

QUARTERLY BULLETIN
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY
INCORPORATED 1875

Volume 12

Fall 1972

Number 4

AN OLD CUSTOM
Ruth M. Heath

What has happened to the custom of serenading newly married couples with a shivaree or as it is correctly named a charivari?

These discordant serenades were quite popular in rural sections of the country in the first quarter of this century.

The participants in the shivaree would plan their surprise visit for 10 or 11 p. m., hoping to find the bride and groom fast asleep and unprepared for visitors.

Then a line of automobiles, moving slowly, with lights dimmed would surround the house and simultaneously horns would toot, car doors slam, tin plates would be banged together, dogs would bark and everyone in the neighborhood would know that a shivaree was in progress.

Sometimes a well intentioned friend would drop a hint to the bride and groom so they would be prepared and opened their doors to their guests fully clothed.

Shivarees had a reputation of being raucous affairs and a little off color, but those I attended were the type of party we would have at any other time; good food, games and singing around the piano. Looking backward it seems rather idyllic and I grow nostalgic thinking about it. To me a shivaree means that the bride and groom have been accepted -- that they are part of the community.

We don't hear of them anymore. They have probably served their purpose and gone the way of the spelling bee and the quilting party; and in their way they served the same purpose.

MISION DEL GLORIOSISIMO PATRIARCA SEÑOR SAN JOSE

Arthur M. Fisk

In a beautiful location amongst rolling hills and green pastures, hard against the Old Oakland Road, about 16 miles northeast of Pueblo San José, Mission San José, named after Joseph, spouse of Mary, was dedicated on June 11, 1797 with Father Lasuen officiating, although the church building was not completed until 1809.

During the Church's heyday the Indians raised abundant crops of vegetables, hay, grain, fruit, grapes, olives and hundreds of cattle which were used mostly for their hides and tallow.

On August 22, 1827 four white men in ragged buckskins rode into the plaza at Mission San José. Their 25-year old leader was Jedediah Smith, trapper, mountain man and explorer--a legend in his own time. Father Duran greeted him coldly. Smith managed to clear himself with the Californians and his expedition was outfitted before moving on into Oregon.

Another chapter in the history of Mission San José was Estanislao (Stanislaus) a favorite of Father Duran who, in 1829, turned against the church and led an uprising in San Joaquin Valley. He turned back a military expedition which tried to assault his fortress in the woods along the river, later named Stanislaus. After due consideration Father Duran gave Estanislao permission to return to the mission where he died of smallpox.

Before secularization, the local Indian population was about 2,000, but by 1846, it had dwindled to about 200. In 1833 cholera killed hundreds of Indians who totally lacked immunity from the white man's diseases. Measles and smallpox led the killers, spreading unabated to hasten final extermination of the Indians from this pueblo.

The church like other missions deteriorated by weather, time and neglect after secularization. The big earthquake of 1868 completely razed the damaged building.

The present parish church on the site of the original building contains several relics of the old mission, including the baptismal font, two of the original bells, some timbers, rawhides and some rare old vestments worn by Father Serra.

Many early pioneers are buried in the mission cemetery, including Captain Robert Livermore born in London, England in 1799 and for whom the town of Livermore was named. It is located about 15 miles east of the mission in Livermore Valley.

The trees in t h e olive grove behind the church, planted by the padres and Indians still bear fruit. The church, olive grove and cemetery are open to visitors who are always welcome.

* * *

MURDER MYSTERY

Ralph Rambo

The above title would fit the paper cover of a Gay Nineties Diamond Dick novel. But unfortunately this Early Valley drama did not fall into the category of fiction. It was a truthful and tragic happening destined to become the most famous of our unsolved murders. If you are a native your folks fought for a copy of the San Jose Mercury, May 18, 1896.

On midnight of this date James C. Dunham "murdered in cold blood" six of his family members. The massacre took place not far from Campbell.

That night James Dunham rode home o n his bicycle from Santa Clara College where h e had been attending classes. A year previous he had married Col. McGlinchy's daughter and lived with the Colonel's family. He was 32 years old. At the autopsies varying accounts claimed he was a fairly intelligent, kindly loving husband. This was refuted with terms of sullen, stupid, sly, jealous even demented. Let actions speak louder than words or opinions.

The Colonel, his stepson, James Wells and the hired man, Robert Briscoe were attending a meeting in Campbell. Religious conflict was rumored as one of the many motives but it was never confirmed, or were any others.

Dunham went immediately to his wife's room and being a powerful man, with one quick twist, broke her neck. This aroused her maid, Minnie Schlesler, in the next room. He disposed of her with an axe. A note was found on the bureau reading "Please say goodbye for me to my dear mother, brother and step father. Hattie." Did Dunham forge this as a ruse? His three weeks old son in a crib was left unharmed. Neighbors speculated that the cunning Dunham figured t h e child might inherit the McGlinchey estate if he, Dunham, wiped out the entire family.

Up to this point the maniac had relied on brute strength to carry out his murderous intent. Now he armed himself with 38 and 45 caliber revolvers and awaited the men's return. While in the mood he killed Mrs. McGlinchy with the axe. Then he went through the house and destroyed every picture of himself, but overlooked one small tintype. When the Colonel and his two companions arrived,

Dunham stalked them again using the axe a n d finishing them o f f with revolvers. With the house "a bloody shambles" the three men now lay in the moonlit farmyard. Only the baby and George Schable, another hired man, were left. George leaped through a window and hid in the hay loft in the barn. After hunting furiously for him, Dunham mounted a little buckskin mare and disappeared ---- forever. Some men saw him pass through Guadalupe, but the mare was found in the Mount Hamilton range, as for Dunham, never a trace or a clue to his mysterious motive.

You must remember that communications in that day were crude o r entirely lacking. We had no radio, no automobiles of practical u s e and few telephones. An enormous posse was formed the next morning in San Jose. Before starting the search they gladly posed for a photograph, a vast congregation of horseback riders, buggies, carts and determined faces.

Anyway the aftermath must have been most interesting; the officious coroner, the distracted sheriff with the W. L. Woodrow Undertaking Parlors as the center of interest. The writer regrets he was not a witness to the long funeral parade down the Monterey Road to Oak Hill; miles of surreys, spring wagons, pheatons, hacks and carryalls, headed by six glass encased hearses with the white plumes at each corner.

Today in this cemetery, not far from the Veterans Section, you may pause and ponder over the six marble slabs in a row. Stretching across them is the inscription "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY, SAYETH THE LORD."

What became of Dunham? Did he cross the Mount Hamilton Range and lose himself in the then thinly populated San Joaquin Valley? Or at the base of some isolated canyon's cliff is there a grinning white skull pierced by a suicide bullet?

* * *

ST. JAMES PARK
Henry J. Calloway

This historic park of 7.7 acres dates back to the Lyman survey of 1848 when it was under American r u l e . It was once held by James Frazier Reed as security for money he loaned toward helping the city provide a State House during the time San Jose was the State Capitol.

Books from the county recorder's office show Reed had deeded all the square back to the city for \$1549 on July 15, 1851.

In 1857 St. James became the site o f San Jose's

District School Number 2, a crude one story, two room structure.

During the Civil War it served as a drill ground for the local militia.

The city offered it to the State for a capitol site, to the county for a court house site, and to the railroad for a depot site, but none of the offers went through. A picket fence was built around it in 1866 and a few years later landscaping for a park began.

The square claimed an artesian well and a bandstand. The bandstand was built in 1880, but went to Alum Rock Park in 1885.

The park first became a controversy in 1873 when the first discussion arose over running Second Street through it. By 1880 the idea gained enough momentum to be placed on the ballot and was defeated 1644 to 192.

After 124 years we still have the venerable old park but the beauty spot our planning pioneers intended has somehow lost its lustre.

Once it was the fashionable place to go.

The automobile, the mountains and the seashore have won out to leave old St. James with proud and sad memories. It courted the young and the young at heart. Gold fish ponds and spouting dolphins amused the children. Here, mi-lady prominated her style and finery every Easter Sunday.

I'm reluctant to think before long it might become the "frosting" for an underground parking facility or the victim of some "high rise" blueprint genius. Whatever comes, we hope it is done tenderly.

* * *

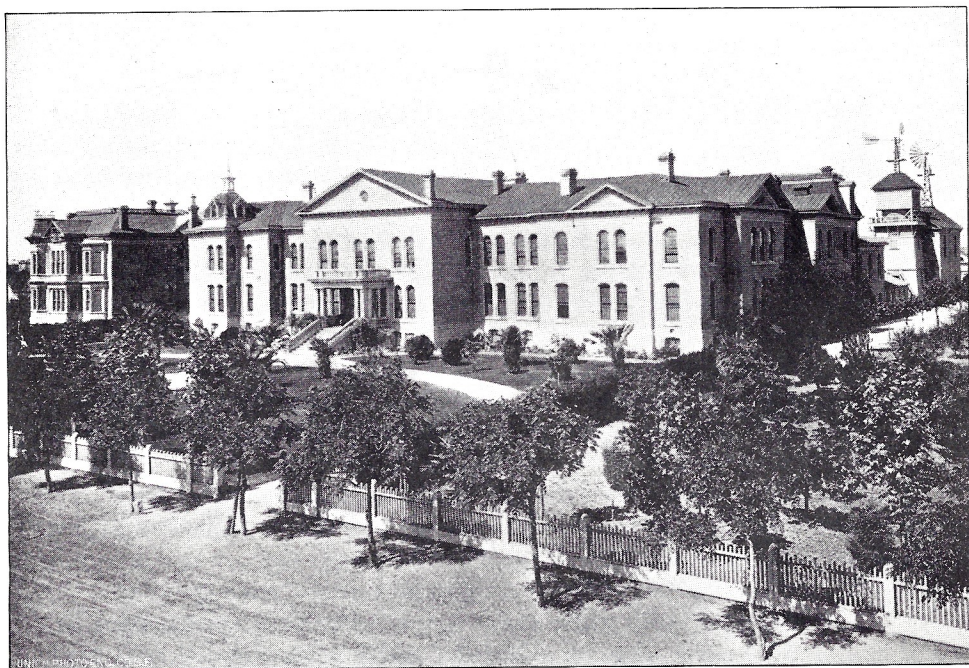
Vol. XII

The Pioneer - May 1897

No. 5

At the last meeting of the Pioneer Society of this County, it was decided to hold a general pioneer picnic at Alum Rock on the 26th of next month. It is to be hoped that all the pioneers of the county and visiting pioneers will attend and have a grand reunion. Many of the old time features will be introduced. The old folks will dance a Virginia Reel and also a Tucker Quadrille. Pioneers of California, bring your baskets filled with the good things of life, and have a good social day in memory of the days of old. Further particulars will be given next month. Remember, the invitation is for all old Pioneers of the State without regard to residence. Come one and all.

* * *



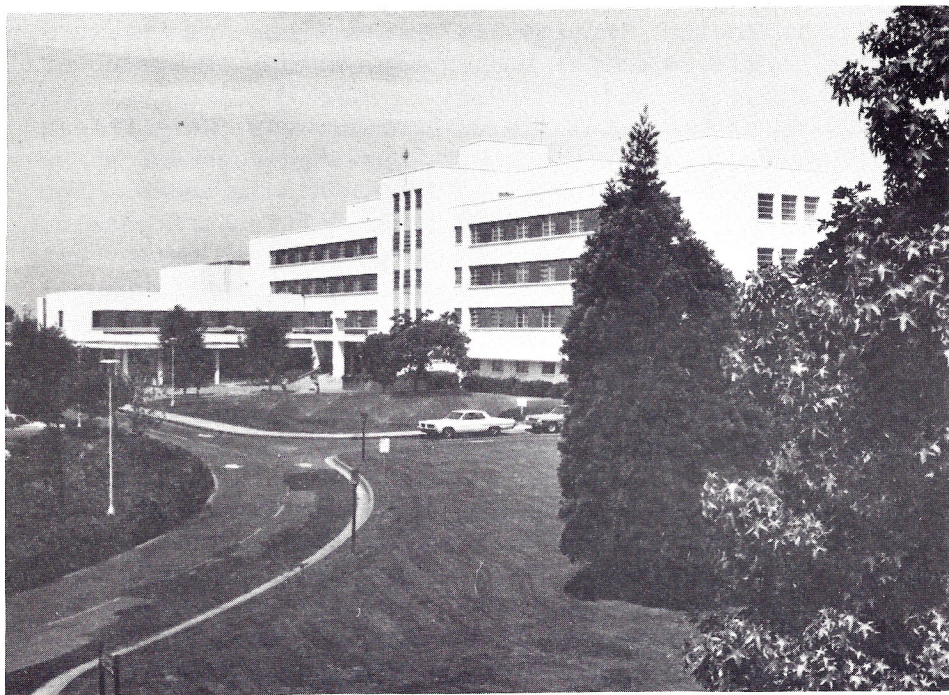
O'CONNOR HOSPITAL

Arthur M. Fisk

The above picture of O'Connor Sanitarium (circa 1890) was located on Race Street at Stevens Creek Road where Sears & Roebuck store is located at the present time and where our three grandchildren were born.

Alfred Eaton in his book on Santa Clara Valley, states, "Among the many institutions of the State dedicated to uses of a sanitary character, The Sanitarium at San Jose stands eminent. It was erected in 1888 and 1889 by Judge and Mrs. M. P. O'Connor, and by them was donated to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, under whose auspices it is now conducted.

The building is located on Race Street, in the southwestern part of the city. It is a large structure of brick and sandstone, and contains thirty-five private rooms and several wards, the entire house being neatly and tastefully furnished, well heated and lighted and provided with all the modern conveniences. The grounds are spacious and laid out in the latest style of land-



scape art, with trees, flowers, lawns and pleasant walks, the whole, buildings and surroundings, being arranged with a view to comfort and ease of the patients.

It is something more than a hospital, for besides the sick the aged can here find a home, where they can pass their declining years in quiet restfulness, and obtain peace of mind and body. Arrangements have been made by many such, who find it a cheerful home, and at the same time an economical mode of living."

The average number of patients at the old O'Connor Hospital was about 60 persons. It closed its doors to the public in January 1954 and moved to their new location at 2105 Forest Avenue where they maintain 348 beds with an average daily attendance of about 280 patients, which is quite an increase in less than 20 years. The new O'Connor Hospital is quite an extensive institution and continued growth and development is assured.

* * *

LETTERS

The following interesting information was received with the application for membership of one of our newer members, Marie Warburton Rogers:

"My first ancestor in California was José Ortega who discovered San Francisco Bay, having scouted for the Portola-Serra expedition in 1769. His granddaughter married my great, great grandfather, Luis A. Argüello, first Mexican governor of California and whose father was José Dario Argüello, one of the last Spanish governors. His sister was Conception Argüello whose story was made famous by such authors as Bret Harte and Gertrude Atherton. My father's father, Dr. H. H. Warburton, was a pioneer doctor in Santa Clara -- his wife came across the plains in a covered wagon in 1852."

* * *

The following interesting information was received with the application for membership of one of our newer members, Mrs. Ina Papson Vermillion:

"My father was George W. Papson. He was born on the property at McKee Road and Capitol Avenue where a shopping center is now located. His father came from New York and I have been told that he purchased that property (where my father was born) three times before he could get a clear title, as it had been a Mexican land grant. My paternal grandmother was Mathilda Freer and was born in Missouri, she was one and one-half years old when her parents came to California in a covered wagon. Her father settled in the Berryessa area. When my father was a young man, he and his parents homesteaded in Lake County, California, where he met and married my mother, who was the daughter of Nathan Smith and Julia Stevens. The family moved to Santa Clara to live when she was quite small. After their marriage in San Jose they went to Cobb, Lake County, where my mother was born. When I was eight years old my parents sold the property in Lake County and purchased a ranch on Capitol Avenue next to the place where my father was born. I lived there with my parents until my marriage to Fred Vermillion of Sanger. My father passed away in 1915 and my mother married James Hansen and they stayed on at the Capitol Avenue home. My paternal grandmother was a California pioneer. After being widowed for many years she married Edward Godfrey and lived in San Jose. I do not know when she became a member of the organization."

Ina Papson Vermillion

BY-LINES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Lynn L. Vermillion

I have just returned from a month's visit to England where I found the country going through tremendous changes in construction of modern office buildings, apartment buildings, roads and improving channels of rivers and canals. It was fascinating to gaze through the glass work of a new building being constructed into the facade of a Georgian house just across the street.

The Board of Directors have exciting plans for the next year. We wish to increase our membership to include more younger people and interest all of our members in our activities. There will be a need to organize a committee to celebrate our 100th anniversary. Support for the preservation of landmarks is desperately needed. Letters need to be written to the city council concerning the Peralta adobe. Don't forget to sign up for some of the wonderful tours we have and there is the Social Club that meets at 90 N. Ninth Street, San Jose.

Christmas is coming before we know it. Season's Greetings and Good Health to all.

RESERVATIONS -- We plan to have an exciting Christmas program so please remember to make reservations. It is very important for Lou's Village to have a head count so seats may be arranged and the food ordered. Many members and guests have complained they have phoned in reservations and arrived to find no seats available. This has caused hard feelings with all involved and does not line up to the Pioneers' reputation of friendliness and hospitality.

* * *

LETTERS

Dear Marjorie and Arthur: I was so happy to read the very good article written by Ruth M. Heath about Madam Schumann-Heink. I was there too, with my Sixth Graders and I have never forgotten that day. I hope all the school youngsters remember also. Madam Schumann-Heink was so genuine, happy and friendly. In closing she said, "just be glad and think a little of Schumann-Heink." This comes to my mind ever so often, no one could forget that day, we were all so lucky. I had forgotten the exact date so thanks to Ruth for that also.---The Trailblazer is the best ever for all of us who have lived here for so many years. For me it means my life---I am sure all the members of the California Pioneers must look forward to receiving it. Thank you for all the work that goes into each publication. Sincerely, Inez Green Getchell.

LOOK FOR IT HERE

Our next quarterly meeting will be held on Saturday, December 2nd, 12 o'clock noon at Lou's Village. Our program chairman promises us a fine Christmas program. All members 85 years of age or older will be honored on this occasion. If you have reached the 85 year mark please notify Mrs. Martha Bulmore, 1221 Coastland Ave., San Jose California, 95125. ***

1973 DUES may be paid to our financial secretary, Curtis S. Bailey at our quarterly meeting December 2nd or mailed to him at 390 N. Winchester Blvd. 9C, Santa Clara California 95050. ***

The Social Club of our society meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. For further information call Mrs. Frances Grant, 292-3852. **

The old San Jose First Baptist Church building at Second and San Antonio streets was destroyed by fire on July 17th. The venerable old building, built in 1882 was put together with square nails and had survived the big earthquake in 1906. It was the fifth church building to house a San Jose First Baptist congregation since it was founded in 1850. The church bought radio station KQW, (now KCBS) in 1925 and moved it into the church building. KQW was established in 1909 by radio pioneer, Professor Charles D. Herrold. The call letters of the world's first radio station stood for "King's Quickening Word." The first service from the church was broadcast on December 5, 1925. ***

The elegant old mansion, built in 1905, known as the "Squire House" on University Avenue in Palo Alto has been saved from demolition, at least temporarily. After a long struggle by Palo Alto citizens to save the three story building, it has been taken over by the city for one year. This will provide enough time for a fund drive to turn it into a museum. ***

The owners of the old Rengstorff mansion on Stierlin Road in Mountain View have offered "to restore and donate the structure and the site to the city in order to gain approval from the city to build a 300 acre townhouse on their property just north of the Bayshore Freeway." The Rengstorff home was built in the 1880's and was one of the show places of that area.

The old San Jose Post Office and later the San Jose Public Library at Market and San Fernando streets has been recommended for the National Register of Historic Places. ***

We are such little men when the stars come out. ***

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Ora Abercrombie, Anna V. Anderson, Edna D. Anderson, Elsie Barcelona, Bernice Beeson, Edward Beeson, Elizabeth Stevens Brown, Emma E. Carder, Ann Casalegno, Sebastian T. Casalegno, Louise A. Chalfant, May Elliot, Velma D. Ewanson, Mary C. Hummel, Betty Huddle, Adeline Lambert, Jane E. Leal, Alice Matter, Pearl Mazzone, Lena C. Miceli, Benjamin H. Moore, Marie Oswald, Roland A. Oswald, Elsie Paddock, Dorothy Pracna, Edward Pracna, Lavetta Silva, Juanita Smith, Clara Sousa, Pearl Stelling, Raymond Stelling, Armond J. Tonello, Patricia Tonello, Eva M. Torrello, Winnifred M. Tucker, Betty Woods, Gene B. Woods, Elizabeth Worden and Lionel Worden.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

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, Miss Doreen Magud, 819 State St., San Jose 95110. Phone 293-0242.

* * *

BEYOND THE SUNSET

George M. Gattorna
- July 1972

Mary Walter
October 10, 1904 - July 27, 1972

Esther M. Filice
July 8, 1900 - July 27, 1972

Virginia Montgomery
- August 1972

Beatrice Cunningham
March 8, 1907 - August 22, 1972

John L. Tate
- September 16, 1972

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

THE TRAILBLAZER

Issued in February, May, August and November

Editor, Arthur M. Fisk, 390 N. Winchester Bv., Santa Clara

Associate Editor, Marjorie B. Fisk

Assistant Editor, Henry J. Calloway

Staff Artist, Ralph Rambo

Subscription rates to non-members \$1.00 per year. Single copies 25 cents each.

Officers for 1972-'73

President Lynn L. Vermillion

1st Vice President. C. Kelly Canelo

2nd Vice President. Laurence E. Bulmore

Recording Secretary Byron K. Bullard

Corresponding Secretary Imogene T. Clark

Financial Secretary Curtis S. Bailey

Treasurer Howard L. Worcester

Directors: Clyde Arbuckle, Martha L. Bulmore, Ramona W.

Moxley, Anthony R. Sapena, Otto J. Schmaelzle, Henry C.

Stout, A. Bernice Van Gundy and Austen D. Warburton.

* * *

SEND APPLICATIONS FOR membership and address changes to Bernice Van Gundy, 561 Fuller Ave., San Jose, Ca. 95125.

BUS TOUR INFORMATION for members of the Pioneer Society may be obtained from Mrs. Esther M. Adams, phone 264-8119 9 a.m. until 12 noon, Monday through Thursday.

SICKNESS and DEATHS please notify Doreen Magud, 819 State Street, San Jose, Ca. 95110. Phone 293-0242.

* * *

2221 COASTLAND AVENUE
SAN JOSE, CALIF. 95125

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED

Return Postage Guaranteed

Non-Profit Organization U. S. POSTAGE PAID San Jose, California Permit No. 1234
--