



VOLUME 39, NUMBER 3, SEPTEMBER, 1998

Our speaker this month, is the same Editor of the Trailblazer you hear from at every meeting, Mary Lou Lyon. Dave McKinney wanted someone to speak on The Discovery of Gold in 1848 and after enquiring around, came back to our own ranks. Mary Lou has been teaching about the Gold Rush in her Metropolitan Adult Ed Class for 8 semesters, and is only up to 1852. She has been teaching this class for 11 years, ever since our beloved Clyde Arbuckle retired from teaching Adult Ed and anointed her to follow. Each semester, an area has been chosen to explore in depth: Overland Trails, Southern Trails, Arriving by Sea, San Francisco 1849-1852, Chinese in the Early Gold Rush, Northern Mines, Southern Mines and Mother Lode have been examined. This fall, the class will move on to Hydraulic and Tunnel Mining.

Mary Lou has a BA in American History from San Jose State University and an M.A. in California and the West with 19th Century America minor plus some 75 units and 35 years of teaching. She is now retired from 31 years at Homestead High School and spends nearly all of her time on Western History and the many groups of which she is a member, including The Pioneers of Santa Clara County. During her years as a student, she won 4 awards for historical research and writing including the one given by our group. It has been some time, since she last addressed one of our meetings.

California and the American West will begin again on Wednesday, September 16 through December 16, 1998 at the Willow Glen Educational Park, on Cottle, between Hamilton and Curtner at the Junior High end. The class meets from 7 to 9 pm on Wednesdays plus some Saturday and weekend trips.

ELIZA (BESSIE) CATHERINE LAYTON MC KAY SMITH
CO-FOUNDER OF SMITH & McKAY PRINTING, 1919

by Leonard McKay

Bessie Layton's mother, Annelia Barter, born March 5, 1852, had emigrated overland at the age of one year with her parents, William and Catherine J. Coorad Barter from Mt. Vernon, Indiana. They came over the Oregon-California Trail, passing Lake Tahoe and arriving in Hangtown in September of 1853. Their wagon was made by Barter's Blacksmith and Wagon Shop in Mt. Vernon, Indiana. Her father was a wagon maker and farmer who settled in Penryn, east of Roseville. Three years later, in 1856, Catherine Barter died of consumption in Steuarts Flat, Placer County and 4 year old Annelia was placed with a group of Catholic Sisters in Sacramento, although her father was Protestant.

Annelia married Leonard Layton when she was 15 on June 28, 1867, and at 16, had twin boys followed by the birth of eight other children, 10 in all, born between 1867 and 1894. Eliza Catherine Layton, born on June 24, 1877 was number 6. She was born at the ranch homesteaded by her father and his two older bachelor brothers in Clover Valley, just north of Rocklin, California. The valley was 6 miles long and about half a mile wide and is now the Sunset Whitney Country Club development. The school was 4 miles away and Bessie, as she was called, was the one who rode the horse or drove the young Laytons in the wagons or buggy. In all of the early pictures of the family in wagon, buggy or car, Bessie was always in the driver's seat.

During the hot Sacramento Valley summers, the family sometimes escaped to Santa Cruz for a few weeks to cool off. It was in Santa Cruz that Bessie met and at the age of 20 in 1897, married Neil McKay, a printer. Neil was from a family of printers who had come to Santa Cruz in 1878 from Michigan. Neil taught his young wife the art of typesetting, a job often done by women because of their patience and dexterity before the advent of the linotype machine. Leonard M. McKay, Sr. was born to this union on September 30, 1898, but the two were divorced in 1910 when the extended McKay

family packed up to move to Yerington, Nevada to publish and print the local newspaper in this copper mining town.

Bessie Layton McKay took her young son, Leonard to San Francisco where she continued to work in the printing trade in a job shop. When he got old enough, Leonard, too, learned the printing trade and while a young teen-ager, he caught his left hand in a die cutting printing press, cutting off his left thumb and a portion of his third finger. He graduated from high school by attending night school while working days. When World War I came along, he was ineligible for military service because of his missing fingers, so he went to work for an oil pumping company in Gustine. He saved a considerable amount of money which was the capital used to start Smith & McKay Printing Company in 1919.

Meanwhile, Bessie met Clifford Smith, a promoter and fast talker. He became one of the three partners in the Smith & McKay Printing Company, Clifford Smith, Bessie Smith and Leonard McKay. Few partnerships are successful and a three way is nearly impossible. Although it was Leonard McKay's money that bought the used equipment of the Slovan newspaper, *Sokol*, in San Jose, he was never consulted regarding business decisions.

In 1924, the name became Smith and Smith as Clifford was bent on becoming the largest and dominant printer in San Jose. To this end, he added many pieces of equipment, all purchased with bank loans. In 1928, he took all of the company cash and left town with another woman, leaving large debts and mortgaged equipment which was soon reclaimed by the banks. When the stock market crashed in 1929, it was dubious whether the business could survive. Bessie surrendered her large house off the fashionable Alameda at 782 Morris Street because she could not make the payments and moved into a room built for her inside the printshop on St. John Street. She lived there throughout the early 1930's. Leonard McKay, Sr. lived with his wife and family at 175 Loma Alta Avenue, Los Gatos where they moved for Leonard, Junior's health, as he was an asthmatic child, not expected to live to adulthood. St. John Street was

very near several historic events in San Jose including the disastrous Court House Fire just 100 yards away in 1931 and the infamous lynching in St. James Park in 1933.

Bessie continued to be a prominent figure in San Jose as she was elected President of the Business and Professional Women' Association, Matron of the Fraternity, later Jarman Chapter of Eastern Star, and she continued to ride a horse in the Sheriff's Posse of the many Fiesta de las Roses Parades.

The Depression era was an especially difficult time for a woman to run a business since much was done on the barter system. When the company printed the daily menus for the American Grill, it was expected that you would eat out your bill. Printing was done for Andy Saso of the Fox Theatre chain in exchange for movie tickets. Bessie, with Leonard at her side, survived, neither making as much as their workers. She had favorite customers who fell into three groupings: the petty gamblers were most common and prominent. They needed raffle and lottery tickets printed, were not fussy about quality, didn't want receipts and paid in cash.

The second group were the Catholic Priests, particularly the Jesuits from the University of Santa Clara and Bellarmine and St. Mary's Church. Bessie held them in high regard because of their intelligence and high moral qualities. In 1929, Smith Printing printed the program for the Passion Play which was the start of a major account that saved the business.

The third group were the construction men in the valley starting with Earl Heple and after his death, Lou Jones Construction, Elmo Pardini, L.C. Pardini, Rosendin Electric and many others. A smaller portion of the business was book printing. Some of them still survive today such as the 1933 *History of San Jose* by McMurry/James, many books of poems and some science fiction works.

When World War II came along, it was a terrific struggle to continue business, as all of the young men left for the service and many of the women were employed in defense industries. Supplies were very difficult to obtain and new machinery was impossible. One way or another, the

company kept the old equipment going and kept printing, doing defense contract work for Permanente Cement, Pittsburgh Steel and others.

Once the war was over, there was a period of limited expansion, as young men returned seeking employment. Smith Printing had always done letterpress printing (printing directly from the type) but improvements after the war included the advent of lithography, using thin aluminum plates. The early process left much to be desired and nearly broke the business again.

Leonard McKay, Jr. returned from the European theater of war with one year of college to finish. While completing his education, he worked full time at the printing company, while his father's health faded. Leonard, Sr. did not want him to go into the printing business as he felt there was more work than reward in it. Upon graduation, he went to work with Pan American Airways in the passenger traffic department and asked for foreign assignment which took him to San Francisco, Honolulu, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Guam. The Orient was in chaos with Communism running rampant and after nearly seven years with the airline, he resigned in 1953 and returned to San Jose. In 1954, Leonard, Senior died but the "Boss" remained- Bessie Smith at age 77.

Two years later, in 1956, Leonard, Jr. and his grandmother Bessie agreed to return the name of the company to its original Smith and McKay Printing Co. He would buy the business from her and she retired in 1956 at age 79, going to live with a younger sister in Washington state until her death in 1962 at 85. She is buried in the Los Gatos Cemetery.

Bessie Smith, Pioneer Printer and Proprietor of Smith and McKay Printing Company and Smith and Smith for a total of 37 years, 1919-1956, was respected for her honest dealings and quality printing. She survived 85 years through much of California's history, leaving her indelible imprint on the local scene.

The December Meeting Will Be On The 2ND Sat - Dec. 12

covered the Hart Kidnapping, San Jose during World War II, San Jose State Protests about the Vietnam War, The Turner Movement, The Civil Air Patrol and The San Jose Youth Protection Ordinance. More modern themes were two similar essays on The Impact of the Arena on San Jose and the Social and Economic Effects of the Sharks on San Jose.



Winners Anita Woodson, Joelle Mellon, Erna Holyer,
Dale Tibbils and Roger Rosenberg

Photo by Melita Kelly

The Committee found it difficult to choose from all of these, however their final choices were:

First Place of \$500 went to Joelle Mellon. Miss Mellon just received her MA from San Jose State University. She wrote about East San Jose's Carnegie Library from its inception to the present.

Second Place of \$250 went to Dale Tibbils who wrote about Coach Julie Menendez who has been the driving force behind



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

In California Pioneer of Santa Clara County

(Founded 1875)

P. O. Box 8208 San Jose, California 95155

Requirements for membership:

ACTIVE:

- A. Resident of California 50 years or more; or
- B. Descendant of California resident of 50 years or more
(shall be 18 years of age or more)

ASSOCIATE:

- C. Anyone whose spouse is a member (May become Active Member upon attaining 50 years residence in California)

To The California Pioneers of Santa Clara County:

I hereby apply for membership in your organization according to Paragraph ____ above. If elected to membership, I promise to confirm to you By-Laws, Rules and Regulations.

My name is _____
(PLEASE PRINT) (MAIDEN NAME)

Name of Pioneer Ancestor/s _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

I am a native of _____ My birth date is _____

Date arrived in California _____ My occupation is/was _____

Date Parents came to California _____
(MOTHER) (FATHER)

My address is _____
(STREET) (CITY) (NINE DIGIT ZIP)

My telephone number is (____) _____

Date _____ Signature _____

Proposed by _____
(SIGNATURE OF MEMBER OF CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY)

Endorsed by _____
(SIGNATURE OF ANOTHER MEMBER /CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY)

New member processing fee \$5.00. Annual Dues \$10.00. Life membership-Single \$100.00.
Life membership-Couple \$175.00. A \$15.00 payment must accompany the application.
Thereafter, dues payable in January of each year. All memberships include quarterly issue of
THE TRAILBLAZER newsletter.

Accepted (Date) _____

Please include Brief historical information on back of this page.

Please Return To Membership Chairman:

ROBERT JOHNSON
445 NO. 15 TH ST
SAN JOSE CA. 95112

Letter From the New President, David McKinney

Dear Pioneer members,

I was late to the Board Meeting so they had already elected me as President! Actually, since returning to the Board in 1993, I knew that I would, again, serve as President and the time has come.

It is amazing to think that the Pioneers will soon enter their third century --having been founded in the late 19th Century, June 22, 1875. We will be talking about some changes to bring us into that next century without losing sight of our goal to "emphasize the early history of Santa Clara County and/or the lives of its early pioneers."

I would like to congratulate Bob Fisher on a job well done as President for the last two years. He is stepping back into the job as Treasurer, so is still not entirely off the hook. We would also like to thank Mimi Wells for a job well done as Treasurer the last two years.

We are proud to have Leonard McKay return to the Board as our Historian. He is the obvious choice with his long association in our county. (see featured article.)

Enjoy the last days of summer. We will see you at our September 5th Quarterly Meeting . . . celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Discovery of Gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, January 24, 1848. Eureka!

David McKinney



NEW MEMBERS in 1997-98

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Katherine Barber | Gladys McFarland |
| Hazel Boyd | Ron & Carol Portal |
| Grace Campbell | Fay Sells |
| Elizabeth Chapman | Bertram & Elizabeth Schirle |
| Ray Clark | Larry & Karen Smith |
| Ada Clemens | Larry & Rita Tilbury |
| Ruth Hogen | Wayne Wenger |
| | Dolores Williams |





Touring With The Californians

Rose Crimi Muench - Tour Director

Nancy Hill - Phone Reservations 258-3449 M-F before noon

Pauline Hawkins - Treasurer

1223 Redcliff Drive, San Jose, CA 95118-1228

Helen Brooks - Registration at Luncheons

REGISTRATION for FALL TRIPS begins at the September 5th Luncheon. Non-members and guests may sign up starting September 14th. If you did not get a trip flyer at the luncheon meeting, please send a stamped, self-addressed legal-sized envelope to Pauline's address. Pick-up Point (unless otherwise indicated) is at Valley Village, 390 North Winchester Blvd, Santa Clara, at the Dolores Street side of the complex.

SEPTEMBER 14, 15, & 16 NAPA VALLEY GETAWAY

A special flyer is available by mail describing a 3-day visit to the Napa Valley during grape harvest time. Some of our adventures will include: a paddlewheel cruise on the Napa River from Vallejo to Napa

- luncheon at the Culinary Institute of America West Coast Branch in St. Helena with a tour of the old Christian Bros. Greystone Winery
- Silverado Museum and Library celebrating Robert L. Stevenson
- Calistoga's "Old Faithful" geyser and the Petrified Forest
- Sterling Winery tramride, tour and lunch
- Sharpsteen Museum featuring 19th Century Calistoga
- Old Bale Mill
- Tour and Tasting at the family-owned Sutter Home Winery and at the Freemark Abbey Winery

- the Hurd Beeswax Candle Factory
- a visit to the Napa Wine Train Station Emporium. Cost is \$339 + \$125 for single supplement. Deposit at registration is \$100, with balance due by August 14. After that date, registrations will depend upon the availability of hotel rooms.

OCTOBER 17 SATURDAY --GRAND OPENING-- NEW ALMADEN QUICKSILVER MUSEUM

To celebrate the move of the New Almaden Quicksilver Museum into Casa Grande, a Grand Opening fiesta will be held on Oct. 17. We will participate in the events, including visits to the museum, walking tours, horse carriage rides, and an inaugural program. Food booths will serve a variety of lunch fare. La Casa Grande was built in 1854 for General Halleck, the manager of the quicksilver mines. In the 30's and 40's it was known as Club Almaden. We will also visit Almaden's Hacienda Cemetery and see the progress made by the Pioneers project chairman, Richard Hill, and the dedicated volunteers.

Leave: 9:30 A.M. Return: 4:00 P.M. Price: \$ 12

NOVEMBER 17 TUESDAY -- HISTORY IN THE MAKING

As grazing cattle and wheat fields gave way to fruit orchards, orchards have given way to technology centered companies, which have put our beautiful Santa Clara Valley on the map as "Silicon Valley." We will see examples of our modern history with tours of the Intel Museum and the Lockheed Space Exploration Exhibit Center. We then travel to the newly opened Tech Museum of Innovation for self-guided tours of its four galleries. Luncheon on your own is available at the Museum Cafe or at Cafe Primavera, located in the Adobe Building across the street. We will also view the IMAX film "Everest" on an 8-story tall screen. How our Valley of Heart's Delight has changed!

Leave: 9:15 A.M. Return: 4:15 P.M. Price: \$ 24

DECEMBER 8, TUESDAY STEINBECK IN SALINAS

Leave: 9:00 A.M. Return: 4:00 P.M. Price: \$ 33

We are invited to join the Sirs 5-day Rose Parade tour featuring: reserved grandstand seating for the Rose Parade

- preview of floats
 - tour of the new J. Paul Getty Museum
 - New Year's Eve ball
 - Los Angeles City tour
 - stay at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel. Cost is \$688 + \$200 single supplement. Rose Crimi Muench will escort our group.
- Brochures will be available at the September luncheon or by mail.

PIONEER ANCESTORS

**1998-99 OFFICERS - CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

David McKinney-- President

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Before Noon

Californians Treasurer

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PIONEER LUNCHEON
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1998
AT NOON- LOU'S VILLAGE
554-7587 \$15

For Reservations Phone BEFORE WED, SEPT 2

*Breast of Chicken, mushroom sauce
tossed green salad
fresh vegetables, potato
rolls & butter, sherbet & coffee*

RECORDS COORDINATOR HILL L

10393 DORIS CT

SAN JOSE, CA 95127-3013



**IN CELEBRATION OF THE
SESQUICENTENNIAL
MARY LOU LYON WILL SHOW SLIDES
AND DISCUSS
THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD
JANUARY 24, 1848**