

Volume 26

August 1985

No.3

The Orchard City Canning Company (1911 - 1918)



The short lived but memorable Orchard City Canning Company was owned and operated by Perley Payne, Sr., a pioneer of Campbell. Established in 1911 on Hopkins Street, Campbell, California, the canner gained a reputation for quality, winning a Bronze Medal at the Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1917. Fruit was being shipped to Hamburg, Germany until the war broke out in 1917. During the lapse before trade was resumed with the Allies, the Orchard City Canning Company closed down.

The Trailblazer is grateful to Ruth Payne Gass of Campbell, California for this cannery memoir.

▼ ▼ ▼ WHALE BLAZERS ▼ ▼ ▼

SAN JOSE, 1863: - The City Clerk presented the following report. "We have 77 licensed merchandising establishments, 18 hotels and restaurants, 9 billiard tables, 3 bowling alleys, 8 livery stables, 3 job wagons, and 44 licensed bars where 'chain lightning' is sold. We can add to this 6 churches, 5 schools and 2 newspapers. Thus it will be seen the Lord has one church to the devil's seven and one third, counting the schools and newspapers out. Still we believe there is less drunkenness and immorality in San Jose than any other town of its size in the state."

July 1901: - The W.C.T.U. of Watsonville opposed the appearance of the Boston Bloomer Ladies Baseball Club in that city. Later a similar game at Santa Clara was also prohibited by Fr. McKenna, president of Santa Clara College.

PALO ALTO, 1902: - Mrs. Leland Stanford ordered her superintendent to sell the 210 blooded Stanford horses on the world-famous Palo Alto Stock Farm, founded in 1877 by Senator Leland Stanford. Mrs. Stanford was to add the vast acreage to the university campus. "The Farm" was said to have run up a deficit of one million dollars in its 25 years of existence, but not before extending to the racing world some noted horses who were record breakers.

SAN JOSE, June 1, 1907: - "Talking chicken is bred on local Ranch - speaks half dozen words in clear distinct tones" proclaimed the San Jose Herald. After ten years of experimenting, Clinton H. Willis, a rancher on the Monterey Road, produced a chicken that could talk. The fowl was the sixth generation of a cross between a parrot and a guinea hen. The upper half of the bill was straight like a guinea hen while the lower was like that of a parrot. Its toes were arranged two and two instead of three and one as a regular chicken. At the time the chicken's vocabulary was limited to "Morning, Clint;" "Chaw ter-baker, Clint" and a three syllable swear word. With this breed to encourage him, Mr. Willis was going to breed a fowl with two breast bones to increase the yield of white meat. If successful, he said he would turn his hand to other freak birds.

SAN JOSE, 1934: - An inventor here announced his version of an improved railroad tie made of cement, wood pulp, asbestos and pumice stone reinforced with barbed wire.

San Jose Blacksmith Firm Heading For Its 125th Year

By Hank Calloway



In this day of incredible automation this unpretentious corrugated building at 1194 Lick Avenue in San Jose turns out the same product on the same equipment that the firm used over ninety years ago, yet competes, today, beyond all expectations with some of the nation's industrial giants.

This perky little firm is the John Christian Manufacturing Co. and its output is steel replacement teeth for agricultural harrows combine harvesters. It hires no salesmen and shuns advertising, yet it continues to produce up to 300,000 teeth a year to a demanding market that includes California, the Midwest and parts of Canada.

Sharing facts, figures and photographs with the Trailblazer is cordial Pioneer member Elroy Christian, president of the company and great-grandson of John Christian who started it all in a simple blacksmith shed at First and William Streets in San Jose in 1861.

H.S. Foote, a newspaperman and historian, in 1888 published an account on John Christian revealing how this huge, black-hatted, mustached, leather aproned machinist-blacksmith was the patentee and producer of steel-laid cylinder teeth called "The Diamond Thresher Teeth" constructed of the best Norway iron with the wearing edge of fine cast steel which doubled the lasting qualities of other thresher teeth from a set, on display at John Christian's blacksmith shop at First and William Streets, which had threshed 70,000 sacks of grain each weighing one hundred forty pounds. "His ship," wrote Foote, "was equipped with the best machinery available for his needs

including a large steam engine that furnished power for the factory, all made by Mr. Christian himself. His output was 2,000 teeth per month. Mr. Christian also served with the California State Militia for eleven years and was alerted to arms the night President Lincoln was shot in 1865.

John Christian was a native of the Isle of Man, on the Irish Sea, who crossed a lonely ocean at the age of fourteen making land at San Francisco, via the Isthmus, in 1854. After a diligent year of blacksmith learning from an uncle at Stockton, young John arrived in San Jose to complete his apprenticeship with the renowned machinist-blacksmiths of the day, Bonner and McKenzie who founded the San Jose Water Works in 1866.

"Not long after my great-granddad arrived in San Jose," states Elroy, "much of the valley was in grain and by the 1870's threshers and harvesters were on the increase. It was my great-grandfather and his son Charles, my grandfather, who designed and built a number of trip hammers in the 1890's, three of which are in constant use today. Before this the teeth were made by heating the steel and then forming the product on a black-smith's anvil, using a sledge hammer, a real slow process."

In 1920 the firm moved from its sixty year old eventful location at First and William Streets to Lick Avenue and Humboldt Street where the family owned property. Here was a realm of 'Goosetown', one of our wondrous 'Little Italys', since gone, where enterprising Italians called home. It was a time when the southern Italy dance step, the Tarantella, came alive to old world castanets, tambourines and mandolins. Here the rented wine press was a familiar street scene as it juiced fifty gallon oak barrels for hand dug cellars.

Today 'Goosetown', named for the early day overflow of the Guadalupe River and the Canoas Creek, continues to reel with remembrances. Here its venerable frame houses endeavor to keep up with their presence like old chorus girls with paint and flowers.

The small pre-century house where Elroy's late father, Elmer Christian, was born leans nearby. Elmer joined his father Charles in the business following service in World War I going on to direct the company for years.

Elroy tells on his great-granddad who purchased land just south of the today's plant in 1885 going on to build a fine home of ten to twelve rooms with an ornate veranda completely surrounding it. The old landmark was razed in the 1930's.

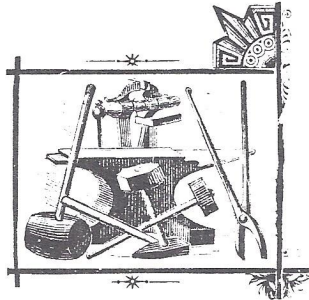
The Christian operation is located on what was once referred to as the Lick Annex or the Lick Homestead. James Lick of Observatory fame acquired the property in 1848 for just \$1200 covering a total of one hundred five acres. Mr. Charles White, a San Jose attorney, was the former owner. The Homestead was considered a show place of its time with trees, shrubs and flowers from around the world all planted

in their native soils. According to Mr. Lick's great-grand niece, Miss Rosemary Lick, her uncle lived on the Homestead at times as he did in his mansion at Agnew. He was in San Francisco planning the liquidation and distribution of his holdings when he died on October 1, 1876. Familiar street names today embracing the Christian neighborhood such as: Sherman, Mastick, Floyd, and Plum were the names of men who served as Mr. Lick's Board of Trustees.

As to the future of the company Elroy makes clear that the strenuous five year trip-hammer training period is vital to its future. "My children are all girls and their husbands aren't interested in the business. It's tough work, but there's a sense of pride in knowing we are turning out a product no one else can match."

We asked Elroy who holds a California Journeyman Blacksmith's License, "Can you shoe a horse, Elroy?" "No," he quips, "was never required to."

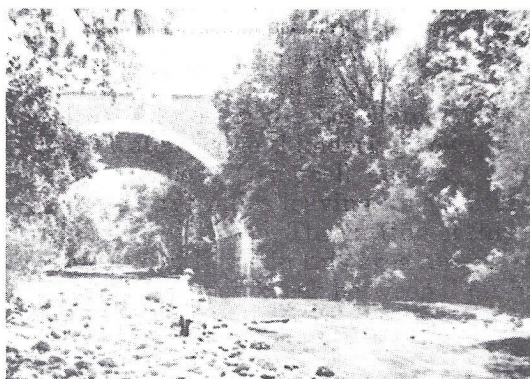
In 1977 the San Jose Bicentennial Commission paid tribute to fifty-five 100-year old business firms, organizations and institutions who contributed a century or more of service to the community. Among these durables was the Christian Manufacturing Co., now hammering for 125.



Letters To City Council Effective

Thanks to the assist rendered by folks like the California Pioneers' letters directed to the San Jose City Council was the realization of nine new city funded staff positions for the San Jose Historical Museum. A long paupersized staff will now include: docent Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Typist II, three Curator positions, Museum Events Coordinator, and Archivist, and a Staff Technician.

We are indebted to Mr. "Pioneer" Theron Fox for his grand assistance. It was under Mr. Fox's leadership in 1965 which helped our City Council select the present location of our Historical Museum at Kelley Park. Our Museum will be looking at exciting new pursuits, thankful, in part, to our membership.



The Los Gatos Creek

by Bill Chivers

Santa Clara Valley is fortunate in having many facilities for obtaining an abundant water supply. One of the primary and earliest sources of our water is from the Los Gatos Creek which starts high in the Santa Cruz Mountains behind Loma Prieta and joins the Guadalupe River near St. Paul Street and North River Street in San Jose, also flowing through the Town of Los Gatos and the City of Campbell.

The earliest recorded commercial activity using the water of the Los Gatos Creek was the construction of a gristmill in 1854 to process grain from the growing number of farms around San Jose. This mill was built by James Alexander Forbes. Born of a wealthy family in Scotland and educated in Spain, he had made several trips to California before being appointed Vice-Consul for San Francisco by the English Government. At this time, flour was imported from South America at great cost. Forbes could see this valley needed a mill. He also knew a mill needed water power, and the Los Gatos Creek could supply this water power. He built his mill calling the the area Forbes Town, later to become Los Gatos. Part of this mill is still standing and is now called the Forbes Mill Museum in Los Gatos.

In 1868 the San Jose Water Company was formed and had a reservoir in the Santa Cruz Mountains using water from the headwaters of the Los Gatos Creek and sending it by pipe and flume to several reservoirs a few miles above San Jose. The San Jose City Water Company, once known as the San Jose Water Works, is the oldest privately owned water utility in California. There are today two large dams at the headwaters of the Los Gatos Creek owned by the San Jose Water Works. One is called Lake Williams, named for the third president, and Lake Elsman, named for the ninth president of the water company. This water is used by San Jose, Los Gatos, Campbell and surrounding areas. There has never been a serious interruption in water

service or an epidemic related to this water.

Newton G. Finley, who was a pioneer of 1852 and a nephew of Benjamin Campbell (namesake of the City of Campbell), relates in his memoirs of a great flood in the Los Gatos Creek on December 20, 1866, when the waters came thundering down from the mountains, jumped its course above Campbell and dug a new water course through for nearly five miles leaving its old course in what is presently called Dry Creek Road. The cutting of this new creek bed required an exchange of lands in this area among ranchers who suddenly found they had a new creek between their house, barn or hay field. It wasn't until 1896 that the dry creek bed was officially declared a county road.

As early as 1856 water was being diverted from Los Gatos Creek for irrigation of farm lands by the Kirk Ditch Company. In subsequent years, several major commercial water ditch companies at different times used water from the creek. They were the Duncan Ditch Company, Statler Ditch Company, Santa Clara Valley Water Company, and Orchard City Ditch Company, also known as the Page Ditch. All took irrigation water from the same one mile stretch of creek which is today called the Camden Underground Recharging Ponds near Campbell where the Los Gatos Creek Park is today.

Floods had always plagued the Santa Clara Valley along with droughts; so with the increase in farms and wells, the water table was rapidly falling, it was obvious to everyone that some method of controlling such caprices of nature must be found. The voters in Santa Clara Valley approved the formation of a water conservation district on November 5, 1929. The public knew that water problems had to be corrected soon if the valley was to grow and prosper, but also at this time the whole country went into a great depression. Despite the depression, one major dam was built on Los Gatos Creek in 1935. This was the 410 acre foot Vasona Dam. Five other dams were built about this time on other creeks in Santa Clara County. They were Stevens Creek (1935), Guadalupe (1935), Almaden (1935), Calero (1935) and Coyote (1936). The 20,210 acre foot Lexington Dam was built in 1952 on the Los Gatos Creek, but not without much controversy, as it was an earth dam and not very far from the San Andreas earthquake fault.

Today the Los Gatos Creek is an asset to our valley, not only in water conservation but in beauty and recreation.

Mainly due to the efforts of the Santa Clara County Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Committee, the communities of Los Gatos, Campbell, San Jose, and the Santa Clara Valley District are working on a joint project that will eventually provide a pedestrian-bicycle path along the Los Gatos Creek from Lexington Reservoir to Guadalupe Creek and on to Alviso.

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NEWS 'BOUT' MEMBERS

Curtis Bailey of Los Gatos who served on our Pioneer Board of directors for a number of years writes that his mother, who was born in New York, moved to Chicago and was there in 1871 when the cow kicked over the lantern which started the famous Chicago fire. Curt also informs that his paternal grandfather, Robert Bailey, as recorded in the Court House records of Marin County, a native of Iowa, in 1850 crossed the plains with oxen reaching the mines in Placer County later that year. In 1855 Bailey returned to Iowa where he purchased a herd of cattle punching them overland to California in 1856. Thanks, Curt. (Curt was quite a star athlete in basketball circles at San Jose High and the local Y.M.C.A. in 1911-1914.)

Mrs. Margaret (Bill) Halla of Santa Clara shares an interesting note about her late father, Constable Tom Maloney, as published in the San Jose Mercury in 1938. "Santa Clara will not be quite the same now that Tom Maloney is gone. He had been constable for thirty years and knew every man, woman and child in the city. Tom not only knew them but had their respect because he had recently been re-elected in the primaries at the age of 72. Tom was not only an able peace officer but a true and warm friend. The golden streets of heaven are a little bit more cheerful with the advent of Tom Maloney. The streets of Santa Clara are a little less so."

Theron Fox our retired sales manager of Rosicrucian Press was once assistant chief of Burbank Volunteer Fire Department while a member of the Burbank Improvement Club. In 1926 this historian-editor-magician was a sport columnist for the San Jose Evening News doing a column called "Coaching from the Sidelines." Theron is also a humanitarian. During the post-war years of World War I, Theron says the Lyric Theatre, for a time, was accepting just a plain 'ole' potato for admission to help ease the hunger in Europe.

Jeanette Watson, a former Campbell Woman of the Year, helped to organize the Cambell Historical Museum, is Past President of the Board of Directors and is presently serving as its curator. She is also a Past President of the Campbell Civic Improvement Commission. Jeanette is in the process of writing a book on the history of Campbell.

Santa Cruz, Big Trees and Pacific Railway Company

A new railroad called the Santa Cruz and Big Trees and Pacific Railway Company has recently bought the former Southern Pacific Olympic Branch Line from Santa Cruz to Olympia and soon, possibly this fall, will start passenger service between Santa Cruz and Roaring Camp, near Felton. The line was part of the South Pacific Coast Railroad which ran from Oakland to Santa Cruz and was built as a narrow gauge line about a hundred years ago.

Passenger service, when started, will be rail motor cars operating between the Beach Board Walk in Santa Cruz, the Roaring Camp and Big Trees Railroad and Henry Cowell Redwood State Park. The line will rail through some of California's oldest and tallest redwood trees as it meanders the San Lorenzo River, including two tunnels. The Railway will also operate steam power freight trains, a first in California in many years. Steam power and rail motor cars will now be returning to one of the most beautiful rail lines in the West . . . Watch local newspapers for this unique run.

. . . Don Tustin

* * * * *

We Appreciate Hearing From You

A sincere thank-you to all of those members who responded to the reminder notice regarding the non-payment of dues. Since we do not send bills this is a gentle way to let people know they were in arrears. As it stands, there are members at approximately 100 addresses who have not yet paid; so they will remain off the mailing list and will not receive this Trailblazer. If you hear anyone wondering why they have not heard from us, would you please tell them to check the status of their dues? If you have questions or need information, just call Mary Wahlberg at 246-5503 and she will be glad to help.

Dues are \$5 per person, annually. Please make your check out to California Pioneers and mail along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Financial Secretary, P.O. box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. Your card will come to you by return mail.

Would you like to avoid all this need for dues reminders and such? Well the answer would be a Life Membership. this one-time payment would take care of it forever. Fees are \$60 for individuals and \$100 for married couples. (Understand too that it is tax deductible.) Give it some thought between now and the end of the year when it will be time for payment of 1986 dues. One hundred seven of our members are already Life Members.



President's Message

Mrs. Victoria Julia Malatesta

Mr. Ralph Rambo, our loving and eternal artist-historian, was paid tribute by the Mayor of San Jose, Tom McEnery, on May 14th for the impact his time and talent made to major restoration and educational projects in our valley. Our congratulations to Mr. Rambo, our staff artist for sixteen years, for his commendation and his lasting account of the Valley of Hearts Delight.

We were also overjoyed to know that Laura and Henry Calloway, our editors, were presented the Award of Merit at the Conference of California Historical Societies at Long Beach recently for their involvement in Santa Clara County history. Cheers, Hank and Laura.

Wade Brummal, our essay chairman, assisted by Clyde Arbuckle, introduced to a cordial turnout the winners of our Annual Historical Essay Contest at the June Luncheon. Linda Weiss of Leland High School and Mary Jane Champion Andrews captured first place of \$200 each in their respective category. Weiss won a "A History of San Jose's Education" while Andrew's "How Lucky We Were" recalled childhood memories in 'College Park', San Jose. Second place awards of \$50 each went to Leland Senior Katherine Miller on "The Circumstances of the Building of Lick observatory" and Bea Lichtenstein, in the Adult Category, for "Santa Clara Public Schools."

The 'kick-off' for next year's contest is in effect as this will offer the interested more time for the necessary research required for a winning essay.

Welcome New Members

John J. Allegretti
John M. Allegretti
Mary Allegretti
Shirley Allegretti
Marian A. Arnold
Ann Barbarez
Doris Barbarez
Frances D. Clare
Bertha Earhart

Naomi Fairbanks
John H. Friel
Glen E. Guttormsen
Ellen L. Holmes
Andrew I. Lindsay
Norma L. Lobaugh
Helen MacCarthy
Walter J. Mathlin
Archibald W. McKellar

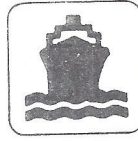
Cecil H. Moellering
Doreen Oliver
Robert E. Oliver
Rachel E. Pette
Ruth Pratt
Emerson N. Shaw
Frances Shoemaker
Robert S. Shoemaker
Edna Zerkas

Beyond The Sunset

Sal E. Conte
Lillian E. Kampfen

J. Myron Hardcastle
John S. Hasen
Helen Coe Haug

Lottie H. Osen
Louella Stevenson



Touring With The Californians

FOR RESERVATIONS: Call Alice Vetterle at 294-7510 **only** between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon Monday through Friday. Members of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County are given preference over guests with reservation taken on first-come, first-serve basis. Reservations for **MEMBERS ONLY** will be accepted for the first week after each quarterly meeting; thereafter, non-members will be welcome. Subject this rule, anyone may sign on a waiting list. The right is reserved to decline or accept any person as a member of any tour. No reservations are made by mail.

THE CALIFORNIANS, P.O. Box 32121, San Jose, CA 95152

September 17, Tuesday - A DAY IN SAN FRANCISCO - A First, a tour, by special arrangement only, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. This is located in the 1898 Post Office Building where its courtrooms were known as the most embellished west of Chicago. In the P.O. section special windows will be poen for stamp collectors. Lunch at Abagails - Some sweet time to ride a cable car, brouse The Cannery, Ghiradelli Square, or Maritime Museum. Leave 8:00 a.m. - return 5:30 p.m. \$26.50 per person. **CALL NOW!!**

October 28-30 - WONDER VALLEY RANCH RESORT - Come join the Californians in the casual relaxed atmosphere of this ranch in the foothills of the Sierras, east of Fresno. Delight to an array of fun like a Hayride, a Casino Night, Bingo with Wonder Valley "Money", swim or soak, Nature Walks. Other inclusion will be a guided tour of Pine Flat Dam and Lake. Meals: 2 breakfast buffets, 2 dinners, 1 lunch. On way home a French Basque luncheon. \$164 dbl., \$44 sgl. Supp. **CALL ALICE NOW!!**

RESERVATIONS for the following tantalizers will begin at Sept. 7th Luncheon.

NEW YEARS! Dec. - Jan. 1, 1986 - A unique overnight celebration in San Francisco. Details at Sept. 7th Luncheon.

Early April 1986 - Ten days in the **COLONIAL SOUTH** - Featuring an 8 day cruise on a luxury yacht along the Georgia and South Carolina Coasts of the Atlantic Intracoastal Inland Waterway. Land tour will embrace Savannah and St. Simon's Island, Georgia; Charleston, Beaufort and Hilton Head, South Carolina.

SAY! LOOK FOR some interesting one day trips in Oct., Nov., and Dec.

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*Willis Peck
Local Historian
Newspaperman & Author*

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THE TRAILBLAZER issued February, May, August and November. Editor-Henry Calloway, 1899 McDaniel Ave., San Jose, CA 95126; Associate Editor-Laura Calloway; Assistant Editor-Bill Chivers; Staff Artist-Ralph Rambo. Subscription rate to non-members \$4 per year.

CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY DIRECTORS 1985-1986:
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SUNSHINE Please notify of SICKNESS AND DEATHS: Mary Simas, 1722 Husted, San Jose, CA 95125 Phone 408-448-6102.