders. They even had one tandem bike.

Actually, the bike idea started out as another money making gimmick and not for fire fighting purposes, according to notes compiled by the late Jack Scott, former Campbell Fire Chief. The volunteers were always trying money-making activities. One member who usually rode his bicycle to fires fell off in a mud hole and never reached the fire. They immediately fell on the idea of putting on a show as the "Bicycle Fire Department." Pictures were taken and some news agency conceived the idea to have it filmed, and the film sold to a Hollywood agency as a news item. Proceeds were to be split down the middle between the agency and the department.

After several months of practice a film was made of men carrying their equipment on bicycles going to a pre-arranged small structural fire. The pictures were made well and were shown world-wide, London, Berlin, Tokyo and other foreign countries as well as throughout the United States.

When the request for the proceeds to be split was made, the fire department was ignored. When they demanded the film, they were informed it had been destroyed for the silver nitrate it contained. There was talk of litigation, but there were no Bellis or funds in those days to fight them. However, the name stuck and the Campbell Fire Department was called "The Bicycle Fire Department" for many years thereafter.

B . C .

WHALE BLAZERS

CUPERTINO, 1900: Citizens here were elated over the acre of land offered by a kind resident for a free library. It was proposed, in connection with a well stocked library "croquet and tennis would be available affording intellectual advancement for the public spirited resident.

* * *

CAMPBELL, 1901: Campbell was to have electricity! The Standard Electric Company had contracted to run a wire from here with a promise of a 30 horse power motor that would supply power for the Campbell Water Company. There was a belief that this would lead to the lighting of the town. Happily, the first to receive 'electric lighting' was the post office and the Congregational Church by late 1902.

* * *

SAN JOSE, November 1902: The Prince of Siam had arrived here. His Royal Highness, along with his party, enjoyed a trip to Mt. Hamilton and a narrow gauge train trip to Big Trees in the Santa Cruz Mountains during his two day visit. The 22 year old prince was educated at Eton College and Oxford. He was the eleventh of the King's 132 sons who were learning to become soldiers, sailors, lawyers and engineers. The visit-learning prince already was collecting a harem of his own with some hope of additions from the U.S.A.

* * *

During the early era of Santa Clara County there was no central courthouse so proceedings were usually held at the home of the justice--his office or place of business.

* * *

SAN JOSE, 1907: Horses repeatedly left standing in driving rains aroused members of the Humane Society. Officers of the group had again placed a double-team in the public stables after being drenched and shivering. Jail and heavy fines for such neglect was boldly published.

* * *

GILROY, November 1913: It was reported an automobile factory and also a canery was to locate here. It was also made known \$100,000 was made available for the improvement of the Pacheco Pass Road.

* * *

SAN JOSE 1917: Valley prune growers were elated to hear raw prunes were given first place as a remedy for hay fever by the Hygenic Research Society in Pittsburgh, Penn.

* * *

November 1920: Almost eleven months after Prohibition, Federal agents were still padlocking speakeasies. Billy Sunday, a baseball player converted to religious work, said of 'John Barleycorn', a cartoon representing drink, "You were God's worst enemy; you were hell's best friend. The reign of terror is over." Here at home an entrenched moonshiner back in the Uvas Hills had a unique experience. On the way to the county jail he was introduced to his first automobile, street car and elevator ride.



President's Message

Edward Allegretti

ATTENTION! Please note that we now have a new answering service to take reservations for the quarterly luncheons. This new information is on the back page with the details of our Christmas program.

Currently members of the board of directors are working with Supervisor Suzanne Wilson and other county officials to decide the future of the Society owned Jackson House at Anderson Reservoir. It is hoped that the county will repair the house and open it as a museum, with the grounds as a park. Of course, the Society will retain ownership of the ranch.

Also given with the house were its contents. Among the items are many antiques and paintings of local significance. Possibly some of these will be displayed at the Jackson Ranch as well as in the Morgan Hill House. Hopefully some will even be placed in a house at the San Jose Historical Museum where our Society hopes to establish its headquarters.

Recently, as many of you know, a respected member of our Society, Mary Simas, died. Although she spent many hours serving the Society as a board member and Sunshine Chairman, I am sure she will be remembered most for the kindness and concern she showed to everyone.

BOY SCOUT PROJECT REWARDING

The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County are delighted to announce the presentation of the Eagle Scout Award to Douglas J. Courtney of San Jose Troop 227, Boy Scouts of America, at the area Eagle Court of Honor on Oct. 16, 1987. Douglas's Eagle service project was the cleaning, painting and general betterment of our historic Hacienda Cemetery on Bertram Road in New Almaden. We, indeed, doff our historical caps to Douglas, his leadership, his devoted family, scoutmasters and fellow scouts for this undertaking. Certificates of recognition will be extended to Douglas at the December 5th Luncheon at Lou's Village.

WHEN DRUG STORES JUST SOLD MEDICINE

by Helen S. Moore

As there seems to be some interest in the early drug stores in San Jose, I thought it would be appropriate to mention August Gotthart Schoenheit, my grandfather, who was, according to Clyde Arbuckle, the first professionally qualified chemist and pharmacist.

Like many other of the early pioneers his life is quite interesting. He was born in Eglesdorf, Thuringen Wald, Saxony, December 12, 1827, and when he was three

years old his parents passed away and his sister, Johanna S. Junker, took him to Moscow, Russia, where he had the beginning of his education in the gymnasiums there.

From 1848 to 1851 he served as a first lieutenant in the Jaeger Corps (sharpshooting corps) in the Schleswig-Holstein war. In being mustered out of the army he studied for a time at the University of Gottingen and then sailed for New York and took ship for the Isthmus of Panama. As there was no transportation to the west coast, he walked. He had contracted the fever and only because he was a military man used to forced marches was he able to complete the journey through the thick jungles. Managing to obtain passage on a ship for California, he was shipwrecked in Baja, California, but finally getting passage on another ship, he arrived in San Francisco in 1852.

He traveled to the gold fields of Coloma and Big Oak Flat where he heard from the Indians there was water falling from the heavens. Accompanied by three others they walked over what is in the vicinity of Big Oak Flat Road today and looked down into Yosemite Valley. Returning to San Jose he worked in a small apothecary shop established by two doctors named Lee and Van Cannagan. The doctors had bought a small amount of drugs from a man named Davini who had come from Peru in 1849. After about eighteen months Mr. Schoenheit bought the store which was situated on Market street just north of the northwest corner of Santa Clara street. It was originally called the City Drug Store and later the name was changed to State Pioneer Pharmacy.



DRUGGIST.

In 1868 Mr. Schoenheit returned to Europe to visit his relatives in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Saxony. During this time he visited the University of Gottingen and several others obtaining the newest discoveries in drugs and medicines.

When he was ready to return to California his nephew, Dr. Wilhelm Junker, wanted him to accompany him to "darkest Africa," a coin was flipped and California won.

Dr. Schoenheit had a large wholesale business and shipped all over the United States and Canada under the name Century Drug Company. His liniment gained fame and was used in the gold fields by many a miner on his aching back. He also was known for his non-poisonous corn cure, his Specific A No. 1, his medicinal lozenges, Schoenheit's Sasaparilla and cough cure and others.

The store was moved to Santa Clara street and lastly to 72 South First Street where his son, Augustus A. Schoenheit, put in photo supplies and cameras and had the first Eastman rights. Mr. Schoenheit passed away in June, 1906, and his son sold the business to Mr. E.O. Webb.

Mr. Schoenheit was a member of the Pioneer Society of San Jose, having badge No. 42. He was well qualified to take care of the people of Santa Clara County both because of his education and the fact that he was able to communicate with the various nationalities here as he spoke six languages. His home was at 73 East Julian Street. It is still standing although it has been greatly altered.

OUR NEW LUNCHEON PHONE NUMBER IS NOW 554-7587

On this, America's Constitutional Bicentennial, we pause prayerfully in the continued security of the blessing of liberty and our prosperity.

Ten years ago on November 29, 1977 we were commemorating another bicentennial, the founding of El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe and the dedication of Pellier park in San Jose as a State Historical Landmark in memory of Louis Pellier, founder of our once thriving prune industry. This, in part, was a major endeavor of our Pioneer Society.

SENTINELS OF THE BAY

by Laura Calloway

The romance of lighthouses is usually thought of as being the rugged coast of New England. But have you ever considered that some of the most dangerous navigational water is close to home--the San Francisco Bay area?

The discovery of gold increased shipping in California and by 1852 Congress had appropriated funds for the construction of lighthouses on the Pacific Coast. The first two to be constructed were the ones on Alcatraz and Fort Point. However, they could not be lit until the lenses could arrive from France. Alcatraz was finally lit in 1854.

Fort Point was the third light to be lit as it had the doubtful distinction of being the first to be torn down when barely three months old. The army had decided to fortify the Golden Gate. Now the light house had been built on the southern shore of the Golden Gate's narrowest point where the Army wanted the fort to be. The lighthouse was reconstructed outside the fort wall, but the sea wall was giving way. Therefore, for the third time the sentinel was erected, this time uniquely atop the fort where it still stands. The arches of the the Golden Gate Bridge when constructed made the light ineffective and



so the light and the fog horn have been relocated on one of the main bridge piers.

At the entrance to the bay are submerged rocks which extend into the Golden Gate. Fartherest from shore are a pair known as Mile Rocks which rise but 20 feet above the water, the largest of these is only 40 feet long and 30 feet wide. Strong currents and fog make them a real hazard. In 1889 a bell buoy was moored there by the U.S. Lighthouse Board. Very soon it was reported missing only to be reported at station just a few hours later. This went on for weeks as the massive ebb current continued to draw under the buoy.

The only solution was an effective warning signal of the Fort Point shoal be erected. But when the contractor arrived with his crew of skilled men, they refused to risk their lives on the tiny seawept rock. The contractor then resorted to a crew of deep water sailors who might have been less skilled in construction techniques, but definitely were more fearless. Even these experienced seamen at times found themselves struggling in the water. Eventually the rock was leveled and a three-storied structure topped with a lantern room braved the elements.

Today a helicopter landing pad has replaced the tower for easier maintenance, a new reflecting light installed and the fog signal relocated. Mile Rocks can be sighted from Lookout Point on Land's End in San Francisco.

A light on the opposite shore at Point Bonita was shown to be very necessary when the steamer "Tennessee" ran ashore during heavy fog. Miraculously all aboard were saved.

At Point Bonita as with many of the early California lights, the stations were built on the highest reaches of the coastal headlands. But the California fog is frequently a high fog shrouding the upper headlands while the lower reaches are clear. Point Bonita is unique in the near record amount of fog found there. It was determined a noise was needed as a fog warning. The noisiest device known at the time was a cannon. From the Benicia Arsenal a hefty eight foot long 24 pounder cannon was acquired along with a retired army sergeant as the new keeper. The sergeant was to fire the cannon without ball every half hour during foggy weather. Soon the lighthouse inspector was hearing the complaint, "I have been up three days and nights without a person to relieve me." Thus was the first fog signal on the Pacific Coast.

Lime Point and Angel Island stations were designed as fog stations but later they received makeshift lights.

The keepers and their families at Lime Point braved the hazards of

rock slides in the early days. After the arrival of the Golden Gate Bridge, they needed to keep an eye overhead as tourists seemed to enjoy tossing beer bottles and other trash off the bridge. A direct hit on a keeper's head might be fatal. At this windy spot with bridge painters above an additional chore was keeping the buildings a gleaming white.

Angel Island had a mechanical striking mechanism for the fog bell which unexpectedly broke down in 1906. Mrs. Juliet E. Nichols was the keeper at the time. She picked up a regular hammer and began to pound away at the bell (the dents can still be seen.). It was 20 hours and 35 minutes before the fog lifted and Mrs. Nichols' arm had a rest. For a short time Angel Island had the distinction of being the only island have three lights and fog signals (Point Knox, Point Blunt and Point Stuart.) The original station at Point Knox has been discontinued but the other two are still manned.

Yerba Buena Island is at the very heart of San Francisco Bay. Thousands of commuters and transcontinental railroad passengers passed its shores aboard ferries. An unmarked island near these navigational routes was extremely dangerous. In the 1870's on two and a half acres above a 50 foot cliff a beautiful Victorian structure was erected for the light and another for the keepers' residence. The island was rugged and wild with no regular transportation or schools. One lighthouse family solved the problem by teaching their three daughters how to sail. The skillful girls daily sailed their sloop to San Francisco to school.

Just north of the San Rafael-Richmond Bridge can be seen the East Brother Light Station which has been converted into a bed and breakfast inn with four guest rooms.

For 35 years, a widow, Kate McDougal, was the lone keeper of the Mare Island Lighthouse. The light was discontinued in 1917 but an automatic fog bell still rings every ten seconds--a signal unchanged since the days of Kate McDougal.

Over thirty miles from the pounding breakers of the Pacific stood the Roe Island Light Station with fresh water flowing beneath its piers in an area across the Sacramento River from Port Chicago.

Other sentinels of the Bay were those of Southampton Shoal, Oakland Harbor and Carquinez Strait whose structures are no longer in existence.

OUR NEW LUNCHEON PHONE NUMBER IS NOW 554-7587

The San Jose Historical Museum Association is now offering "Barnstorming," the autobiography of the renowned actor, Frank Bacon, as their membership premium for supporting the museum in 1988. For information call 287-2290. A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS is planned for Dec. 10, 11 and 12.

PLAYED GOLF ON ONE LEG

This insistent golfer was C.M. Platt of San Francisco, a hotelman, who often played the San Jose links during the 1920s and 30's on one leg. Platt had lost his left leg in the Canadian Army but failed to let the handicap prevent him from pursuing golf, his favorite pastime.

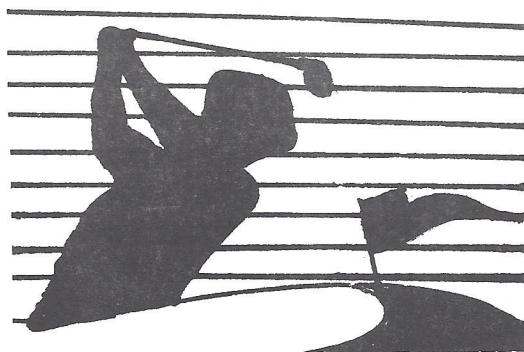
After a siege of hospitals and minus a leg so essential in a golf swing the urge to play was overwhelming.

In 1932 he played to an 18 handicap and his fellow golfers said he played to it consistently at the Ingleside Club in San Francisco, his home course. Learning to swing and keep his balance was a problem at first, but he mastered the art of pivoting and following through on one leg. His determination got him close to 200 yards on his tee shots. Before the era of golf carts Platt got from shot to shot with just his crutches. When he approached the ball he discarded his crutches and played his shot.

At the old San Jose Hillview course he often played 27 holes and perhaps the same number next day in San Francisco. He played courses flat and hilly and got around as fast as his opponents. Platt appreciated folks taking an interest in his game. He believed he was not so bad off as he might have been. Some golfers came out of the war worse than he and played the game.

In a 1932 interview Platt said, "I had a handicapped playing partner in Victoria, British Columbia who got around under a hundred. Interested spectators came across two fairways one day to see me make a shot." Turning to the gallery Platt said, "This is nothing, take a look at my partner, he's blind."

Platt also recalled the thrill when he played Tom McAuliffe of Buffalo, N.Y., an armless golfer who had broken 100 and who also held the world's record for chip shots, that is, putting 269 balls into a basket without a miss. His head and shoulder supported the club.



Welcome New Members

John E. Allegretti	Albert E. Herschback	Myrl E. Metcalf
Margarethe L. Crandall	Doris E. Herschback	Nicholas A. Mlinarich
Donald W. Dingman	Nona Lee Martin	Josephine P. Pashote
Cheri Ann Fields	Chris R. McCann	Raymond J. Silva
Beverly Fisher	James W. McCann	Cathleen E. Storm
Robert G. Fisher	Jean E. McCann	James A. Storm
Dolores J. Foley		W.J. Shiloh Unruh

Beyond The Sunset

Almira M. Robbins	Barbara Center	
Mary Simas	Gladys Ashcraft	Ruth Duino



A GOOD OLD DAY FRUSTRATION!

Say! Remember the good old wet winters when the family car was drenched and the darn hand operated windshield wiper failed to work? Boy! Then as your elders carefully drove you all strained your eyes peering through an almost totally washed out condition. The old shields were usually in two sections, one above the other. The lower section could open up and if the rubber weatherstripping that seperated the sections was worn or broken, the situation became tragic as the stuff ran down the dashboard and onto your Sunday shoes.

This deplorable condition went on to be improved somewhat when cars came equipped with wipers moved by pressure forced through a rubber tube. When the tube plugged or broke the wiper stalled. It can be remembered when car makers installed two wipers, but at first on just the more elegant models.

Please remember also Henry Ford did not include wipers on his first "lizzies" believing them to be just "frills."

Or, how about when rain had you hurrying to snap on the side curtains, often already cracked and broken. It was an accomplishment when you tried it while in the car. Somehow this age of motordom has eliminated running boards with tool boxes, but not flat tires and tailgate horn blowers.

--H.C.

We have just learned that Pioneer member Louis Duino, retired executive sports editor of the San Jose Mercury (1977) has just completed a history of the San Jose Country Club. Sorry, folks, but Lou states the publication is for club members only.



Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS by phone begin on Monday, Dec. 7, for members only. Call Nancy Hill at 258-3449 Monday through Friday, preferably mornings.

(Except on trip dates when she may be touring with the Californians.) After Nancy confirms your reservation, make check payable to the CALIFORNIANS and send to P.O. Box 32121, San Jose, CA 95152. After the quarterly meeting a Trip Brochure may be obtained by mailing a stamped self-addressed legal sized envelope to the above address.

December 20, Sunday Afternoon: SAN JUAN BAUTISTA In a little Spanish Town where residents of this peaceful valley once set their watches by the mission bells. Lunch in an old California setting at Jardines De San Juan. Then to El Teatro de Campesino, America's first Chicano Theater Company for a unique performance.

March 20-27, 1988: DEATH VALLEY IN THE SPRING Requests have been many to return, so here 'tis! Thrill to the accommodations at Furnace Creek Ranch Resort. Enjoy this realm of geological phenomena that abounds in escorted tours, date palms, shade, greenery mid the changing color of the desert. Marvel to a creation estimated to be 400 square miles below sea level. See special flyer for this extraordinary get away!

NEW YEAR'S IN SAN ANTONIO is filled with a very short wait list. Give us a call if you care to have a place on it.

Coming attraction for 1988: NEW MEXICO in May and AUSTRALIA in October.

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GREETINGS TO OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

DECEMBER 5th IS OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON
AT LOU'S VILLAGE

Please Note Our NEW PHONE NUMBER
FOR RESERVATIONS - - 554-7587 --

A 24 HOUR SERVICE. . . RESERVATIONS MUST NOW BE
MADE NOT LATER THAN THE TUESDAY BEFORE THE
LUNCHEON . . PLEASE.

MENU

Baked Ham, Potatoes, Vegetables,
Harvest Jello Salad, Dessert,
Coffee . . \$8.50

PROGRAM

The Award Winning
MADRIGAL SINGERS
of Monta Vista High School

Doors Open At 10:30 a.m.

THE TRAILBLAZER issued February, May, August and November.

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Staff Artist - Ralph Rambo

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