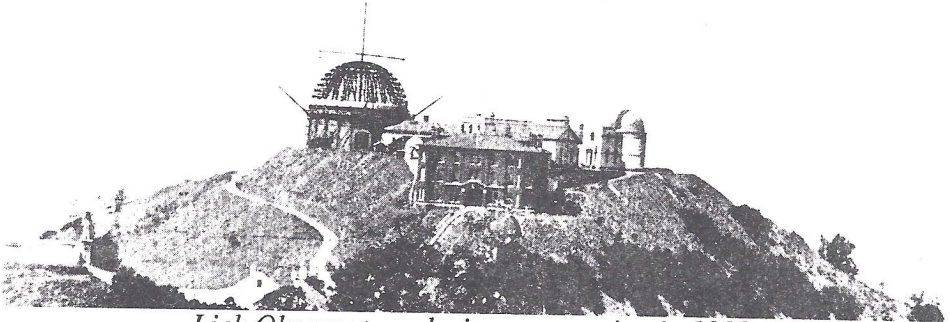


Volume 29

February 1988

No. 1

PURSuing AN OBSERVATORY SITE



Lick Observatory during construction in 1889

The location for an observatory site turned out to be a turbulent task for our philanthropist, James Lick. His advisors, including scientist George Davidson, after whom Mt. Davidson in San Francisco is named, all reported a number of proposed sites. Among them being Mt. St. Helena in the Napa County mountains. Lick believed he was feeling well enough to view the location himself, according to his late great-grandniece, Rosemary Lick, in her book "The Generous Miser." While partway up the summit the wagon's tailgate swung open with Lick and his mattress spilling into the elevation's rocky dust. He cursed the mountain along with the wagon and the entire county of Napa and left. Other locations were considered, one being a point above the shores of Lake Tahoe.

James Lick's interest in astronomy had its start in 1860 when a young Portuguese student of astronomy George Madeira gave a lecture in San Jose which Lick attended. Impressed, Lick invited Madeira to his ranch where he asked questions about the heavens. Each night George would reveal the stars to Lick through his telescope as he discussed discoveries made through much larger telescopes. On one such occasion Madeira remarked, "Mr. Lick, if I had your wealth, I would construct the largest telescope possible." James Lick never forgot those words.

On Oct. 20, 1873 at a California Academy of Sciences Conference it was announced for the first time of Lick's desire to build such an observatory. It was the biggest news release of the day.

Our bewhiskered, shrewd benefactor did not have the opportunity to see his observatory. He died October 1, 1876 before construction had begun.

H.C.

Mr. W.J. Shiloh Unruh, Lick Observatory historian, will be our guest speaker at our luncheon on March 12.

WHALE BLAZERS

SAN JOSE, April 1911: The city school department announced May Day would no longer be observed as a holiday.

SAN JOSE, February 1913: Just after a sell-out performance at the Victory Theater here, Mme. Sarah Bernhardt and her company left to entertain prisoners at San Quentin on a rough stage in a corner of the prison yard.

March 1913: Floyd McFarland, San Jose athlete and former world's champion bicyclist, was making a fortune introducing six day bicycle races in Germany and France.

SAN JOSE, February 1915: Six carloads of redwood posts and planks to build guard rails on the treacherous San Juan Grade were purchased by the Division of Highways from a local firm.

SACRAMENTO, 1915: Annual state auto license fees were to be paid at the rate of 40 cents a horsepower. Also, vehicles, whether motor or horsedrawn, "shall utilize a light after dark."

SAN JOSE, 1915: Possoms were being collected by members of the Market Street Fire Company in preparation for a "Southern Dinner." Word was sent all over the city that such game was quite numerous in creeks near town and were being trapped for the occasion.

CAMPBELL, March 21: Prune Week continued with a flourish here as the Orchard City Grange endeavored to meet the demands for prunes in all its tempting forms such as prune cake, prune bread, prune doughnuts, prune candy and prune nog. At the Saratoga Blossom Festival an unexpected demand for such delights was no longer looked upon as "the poor prune."

SANTA CLARA, 1932: A traffic judge here fined and admonished a Kansas traveler, not so much for speeding, but for telling the officer who issued his citation that he was "full of prunes." This remark alone went on to cost him five dollars more.

Recognition of Judge Craven P. Hester goes beyond a San Jose district, school and street. Santa Cruz County also honored this quiet, admired man who served as a district judge in the Soquel region from 1851 to 1859. Hester Creek School, Hester Creek Church, and Hester Creek on the old San Jose-Soquel Road are early tributes.

SON OF FIRST AMERICAN MAYOR VISITS SAN JOSE

by Henry Calloway

On April 19, 1927 Charles A. Beldon, the son of Josiah Beldon, a member of the first party to cross the plains to California and San Jose's first mayor, visited San Jose. Charles had been born in an old adobe on San Carlos Street 76 years before and was then a resident of Ross in Marin County.

On his visit to San Jose he brought with him photographs of his father and the old Beldon house which once stood in the center of the park then occupied by the Vendome Hotel. He also exhibited interesting artifacts during the Fiesta de las Rosas in May of 1927, an event celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of San Jose.



*Josiah Beldon
San Jose's First Mayor*

His dad, Josiah, left Independence, Missouri in 1841 with the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, reaching California November 4, 1841, descending the Stanislaus River and finally arriving on the outskirts of San Jose, then a Mexican village, where they thought better to leave their guns outside the town, which proved wise, for as they entered San Jose, they were arrested by Mexican officials who feared they had come to seize the pueblo.

After a stay in San Jose Beldon ventured to Monterey where he formed a partnership with William G. Chard where the two operated a boarding house for impoverished sailors with a financial assist from Thomas D. Larkin, the U.S. consul there.

By 1845 Beldon had become a Mexican citizen. Due to his support of Gov. Manuel Micheltorena he was granted a 21,000 acre land grant near what is now Red Bluff. Within months Beldon was back in San Jose where he set up a successful merchandizing operation.

On February 1 1849 he married Sarah Margaret Jones, daughter of Zachariah Jones who was an 1846 overland arrival. Beldon's wife was described as "a very conscientious woman, beloved by all who knew her." The marriage was blessed with two sons and three daughters.

On the second Monday of April in 1850 Josiah was elected the first American mayor of San Jose, receiving 195 votes, serving a one year term. In 1851 he served another term as a councilman. It was said the site of the first California Legislature in San Jose in December 1849 was on property owned by Beldon.

Continued on page 8

PLEAS MADE FOR COUNTY JAIL REFORM --- 1917

by Helen Arbuckle

In recent months the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff have been under fire for jail overcrowding and other discomforts not only for the inmates, but also for themselves. They should take heart. This is not the first time the Board has had to take the heat for procrastination.

While on a tour of inspection of all kinds of public institutions in 1917, three representatives from the State Board of Charities and Corrections visited Santa Clara County and suggested that some changes be made in the county jail. At that time the jail was a brick building behind the Courthouse on North First Street. It was often referred to as "the tank."

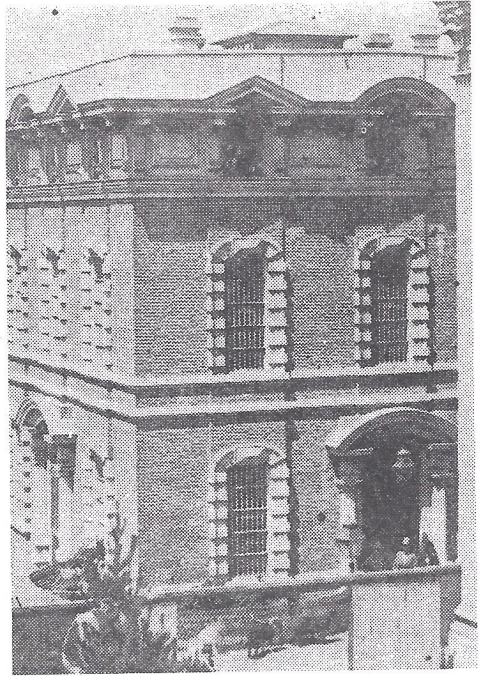
According to board chairman Henry M. Ayer, "It was the intention of the supervisors to install an entirely new and modern system of lever locks in the two "tanks," starting with the small tank as soon as the price of steel became firm and material could be bought at a reasonable figure. "This step is mainly for the convenience of the jailor and is a time and labor saving device."

Beds and regulation prison bunks would be installed in the large "tank", a gas heater would be purchased for use in the event of the regular heating arrangement being out of order.

Fumigation of the jail was to start immediately and a new floor was to be built in the exercise room. The old concrete floor was broken in a number of places and considered dangerous and unsanitary.

Mrs. Alice Park reported in a WCTU meeting ten years before that she had asked why prisoners

were not allowed to sit down and was told that benches and chairs were always destroyed. She suggested that benches strong enough and big enough to be permanent ought to be installed in the county jail. The women expressed hearty approval. The WCTU reported that "The prisoners were given clean



Santa Clara County's 1871 Jail or 'Tank'

blankets and suitable food; that prisoners were forced to bathe on their entrance to the jail, and the only thing lacking was a rock or wood pile to give them work. There are acres of vacant land in San Jose; so there ought to be something for the inmates of the jail to do," suggested Mrs. Lucy McClintic, president of the organization.

CAMBRIAN RESERVOIR FOUNTAIN

by Bill Chivers

Driving south on Bascom Avenue near Foxworthy, I was passing the old Cambrian Reservoir when something caught my eye. I quickly pulled over to the curb. What I saw at the southeast corner of the reservoir was the old white marble water fountain. I hadn't thought of it in many years, but I remembered with much pleasure how the water used to spurt and spout up from it and how the colored lights shone on the splashing water at night.

I contacted my friend, Frank Kukuk, who worked for the San Jose Water Company (Frank is now retired) and asked if I could go inside the reservoir property and take some pictures of the old fountain and also if he could get me some history of it. Frank and another employee, Floyd Stuck, met me there one afternoon and I took pictures of the fountain which hadn't been used for over fifteen years. It appeared that vandals had broken all the lights around the fountain. At one time a caretaker lived in a house on the property, but when he left his old house was torn down. This caretaker had done lots of nice stonework all around the grounds, but vandals had also torn a lot of this work out.

The fountain which sits at the corner has a large stairway going up to it. The pump for it was housed in the old caretaker's garage, but it was very rusty and the water company men felt the electricity was no longer hooked up to it. We walked up this large beautiful stairway with the lovely marble fountain at the top. It looked in very good shape. The date stamped in the concrete at its base was 1926. Neither Frank or Floyd knew much about the history of the fountain so I decided to research it myself.

I went to the local libraries and found newspaper microfilms of old Campbell and Los Gatos papers. In the January 1927 issues of both papers, I found articles telling about the new fountain at the Cambrian Reservoir being finished. It said, "The fountain is not only for attractive appearance but it will aerate the water piped to the reservoir from the Santa Cruz Mountains and tends to purify the water and helps it become wholesome." The water company employees told me this was not true, for at that time the reservoir was gravity flow, and the small volume of water passing through the fountain could make no difference in the purification process of this large reservoir. The old newspaper articles further stated that the fountain was designed by Gardner Bailey of San Francisco and the marble was brought from the State of Vermont by the Western Granite and Marble Company of San Jose. The work of building the stairs and fountain was being done by company employees. The total cost was estimated at \$5,000.



Cambrian Reservoir Fountain - June 1985

The original Cambrian Reservoir was built in 1890 as a dirt lined water storage unit and was concrete lined in 1906. It has a total capacity of 3,903,603 gallons with its overflow of 239 feet above sea level. In 1921 Number 2 Reservoir was built just behind and west of the old one and it has a capacity of 12,146,153 gallons. Both reservoirs have a total capacity of 16 million gallons. This feed water system is now for downtown San Jose and all the water today comes from wells. It is sent out of the Cambrian Reservoir to San Jose without any chlorine because it is so pure.

The pump for the fountain was installed in 1939 to give it more spray and a higher pressure. This beautiful fountain was used for many years as the logo for the water company annual reports. There was also a replica of it used on the San Jose Water Company floats in the San Jose Fiesta de los Rosas parades in the 1930s.

Most people I know love to see water fountains and few man-made scenes in this part of the valley at that time could compare with the Cambrian Reservoir fountain masterpiece when seen with the sun shining through the leaping waters or the colored lights on it at night. It is this author's hope that the San Jose Water Company will take a good look at this historical gem and try to have this wonderful old fountain operating again.

SAN JOSE BROOM PLANT

--A UNIQUE ENTERPRISE

How many of our Pioneer members recall the astonishing broom factory located at 165 Washington Street in San Jose owned and managed by the courageous blind man, Alick Derrick? His productive plant turned out more than 1,000 dozen high grade house brooms, dozens upon dozens of whisk brooms, including heavy duty items for industrial plants and canneries as just an average monthly output.

According to an interview he extended to the San Jose Evening News in 1929 the best broom straw then was the lindsay broom corn out of Oklahoma. Broom sticks were of Oregon fir while the higher grade of broom sticks were maple. "It is a knack in knowing how to know whether a broom is first class or not," said Derrick.

The broom assembly was fast and efficient. The straw was assembled at the end of the stick; then the wir-

ing placed around the "shoulder" of the broom. Sewing machines then stiched the spread of the broom with the trimmer then making the ends even. Each broom was then encased in a paper vest and stored for distribution.

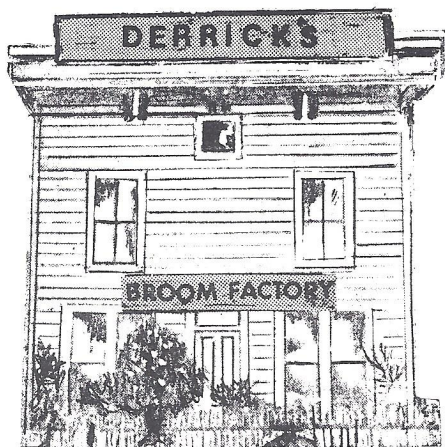
The Derrick Broom Factory always "branded" all brooms turned out . They carried a guarantee along with the notation it was made by a member of the International Broom and Whisk Makers Union. Derrick revealed that officials of the International had succeeded in placing a ban on convict-made brooms which had resulted in the closing of a number of prison broom plants grappling with free labor.

The Derrick enterprise was founded in 1908 on Orchard Street, now Almaden Avenue, in San Jose and moved to its Washington Street site in 1927.

Derrick had the misfortune of being blind, having lost his sight due to a quarry dynamite explosion near Los Angeles in 1901. After weeks of hospitalization he took to broom making, becoming very adept. By 1902 he was in San Jose employed in various broom factories.

Despite his sight loss he was described as a very jovial man who did a full day's work. Assisting him were Mr. Len Ross and Miss Lottie Wald, all skillful in broom factory production.

--H.C.





President's Message

Edward Allegetti

Happy New Year! I hope you are planning to attend the next luncheon of our Society on March 12, 1988. Mr. Unruh, a local historian and guide at Lick Observatory, will lecture and give a slide presentation about the history of the observatory on Mt. Hamilton.

As you know, the California Pioneers give awards each year. In June the board will again present the Pioneer Award (to a member of the Society who has made outstanding contributions to the community) and up to three Honorary Memberships (to non-members for outstanding work in the field of history). If you would like to nominate someone to receive one of the awards, then please contact Mr. O'Connor at the return address listed on the "Trailblazer." He is chairman of the Awards Committee.

The board also will be presenting in June the cash awards for the winners of the Essay Contest. First prize is \$500, second prize is \$200, third prize is \$125. If you are interested in submitting a history paper, then please contact Mrs. Helen MacCarthy for a copy of the guidelines. All essays must be received by May 2, 1988.

In this issue of the "Trailblazer" you will read that the cost to attend the luncheons has risen by only 25 cents for 1988. This is a modest amount when you consider that this pays for the lunch, tip, parking, use of the audio and other equipment and the honorarium and lunch for the guest speaker.

Unfortunately another member of the Board of Directors, Alice Vetterle, died. Miss Vetterle, who was a past president of the Society, will be greatly missed.

First Mayor

(Continued from page 3)

He also dealt successfully in real estate in San Francisco and merchandizing, keeping his adobe residence in San Jose where his family lived. In 1856 Beldon had bought a ten-acre mustard field where he built a broad two-storied place surrounded by wide verandas, a home which reeked with hospitality. In 1887 this enchanted homestead near Empire

Street was purchased by the Hotel Vendome Company for a hotel site. Beldon remained in San Jose until 1881 when he moved to New York and died there in 1892.

Charles A. Beldon who was born in the San Carlos Street adobe in 1851 lived in San Jose until he was 18 years of age, receiving his education at Oakland.

TIME IS RUNNING SHORT FOR DUES PAYMENTS

We appreciate the response from our separate mailing, but for those of you who have not paid time is running short. Members who have not paid by the March luncheon (March 12, 1988) will be considered delinquent and will have their mailing plates pulled.

Financial secretary Mary Wahlberg will be available at the luncheon to receive payments and if that is not convenient you may, as always, mail them in. Please send your \$5 check along with a self-addressed, STAMPED envelope to California Pioneers, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. Your card will come to you by return mail.

Our Life Memberships have met with a great response and it is a good way to avoid being bothered about annual dues. Fees are \$60 for a single person and \$100 for a married couple. If you have any questions, please call Mary Wahlberg at (408) 374-5776.

ANNUAL PIONEER SPRING ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCED

Both high school students and the general public are eligible for cash awards: First prize \$500; Second prize \$250 and Third prize \$125 plus three honorable mention awards of \$25 each. Any person, place or event concerning Santa Clara County's history is suggested. May 2, 1988 is the deadline; all of which must be in the English language containing at least 3,000 words.

For a complete set of guidelines send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Essay Chairperson, Helen MacCarthy, P.O. Box 8202, San Jose, CA 95155 or call (408) 578-4485.

NOTICES

Due to circumstances beyond our control our **NEXT QUARTERLY LUNCHEON DATE** has been moved to **MARCH 12** for this occasion only.

Clyde Arbuckle's epic "*History of San Jose*," a sell out in less than two months, is being readied for a second printing. Orders are being processed (\$40) at Smith-McKay, 96 N. Almaden Blvd., San Jose, CA 95110 (408) 298-5711.

The California History Center Foundation invites us all to the exhibit **CHINESE GOLD**, the Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region. Exhibit: Trianon Building, De Anza College, Cupertino. 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 20 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. Closes March 26, 1988.

The San Jose Historical Museum Association is announcing the publication of "*Barnstorming*," the autobiography of actor and playwright Frank Bacon, who made his home in San Jose. The book is the 1988 premium gift to SJHMA members.

JOHN Z. ANDERSON-- TRAILBLAZER IN FRUIT INDUSTRY

Mr. Anderson is credited with shipping the first cherries from San Jose by fruit express. He also is accepted to be the first in California to send tree fruit by refrigerator car to eastern markets.

People were reported to have laughed when he declared fresh fruit could reach Chicago in perfectly good condition. This failed to discourage him. His cherries, shipped in refrigerator cars, reached Chicago in splendid condition, but buyers, so non-believing at first, were afraid to bid. Later, however, they realized the miracle was reality and bought entire carloads at high prices.

One of the milestones earlier in the history of the industry was when Mr. Anderson's cherries first reached Denver in 1876.

Anderson was also one of the pioneers of the California ripe olive industry. He was among the first Americans to pickle ripe olives, conducting his experiments on the old Field Ranch off Alum Rock Avenue. He was credited as being among the first to ship ripe olives out of the state in carload lots. He also was president of the old California Fruit Union, organized in 1883, the first cooperative fruit marketing organization formed for the purpose of shipping California fruit east.

Mr. Anderson was a strong member of our California Pioneer Society, serving as president of our county organization in 1914, 1915 and 1916.

John Zoingulus Anderson was born in Meadville, Pa., in 1829, arriving in California via the Isthmus of Panama in 1852.

H.C.

Welcome New Members

James E. Brown
Mary L. Dixon
Katherine L. Flood
Barbara J. Grace
Annice S. Held
Lawrence C. Holian
Alice J. Laird

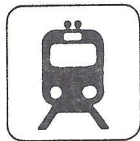
Thomasene E. Luzzatti
Dorothy E. Mercuri
Audrey Morgan
Alexandra L. Riddle
Ann M. Scimeca
Anthony P. Scimeca
Stephen Vernon

Beyond The Sunset

Roy E. Bartholomew
Alice B. Covert
Irma Tourtillott Cleary
Amanda V. Honeywell
Helen Keech



Peter E. Maurer
Ida F. Mello
Yvonne H. Paul
George C. Praisewater
Alice Vetterle



Touring With The Californians

RESERVATIONS by phone begin Monday, March 14, 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 mailing a stamped self-addressed legal sized envelope to the above address.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST-SEATTLE, HARRISON HOT SPRINGS, VANCOUVER, VICTORIA. July 19-26, 1988: Fly to Seattle for two days and nights- enjoy thrilling sites such as CHITTENDEN LOCKS which link Puget Sound and Lake Washington-PIKE PLACE MARKET on Elliott Bay-PIONEER SQUARE-SPACE NEEDLE. Captivating drive to sights such as Harrison Hot Springs on Harrison Lake in British Columbia, a famed spa wreathed by mountains. Drive to Vancouver, Canada-guided tour of Gastown, Chinatown, Queen Elizabeth Park, famed Stanley Park-Ferry the Strait of Georgia and on to Victoria for three nights-Marvel to Butchart Gardens dazzling display of fireworks, light and music-Guided tour of Victoria with time for exploring and shopping in this very English city--Make haste here! Only six spaces remain!

September 20-October 9: AUSTRALIA-FIJI Australia-Big-Breezy and a Bloomin' Good Show. Delight to the celebrated Aussie accent; The Great Barrier Reef; An outback trek; kangaroo and koalas. We arrive to an Australian springtime, the farthest away of far away places; then to Fiji, part of Melanesia sparkling in the South Pacific. Fiji is an independent state. Her state flag was flown for the first time in 1970. Tourism is just catching on. This balmy South Pacific realm of a thousand wonders beckons and awaits us.

* * * * *

PLEASE NOTE that due to circumstances beyond our control our **QUARTERLY LUNCHEON** date has been changed to **March 12, 1988**. Remember this as you call our new telephone reservation service at **554-7587**.

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March
12

Louis
Village

Menu

CROSS RIBS OF BEEF
POTATOES AU GRATIN
TOSSED SALAD-DESSERT
COFFEE

DOORS
OPEN
10:30

LUNCHEON
12 NOON

Program

MR. W.J. SHILOH UNRUH
* LICK OBSERVATORY
Historian

THE TRAILBLAZER issued February, May, August and November.

Editors - Henry & Laura Calloway, 1899 McDaniel Ave., San Jose, CA 95126

Assistant Editor - Bill Chivers

Staff Artist - Ralph Rambo

Subscription rate to non-members \$4

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