

Volume 8

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The Pioneer - March 1897

Each year since 1872 the "Jayhawkers" held a reunion at the home of one of them. On February 4, 1897 the reunion was held at the home of Colonel John B. Colton in Kansas City. Death had so thinned the ranks of the party that, out of the thirty-six who reached the coast in 1850, only twelve remained, and they were scattered over many States. Those that could not attend the meetings would write letters. Lorenzo D. Stephens of San Jose, California wrote: "One by one our comrades go to join the great majority. In a few more years the last of the '49ers will have to go and our anniversary will be a thing of the past. There is great satisfaction in the thought that we, the old pioneers, helped to make the history of so great a country. As much as has been written, it is only a drop in the bucket to the unwritten part, for the history of each man's life would make a volume that could be read with great interest and profit. I thank you for your invitation to meet with you at your house on February 4. It would be a treat long to be remembered to meet the old Jayhawkers once more--it would be the crowning event of my life. If February 4, would come about June I might be able to meet with you some time, for I have become such a coward about cold weather that I can not entertain the thought of crossing the Sierras when the snow has begun to fly, after I have lived in California forty-seven years."

February 4 was chosen for their reunions, as it was on that date in 1850 that they were delivered from what seemed to be certain death from hunger and exposure. Other letters received at this get-together were from Thomas Shannon of Los Gatos and William L. Manly of College Park (San Jose).

MORE ON TIBURCIO VASQUEZ

(Following information written by George Millard and submitted to Ralph Rambo by Ione Welch.)

"One of the most spectacular daytime blazes in San Jose's history occurred at noon on May 18, 1931, when the historic old Santa Clara County Courthouse, topped by its huge dome, was swept by flames of unexplained origin.

When it became obvious that the towering structure, erected in 1866, was doomed and that the great dome might topple momentarily, 103 prisoners were evacuated from the county jail and herded into an adjacent garage.

When a count was taken later there were 107 men! -- four of them spectators who had got mixed up in the lines of prisoners as deputies hurried them off to jail.

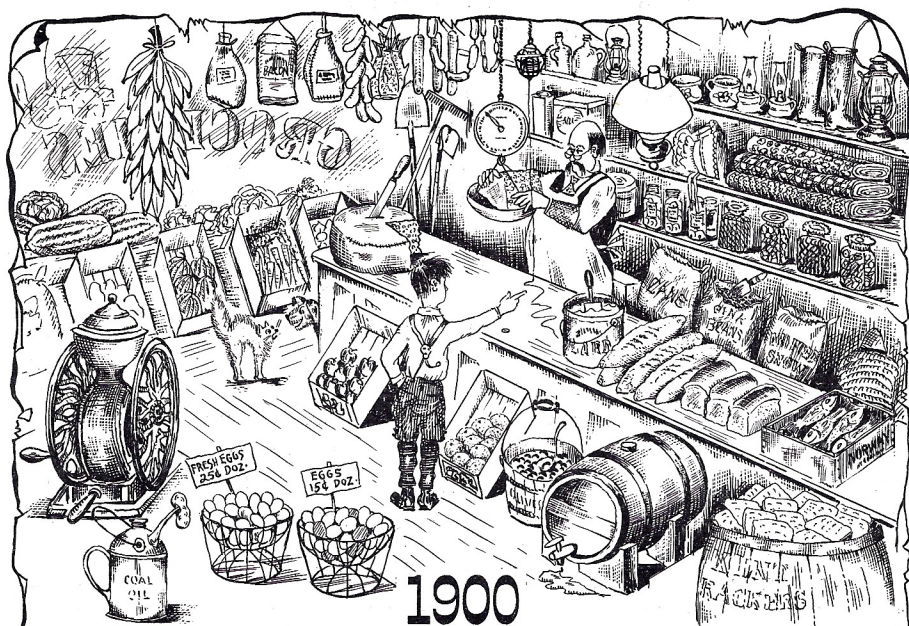
Slowly the great dome atop the courthouse, then a two story structure, started sagging and within a short time, crashed through the fire weakened floors into the basement. Collapse of the dome spread the flames, and for a long time it was feared the old Hotel St. James, since raised, to be replaced by the new postoffice building, and other nearby structures were doomed. Firemen, however, by valiant efforts, prevented spread of the blaze.

The fire led to the agitation for a new courthouse, but when it was found that the ancient foundations and outer walls were sound, it was decided to rebuild the razed building. Rebuilding cost approximately \$200,000. A third story was added at the time.

The blaze gave rise to a mystery in addition to that surrounding its cause. Missing after debris was cleared was the old gallows tree on which the notorious early day California bandit Tiburcio Vasquez was hanged at the County Jail in 1875.

Several persons intimated they knew where the gruesome relic was, however it was never found. Many valuable records were lost in the conflagration, as the building was virtually deserted when the fire broke out during the noon hour."

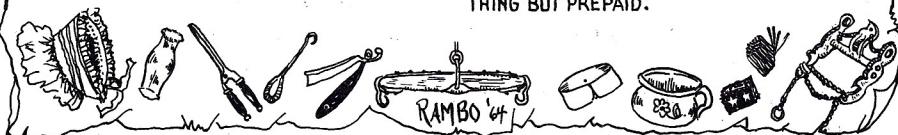
(Now it so happens that Ralph knows where part of the famous scaffold went! This friend of his was searching the basement of the courthouse after the fire. He asked authorities if he could take home several heavy pieces of timber. He proudly built his wife an outdoor, wooden, revolving clothesline. Then he was told! It was the Vasquez scaffold! Somehow, later his wife found out and it was quickly cremated.



1900 Country Store

OUT IN THE COUNTRY ABOUT 1900 B.C. (BEFORE CARS) GETTING DRESSED, MAYBE EVEN TAKING A BATH, HITCHING UP A SLOW HORSE AND DRIVING TO SAN JOSE MIGHT CONSUME AN ENTIRE DAY. CONSEQUENTLY, CONVENIENT LITTLE ONE ROOM "SHOPPING CENTERS" SPRANG UP AT CROSS ROAD CORNERS AND WERE CALLED COUNTRY GROCERIES. THEY WERE NOT CASH-AND-CARRY. ONE COULD RUN A BILL FOR SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR AND PAY WHEN CROPS WERE IN. CASH WAS SCARCE AND FOLKS TRADED BUTTER, EGGS AND FRUIT FOR GROCERIES. STORE STOCK WAS AMAZINGLY DIVERSIFIED, MUCH OF IT NOW OBSOLETE AND UNFAMILIAR TO NEW GENERATIONS. OUR GROCERY MAN COULD PROVIDE LAMP WICKS, BUTTON HOOKS, COLLAR-BUTTONS, SULPHUR MATCHES, CELLULOID COLLARS (CLEANED WITH A DAMP RAG) FLOWER POTS, BEAN

POTS AND CHAMBER POTS, WHIPPLE-TREES, KICKING STRAPS, CRUPPERS, COFFEE GRINDERS AND DO-IT-YOURSELF SHOE-MAKER KITS. HE WOULD GLADLY SNIP OFF A YARD OF GINGHAM FROM THE VARIEGATED BOLTS ON HIS SHELVES. THE EDIBLES WERE AS GOOD IN QUALITY AND FLAVOR AS TODAY'S BUT LACKED THE VARIETY AND CONVENIENCE. WE SAW NO GAUDY LABELLED CONTAINERS OR PESKY CELLOPHANE, ALL WAS OPEN FOR INSPECTION INCLUDING THE SODA CRACKERS AND DILL PICKLES FOR THE LOCAL POT-BELLIED STOVE CLUB. (GROCER QUIETLY ADDED SAMPLINGS TO THEIR BILLS.) NO, I NEVER SAW THAT PROVERBIAL CAT ASLEEP IN A BOX OF DRIED PRUNES. WE LIVE TODAY IN A WONDER AGE OF PRE-WASHED PRE-PEELED, PRE-COOKED, AND PRE-WRAPPED, EVERY THING BUT PREPAID."



(Reproduction of page 26 in Ralph Rambo's "Almost Forgotten" now in Sixth Edition. Permission to use is granted by the author.)

SANTA CLARA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Frances M. Klune

(Continued from the Winter issue)

In 1903, despite the failure of several petitions and the election, public sentiment as reflected in the newspapers and by the decisions of the Board of Town Trustees, favored establishing a public library. There are conflicting statements regarding the first librarian. In one source, credit for setting up the library in 1903 is given to Franklin S. Hichborn and Shelby Dodson, son of Dr. S. M. Dodson, a pioneer San Jose physician. Both were students at the Stanford University. Mr. Dodson volunteered his services as librarian.

Another source states that William A. Beattie, also a student at Stanford, was appointed librarian by the Town Trustees, at a monthly salary of \$20. His uncle was Dr. Beattie of Santa Clara. He himself was born in China, where his parents were missionaries.

The library occupied two rooms leased in the Franck Building at the rate of \$15 a month. When the library opened in November, the collection consisted of the Book Lovers Library, seven or eight hundred volumes presented by the Santa Clara Book Club and periodicals.

The Journal described the library rooms as follows: "They (three rooms) are furnished in highly polished oak, with carpets of green velvet and walls and ceiling finished in a delicate tint of yellow. The furniture is all builded on a massive plan that will prove very substantial for the wear and tear of a public library.

One enters the librarians office with the library proper to the right and the reading room to the left. In the library there are now over seven hundred volumes, besides the one hundred volumes rented monthly from the Book Lovers Library of San Francisco... The citizens of Santa Clara can have books from the library at any time by filling out an application blank and having it endorsed by a taxpayer and filing same with the librarian.... The library is open 2 to 5 and 7 to 9."

Once established, the library grew slowly because of apathy and neglect, lack of funds and qualified personnel. One of the regular sources of income for the first decade of its existence was a quarterly donation made by the Town Treasurer. Records show that Mr. A. W. Fatjo, Town Treasurer, Mr. Albert Harris and Mr. Robert Fatjo donated some \$10,427 to the library during the period from December 1907 to May 1927, supplementing the ad valorem tax of three cents. Mr. H. C. Mumford, a treasurer who

died in office, left \$368.81 to the library.

After Mr. Beattie's resignation in 1904, the Board of Town Trustees elected Miss Mary Mulhall librarian. She was in her mid-twenties and had no library training. She served until 1943, when Mrs. Nell Curtis took over.

The 1906 earthquake felled many buildings in Santa Clara, but the Franck Building was evidently not too badly damaged.

For 62 years, library facilities in Santa Clara were no one's responsibility and had no permanent quarters. It was not until 1914 that the Town assumed responsibility for the library and provided permanent quarters on the second floor of the newly erected City Hall located at Franklin and Washington streets.

The Board of Town Trustees increased the three-member library committee to five. Mr. J. G. Robinson, a druggist, was the "guiding hand," playing an important role in the direction of the library from 1903 until his death in 1931.

With the adoption of the 1927 Charter, and until 1951, the Library Board was, for many purposes, an autonomous board. Among its duties, the Library Board received and disbursed all sums of money allocated to or for library purposes.

Beginning in the 1930's, the continued decline of library services was becoming apparent to the Library Board and to the public. The library in 1937 contained about four thousand volumes, of which eight hundred children's books and nearly one thousand novels were in locked cases. The Librarian considered these novels immoral.

A progressive Mayor, Dr. Robert J. Rogers, and a newly appointed library trustee, Mr. Remo Cipolla, tried to halt the disastrous trend. A bond election scheduled for September 27, 1938, included \$12,000 for a new Town Library. Federal funds would supply an additional 45 per cent, or \$9,800 for the library. Higgins and Root submitted plans for the library building. However, none of the bond issues received the necessary two-thirds majority. Other attempts to revitalize the library program were initiated, but with no lasting results. Miss Beryle Hoskin, a trained librarian, replaced Miss Mulhall during her extended three-month leave. To provide more books, the Town entered into an agreement with the County Free Library in January 1938. (It was terminated January 30, 1942.) The contract made available to Santa Clara a rotating collection of 100 volumes and access to any book in the County Library, at a cost of \$300 per year.

(Continued in the Summer issue)

MOTHER WAS A GOOD COOK

Marjorie B. Fisk

Today, modern super markets supply every variety of frozen foods, canned soups, packaged mixes for preparing pancakes, breads, cakes, cookies and gourmet desserts. All that is needed to prepare a good meal is some type of liquid, an electric mixer and the ambition to push the electric button.

More than a century ago, the mothers of children riding westward in covered wagons planned as early as a year before that journey began to plant seeds, gather the crop, spend hours at getting food ready in cloth bags and stone jugs for the long trip to the new home.

Much food of those early days sprouted into life in the cornfield.

Two important contributions to the meals out under the sky, beside an open campfire were corn pone and corn cob molasses.

Yellow field corn became stone-ground corn meal. Harvested, then ground by the mill stone, and packed in heavy cloth sacks.

Sweet corn harvested in mid-summer was part of the recipe for home made corn cob molasses. The fresh kernels were cut off the cob and cooked with home churned butter to be used separately the day they were picked. The cobs, each cut into three or four pieces provided flavor for the molasses.

Using one dozen fresh cobs, add three quarts of water in a large kettle and boil for half an hour or until the liquid becomes cloudy. Remove the cobs and strain liquid through a clean white cloth. Pour the liquid into a clean kettle and add two pounds of brown sugar. Simmer gently, stirring as little as possible. When liquid appears to thicken slightly, pour into a stone jug.

Once out on the rough trail, mothers bravely shouldered the extra worries and fears felt by the family. A great help was a special treat for the evening meal, cooked over an open fire.

"We'll have corn pone and molasses tonight," mother would say as she smiled down at the group of youngsters.

"See, I'll put a dash of salt in this pan of corn meal and pour boiling water on it and stir until the batter is smooth and thick." Young eyes watched every move.

A lump of lard in the frying pan soon melted over the flames. The corn meal dropped a spoonful at a time, made a small round cake that once browned, was turned

over to brown crisp on the other side.

Plates raised high received the crisp morsels and the precious corn cob molasses was poured over each pone.

Six year old George licked his fingers.

"Ma, I think you are the best cook!"

Mother patted the youngster's touseled hair.

"It makes us remember home, Honey. We'll have it when we get to Santa Clara Valley, too. Now clean it all up. Savor it good! That's grub that'll stick to your ribs!"

* * *

REMEMBER WHEN

Donald Tustin

(The following item is from the files of the late John L. Tustin, Donald's father.)

Saturday was a big day in San Jose especially for kids. After chores were done the day was free. Books should be returned to the city library, located on the second floor of the old City Hall. This was before the new Carnegie building was built on the Normal School grounds. Long tables in the reading room were spread with current magazines, such as Puck, Judge, Wasp, Liberty, Saturday Evening Post and the Youth's Companion.

South Market Street was the best way home. Ranch families came into town, tethered their horses and teams to hitching rails and went shopping. Supply stores and saloons along Market and Post streets stocked up for this day.

Down West Santa Clara past Orchard and along the red brick wall of Notre Dame Academy where a view of the buildings and grounds could be had through the grill of the large iron gate. Umbrella trees along the curb gave welcome shade on warm days. Harness, carriage and wagon shops displayed their latest models. Of particular interest were the rubber tired sports model carts and buggies.

Wooden bridges crossed the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek. At Montgomery Street a large iron tank stored artificial gas manufactured by the adjoining Gas and Electric Company, which was used for lighting streets and stores. A dynamo generated electricity for city use. More pretentious homes had gas lights, but most youngsters were given the daily task of filling, trimming and cleaning the wicks and coal oil lamps in general use.

Home for supper, before Dad came in bringing his pay for the week.

Saturday night was the family night in town to meet friends along First Street, brightened with light from the store windows, gas lights along the curbs, arc lights suspended over street corners and light from the top of the high steel tower. On Santa Clara Street near First Professor Curtino directed the Fifth Regiment Band and the Salvation Army Band played and sang hymns at Market and Santa Clara streets. I.W.W. and other soap box orators attracted passers by with parodies of the hymns, such as "Pie in the Sky."

Peanut and popcorn stands and a curb side booth with a counter on which was placed a phonograph minus the morning glory horn, but with attached tubes to be placed in the ears and listen to a cylinder record for a nickel.

The evening ended by bringing home the weeks supply of groceries and whatever other needs could be afforded.

* * *

THUESEN FAMILY

My maternal grandfather Harold Andersen was a sea captain and it was his marriage that terminated this career in 1874. He had made San Francisco his home port since 1868. My maternal grandmother reached the coast via Halifax, down the St. Lawrence River and to the west coast on the railroad.

My paternal grandfather John Thuesen hiked across the Isthmus of Panama in 1867, not having enough money to hire a mule. Eventually he decided on San Francisco and bought a piece of property from James Lick. He then sent for his wife and son who were still in Denmark.

My father Godfred Thuesen bought out a small company (Patek & Co.) and built it up to a successful Chemical, Dye and Soap firm. We moved from Russian Hill in San Francisco to Los Altos in 1917, there were only a few houses and a lot of hay fields here at that time, also a very exciting red electric car line, a bakery and a general store, nice wide sidewalks but very few people. Oh yes, there was a barber shop! The town was kept alive by the Southern Pacific steam trains going to Los Gatos and Santa Cruz. Many Southern Pacific officials lived here.

My father bought the old Kirkwood Ranch on Grant Road in 1919 and we lived there until 1943. Much of the lumber in the home was from Bloom's Mill, located at the south entrance to Big Basin.

Later Frank and I lived in an old house in Los Altos which Mrs. Winchester had built when she lived with her sister near El Monte Road. It was a fascinating struc-

ture with square nails and had three floors. In the kitchen it had the most unusual electric wiring.

At present, we live in the East Hills and can watch the subdividers transform the beautiful agricultural districts into match box plots, which of course adds new lights at night. We can also track the weather coming in over the West mountains from the coast and see the beacons on the familiar Loma Prieta, Umunhum and Black Mt.

Elsa Thuesen McKee

* * *

By-lines from the President

Jessie E. Black

When you look out and see the Acacia trees in all their yellow glory. The almond trees in bloom, and if you are out in the country, as I was not long ago, and hear a Meadow Lark, you know Spring is here.

We finally have arranged for a permanent mailing address for all correspondence, which is Pioneer Society, 2221 Coastland Avenue, San Jose, Calif. 95125. Please address all mail to this address in the future.

If you are unable to attend the quarterly meetings and wish a brochure of up-coming trips, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Mrs. Effie Hawkins, 25 South 10th Street, San Jose, Calif. 95112, and she will be glad to mail you one. With over 1,000 members it is impossible to mail out a brochure to every member, especially when you take into consideration all our help is volunteer and we have no paid secretary. I trust you will bear with us.

It looks like the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County are in for another big year. I appreciate your good attendance at our last quarterly meeting and hope to see you all at Lou's Village on June 1st.

* * *

LOOK FOR IT HERE

In addition to the San Jose State College scholarship the Board of Directors has voted to give some qualified student in the field of Social Science at the University of Santa Clara a similar scholarship. ***

On March 7th, four young redwood trees were planted in the south-west corner of the Rose Garden in honor of the Pioneers of Santa Clara County. Representatives from our Society were: Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Bulmore, Mr. Theron Fox and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fisk. ***

Next issue of the Trailblazer will be in August. ***

The new permanent address for all correspondence and members desiring to pay their dues will be: Pioneer Society, 2221 Coastland Avenue, San Jose, California 95125.

Members desiring a brochure on Pioneer Bus Tours may secure same by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Mrs. Effie Hawkins, 25 South 10th Street, San Jose, California 95112.

At our Christmas party Mrs. Alma Andrews accompanied our soloist Mr. Mike Patterakis. The talented Mr. Patterakis and Mrs. Andrews first appeared on our Christmas program in 1959. The membership appreciated their talents so much, that they have appeared together on each Christmas program since.

SARATOGA'S FIRST HUNDRED YEARS is the work of one of our former members Miss Florence Cunningham, who did not live to finish her book. Mrs. Frances Fox was chosen to edit the wealth of material left by Miss Cunningham. The result is a fascinating story of the historical background, the people, the environment and the events that made up Saratoga's First Hundred Years.

Clyde Arbuckle was the speaker at the Saratoga Historical Foundation meeting on January 15th. His subject was "The Pioneer Trail to Saratoga" and included such families as the Springers, Campbells, Ruckers, Haunes, Whismans, Moutreys and others that are familiar names to many of us.

Ralph Rambo's new book "Trailing the California Bandit, Tiburcio Vasquez" will be released in the near future. It depicts early day life in California with many illustrations and Vasquez's demise in San Jose in 1875.

THE CORNISH MINER IN AMERICA is the work of our honorary member Dr. Cecil Todd. It is a very interesting account of the vital part the Cornish miner played in the opening up of the American West. It contains 279 pages with specially prepared maps and many photographs. Exclusive agents are the Arthur H. Clark Co., 1264 South Central Ave., Glendale, Calif. 91204.

On February 3, 1968 another San Jose Landmark pulled down its shades and closed its doors to the public. Hale's Department Store founded in 1876 by Oliver Ambrose Hale had thrived from its beginning. In the 1890's the original store was torn down and a new two-story structure built. In 1931 the present five-story structure was completed at First and San Carlos streets and employed about 200 people.

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Bruce R. Barton, Fanny W. Barton, Ida Batten, William J. Batten, Embert M. Brown, Berenice C. Formico, Arthur V. Happ, Jeanette P. Happ, Walter V. Henry, Sara A. Holley, Edith E. Huff, Jessie Joyce Hughes, Kenneth W. Hughes, Ruth Iris Jacobs, Lerta B. Kelley, Evelyn R. LaDuke, Loretta L. Mertens, Genevieve B. Sanford, Bernice H. Simmons, Georgie Rogers Swall, Edmund B. Williams, Laura Wright.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

Mrs. Frances Derr, Mr. Herbert C. Jones, Mrs. Viola B. Lester, Mrs. Annie T. Peters, Miss Lois Ralston and Mrs. Mabel Snyder have been reported ill. Our very best wishes for a rapid recovery are sincerely extended.

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the condition of any ill member, and report any sickness or death to the chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Ruth M. Heath. Phone 292-2609.

* * *

BEYOND THE SUNSET

Lives of great men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
 And, departing, leave behind us
 Footprints on the sands of time.
 Longfellow

Curtner W. Zanker

May 25, 1900 - December 16, 1967

Helen Sweeney

January 31, 1884 - December 28, 1967

Mabel H. Sheffield

August 8, 1898 - February 14, 1968

John E. Castro

June 8, 1889 - February 25, 1968

In behalf of the officers and members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, the TRAIL-BLAZER extends their sincere sympathy to the relatives and friends of our departed members.

* * *

THE TRAILBLAZER

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Associate Editor: Marjorie B. Fisk

Staff member: Mrs. Ruth M. Heath

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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 call Mrs. Kate L. Owen, 295-1153.

BUS TOUR information for members of the Pioneer Society may be obtained from Mrs. Effie M. Hawkins, phone 295-2868.

PIONEER SCRAP BOOK items may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95128.

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