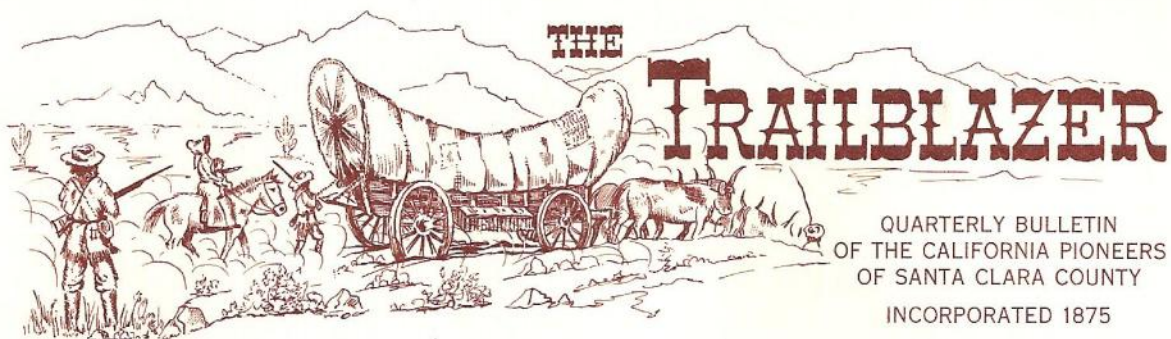




THE

TRAILBLAZER

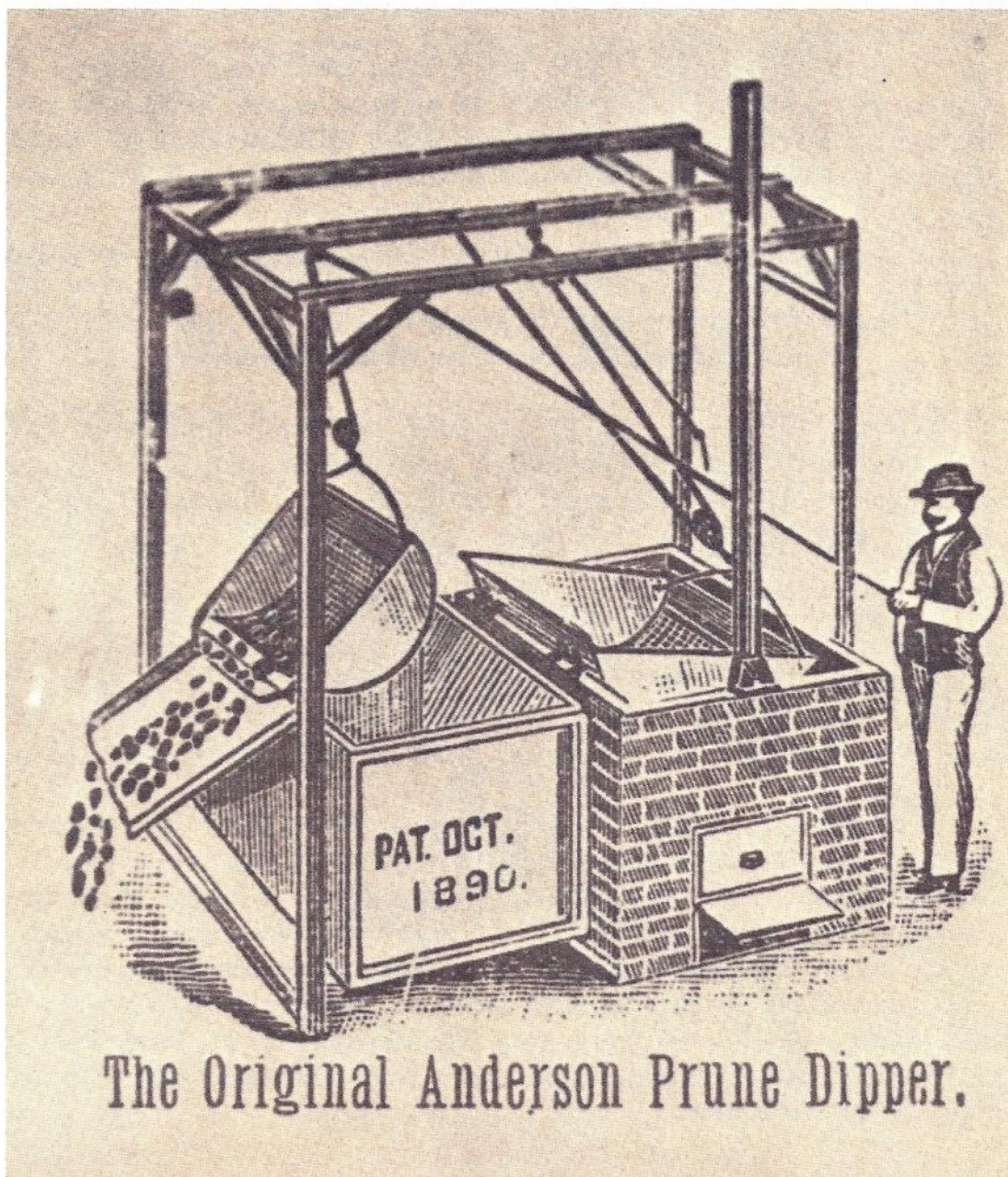
QUARTERLY BULLETIN
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

INCORPORATED 1875

Volume 17

August 1977

Number 3



The Original Anderson Prune Dipper.

WHALE BLAZERS

THE PIONEER, Oct. 27, 1877 -:

"What is Left of Our Former Greatness"

"Perhaps but few of our readers, and residents of San Jose, know that about the last relic of San Jose's greatness, as Capital of California, stands on Fourth Street, just a few steps south of Santa Clara. It is nothing but the crumbling walls of an old adobe hut, first State Treasurer's office, in which was kept the oil that limbered up the wheels of State.

"It was also the birth place of the Democratic Party of California; where was organized the first meeting in its behalf.

"Judge Peckham, who was then on that side of the fence was present and took an active part in the organization. But little is left of this old building, only a couple of walls of adobe. Thus they are passing away, and soon will be lost to memory forever.

"Would it not have been a grand thought to have preserved, by the city, one or more of these antiquated relics, as mementos of our State's birth and our city's infancy. How interesting they would be to posterity."

June 1901 -: "Until further notice round-trip rates from Santa Clara to Alum Rock will be 30 cents. Tickets available at Oberdeener's Drug Store, Santa Clara and Riles Drug Store in San Jose. Children 20 cents."

July 1912 -: The Chamber of Commerce at 40 No. First St. announced that two large containers of Alum Rock mineral water had been placed in the office. Joseph T. Brooks, secretary, said a free drink would be offered to all who dropped by. A fresh supply was programmed daily.

Saratoga, 1913 -" A petition was filed in Superior Court by the Trustees of the Maderonia Cemetery Asso., a corporation, for permission to change its name to Madronia Cemetery Association. It had been discovered that in 1863 when the association was formed someone misspelled the principal word in the name. Even in selecting the new name or correcting its spelling, the trustees had disappointedly Anglicized it out of the pure Spanish beauty of Madrona.



ELROD'S EXPEDIENT EXPERIMENT

By HELEN ARBUCKLE

To Louis Pellier and his brothers, Pierre and Jean, belongs the credit for making Santa Clara Valley the prune-growing center of U. S. Continued success of the industry, however, was dependent on a practical method of preserving the fruit.

Until about 1887 prunes had been dried using the French method of lightly cooking the fruit with alternate periods of sun drying. Finally, the partially dried fruit was completely dried in an oven, the forerunner of the dehydrator. Growers were dissatisfied with this laborious process and product quality. It was almost black in color with a licorice-like flavor.

An account of early experiments in drying prunes by Noah S. Elrod was carried in a small catalogue published in 1879 by W. C. Anderson, Manufacturer and Dealer in Horticultural Supplies, an ancestor of F. M. C.

The Elrod family, natives of Indiana, settled in the Solis district near Gilroy in 1863. Mrs. Ruth Weston, a fourth generation of the family, continues to reside on the old homestead.

Mr. Elrod had on his place a large prune tree of the French variety, the only one in that section of the country. Some thought it to be the oldest tree in the state at that time. As there was no market for the fruit it was used by the family for canning and preserving.

One fall, while cultivating, he found under a board that had been left leaning against the tree trunk, several perfectly cured prunes. He ate one, and being pleased with the flavor, carried those remaining in to his wife, Hannah. She pronounced them as fine as raisins.

The next season measures were taken to cure all the fruit from this tree. It was gathered carefully and spread out on sheets in the sun, but every one fermented and turned to a chocolate color.

The next season they dipped the fruit in hot brine before placing it out to dry. This treatment met with some success. About half the fruit cured nicely.



W. C. ANDERSON.

W. C. Anderson credits Noah S. Elrod with early successful experiments in drying prunes by dipping the fruit in a hot lye solution then placing it in the sun to dry. Anderson's invention of the prune dipper in 1890 gave great impetus to Santa Clara Valley's becoming the principal prune growing region of the U. S.

Confident that a stronger chemical was needed, the third season they set up an ash hopper and the lye secured from it was used in the dipping solution. Practically all the fruit cured perfectly.

It was the breakthrough. The Elrods attributed their success to the fact that the lye solution dissolved the "bloom" or air-tight coating which is peculiarly heavy in the French prune. Its waxy or oily nature often thought to be mildew or mould thoroughly seals the pores of the skin. The lye solution also partially sterilized the fruit and inhibited fermentation; it also neutralized a peculiar acid under the outside layer of the skin that was detrimental to the keeping

qualities of the fruit.

Other growers, meanwhile, had conducted similar experiments. Once success was established, this method was adopted throughout the prune-growing sections of the state.

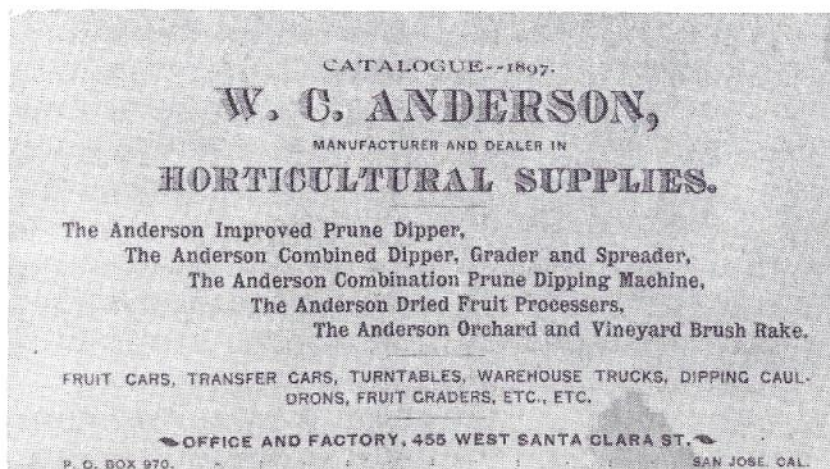
Combined with Elrod's dipping formula and the introduction of Anderson's Prune Dipper in 1890, growers could harvest and dry "a great many more Prunes in a day than we had any idea of . . ."

PRUNE CAKE

Rich in iron and vitamins

2½ cups all-purpose flour	1 cup sugar
¾ cup shortening	3 unbeaten eggs
3 teaspoons baking powder	1 cup prune pulp
1 teaspoon baking soda	¾ cup prune juice
1 teaspoon allspice	¼ cup sour cream
1 teaspoon cinnamon	½ cup chopped walnuts
½ teaspoon nutmeg	¼ teaspoon cloves
½ teaspoon salt	

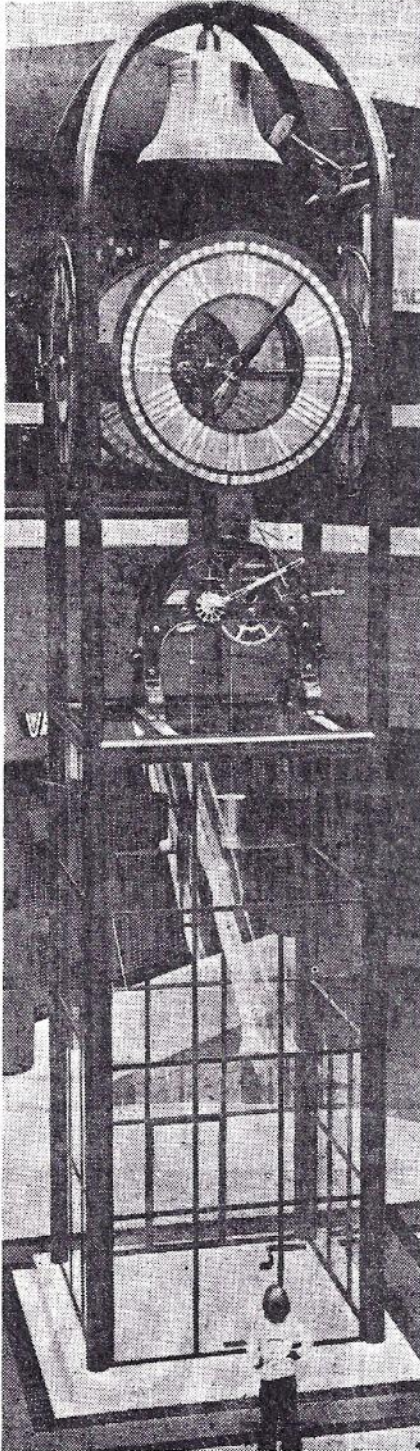
Sift flour, spices, baking powder and soda together. Cream shortening, add sugar, and beat well. Add eggs. Beat until light. Combine sour cream and prune juice. Add liquid mixture alternately with dry ingredients. Stir until blended. Add fruit and nuts. Bake in greased layer tins at 350°F. 25 to 30 minutes or in greased loaf pan 40 to 45 minutes. Cool. Spread with mocha butter icing or serve plain with whipped cream.



Photography by Helen Arbuckle

WHEN SAN JOSE LOST TIME!

by Henry Calloway



San Jose Clock
Finds a Home

It appears as though other communities are cashing in on San Jose's historical discards. Arresting attention is a former San Jose bank tower clock scaling over three stories in height which keeps on amazing thousands daily at the Glendale Galleria Mall in California.

This once familiar townpiece owes its existence to the 1906 earthquake. Mr. Clyde Arbuckle says when the jolt hit on the morning of April 18th, the tower on the Bank of San Jose at the northeast corner of First and Santa Clara Streets snapped and toppled, demolishing the clock beyond repair. The bank structure was then rebuilt in 1908 as the Beans Building. The E. Howard Watch and Clock Co. of Boston made and installed a new clock to fit the new tower. The building and clock-tower served as a San Jose landmark time site for thirty-eight ceaseless years.

The Beans structure was torn down in 1946 with the clock and its entire mechanism removed to Dr. R. Coke Wood's Old Timers museum at Murphy's in Calavar-

as County.

It was not long after when a Tacoma clock collector spotted the prize in this Mother Lode hamlet, where he immediately purchased it along with its two thousand pound bronze bell, also of 1908 vintage.

"It was in Tacoma where we found it," beams Marilyn Jacobs, manager of Canterbury Designs, Inc., who create such novel area projects as the regional shopping center in Glendale, California.

Polishing, cleaning and overhauling more than one thousand parts of the clock's cast iron and brass movements were necessary before it was housed in its attractive seven foot square partially enclosed glass frame.

Officials say the clock remains an authentic antique. The only update concession is an automatic

motor and chain rewinding unit, electronically controlled to crank up the weights. In her triumph Ms. Jacobs says, "This is proof that preservation and use of early treasures need not be delegated to museums alone."

Crowds muster on the hour and half hour to witness with 'I'll be jigged' expressions as the seventy-five pound arm and hammer strike out sonorous sounds on "our" lost clock of another day.

It is interesting to note what Munro-Frazer's History of Santa Clara County, published in 1881, records: "It was on the 24th of May 1872 when a clock in the tower of the new Bank of San Jose Building first gave time." This was the clock that made its fatal plunge during the 1906 quake.

* * *

THE OVERLAND TRAIL REVISITED

Like a pilgrimage into the past your Trailblazer editors recently retraced the phenomenal Oregon-Mormon-California Overland Trails. This 4500 mile round trip expedition was shared by 38 trail eager, history gadding San Jose Metropolitan Education Argonauts. A bus charter "wagoneered" our party to Independence, Mo., our "jumping off point" for the 19-day epic. It was the emigrant's six month tight travel schedule we probed with Clyde Arbuckle, recognized by the California Historical Society for his extensive research on the trail, as our narrator.

We called on Liberty, Mo. where Peter Burnett read

law. He headed a party to Oregon in 1848 and by 1850 was California's first American civil governor.

Weston, Mo. is where John Bidwell taught school and organized "The Great American Exploration Co." in 1841. The Bidwell-Bartleson Party was the first company of American emigrants to enter California near now Sonora Pass. Their journey was labeled a desert starvation march as they slaughtered oxen one by one, boiled acorns and called coyote a delicacy. From this hard luck group emerged Josiah Belden, first mayor of San Jose.

Off the road in Kansas we halted at the remote grave site of Grandma Sarah Keyes, mother-in-law of James F. Reed, originator of the Reed-Donner Party in 1846.

We paused on a shady bend near Nishnabotna, Nebraska where Elisha Stephens was elected leader of the Murphy-Townsend-Stephens Party in 1844. This company stands out brilliantly in bringing the first wagons over the Sierra with no loss of life. This once-grueling, granite naked entry is now U.S. Highway 80. Most migrations used the Central Platte-Sweetwater Rivers route which was considered less hazardous. Over 250,000 emigrants pursued this line of march. "But the price was staggering," states Arbuckle. "During the cholera epidemic of 1849-50, death was so certain men were seen digging their own graves."

Prominent trail landmarks that formed horizons for days to the plodding overlanders were explored. At Court House and Jail Rock, near Bridgeport, Neb., were curious Herfords which became the Argonaut's "buffalo." Up the Platte we came to another Nebraska offering, Chimney Rock. Father Pierre DeSmet, missionary and explorer in 1840 wrote: "one of the most remarkable curiosities of this savage region." The Argonauts scampered for camera angles a mile or two from the 475 foot "noble monument." Independence Rock in Wyoming is a 38 acre granite 'pet' rock of the migration as it is well etched with early names and dates. We walked the confines of Devil's Gate, a quarter mile long 400 foot high plains "Gibraltar," a Sweetwater passage.

From the crest of Emigration Canyon in the Wasatch Range we scanned the Mormon utopia of the Great Salt Lake Basin. From a more dramatic angle we beheld East Canyon Creek where a misinformed, crucified Donner contingent paid a costly 28 days forcing a passage down its unyielding ravines.

We skirted the 300 mile Nevada Humboldt which begrudgingly offered its alkaline moisture to a trailed out

parched hoofbeat and footfall migration.

The Argonaut Pilgrimage backs up an early saying:
"If hell lay to the west, Americans would cross heaven to
get there."
-- H.C.



Carolyn de Vries

Greetings to one and all:

I wish to thank the Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to serve as President of a most historic and honorable organization. I only hope that my term can continue the outstanding accomplishments that were made under the leadership of our outgoing President, Clyde Arbuckle. And that is probably the greatest honor I shall ever have -- to follow in the office vacated by Clyde, whose contributions to local history are so well known.

Our Board has many plans for the coming year. All members are such good workers that you can be assured that your organization is in good hands.

I look forward to meeting as many of you personally as I can at the September 3rd Quarterly Luncheon Meeting.

LOOK FOR IT HERE

TOUR RESERVATIONS are made at the Quarterly meetings or by phone calls to Ruth Gross at 294-9830 between the hours of 9 and 12 Monday through Friday. After confirmation by Ruth that space is available, THEN send checks, payable to "The Californians" to 100 Serena Way, Santa Clara, CA 95051. Trip brochures are available through Ruth Gross.

"City Gardens" to bloom again! We ask our readers to take in the Pellier Park progress at the corner of St.

James and Terraine Streets, San Jose. As you know our Society has made a \$5000 grant to help memorialize this valley's once great prune industry. Pellier Park is just that. As an individual you may now purchase a prune or pear tree as a living memorial to a family, friend, firm or organization. Attractive bronze plaques mounted onto concrete elevated headers will identify the donors. This tax deductible tribute is \$300. Prime movers and historical restoration marvels in this contributing effort are fellow Pioneers, Leonard McKay and Jim Arbuckle. Mailing address: 96 Santa Teresa St., San Jose, CA 95126.

DUES of \$3.00 each for 1977 are now due. Check your ID card to avoid loss of membership. Call or write the Financial Secretary, Byron Bullard, 1085 Tasman Dr., Sp. 404, Sunnyvale, CA 94086 or phone 734-0481.

Lois Ralston has a feeling of total immersion when she tells of her birthplace at Kennett, California. The one time thriving copper-smelting and shipping center is now covered by the waters of the Shasta reservoir. Lois who is also an attentive member of the Shasta Historical Society says her dad, Lair A. Ralston (1879-1964) carried mail into Big Bend on the Pit River during the winters of 1900-1902 on snowshoes. He left Montgomery Creek on one day and returned the next, a distance of twenty miles, making three trips a week. During fair weather this dedicated "rural" carrier made the trip on horseback six times a week.

Among the first to receive a commission to captain an English cruise ship was Francis H. Armstrong, father of our Mrs. Edith Huff. The Oceanic Steamship Company of San Francisco, Edith writes, chartered three White Star passenger ships from Liverpool, England to sail from San Francisco to the South Seas and Japan in the late 1890's. Her father's last ship was the S. S. Coptic. He died in 1904 at the age of 42 of typhoid in Yokohama. Her brother, William, also went to sea for the British Maritime Service earning his captain's stripes in 1920 at the age of 23, becoming one of the youngest commissioned captains of British Registry.

SEPT. 3rd IS OUR LUNCHEON DATE!

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exact number of Reservations so Lou's VILLAGE can
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Verda E. Fisher	Edith F. Jones	Hildegard Snyder
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Frances Fox	Alice Raine	Nadine Stubbe
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Pauline Gifford	Lillian Richards	Frances Y. Tatom
Rose Hale	Etta Sharpe	Evelyn Von Dorsten



Beyond the sunset

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