

T H E T R A I L B L A Z E R

Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

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New Almaden Mines
Laurence E. Bulmore

Although New Almaden was originally the place from which the local Indians procured the red mineral pigment to make their war paint, it afterward became the second largest quicksilver mine in the world.

The site was brought to the attention of civilization by Antonio Sunol and Luis Chabolla in 1824. However it was Captain Andre Castellero, of Mexico who identified the mineral as cinnabar. Thus, in 1845, nearly three years before the discovery of gold at Coloma, California's first quicksilver mines came into existence. This resulted in Barron-Forbes & Co. of Tepic, Mexico, forming the New Almaden Company to operate the mines.

In October 1863, the mines were purchased by the Quicksilver Mining Company of New York for \$1,750,000, bringing them under the control of American capital. This company operated the mines successfully for 54 yrs.

There are over 100 miles of tunnels and shafts on the property which originally consisted of 8,580 acres. The deepest shaft being 2,500 feet below Mine Hill. During the 1880's the reduction works consisted of eight furnaces with a total roasting capacity of 154 tons of ore every 24 hours. Official production records have been kept since 1850 and during the following century 1,051,179 flasks of quicksilver (76 pounds to the flask) were produced and sold for over \$55,000,000.

The first Post Office in New Almaden was opened on July 5, 1861, with J. P. Bodie as Postmaster. It was closed on December 31st the same year and not reopened until December 23, 1873, remaining in operation until April 15, 1921. The present office was opened December 21, 1933. During the interval between April 15, 1921 and December 21, 1933, the community was served from the Los Gatos Post Office.

Interested persons will find a fine exhibit of New Almaden memorabilia in the annex to the Statehouse museum, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds.

By-Lines from our Presidents

The two years during which it has been my pleasure to have served as your President have passed all too rapidly. With the wonderful support of the Board and our enthusiastic growing membership a great deal has been accomplished to further the purpose of our organization. I am indeed indebted to all of you who have helped so generously with your time, your thought, and material contributions.

We are, however, not just ending a term of office but rather arriving at a threshold of new opportunities for our Pioneer Society. The Board has recognized the need for more room at our quarterly meetings and has arranged, on an experimental basis, to hold the September meeting at Lou's Village. The programs which are planned for the future will continue to be stimulating and challenging. Our social group, our TRAILBLAZER, our trips to points of historic & general interest will be continued. Our scholarship will be productive of more fine historic research; greater impetus will be given to the classification and preservation of historic sites in this county and we hope that eventually publication of past scholarship papers in booklet form will be assured. There is much yet to do and we must therefore rally in support of our new officers to insure their fulfillment.

Let "Eureka" continue as our cry!

Austen D. Warburton

It is an honor to be a member of the California Pioneer Society, organized to create friendship, preserve historic articles and data of Pioneer history to pass on to future generations.

Let us all take advantage of the many opportunities provided for the members; the social group, the guided tours to scenic and historical places, the TRAILBLAZER, and our quarterly meetings where we enjoy a luncheon, a good program and social time.

Elaborate plans are being made for our next meeting to be held on September 8th at Lou's Village.

How little it costs,
If we give it a thought,
To make happy some heart each day,
Just one kind word or a tender smile,
As we go on our daily way.

Minnie L. Clark

MILE HOUSES ON MONTEREY ROAD

Clyde Arbuckle

Most of the pre-railroad communities along Monterey Road between San Jose and Gilroy came into existence as roadside inns called "Mile Houses". They took their names from their approximate distances from San Jose.

Four Mile House, for example, stood just south of Oak Hill Cemetery. Eight Mile House catered to stage-coach travelers in the Edenvale area. Twelve Mile House became Coyote; Fifteen Mile House, Perry Station. Eighteen Mile House changed to Madrone, and Twenty-one Mile House stood alongside the big curve in the road about a mile south of what is now Morgan Hill.

(Only the original San Martin--also called Martinsville--escaped a "Mile House" designation. Established in 1852, it occupied a little patch of foothill meadow some two miles east of the present San Martin. The modern settlement, originally a railroad siding, bore the name Mills Switch until 1893.)

Arrival of the railroad in 1869 eliminated most of the "Mile Houses". Only three attained anything akin to historical permanency--the Twelve, Eighteen and Twenty-one.

The two-story Twelve Mile House, dating back to the 1850's, still dispenses refreshment to thirsty wayfarers and enjoys the reputation of "oldest frame structure in Burnett Township." Often referred to as Coyote Hotel, it has withstood the onslaughts of time and "progress" in a most admirable manner.

Eighteen Mile House appears to have stemmed from Seventeen Mile House, presumably located a little north of the present Madrone. From 1858 to 1861, before taking the Eighteen Mile designation, it served as a station on the Butterfield Overland Mail route from St. Louis, Missouri, to San Francisco, California. It even boasted a post office named Sherman when the railroad changed its name to Madrone in 1869. The inn that gave it its first name has long since disappeared.

The one story Twenty-one Mile House, built by William Host and sold to William Tennant in 1852, measured only 20 by 25 feet. It burned down in 1853, but Tennant promptly rebuilt it on a larger scale, adding a second story and two wings, which make it "a commodious hostelry".

The most memorable event in Twenty-one Mile House's history occurred in July, 1873, when the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez robbed it and several guests of their cash and

other valuables. The saddest event came on August 19, 1917, when the San Jose Mercury carried a story announcing its razing.

Look for it Here

At our quarterly meeting June 2nd, Dr. Gilbert of San Jose State College presented the winner of our scholarship award Miss Barbara Hamlin, whose topic was, "The transition period of the courts in Santa Clara County."

Our next quarterly meeting will be held September 8th at Lou's Village, 1465 W. San Carlos Street. Lunch at 12 o'clock, followed by speaker and business meeting. Free parking for cars or take number 5 bus.

Ex-Senator Herbert C. Jones will be honored at our meeting on September 8th. Known as the "Father of Waters" by his former colleagues, his long record of public service will be told by a selected speaker.

Our practice of keeping the mailing list up-to-date by asking for P.O. Form 3547, is growing quite expensive! Each TRAILBLAZER returned costs us 8¢ postage due. Please--if you move, send us your new address.

New members joining in January through August will pay dues for the current year. The dues paid by new members joining in September through December will include the following year. All members please make checks payable to, "California Pioneers of Santa Clara County".

The committee on our "Pioneer Stationery" wish to announce they have some boxes of stationery bearing a replica of the "First Statehouse" for sale at \$1.00 per box. They make excellent gifts and may be purchased from: Mrs. Walter Taylor, Doris Ainsworth, Jessie Cook, Louise Cook or Ortenzia Little.

Your officers elected at the June 2nd meeting, were duly installed at the Board of Directors meeting July 9th. Mr. Percy Thompson served as installing officer.

LOST--Ten Years in Paradise, a book on stories of early California, by Mary Carroll. Please return to Mrs. Ora H. Merritt.

37 members led by Miss Bernhardt on the "Century 21" bus tour to Seattle World's Fair in May, report a very enjoyable trip. Reservations are now being made for another trip to the Fair in August.

Miss Bernhardt will have a bus tour to Monterey on August 11th to see the "Music Man." Phone CY 3-3087.

Pioneer Anecdotes

When I was a girl, Mountain Charlie was still living in his home in the Santa Cruz mountains. He was the hero of a fight with a grizzly bear, that had torn off part of his scalp, causing him to wear a silver plate.

Two former residents of this valley, Mr. Clanton, whose father owned a lumber mill in the Santa Cruz mountains and Mr. Eb. Cunningham, recounted in my hearing the slaying of the last grizzly bear.

The most virile western story now so loved by the boys of today, would pale into insignificance when compared to these stories of real life, that were told in the valley in the 1880's.

Harriet Phelps Burnett

(Editor's note: "Mountain Charlie", was Charles Henry McKiernan who spent 1849 in the gold fields and settled in the Santa Cruz mountains in 1850. His cabin was on Mt.Charley Road, west of Highway 17 at the summit. The silver plate in his skull, was made from Spanish pesos, melted down and formed by a San Jose physician.)

In 1886 my father built a home on Palm Street, which is now the home of Sacred Heart Church. Father also built the first bath-house in Alum Rock Park.

In the early days floods were frequent along Willow Street and also in San Jose from Market Street to the Guadalupe.

I have seen Willow Glen change from acres of Cherry trees to beautiful homes---horse cars to electric cars and now buses.

I attended the old Lincoln School on Orchard Street (now Almaden). Graduated from San Jose State Normal School in 1893 and started teaching. Among my classmates were Mrs. Wilbur Henning and Mrs. Herbert Hoover.

I married Lee Ridley of Willow Glen in 1895.

I started teaching again in 1914 at the old Midland School on Alviso Road in the Ogier orchard. In all I taught 36 years, stopping in 1948 when my schoolhouse burned down.

Edna Clinton Ridley

(Editor's note: Mrs. Ridley is a song writer and poet, and still drives her own car.)

These anecdotes must come from the membership, if you are interested in continuing this page, please mail yours to the Editor.

Wedding Bells

Married in Reno, Nevada, June 15th, Freda Reibling and John Vanderberg. Our congratulations!

100 Years Ago - 1862

Even 100 years ago our citizens had problems about street improvements, especially the road between San Jose and Santa Clara, when bids were offered for a toll road. One bidder offered to make the road a free one as soon as it had paid for itself. The San Jose Mercury commented, "if we are to have a toll road at all, this proposition should be accepted by the Board. The terms are certainly as reasonable as the people could ask".

79 Years Ago - 1883

(From the files of the San Jose Daily Item, July 23, 1883)

S.P.C.R.R. - Narrow gauge. Trains for Santa Cruz 10:38 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., 6:42 p.m. for Los Gatos only.

Board of Education, office in the Bank of San Jose Building. Regular meetings, 1st Thursday of each month.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. J. W. McWhorter, a daughter.

Henry Lux, has removed his butcher stall from the Central Market to his own new and elegant market at 475 First Street.

Bernhardt, Groceries and Provisions, 328 First St.

No Chinese need apply! Rinaldo Bros., manufacturers and jobbers of Cigars, Tobacco, Pipes, etc. 306 First St.
50 Years ago - July 1912.

Congress Springs was the scene of a large gathering of merrymakers yesterday, the occasion being the annual outing and picnic conducted under the joint auspices of the Redmen and the Degree of Pocahontas.

Ladies alpaca bathing suits \$2.35 at The Arcade.

Alexander Sherriffs, city superintendent of schools, has had his regular high school teachers certificate renewed.

Schuetzen Park, July 4th. Brohaska makes music.

The work of making the survey for the state highway over the mountains to Santa Cruz has commenced.

Midwife, Mrs. Mary Bressani, 269 W. Santa Clara St.

Mrs. Van Buren of Evergreen, was badly injured yesterday afternoon as the result of an accident. She was driving a horse hitched to a light buggy and as she turned west onto San Carlos St., one of the rear wheels of the vehicle was taken off by an automobile which whizzed by. The horse ran away, spilling its occupant.

Miss Kate R. Smith has closed her school in Mayfield and is home for the summer.

Welcome

Congratulations to our new members: Alice M. Abbott, Laura C. Bertelsen, May Hapgood Boyer, Josephine M. Bruno, Irma Tourtilotte Cleary, Edith E. Cook, Harold M. Cook, Genevieve M. Damaske, Jennie Di Beheditto, James J. Donahue, Wilma A. Donahue, Sadie May Edwards, Esther M. Filice, Lillian Gilbert, Charles R. Greenfield, Violet V. Greenfield, Wilma E. Harris, Clifton C. Heller, Orpha L. Heller, May Hickcox, Everett W. Jones, Lillian E. Jones, Rachael Kimball, Edna G. Lake, Olin S. Lake, Helen F. Lessley, Caroline Lillie, Montrose Lillie, Tony R. Sapena, Amanda T. Savage, Marjorie M. Schlosser, Dora M. Shanklin, Hannah Stile, Gertrude Jamison Tabor, Evelyn Wellington, Winifred B. Wilson.

Under the Weather

Miss Carrie F. Williams is now living at St. Helena Sanitarium, St. Helena, California, and would enjoy hearing from her friends.

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the condition of any ill member, and report any sickness or deaths to the Chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Lovene Luhrman, phone CY 2-0070.

Beyond the Horizon

Mary Jane Watson

December 15, 1913 - March 17, 1962

Edward G. Keffel

August 6, 1897 - May 9, 1962

Robert A. Jones

May 15, 1883 - May 26, 1962

Harry F. Potts

February 22, 1887 - May 30, 1962

Anna F. Petri

December 16, 1892 - June 10, 1962

The officers and members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County extend their sincere sympathy to the relatives and friends of our departed members.

THE TRAILBLAZER

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Officers for 1962-63

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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 concerning Club activities call Mrs. Kate L. Owen, CY 5-1153.

For information concerning chartered bus tours for members of the Pioneer Society, phone Gertrude A. Bernhardt, CY 3-3087.

Any items for the Pioneer scrap book may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose 28, Calif.

Return to: 595 So. 13th Street
 San Jose 12, Calif.

Return Requested