



VOL. 51 NUMBER 1

MARCH, 2010

Pioneers Luncheon

Saturday MARCH 13 at Noon

Mariani's 2500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara

Reservations MUST BE MADE BEFORE!!

Thursday March 10, 2010

So Mariani's can prepare for our group, it is most important to place a reservation in advance...

.....
For Reservation E-Mail to "sccpioneers@aol.com" be sure to include your menu selection in the e-mail.

or Call: 408-554-7587

Please note: Names will be checked off the reservation list as you enter, if your name is not on the list, you will be requested to wait until all those who reserved a place have been seated.

.....
Cost: \$25 (make checks payable to California Pioneers)

Menu (make one selection per person)

Breaded Calamari Steak with Lemon Butter Sauce & Red Potatoes

Spaghetti and Meat Balls served with meat sauce

Vegetarian:

Manicotti (2) Pasta Tubes, Cheese Filled with Marinara Sauce and Jack Cheese

Entrees are served with:

Green Salad, Rolls, and Butter, Dessert and Tea, Freshly Brewed Regular. or Decaf Coffee

Mariani's Restaurant is located on the south side of El Camino Real, two blocks west of San Thomas Expressway in Santa Clara.

Best to get to Mariani's before 11:30 am to get a parking place.-

Reservations MUST BE MADE BEFORE

Thursday MARCH 10, 2010

SUSAN SNYDER



The Speaker will be Susan Snyder. Susan grew up in the valleys and foothills along California's highway 99. She worked as a teacher, illustrator, artist and Japanese language interpreter before landing in The Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley, where, in her capacity as head of Access Services. She has spent ten years exploring the library's stacks, attics and moats. She lives in Point Richmond, California.

Susan is the author of *Bear in Mind: the California Grizzly*, and *Past Tents; The Way We Camped*, published by Heyday Books and the Bancroft Library. She will bring copies along, if

you wish to purchase them. She will talk to us about the recently reworked Bancroft Library, one of the premier research sites for the study of California History.

Although The Bancroft Library officially dates from 1905, when the University of California acquired Hubert Howe Bancroft's personal library, it was actually born some forty-two years earlier, when Bancroft, assisting the editor of a projected guide book to the western states, discovered seventy-five volumes pertaining to California and the West on the shelves of his own San Francisco bookstore. Suddenly bitten by the collecting bug, the native of Ohio began accumulating works on the history of his adopted state, but over time the scope of his interests came to encompass the entire Trans-Mississippi West, extending from Alaska to Central America.

Ultimately, Bancroft saw his collection as history awaiting an author. Unable to find scholars willing to tackle his massive accumulation of books and manuscripts, Bancroft elected to write it himself, with the aid of a staff of interviewers, transcribers, and writers. The final work encompassed thirty-nine volumes, covering The Native Races, Central America, Mexico, The North Mexican States and Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, California, The Northwest Coast, Alaska, and the remainder of the American west.

Had Bancroft been only a collector and a writer, his contribution to history would have been immense. But because so many of the leading figures in California's history were still alive, Bancroft had the opportunity to accumulate original documents, such as those of General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, and the estate of Sir James Douglas, once governor of British Columbia. If he could not secure original documents, he had transcriptions made of relevant portions, as in the case of the Archives of Spanish and Mexican California then in the hands of the U.S. Surveyor General, and when there were no documents at all, he created them by seeking out and interviewing historical figures; these "Bancroft Dictations" are among the most valuable documents in the collection.

Bancroft's history project was completed in 1894. Realizing the value to posterity

of his collection, he sought a permanent home for it, eventually selling it for a fraction of its value to the University of California, with the provision that it be maintained as a separate library, and that the core collection be added to over time.

First housed in the attic of California Hall, and then in the Doe Library, The Bancroft Library moved into its present quarters in 1973. At the same time, the original scope of the library was enlarged to include a number of other "special collections," including the former Rare Books Collection. The Bancroft Library now includes the Mark Twain Papers and Project, the Regional Oral History Office, the University of California Archives, the History of Science and Technology Program, and the Pictorial Collection. It has become one of the largest -- and busiest -- special collections in the United States.

Susan's publications were garnered from the holdings in the extensive library collection. She has a third publication ready to go to press and will tell us about her research while the collection was temporarily moved from the building, allowing it to be brought up to code. It has just been returned to the completely retooled library facility.



MOUNTAIN CHARLEY Mc KIERNAN (1848) OUR OWN BEAR STORY

One of the most colorful of the Santa Cruz Mountain characters of pioneer days was Mountain Charley McKiernan, one of the first white settlers in the region. Hunter, rancher, teamster, road-builder and stage-line operator, he was the idol of every small boy in the region. His motto was "Right wrongs nobody."

Charles Henry McKiernan was born in Ireland in 1825 or 1830. As a young quartermaster in the British army, he traveled to Australia and New Zealand, where he was stationed in 1848 when news of the California gold strike arrived. His enlistment

had expired so he signed on as a seaman on a ship headed for San Francisco.

When they arrived in San Francisco, the crew jumped ship, not waiting for their pay, which was up to \$20 a day. In Ireland, they had been paid \$20 a year. With his savings from his first year in the mines, McKiernan organized a pack train to carry supplies to the Trinity mining district in northern California. On his second trip, he was attacked by Indians and lost everything but his life.

Back at the mines, McKiernan accumulated a second stake and headed for Santa Clara Valley where he found land claims confused. With a friend named Page, he entered the Santa Cruz Mountains early in 1850 to look for land to homestead. He followed an old Indian trail from the area of Los Gatos to a pond the Spanish padres had called Laguna del Sargento, a long time favorite camping place of the Indians. There were quantities of mortars, pestles and flint arrowhead. Page went on to Santa Cruz, but McKiernan settled there, on the highest point of the ridge where today the southwest corner of Redwood Estates joins Summit Road. Near a spring, he later built a frame house the first in the entire mountain range, from the native redwood lumber whipsawed on the spot. His home and corrals completed, he started to raise sheep and cattle and to hunt deer for market, but grizzly bears, cougars and wildcats soon took care of the sheep. Longhorn steers, better able to cope with the predators were sold for \$6-\$8 a head, mainly for their hides and tallow. Deer meat was worth 10¢ a pound and at first, was easy to find. They had not become aware of rifles and would look around curiously when one of them fell to his muzzle loader.

McKiernan made two trips a week to Alviso with deer meat to be shipped to San Francisco. He was alone in the mountains until 1853 when the Lyman John Burrell family settled farther down the ridge above the site where the town of Wright's later located. John Bean also settled on Bean Creek near the present town of Glenwood and Charles C. Martin homesteaded land adjoining McKiernan's. Martin operated a stage line and toll road on the Mountain Charley Road and later built a home in the valley for his family.

There were at that time, no roads west of San Jose and no fences. McKiernan and his neighbors hacked out an ox trail, later to become a stage route where before had been an Indian trail. McKiernan later built several roads including the one that bears his name. It was a cut off route from Los Gatos through Moody Gulch near Holy City and across the site of Redwood Estates to join the old Indian trail near McKiernan's home. On this winding, narrow mountain road, the site of his cabin is marked with an historical marker done by Mt. Charley Chapter of E Clampus Vitus. Several versions of his famous bear fight have been told, but this one is the way McKiernan's son James told it in 1934.

Grizzly bears in the 1850's were too plentiful for the ranchers who hunted them relentlessly to stop the depredations on their livestock. They also made a profit selling the bear hides and meat. They were huge shaggy creatures weighing 800 to 1200 pounds and were always treated with ultimate respect. They were best hunted from an uphill stand with a fast horse ready for a quick getaway if necessary. It often took several bullets to do the job.

On May 8, 1854, McKiernan and a friend named Taylor started out for a gulch about a mile southwest of the McKiernan place where Taylor planned to take up some land. After shooting a couple of deer, they spotted a grizzly sow with two cubs. As they were both good shots, they decided to go for it and headed up the gulch to approach the animal from above.

When they arrived at their chosen spot, the bear and her cubs had disappeared. Following a deer trail in pursuit, they came upon her around a bend, standing and facing McKiernan at a distance of no more than 6 feet, her forepaws outstretched for a raking hug. McKiernan fired instantly with the muzzle of his gun against the bear's chest, while Taylor fired over his head into the bear's face. McKiernan reversed his gun to club the bear with the stock, but the bear beat down upon the weapon and seized him with her powerful forepaws, crushing the front of his skull in her jaws, then tossed him aside and started for Taylor.

Meanwhile, Taylor's small dog had attacked the two cubs. Their squalling distracted the mother and she turned to their rescue, giving Taylor a chance to escape to the ridge top, supposing that McKiernan had been killed instantly. The bear chased the dog away, then returned to McKiernan and dragged him to the end of a clearing under an oak tree and after pawing him over left him. The bear was never seen again.

His rifle reloaded, Taylor returned to the scene to find McKiernan sitting up and conscious, but paralyzed from the waist down. The fight had only lasted seconds and he had been conscious all the time. Taylor bound up McKiernan's head with his shirt and leaving his loaded rifle for protection went for help. Accounts differ as to whether a doctor came to the ranch or he was taken to San Jose or Santa Cruz for medical attention.

The doctor hammered a silver plate out of two Mexican silver dollars and fitted it into the broken place in McKiernan's skull where the bear had chewed away the bone over his left eye up to the top of the frontal bone. Within three weeks, the plate had started to corrode and had to be removed, to be replaced with another plate. McKiernan suffered through the entire ordeal without anesthetics until the wound healed.

He had headaches for two years until a specialist in Redwood City removed the second plate and found a lock of hair under it. That time, he had anesthesia. Terribly disfigured, he wore a hat low over his left eye the rest of his life. McKiernan enjoyed full health until 1890 when he became ill with an obscure stomach ailment. He died on January 18, 1892, 38 years after the famous bear fight .

California Pioneers of Santa Clara County Membership Medallions

The response to the reissue of our Societies Membership Medallions has been good! Twenty-one medallions were ordered at the December Luncheon and will be available for pick up at our March gathering. If you have been considering acquiring one of these fine Sterling Silver Medallions for yourself, we will again be taking orders at the March Luncheon. Show your heritage and pride of being a Pioneer! The price remains only \$25, payable upon receipt of medallion.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Board and I have been working very hard this past month. We took possession of the Stevens' Estate in January and we are organizing all of Helen and Charles Stevens wonderful belongings. To help with this tremendous undertaking, I have formed five committees:

1. The Stevens' House Committee is chaired by Ken Machado and will recommend the best use for the Stevens' home and advise us on what improvements need to be made;
2. The Collection Selection Committee is chaired by Tim Peddy and will select the appropriate items for the Pioneer collection and will work with the inventory committee to ensure items are recorded and distributed properly;
3. The Non-Pioneer Collection Distribution Committee is chaired by John Stolp and will determine how and where to distribute non-Pioneer collection items;
4. The Inventory Committee is chaired by Robb Moore and has been charged with determining and implementing the best methods to record, identify and track all of the new items added to the Pioneer collection. They will also track the distribution of non-collection items.
5. The Helen Stevens' Honoring Committee, chaired by Mary Lou Lyon, will identify and recommend options on how to best honor Helen Stevens for her generous donation.



It is imperative that we handle this outstanding historic collection sensitively and effectively. I would like to thank the committee members for accepting to help with this enormous task. I would also like to thank Ken Machado for guiding us through the estate's legal process and helping us with the home. Thanks go to Robb Moore, Tim & Barbara Peddy, Jan Paull, David McKinney and Melita Kelly for helping organize and distribute Stevens items. Finally, I'd like to thank Bill Foley for spending countless hours of back breaking work cleaning the home and sorting the collection.

We also were very fortunate last month to receive a generous donation of local history related items belonging to Theron and Francis Fox. They both were long time Pioneer members, local historians and preservationists. This generous gift was made by our new members Diane and George Lechner, the Fox's daughter and son in-law. These documents and artifacts are wonderful additions to the Pioneer collection. Our inventory committee is working hard to record, tag and distribute all of the items.

Both the Stevens' and Fox collections help us better fulfill our mission of collecting and preserving important Santa Clara County history. These items will greatly enhance our research and education programs and compliment our existing collection.

We expect to receive our new film digitization equipment this month and Bill Foley has been busy collecting donations of old local film footage. We will soon be able to share this footage with people the world over, via the internet. Isn't technology amazing?? Be sure and contact Bill if you have any old, local footage that you would like to share with the Pioneers. This collection should vastly elevate the Pioneers' profile in the community, diversify our collection and attract younger members.

Unfortunately, 90% of the Pioneers' work is being done by 2% of our members. I would like to invite all members to join committees and/or volunteer for special projects. By volunteering, you have the opportunity to make new friends, be involved in preserving local history and most importantly be an asset to our organization. Please feel free to contact me or any of the committee chairs if you are interested in helping.

Finally, I would like to invite all members to join us on Monday, June 14th, at 10 a.m., on the steps of the historic Santa Clara County Court-house located on North First Street at St. James Street. All of the Pioneer members posed for a picture taken at this location at the turn of the 20th century. That historic picture now hangs prominently in the Paulson house. Board member, Judge Paul Bernal, has arranged for us to be able to have an updated picture taken at the same spot over 100 years later. This professional photograph will be displayed in the Paulson House and will become part of promotional literature. Don't miss out on this historic opportunity. Happy trails,

Jim Zetterquist

President, California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

**NEW MEMBERS: ROBERT S. ELMORE, JUDY JONES,
GEORGE & DIANE LECHNER, TOM ROSE, LOUI TUCKER**