

Volume 30

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No. 2

June 7, 1958



This photo reveals the award winning participants of our first historical essay contest then limited to college students for papers on Santa Clara County history. (left) Miss Annrie Wilda, "Early French Settlers of Santa Clara County;" (seated) Dr. Benjamin F. Gilbert of San Jose State College, now San Jose State University, who presented the students at the quarterly session of our Pioneer Society at the time; (standing) Mr. Percy Thompson, President of the California Pioneers; (seated at the right) Miss Patricia Curran who presented "Earthquake of April 18, 1906."

Through the years such research papers, now including high school and the general public participation, have been preserved by our Pioneer Society and are available for public use through the California Room at the San Jose Public Library. Some copies may be found at the San Jose Historical Museum.

**THE JUNE 10th LUNCHEON WILL FEATURE
OUR WINNING ESSAYISTS FOR 1989**

WHALE BLAZERS

SAN JOSE, 1863 — Three fifths of the adult male population of California were men without wives. Three out of every five were bachelors and of necessity; for while there were 183,856 men in the state there were only 48,149 women.

SAN JOSE, June 1879 — The Independent Rifles picnicked at O'Donnell's Zoological Gardens at 10th and William Streets. "It was hard to believe," said old timers, "there was not a fight the entire day".

May, 1900 — How to act and behave: "Walk around a lady's train; do not step across it".

CAMPBELL, 1903 — The gravel pit here was a busy site. The Southern Pacific was getting all its gravel here for fortifying the new double track between San Jose and San Francisco.

SAN JOSE, 1890's — The bloomer era had hit town the Mrs. George Owen, wife of Hales Store office manager, appeared clad in this shocking garb riding a bicycle built for two with Mr. Owen.

SAN JOSE, 1902 — The city was suffering from its greatest famine of vacant houses while realty firms were predicting a building boom campaign for the following summer.

SAN JOSE, 1902 — The matter of procuring a typewriter for the night school was considered as well as a janitor at \$20 per month. The school board also ordered bids on 600 chairs for the high school assembly hall.

SAN JOSE, 1911 — Scores were being arrested for driving their gas buggies on the wrong side of the streets declaring they never heard of such a silly ordinance passed by the city just months before.

April 1908 — The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County at an urgent meeting had adopted a resolution condemning the actions of State Forester Lull in cutting of trees and floral specimens in the California Redwood Park (Big Basin) as acts of vandalism and monetary gain. Such facts were proven by the Sempervirens Club of California.

SAN JOSE, 1915 — Due to an adjusted itinerary and a great disappointment the Liberty Bell on a national tour went through the San Joaquin Valley on its return to Philadelphia instead of the coastal route. Edwin Markham was to dedicate a poem to the 'Bell' during the intended San Jose stopover.

June 1922 — The California Pioneers of this county held their annual picnic at Congress Springs with an estimated crowd of 1000 on hand.

SACRAMENTO, 1923 — To ease the state's burden it was considering the taxation of personal income as well as gasoline, transportation, and freight.

SAN JOSE, 1934 — The city council vetoed the installation of an automatic railroad crossing signal at 6th and Empire in preference to a real live flagman. It was the belief a mechanical signal was subject to failure especially it being in the proximity of the nearby Grant School.

David McKinney

Your Board of Directors has been quite busy —

- A committee, lead by Clyde Arbuckle, is heading the audit of Pioneer possessions at the San Jose Historical Museum. Clyde's remarks are being recorded and written records are being compiled and filed on the word processor.
- The membership pins we created last year are now available.
- The date of the June quarterly luncheon is June 10th (instead of the 3rd).
- An historic wood box and quilt box donated to the Pioneers have been restored also thanks to Clyde.
- The lease of the Jackson Ranch property to the County of Santa Clara has been completed. The lease is for 50 years. The 38-acre property will be called the C.P.S.C.C. (California Pioneers of Santa Clara County) — Historic Jackson Ranch Park. Austin Warburton was commended for his many hours of work finalizing this agreement.
- Six essays were selected for publication in the next Pioneer Papers book. The publication date is late this year or early next.
- Henry Calloway has suggested that we revive the custom of planting trees on March 7th — California's official Arbor Day.
- A committee of the board will create a new membership emblem.

LAURELS FOR OUR MEMBERS

Agnes Solari and our late Margaret Zaro were honored at a historic photographic exhibition by the San Jose Cathedral Foundation on April 22, 1989 at the San Jose Diocese administration building on Lenzen Ave. Tribute was paid for their stimulating book "San Jose's St. Joseph's, The Church That Watched a Pueblo Grow Into a City." St. Joseph is the oldest seat of Christian worship in San Jose being established in 1803. The edifice is also a California Historical Landmark, No. 910 being so declared, at the site, April 22, 1977.

Mildred Gentry Winters and the San Jose Historical Museum Association have been selected for the prestigious 1989 Sourisseau Academy Awards in local history.

Mildred Gentry Winters, retired San Jose State University History Professor, is currently working on a definitive history of Mountain View, has fostered valuable historical projects, edited newsletters both for the Mountain View Historical Society and San Jose State University with a historical update of all organizations.

The San Jose Historical Museum Association was selected for bringing its historical resources to the community through educational projects, research facilities, special events including Living History Days, Victorian Days, lectures, out-reach programs and publications promoting awareness of our unique heritage.

Our Carnival of Roses of 1896



In companionship with our county's flowered realm San Jose acquired a glowing complexion due to its celebrated Carnival of Roses held May 6-9, 1896. It was applauded as the greatest floral pageant ever witnessed in the Golden West — "One to eclipse all others," reported Mr. William's San Jose Evening News, at the time.

Midtown had taken on a festive appearance. Streets for days had been cleared of weeds including the likes of cows and goats along with the spectacles proposed line of march.

Charles C. Navlet and his volunteers had fastened 15 foot evergreens to trolley poles on the Santa Clara Street line including flags and Japanese lanterns which lighted the night. Also attired for the event was the city's renowned electric tower with a cape of evergreens, flags and thousands of feet of bunting.

On May 6th, the first day of the event, a festive spirit was in full bloom with activities centered in the Carnival Pavillion at Agricultural Park, a 76 acre recreational site at Race Street and The Alameda, now Hanchett Park. The highlight on this date was the crowning of the Carnival Queen Miss Lillian Rea of Gilroy by San Jose Mayor Valentine Koch with a chorus of some 500 voices consisting of valley school children adding to the pomp of the coronation. This was followed by an oration by Prof. David Starr Jordon, President of Stanford University.

The second day's highlight featured an address by California Governor James H. Budd followed by the grand ball being by invitation only. The third day excelled in polo and baseball games while the League of American Wheelman provided bike races. Each day and evening had provided mandolin concerts or for the more adventurous exhibitions of 'live skeletons,' 'the sacred ox,' or participation in the short, fat, skinny contests.

On parade day all 16 in-coming trains were reported loaded with coaches coupled to all daily arrivals from San Francisco and the south county. The P.M. Mill at Santa Clara had closed so employees could enjoy the parade, however, they had worked extra time for the holiday.

The parade attendance was tremendous. Thoroughfares were packed with man and beast holding down the pavements to prevent the parade from getting away was the thought of observers. Young mothers with toddlers were glad when they brushed against a hefty policeman for a momentary haven. Other observers were certain the frolic was not a safe place to have corns.

The 2 p.m. pageant proceeded from Fifth and Santa Clara west to Second, to San Antonio to First, up First to St. James St., east to 3rd, north to Empire then to First to the Vendome grounds; wouth on First to Santa Clara then over to Market, south on Market to City Hall Park where a review was held of all entries.

Miss Lillian Rea, the Queen, led nine outstanding divisions comprising of over 300 rigs and wagons. The Queen's Maids of Honor were Cassie Welch, Virginia McAper, Pearl Cottle, Nettie McKiernan, and Irene Mankenson. All this 'royalty' rode in a chariot the shape of a large leaf which was attached to three huge butterflies. A float committee from Los Gatos and Campbell assisted in its construction.

Winning float honors were extended to Alviso's contribution, a 'steamer' representing 'commerce' and 'captained' by Miss Maggie Wade, Alviso's jubilant queen.

This pretentious affair concluded at Agricultural Park with barbecues, dancing and fireworks, indeed a fitting finale to the grandest floral adventure of the 19th Century.

H.C.



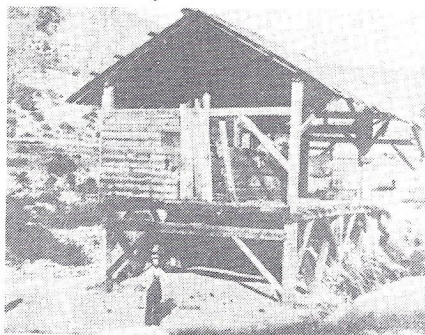
BRAVOS to the Morgan Hill Community towards their impressive Morgan Hill House Restoration undertaking. This yearful old home is one of only 32 properties in the county listed on the prestigious National Register of Historical Places. The revered 102 year old structure remains in almost original condition and is one of the few, if any, that continues to be a show place of its town's namesake.

Also to — Jean Skeels Wright, a native of Morgan Hill, who is keeping its local history alive by bringing to life Sada Coe Robinson, the woman who donated the original acreage for the 67,000 acre Henry W. Coe State Park.

WESTWARD HO! The City of Campbell Historical Museum is currently featuring a vibrant display regarding the great expansion of the West, California in particular. Come and explore the difficult and often dangerous life faced by Campbell's first hardy settlers as they made their way to the "Promised Land." Now, Tuesdays through Saturdays 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. downtown Campbell off First Street and Civic Center Drive, admission Free runs until October 18, 1989.

Who Really First Discovered Gold at Coloma?

By Bill Chivers



James Marshall in front of Sutter's Mill

When John Eliza Wimmer died in 1914 and was buried in the Los Gatos Cemetery, his obituary revealed a very interesting story. It said that as a boy, he co-discovered gold with James W. Marshall in 1848 at Sutter's Saw Mill, he having picked up the nugget for which Mr. Marshall got credit.

A report of the discovery told from Jennie Wimmer's (John's mother) point of view is preserved in an article by Mary P. Winslow which the San Francisco Daily Bulletin carried in its December 19, 1874 issue. In it, Jennie relates that she and her husband Peter Wimmer and their children arrived at Sutter's Fort from Missouri in November, 1846 with a party of 14 families (the Harlan-Young Company). "On arriving, we found Fremont in need of men. My husband enlisted and left me and our seven children at the fort were Captain Sutter arranged a room for us."

As soon as Mr. Wimmer returned from Santa Clara where he had been stationed all winter, he joined three others and went over the mountains to what is now called Donner Lake to fetch over the effects of the Donner family. In June, 1847, we went to Coloma to put up a saw mill. We had about 20 men employed. We soon had a log-house and a log heap to cook by. Describing the events of the day Marshall made his find, she stated that he and her husband, Peter, went down to the mill race to check on the work which had been done during Marshall's absence of a few days.

The water was entirely shut off, and as they walked along, on a little rough muddy rock lay something bright, like gold. They both saw it, but Mr. Marshall was the first to stoop and pick it up, and as he looked at it, doubted it was gold. Our little son was along with them, and Mr. Marshall gave it to him to bring to me to test it in my lye kettle (because I was making soap) to see if it would tarnish. After the soap was finished, I found the piece at the bottom of the kettle as bright as it could be. Mr. Marshall still contended it wasn't gold, but Peter Wimmer remarked that it looked like gold and he should take it to the fort to have it tested, which Marshall did, and it was pronounced gold.

This is only one of the stories from the Wimmer family, for John Eliza Wimmer (Jennie and Peter Wimmer's son) told a different story of the discovery all of his life up until his death in 1914. He claims that as a boy of 8 years, he remembers it clearly that after the water was shut off through the mill race he found the gold specimen by himself and hurriedly brought the glittering piece to his mother who ran the boarding

home for the hired help. She, then in turn, showed it at suppertime to "Pa" (Peter Wimmer) who passed it on to the next fellow, and so on to James Marshall, boss of the mill who sat at the head of the table. John claimed that Marshall was the seventh person to look at it, and this is the story he carried to his grave.

Said to be among the most reliable resource of the discovery can be found in the book by Erwin G. Gudde called "Bigler's Chronicle of the West," which is a collection of diaries kept by Henry William Bigler who was a Mormon and kept daily diaries of his adventures in the West. Bigler worked at the mill with Marshall and Wimmer, and his story is one that the famous historian Hubert Howe Bancroft believes is most correct. Henry W. Bigler's story is as follows.

When Marshall returned from the fort, he said that it was gold that he had found and that Sutter would be up in a day or two to see for himself and see how we are getting along. About the third or fourth day afterwards at night, Marshall entered our cabin and said, "Boys, the 'old cap' has come. He is up at the house," and after talking a while and just before leaving, he said, "Boys, the 'old cap' always carries his bottle with him, and I motion that we all throw in and give Henry some gold and in the morning when you shut down the head gate, let him take it down and sprinkle it all on the base rock, and when the gentleman comes down and sees it, it will so excite him that he will bring out his bottle and treat." This was agreed to with a hearty laugh following the donation of dust from each one, for all had more or less gold. So early the next morning before Sutter came down, the water was shut off, and I went down into the tail race and sprinkled gold pretty plentiful as Marshall had proposed.

Just as we were completing breakfast, we saw Marshall, Wimmer and Sutter coming walking side by side, while the old gentleman was in the middle, very well dressed, walking with a cane. At this, we stepped out into the mill yard and met them, and after passing the common salutations, we were invited to go along and have a general time together in looking for gold. Right at this juncture, one of Wimmer's little boys came running past us down into the race and picked up nearly every particle and came running back almost out of breath, meeting us, holding out his hand and saying, "Father, see what I have found." Sutter, as soon as he saw it, jabbed his cane into the ground saying, "By Jo, it is rich." Here the joke was against us. We dared not say a word, but let the boy claim and keep the gold lest we lose our expected drink. The boy must have had somewhere between ten and twenty dollars. However, we all went down together and had a real time prospecting. The boy had not completely cleaned the crevices and seams, so the Captain had the pleasure of finding and picking up here and there a few particles that had been overlooked by the boy.

Today, in the possession of the Bancroft Library at the University of California is the so-called Wimmer nugget that Mrs. Wimmer carried with her for years claiming it to be the first nugget found and is the one she boiled in the lye pot, but Mr. Marshall claimed later that she had spent the original gold piece.

There is a piece of gold at the Smithsonian Institute claimed to be the first piece of gold discovered in the northern part of California. There are many historians that believe that the destiny of the first piece of gold found at Coloma is lost to history, and there are a few other stories disclaiming that Marshall actually was the first one to pick up the piece of gold, but John Eliza Wimmer went to his grave in Los Gatos in 1914 truly believing he was the first one to find the gold when he was eight years old.

This is one of many stories of the discovery of gold in California but this story is especially interesting because it concerns one of our local people and is one of those legends that will always be wondered about and probably never proven.

PIONEER GLEENINGS

Helen Arbuckle

San Jose Mercury, July 7, 1892. . . A certificate of co-partnership of Henry Charles Doerr and Robert Dickson under the firm name of Henry C. Doerr & Co. was filed. A bakery business is to be conducted.

July 8, 1898 FOURTH OF JULY AT SARATOGA, Largest Celebration in 48 Years For the first time in many years Saratoga celebrated the 4th. The day commenced with the firing of anvils at midnight and a salute and ringing of bells at sunrise. Following the Praise service, the flag was raised over the new schoolhouse. Subject to the Patriotic address was on character. Races of both bike and running as well as jumping, shot put, and pole vaults were the entertainment of the day. From 12-2 all adjourned to the grove for a basket lunch.

San Jose Daily Mercury, August 2, 1901. . . The condition of Market Street and the need for watering the Interurban tracks were the occasion of a strongly worded motion of the city council meeting. It was pointed out that the company was not living up to the terms of the franchise though its attention had been repeatedly drawn to the very dusty state of the road. A motion was made and unanimously passed instructing the city clerk to notify the Interurban Railroad company to put the road bed on Market Street in proper condition and it sprinkle its car tracks, or else the council would take steps to revoke the franchise.

Also a motion was made to instruct the chief of police to take note a number of awnings, particularly on First Street were too low and shopkeepers were thus violating the ordinance of the city.

San Jose Daily Mercury, August 27, 1913. . . COUNTY WILL SPRINKLE STREETS OF SARATOGA "In consequence of the scarcity of water and to conserve the reservoir supply for household purposes, the county supervisor for the district has completed arrangements with T.S. Montgomery for a supply for street sprinkling uses. Mr. Montgomery has a fine well with a bountiful supply of water, and a new tank has been erected on Oak Street. Pipe connections has been made with the Montgomery well, and an engine to keep the tank full. The return of street sprinkling will reduce all the recent complaints about the dusty streets."

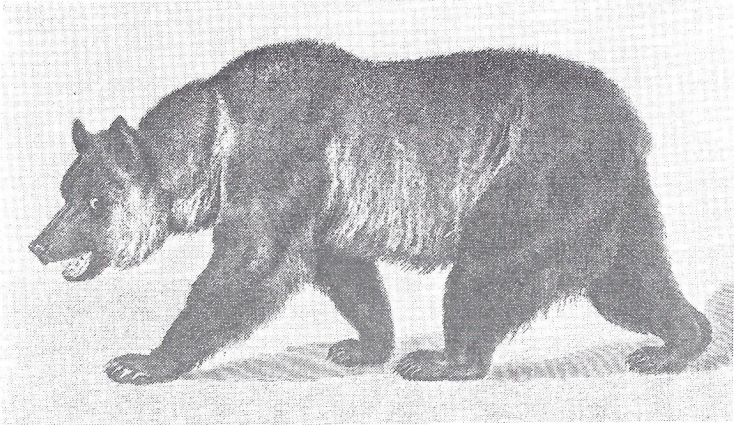
Mercury, May 21, 1922. . . "A crowd of tennis enthusiasts gathered at the Vendome grounds to receive their new scene of action which included six asphalt courts and a completely equipped club house from Fred W. Tegeler, proprietor of the Vendome. The official club ensign was raised on a tall white staff to float over the enhanced courts every day of the year."

The Mercury, June 4, 1922. . . The Commercial Club secured property just north of the Bank of San Jose building on the east side of North first Street and occupied by a number of stores and offices. Virginia Knox Maddox (daughter of Sara Knox-Goodrich) sold it to Paul Rudolph for \$115,000.

The Mercury, June 24, 1922. . . Four thousand people were seated in the natural amphitheatre of Los Gatos to witness the "Pageant of Fulfillment." It was pronounced as one of the most brilliant spectacles they had ever witnessed.

Grizzly Facts

by Hank Calloway



The California grizzly bear was adopted as the official State Animal in 1953 forty-two years after it was declared extinct in 1911. Nonetheless, it was an entirely different story if you had lived here some fifty years before. In the 1860's you could have remained right at home and hunted them, that is if they did not hunt you.

They were particularly plentiful in our eastern foothills and canyons feeding on wild oats and berries while more often than not ventured to rancho slaughtering sites where cattle were killed simply for their hides and tallow with the remains, at times, left to likes of grizzly appetites.

The San Jose Mercury in July of 1863 had reported "Mr. Hubbard destroyed two more monstrous grizzlies in the Santa Isabel canyon hardly 20 miles east of our city. He brought in the paws of one and they are whoppers." One bear was said to have been "immobilized with a spear."

Our own Clyde Arbuckle's grandfather, Benjamin Harrison Gordon, an 1856 overland ox-team arrival who had located in the hills near Evergreen hunted the grizzly especially for its abundance of fat which when rendered, made excellent lard.

Other bear thrills were to heckle the ferocious critters then head for the nearest tree for safety. This maneuver was long considered false preservation as bears were reputable climbers themselves.

William H. Brewer as a member of the original California Geological Survey had the unique opportunity to observe our state's land and people from 1860 through 1864. His observations, accounted in official reports, did not omit the dreaded grizzly. "They will kill, eat pigs, sheep, oxen and horses; of immense strength, quick, though clumsy and very tenacious of life. A man stands a slight chance if he wounds a bear. They will generally let man alone, unless attached; so I have no serious fear of them."

Historians certainly did not erase the appeal early Californians had for hell-born 'bull and bear fights.' Hubert H. Bancroft reputable early California American publisher and historian believed anyone who attended such contests did so because of

curiosity and sensationalism. It was only due to the absence of other sane sportive events that bull and bear clashes became the popular means to create crowds.

Frederick Hall in his "History of San Jose," 1871 reveals such life and death performances at St. James Square and the Market Street Plaza. "Bears were huge and hungry," he wrote, "weighing 1000 pounds and chained while the quick dart of the bull released from a darkened stall created extreme silence and attention as the wild chained grizzly, with just 15 feet to circle within an enclosed area watched for the chance to seize the tongue of the bull, an opportunity, if made, usually became the prey of the grizzly."

Often contests were about even, according to Hall. Generally, however, it was the belief the bear, if not exhausted before the contest, due to a previous 'bout,' was the victor. It was also noted in order to keep a grizzly 'fresh' it was not to be held captive long.

Mexican vaqueros, at the time, were not noted for bear captures with fire arms. They usually baited bear sites with fresh cattle meat and hunted in groups of three or four. Their 'riatas' or rawhide lassos were thrown with accuracy at 75 feet. One riata was thrown around the neck of the bear, the other around its hind foot. The captive was then slung over a pole and carried to a hold-over site.

Father Gerald McKeveitt, S.J. in his brisk "History of the University of Santa Clara, 1851-1977" writes of a large public plaza opposite the mission church. "A place of low character where bull and bear contests were staged in 1851 when Father John Nobili became the first president of the college. In desperation school officials soon surrounded the campus with a high wooden fence while pleading with the community to seek other forms of Sunday activity."

In 1852 The San Francisco Alta Californian, shaken by the annoyance, called upon authorities to interfere and prevent the continuance of exhibitions known as 'bull fights' or 'bear-baits.' "Such exhibitions are a disgrace to our city, to society, to our laws, and to humanity. They are offensive to the tastes of a majority of our respectable citizens."

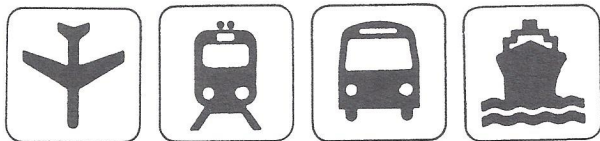
With the arrival of 1856 the California legislature had taken to bull and bear exhibitions as a revenue producing venture so imposed a tax of \$25 per each exhibition.

With an aroused public, laws were enforced and new ones passed to halt such violence on Sundays to insure better observance of the Sabbath.

Surprisingly such 'bouts' did slaken not entirely to public opinion, but due to the scarcity of the grizzly.

It must be said the ruthless grizzly by no means ignored the western ranches of our coastal mountains. Lyman J. Burrell, a settler near the slopes of Loma Prieta in 1850, made attempts to raise stock in the region, but in despair, disposed of his hogs and goats raising only long-horned cattle believing they could better protect themselves.

"California Place Names": a dictionary of geographical names lists over several hundred geographic features bearing the name of this most notable of California's native animals. They are 7 Bear Rivers, 25 Bear Mountains, over 30 Bear Canyons, as many Bear Valleys, a hundred or so Bear Creeks, Buttes, Gulches, Sloughs, and yes, one Bearpaw Cave in Siskiyou County.



Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS by phone begin Monday, June 12, for members only. Call Nancy Hill at 258-3449 Monday through Friday, preferably mornings. 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 sending a stamped self-addressed legal-sized envelope to the above address. We encourage you to use the waiting list if your desired trip is full.

Californians! Come sail to the top of the world! NORWEGIAN COASTAL TOUR, July 31-August 14, 1989. Cruise aboard a mail-cargo passenger vessel making several ports of call a day, 35 in all. Each one offering a different close-up of Scandinavian life during a season where the sun is visible 24 hours a day. Hurry, the Land of the Midnight Sun awaits you! Call Now!

And Say! Two unique 'one dayers' are scheduled for July and September.

September, 1990. . . THE PASSION PLAY OF OBERAMMERGAU in the Bavarian Alps. This is an experience which is offered only once every ten years.

Questions concerning your membership: call Mary Wahlberg at (408) 374-5776.

It was a man's job driving a stagecoach on the dangerous Stockton-Placerville runs, but cigar smoking, tobacco chewing, profane speaking "Old Charley" Parkhurst did it for 30 years, before death revealed he was a woman and had been a mother.

The famous Bear Flag raised in Sonoma in 1846, was not officially made the State Flag until 1911.

Rev. Walter Colton was editor of the "Californian," the first paper published in California, originally in Monterey and later moved to San Francisco.

The Sitka was the first steamboat on San Francisco Bay. It sank within a year.

Nothing, with the possible exception of a fire or the whistle to quit work, can break up a discussion as quickly as a fellow who actually knows what he is talking about.

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