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SURVIVAL WITH STYLE:
THE WOMEN OF THE SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

by

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PREFACE

Before 1846 the only trails through the Santa Cruz Mountains were those made by animals, Ohlone Indians, Spanish padres, and a few hardy trappers and hunters. In a few years all this was to change. The lure of the seemingly endless redwood forests brought loggers; the struggle over land titles in the Santa Clara Valley brought homesteaders seeking unclaimed land, and by the 1860's settlements began to appear. The reasons for settlement in the mountains were as varied as the people who came to them: some came for economic reasons; some to own a piece of land and put down roots; some to escape the problems of their pasts.

Whatever their motives for coming, they stayed because of a common characteristic -- a determination to survive. And survive they did, through forest fires, floods, encounters with wild animals, and personal tragedies. They hacked out roads, built homes, raised families, and left an indelible mark on what had been a wilderness.

Historians have recorded their efforts, but perhaps because of prevailing social attitudes have left us with an incomplete picture. Very little has been written about one group of people -- the women who came to live in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and this paper is an attempt to fill in some of the parts that are missing.

Geographically, the area discussed can be defined as just south of Los Gatos to the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains, southeast to Loma Prieta, and northwest to Saratoga Gap. Chronologically, the period begins with the ox-drawn wagon and ends with the advent of the automobile, approximately from 1846 to 1922.



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MARGARET JONES

Zachariah Jones and his wife Mary, the "belle of Franklin County", Ohio, arrived in California with their family by wagon train in 1846. Zachariah appeared to operate on the principle that if a need existed, it should be filled. He began by opening the Half Moon House, San Jose's first hotel, in an old adobe building just east of Market Square. In 1848 he took up some land south of Forbes' Mill on Tarantula Flat, hacked out a road over the hill to Limekiln Gulch and began building a sawmill. Once the mill was operating he was able to haul the lumber up to his property and build a home for his wife and five children. The road was perilously steep and dusty (-- or muddy, depending on the time of year) but it was the unimpressive beginning of a road that would eventually reach all the way to Santa Cruz in the years to come.

A strict Southern Baptist, Zachariah frequently talked aloud to the Lord and sang hymns while he worked, but before long he had a growing number of people to talk to -- loggers began moving into the mountains around his mill; traffic over Jones' Road increased,

and other sawmills sprang up in the area. Not all of the loggers were as religiously inclined as Zachariah, however, and in view of the fact that he had two attractive young daughters at his house beside the road, he insisted that there be no drinking or swearing among the loggers and teamsters who worked for him.¹

One daughter, Sarah Margaret, was a lovely young girl with smooth dark hair and soft eyes, and this was not lost upon an enterprising young San Jose businessman who made her acquaintance. In 1849 Maggie married the young man, Josiah Belden, who became the first mayor of San Jose.

Chester Lyman, a guest at the wedding, furnished an eye-witness account of the event: "Thurs. [Feb. 1, 1849] ... Mr. Belden married to Miss Margaret Jones by Mr. Dimmick, Alcalde; awkward affair, hands not joined, very stiff." Evidently the affair loosened up a bit after the formal ceremony, because Lyman went on, "After the ceremony full supper, table cleared seven times. Married in the bar-room [perhaps in her father's hotel?]. Large crowd. At nine adjourned to Mr. Cook's [a friend of the groom's] and had a fandango ... Oceans of wine and brandy, most of the company drunk, too. Broke up at five [in the] morning."²

The transition from sheltered daughter to society matron seems to have been handled quite gracefully by Maggie, who was described by one lady as "a very conscientious woman, beloved by all who knew her."³ Josiah was a successful businessman whose annual income was around \$60,000, and in 1855 he built a beautiful estate on ten acres of land that he owned near San Jose, complete with orchards and formal gardens.

¹ Wm. Wulf, Los Gatos historian; telephone interview, April 10, 1984.

² Doyce B. Nunes, Jr., ed., Josiah Belden, 1841 California Overland Pioneer, His Memoir and Early Letters (Georgetown, Ca., 1962), p. 111, footnote 91.

³ Luella Dickinson, Reminiscences of a Trip Across the Plains in 1846 and Early Days in California (San Francisco, 1904), p. 108.

William H. Brewer, who had been walking the length and breadth of California with a mapping and surveying party, enjoyed some of the gentility reminiscent of his teaching days at Yale when he and a young lady friend made a social call at the Belden home in August, 1861, "... visited the residence of a wealthy citizen, Mr. Belden. He and his wife had come here early (1841), poor, had got rich, visited Europe, bought many works of art, etc. He lives here very comfortably on his money, has a fine house, pretty grounds, etc. We spent two or more hours looking over pictures, photographs, etc., which he had brought from Europe. He was absent, but his wife appears a very fine and pleasant woman." ⁴ Mr. Brewer may not have had all his facts straight about the poor Beldens crossing the Plains in 1841, but he did seem to be quite favorably impressed with the sawmill owner's daughter.

After an extended European tour in 1872-3 with Maggie and their five children, Josiah found that financial matters required that he spend more time back East, so in 1881 they sold their estate, packed up their two sons and three daughters and moved to New York.

Maggie left behind only a faint reminder of her early life in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Traces of Jones' Road still climb St. Joseph's Hill and wander alongside Los Gatos Creek, but the family home disappeared long ago and the site of the sawmill built by her father has been covered by the waters of Lexington Reservoir.

SARAH PADDOCK

At the foot of Limekiln Gulch in the Los Gatos Creek canyon the logging town of Lexington was thriving during the 1860's, and Isaac and Sarah Paddock opened a hotel to accommodate stagecoach

⁴ Wm. H. Brewer, Up and Down California in 1860-1864, ed. Francis Farquhar (Berkeley, 1966), p. 175.

travelers and loggers.

When Isaac died in 1873 Sarah determinedly carried on the family business, running the Lexington House and stable, a favorite watering-place for travelers and horses. The hotel was the heart of the town, and had been built in 1860 when Lexington was laid out by John Henning, who named the settlement for his hometown in Missouri.⁵ Sarah proudly advertised the accommodations available: "A good stable in connection with the house in which stock will be cared for."⁶ According to one writer, "Fagged travelers stopped here ... fed and watered their horses in the barn, did the same for themselves across the road at Mrs. S. A. Paddock's hotel and adjacent taverns."⁷

Sarah managed to hold her own in a business world made up of sawmill operators, loggers, and ranchers; when they moved away, farther back into the hills after the retreating redwoods, or into the new settlement at Forbes' Mill (which later became Los Gatos), her hotel and stables began catering to the tourist trade. Travelers came to the mountains to enjoy the healthful climate and beautiful scenery, and Lexington House continued to be a profitable business until the narrow gauge railroad was built through the mountains to Santa Cruz in 1880. The depot was located a mile up the canyon at Alma, and Lexington found itself bypassed. The town's decline was rapid, but Sarah didn't stay around to be part of it.

Resorts were a growing business during Victorian times, and Florence Cunningham wrote: "For those who enjoyed a less-remote resort, there was the Rev. A.B. Palmer's home-like boarding house on the Los Gatos Road. Here, Mrs. Palmer carried on the tradition for friendly hospitality which she had established years before, when, as Mrs. Isaac Paddock, she had been the gracious hostess of the Paddock's popular hotel in Lexington."⁸

⁵Letter by Sarah Frances DeRome, John Henning's daughter, San Jose News, Aug., 1963.

⁶Monte Dayton, "Alma and Lexington: Thought of Two Community Centers Disappearing Prompts Reflections", Los Gatos Times, June 14, 1951.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Florence R. Cunningham, Saratoga's First Hundred Years, ed. Frances Fox, (San Jose, 1967), p. 83.

LUCINDA HEBARD

Not every woman who came to live in the Santa Cruz Mountains in the early days fared as well as Maggie Jones or Sarah Paddock. Several miles up the Los Gatos Creek canyon Louis and Lucinda Hebard took up 160 acres near Idylwild. In 1856 the state legislature passed the "Squatter Law", which provided that all land should be deemed public until legal title could be proved by private parties -- an open invitation to claim land simply by occupying it. Whether this prompted the Hebard family to move into the mountains is debatable, but move they did in 1857. Following the usual pattern of the times, Louis, a carpenter from New York state, worked in the sawmills around Lexington. He put together a crude cabin that was simply a small square shack built of rough lumber with a puncheon floor. In later years Louis added on and improved the cabin until it became a respectable-looking farmhouse that stood for seventy-five years, but when Lucinda and the children moved in, living conditions were very primitive.

The two older Hebard boys, George and Bert, were big enough to help out, but Lucinda also had two younger children to look after, born after the family moved to the mountains. Louis began building homes (hopefully better than his own) for other settlers, and in 1860 he built the first Lexington School,⁹ located beside Los Gatos Creek near Forest House (later Alma) on one-and-a-half acres of land donated by John Henning, who also had children of school age.¹⁰

The isolation and distance from medical help -- the nearest doctor was in San Jose -- made life hazardous; there were grizzly bears, mountain lions, rattlesnakes -- not to mention the everyday accidents that occurred during logging, hunting game, or simply splitting firewood. The women learned to cope, after a fashion, with medical emergencies; but some disasters were beyond their skills. Accidents

⁹ John V. Young, Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains, rev., (Santa Cruz, 1979), p. 127.

¹⁰ Kay Salfen, "Lexington School is the Oldest in the Area, Still Growing", Los Gatos Times/Saratoga Observer, Sept. 13, 1960.

and disease took their toll on the unfortunate Hebard family.

When their four year old daughter died of diphtheria, Lucinda and Louis buried her on a grassy flat near the cabin where she used to play. Her little brother died when he was only two years old, and another small grave was added to the family burial ground. Bert Hebard accidentally shot himself in a hunting accident, and his brother George died at nineteen of typhoid fever.

In the six years since Lucinda had moved to the Santa Cruz Mountains she had lost all four of her children, and she, too, died in 1863. The Hebard family cemetery became one of two known burial grounds in the Lexington-Alma area,¹¹ a sad memorial to the hardships of homesteading.

ELISA COLLINS

About a mile south of Lexington along the stage road to Santa Cruz, another homesteading family moved in. During the previous year (1861) Elisa Collins and her son Joseph had lived with relatives in Calaveras Valley while Lysander worked for a mill owner in the Santa Cruz Mountains and took his pay in lumber. The family was from Pennsylvania, where Lysander had worked as a raftsmen and logger on the Susquehanna River; now, like so many emigrants, he was looking for land and a home for his family.

The mountains offered unclaimed land, a seemingly endless supply of redwood timber, and an abundance of water where Collins Creek flowed into the larger Los Gatos Creek. Just a mile back down the dusty stage road toward Jones' mill the new settlement of Lexington was springing up, a boomtown created by the rush to log out the redwoods.

Lysander, with a sharp eye on the stage road, built a large, two-story house at the junction of the two creeks. The house had

¹¹ The other cemetery was located on Rundell Road, a private road on the former Alma College property. Isaac Paddock is buried there.

four upstairs bedrooms, a saloon, dining room, kitchen, and more bedrooms on the ground floor¹²-- a veritable hotel. Even with the addition of a second son, Hugh, there was more than enough room. It soon became evident that Lysander was looking toward the future; he didn't intend to spend the rest of his life as a logger. He named the establishment "Forest House", and it became a favorite stopping-off place for stagecoach passengers traveling between San Jose and Santa Cruz.

Elisa kept the bedrooms prepared for guests, the dining room ready for hungry travelers, and the wood-burning stove ready to cook whatever came to hand. The food supply was no problem; hunters brought in venison, honey-gatherers supplied the sweets, fishermen stopped by to sell their catches, and an occasional intrepid hunter could sometimes be induced to bring in a fresh grizzly bear chuck roast, a favorite dish of the uninitiated traveler. Most mountain people ate bear only as a last resort, claiming that it was tough, stringy, and tasted of fish.

While Elisa bustled about, upstairs and down, cleaning, cooking, serving meals, and keeping an eye on the children, Lysander tended bar in the saloon. Before long, seeing that Elisa had the situation at Forest House under control, he opened a general store to supply the Chase mill on Dougherty Road.¹³

All went well until the winter of 1865 when a torrential rainstorm loosened a logjam up Collins Creek, and a wall of water, redwood logs, and mud roared down on Forest House, damaging it considerably and flooding the ground floor.

"The family camped in what was left of the saloon while the torrent raged through the kitchen and dining rooms, which were then provided with running water decades before piped plumbing reached the mountains," observed a writer.¹⁴ The family moved temporarily into another house on higher ground while the inn was rebuilt,

¹² Young, op. cit., p. 116.

¹³ The store, after many changes in ownership, was still operating in 1952 when it was forced to close by the rising waters behind Lexington Dam. The last proprietors were Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Green.

¹⁴ Young, op. cit., p. 120.

then returned to business as usual ... in the same location.

Forest House became the nucleus of the little settlement of Alma, and Collins Creek, considerably tamed since those days, runs quietly behind Lexington School today, losing itself in the waters of the reservoir.

SUSAN SCHULTHEIS

For the early settlers who preferred higher ground, there was the Summit ridge, and in 1851 Martin and Susan Schultheis established themselves at what is now the intersection of the Old Santa Cruz Highway and Summit Road. They had crossed the Plains from Ohio by wagon train and Susan had helped drive the oxen. When they moved from the Santa Clara Valley to the Summit it had taken them three days to break a trail through the chaparral, using oxen to push through the dense brush. The closest neighbor to their new home was Charles McKiernan, a hunter, who had a cabin about two miles northwest of their homestead.

Martin was a skilled carpenter and talented musician, and Susan soon established a reputation as a capable nurse and midwife. They had four children: Martin, Edward, Frank, and Alice.¹⁵

Next to their log house was a lagoon where Susan washed the clothes,¹⁶ and her daughter Alice remembered well the chores that were expected of the children: "... making candles by dipping strings in hot grease; creaming milk with a piece of tin perforated by a nail; making soap by boiling mixed tallow, lard, and grease with lye; sewing floursacks for the family's underclothing."¹⁷

The Schultheis home was a veritable hive of activity. When the stagecoach on the Santa Cruz Turnpike began using the Summit-to-Soquel route, Susan fed the passengers on hot biscuits, toast,

¹⁵ Stephen Payne, A Howling Wilderness (Calif. History Center, De Anza College, 1978), XXIII, p. 105.

¹⁶ Mary Hewitt, The Mountain Courier (VIP Realtors, Inc., 1980)

¹⁷ James Addison, Grandad's Pioneer Stories (1953), p. 36.

and coffee while Martin and the boys fed the horses in the barn. Once Susan got quite a surprise when some unexpected guests dropped in for a meal. Her grandson, Fred Averill, told the story: "One day three heavily armed bandits rode up. Grandma was terribly frightened, as they ordered her to 'hurry up with something to eat.' They gulped down some food, then galloped away excitedly, for they knew the Sheriff and posse were after them for murders they had committed." ¹⁸

The three bandits may not have frightened Susan as much as her grandson thought, because she never hesitated to travel alone over the almost impassable mountain roads in all kinds of weather. If there was an expectant mother, a sick person needing a nurse, or someone injured in an accident, ¹⁹ Susan would travel as far as Boulder Creek by herself to help them. ²⁰ She appeared to be more than capable of confronting danger, whether it was a hungry grizzly bear or a few hungry bandits.

In 1885 Martin donated a piece of his land to the Patchen Social Club. They built a hall, forty feet by seventy-five feet, for the purpose of holding dances, plays, and social gatherings. "... The builders, having dancing in mind, had placed heavy wagon overload springs under the dance floor joists so that the whole floor responded to the rhythm of the dancers. This was considered very, very special." ²¹

Two of the Schultheis' sons, Ed and Frank, played in the orchestra organized by their father, and people came from as far away as the Valley and from Soquel to attend the popular dances held at the "Summit Opera House". Incidentally, the Opera House lived up to its name by presenting opera programs as well as Shakespearian plays.

The original Schultheis home, the oldest structure in the Santa Cruz Mountains, still stands behind a Victorian farmhouse built in 1885. The old cabin, which has the original kitchen inside, was moved

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁹ Terri Bacon, "The Saga of Mtn. Charley" (Calif. Today, Oct. 16, 1977), ...Susan nursed Charley after his battle with the grizzly bear.

²⁰ Payne, op. cit.

²¹ Emma S. Garrod, One Life, Mine (1972), p. 114.

to the back of the property on log rollers pulled by horses to make way for the newer house. The family name is remembered in Schultheis Road, a three-and-a-half mile road cut by Martin so he could haul his prune crop down to the railroad station at Laurel.

The water in Susan's "laundry" lagoon disappeared after the 1906 earthquake, and now the area serves as a sub-irrigated garden and cornfield on the ranch known as Laguna Seca.

CLARISSA BURRELL

December 25, 1851 ... Elyria, Ohio: "We have very little temptation to use meat for we seldom have it before us. The children talk some of abstaining from all fleshly lusts but they think it would be rather hard to refuse chicken or squirrel if it was set before them." ²² So wrote Clarissa Burrell to her husband Lyman, who had gone off to the California goldfields, leaving her to care for the four children, fight off the creditors, and run the family business, a candle factory. There was no meat for the table that Christmas Day because Clarissa had just sent 1800 pounds of butchered pork to market, where it sold for five cents a pound. She used the money to pay the mortgage.

During the two years that he had been away from his family Lyman had managed to accumulate \$2,000, in spite of what seemed to be an alarming propensity for bad luck. He had arrived in the Mother Lode country by way of the Lassen Trail, an unusually difficult route; along the way he shot off a finger on his left hand in an accident. "I did not consider it a matter of much consequence," he wrote (using his good right hand) to Clarissa. ²³ Somehow this remark seemed to set the tone for his whole life -- Lyman bumbled along, shrugging off misadventures that would have discouraged a less

²² The Burrell Letters, Reginald J. Stuart, ed. (Calif. History Society, 1949-50), p. 11.

²³ Payne, op. cit., p. 4.

optimistic person, while Clarissa and the children followed behind, trying to pick up the debris.

Having made his fortune, Lyman decided not to risk a return trip across the Plains; he chose to go by way of Panama. When he finally reached home in Elyria it was with a case of yellow fever he had contracted during the journey across the Isthmus.

Clarissa and the children were anxious to move to California, but after nursing Lyman back to health she found that she would have to turn the house and other holdings into cash in order to raise enough money for the long trip. Lyman, meanwhile, returned to California, this time by ship, to try out another idea: farming.

Letters took about thirty-three days to reach Ohio from California, and in the long intervals between Clarissa watched the discouraging sight of yet another wagon train setting out. "I think if I had my hands full of cash, I and my children would take a seat in the waggon too and set off to find Pa but the cash is wanting and I am not ready so this opportunity will have to pass." ²⁴

The in-laws were not very enthusiastic about Clarissa and the children moving to California. Uncle Isaac absolutely refused to offer a cent more than \$2,000 for his nephew's property, business, and livestock, although Clarissa thought it was worth \$2,500; and Lyman's sister commented that he would work himself to death out West and not be able to "carry a peck of bran" by the time his family joined him. The debts, loneliness, and discouragement were almost overwhelming at times.

"I do not know as I am very particular where we live," she wrote wistfully to Lyman in February 1852, "but I should like very much if we might live together somewhere." ²⁵

But by August Clarissa was bargaining with would-be buyers and becoming increasingly indignant: "I believe the Men here think it is beneath their dignity to trade with a woman; or if they do condescend to do so they are in duty bound to cheat all they can.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

I am really quite out of heart trying to sell anything here... have had no offer only from Uncle Isaac of \$1500." ²⁶ Evidently Uncle Isaac had had second thoughts about his original offer and lowered his bid, sensing that Clarissa was desperate to leave before winter set in.

She turned to another relative for help: "I tried to borrow some money of Uncle James Burrell he had it to let but was afraid I could not give good security; as my husband was absent he thought a motgage [sic] on the place would not hold." ²⁷

Somehow, though, all the livestock was sold, the house and the candle factory were sold, the money scraped together, and Clarissa and the children finally boarded the clipper ship Westward Ho in Boston on October 16, 1852, for the long voyage around the Horn to San Francisco.

The voyage lasted 103 days, and Clarissa was terribly seasick until the ship reached the tradewinds of the Pacific, off the northwest coast of South America. The children, Eliza, 16 (Lyman's daughter by his first wife); Birney, 12, and the "man" of the family for the last three years; Martha, 9, and her little sister Clara, 7, soon found out that not only did the ship's captain abhor children, but that he was drunk during most of the voyage.

When they arrived in San Francisco Bay Monday morning, January 31, 1853, they had to wait three days aboard the ship, in sight of their long-awaited destination; the ship was too large to approach the wharf in the fast tides. Eventually they were towed in by a steamer and found Mr. Cary Peebles, a well-to-do Alviso landowner, who arranged their trip by steamer to Alviso where Lyman was working on a farm.

After all this, Clarissa ought to have enjoyed a care-free life in California, but it was not to be. Things started off pleasantly enough; Lyman took the family on a strawberry-hunting expedition; he took them to the seashore to eat mussels and admire

²⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁷ Ibid.

the starfish; and then he took Birney along on a seal-hunting venture that nearly ended in disaster. " ... While I was down there," wrote Birney in his diary, "there was a wave came over the rocks and washed me some 10 feet towards the bank it struck Pa and knocked him over and carried his hat away which he came very near to losing."²⁸ The Burrell bad luck was beginning to reassert itself.

By July Lyman and Birney were building a twelve-by-twenty-eight foot cabin, which he called "Mountain Home", up on the Summit ridge. It was partitioned into two rooms, a kitchen with a woodstove for cooking and heating, and a sitting room with a fireplace. Three bedrooms and a pantry were attached to one side of the house.²⁹

Sixteen year old Eliza meanwhile had met and married Zenus Sikes and set up housekeeping in Santa Clara. Clarissa's health was suffering from the Valley climate, and when time came for the family to move to their new home she made the trip from Santa Clara to Forbes' Mill in a buggy driven by a lady friend. Lyman had hired two wagons and four yoke of oxen to carry the family and their belongings to the Summit. The first night of the journey the family spread their blankets on the ground near Los Gatos Creek, where a stone flour mill was under construction.

The next day the oxen hauled the wagons over Jones' Hill and followed a logging trail as far as a hill on the north side of Moody Gulch, where the Burrells camped the second night. The terrain was getting steeper and the trail more difficult to follow, but by the end of the third day they had almost reached Mtn. Charley McKiernan's cabin on the ridge. On the fourth day they turned southeasterly down the Summit ridge toward Mountain Home.

Lyman's pleasure in finally reaching their destination was obvious: "We unpacked our goods, and took supper in our own house. We are pleased with our new home and its surroundings. We enjoyed the fine view of those magnificent old mountains on the North. We were delighted to see the waters of the Pacific on the South, nearly

²⁸ Burrell Letters, op.cit., p. 28. Birney Burrell's Diary.

²⁹ Payne, op. cit., p. 112.

fifteen hundred feet below us: it seemed as if we had never seen such gorgeous sunsets as we then saw here." ³⁰

Little did Lyman suspect, while he rhapsodized over the beauty of the sunsets, that he had built Mountain Home right beside a grizzly bear trail. The first inkling the family had of this was when a bear tore off their gate, which was blocking his path. Undaunted, Lyman set the family up in business, caring for a herd of dairy cows that belonged to a Mr. Wayland. He took his pay in cows, and in two years owned his own herd of twenty-eight milk cows.³¹ Clarissa and the children were kept busy milking cows twice a day, churning sixty pounds of butter a week, and making cheese. Satisfied that the family members were suitably occupied, Lyman started another project -- planting fruit trees and grape vines on his land --one of his more successful ideas.

Eliza and Mr. Sikes (he is never referred to by his given name in Clarissa's letters) moved to the Summit area with their three-week-old baby in 1854, and Clarissa and the children met the moving party, led by Lyman and daughter Martha, as they entered the Los Gatos Creek canyon with the wagonload of household goods. Unfortunately, a recent forest fire had burned a bridge over one of the ravines and they were forced to abandon the wagon, transfer the goods onto the horses, and follow the old, steep trail that crossed and recrossed the creek. Clarissa carried her tiny granddaughter on "old sure footed Kate", the family horse.

"Mr. Sikes carried the babe in his arms over the roughest parts of the road [he was walking]. We had quite a time of it," she continued, "but we arrived at the home before dark and with much less fatigue than one would imagine; indeed we were all quite well the next day and I commenced washing and cleaning." ³²

Getting home before dark was a matter of concern to Clarissa. Birney, now about fourteen, had taken on a man's work from the time

³⁰ Burrell Letters, op. cit., p. 31. Lyman Burrell's "Reminiscences".

³¹ Ibid., p. 40. Letter, Clarissa.

³² Ibid., p. 37.

the family arrived in Alviso, where he plowed a mile-long field with a team of oxen. He helped his father build Mountain Home and helped his mother milk the dairy herd. Another of his jobs was to haul in the family provisions, brought from San Jose on pack animals, up the steep trail from the creek canyon to the house. In a letter to the relatives back in Ohio, Clarissa wrote, "Birney went down two or three times alone and did not get back till after dark -- I do not feel very easy about him you may be sure for the trail passes through the canyon of a creek for about three miles, it is a dismal place after sundown ..." ³³

The canyons were indeed dismal after dark, and the mountains were home for grizzly bears and mountain lions. Clarissa was only too aware that there were wild animals around their home; anyone who kept livestock knew the damage they did.

"We have not yet had the satisfaction of seeing any of the monsters that inhabit these mountains and ravines in the shape of grizzly bears, lions, panthers, &c, but we see their tracks and know of their depredations," she wrote. ³⁴ They were soon to have this questionable satisfaction, or at least Lyman was. He was attacked by a grizzly bear near his home and his leg badly mauled.

During his six months of convalescence -- before he began hobbling around on an improvised crutch made from a split board -- the entire weight of the chores fell upon Clarissa and the children. Perhaps during this period Lyman had time to realize that Clarissa needed some additional help, so he hired a skilled dairyman for three months to help with feeding and milking the herd.

Clarissa's description of a cozy winter evening at Mountain Home might have had some influence on her brother's decision to come West and settle near her in the Santa Cruz Mountains. "We find the fireplace quite a luxury during the rainy season, it gives sufficient heat and seems to chase [sic] away the damp better than

³³ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁴ Ibid.

a stove, and many a pleasant evening have we spent by the bright cheerful light of our red wood fire. Mr. Burrell, Birney and Martha reading aloud by turns in some newspaper or entertaining story book while I knit and Clara played with her doll." ³⁵

Birney's diary, faithfully kept from the time he boarded the Westward Ho, noted that on February 10, 1857, his mother was going to the Valley for medical treatment. In Clarissa's absence the milking, churning, gardening, laundry, and cooking had to be taken over by the children, so it is no surprise that the diary-keeping had to be set aside for awhile. The diary is blank from May 28 to October 25, 1857, and Clarissa's last letters to her relatives in the East were not dated; but it is believed that she died some time during this period.

Just as there is no record of her death, there is no certainty about where her grave is located. In 1949 Mrs. Clara B. Hirsch, her granddaughter, answering an inquiry about Clarissa, wrote: "Grandmother was buried in the Mountains on their property ... later becoming the property of Miss Martha Burrell." ³⁶

BARBARA MC KIERNAN

It must have seemed to the inhabitants of the Santa Cruz Mountains that 1854 was a peak year for grizzly bear attacks. Both Lyman Burrell and Mtn. Charley McKiernan had harrowing experiences with them, but McKiernan became a legend when he survived an attack that crushed his skull. After some preliminary patchwork by Drs. Bell and Ingersoll from San Jose, who measured the gap in his skull and fitted him with a silver plate, Charley returned to his cabin to recuperate.

"He does not think that his mind or memory has been affected

³⁵ Ibid., p. 35. Clarissa's brother was Rev. James Wright, for whom Wright's Station was named.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 48, footnote 23. Lyman married three more times after Clarissa's death, marrying for the last time in 1876 to Mrs. Filomena Vining.

by the injury he received from the bear," wrote Dr. Ingersoll, "but sometimes complains of a dull sensation in the region of the brain. His health is good, but as a matter of course, his face is much disfigured."³⁷

The bear had torn out a three-by-five inch triangle of Charley's skull over his left eye, causing the eye to turn upward about eight degrees. Charley always wore a hat pulled down low over his blind eye to hide his scarred face. The "dull sensation in the region of the brain" persisted, though, and the silver plate was removed after a few weeks. The following year he was forced to seek further medical treatment from a new doctor in Palo Alto for agonizingly painful headaches. Dr. Spencer performed additional surgery and removed an abscess. From that time on Charley's condition improved.³⁸

It was during his convalescence that Charley met Barbara Berricks, the Irish nurse who cared for him after his operation and during the long period of recuperation. It probably didn't take long to discover that her patient was also a native of Ireland. He had left there in 1848, served in Australia and New Zealand with the British army, then signed on board the El Dorado in 1849 when it was sailing for San Francisco with a load of gold-seekers.

Barbara must have been fascinated by the young man's tales of soldiering and gold-mining, not to mention his descriptions of life in the wilds of the Santa Cruz Mountains, hunting game and fighting off ferocious grizzly bears. In turn, Charley was undoubtedly reassured by the young lady who not only was a competent and caring nurse, but wasn't repelled or shocked by his scarred, battered face. He was twenty-six years old³⁹ and had enjoyed an adventurous bachelor life, but when he returned to the cabin on the Summit ridge there probably were times when he wished for someone to share his experiences with and talk to during the long winter

³⁷ Barbara Bailey Kelley, "The Legend of Mtn. Charley", The Los Gatos Weekly, July 4, 1984.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Depending on whose figures you believe. One date of birth is 1825, another is 1830, the date used here.

evenings. And perhaps his close call with death made him realize that living alone and isolated could be very hazardous.

For whatever reasons, and certainly after a great deal of consideration, Charley decided to take his courage in his hands; in 1862 he asked his Irish nurse to marry him and move to the mountains. It was the beginning of more than twenty years of mountain life for Barbara, and they were interesting ones.

She soon discovered that her husband's interests were more diversified than she had suspected. He owned 3,000 acres of redwood forest land and was involved in logging; he operated a toll road which, with a gate at Patchen, opened the way over the Summit to Martin's ranch at Glenwood, down into Scott's Valley, and eventually to Santa Cruz; he supplied venison to the San Francisco market through his hunting. In deference to his new way of life as a husband and father, he planted orchards and vineyards, built a hotel-stagestop on the property, and began raising livestock. This last enterprise didn't work out too well -- the mountain lions killed his sheep and the pigs ran wild, creating havoc among the stagecoach horses using his toll road.

Just when it seemed that things were settling down into a routine and Barbara could get on with the business of raising seven children and cooking meals for the stagecoach passengers, Charley got embroiled in a road-war with a rival stagecoach company which chose to turn southeast on the Summit ridge and travel to the coast by way of Soquel Road rather than pay toll to him. Charley then formed his own stage company and the price war was on, until the rival company dropped its fare to fifty cents a trip from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz.⁴⁰ Charley refused to cut his fare any lower and began losing money. He countered by opening a liquor store at his stagestop in 1870 -- one more enterprise to look after.

In the midst of all this turmoil, Barbara continued to send

⁴⁰ Payne, op.cit., p. 24.

the children off to Summit School for an education of sorts, and kept trying to polish the rough edges off of Charley's personality. She must have at least partially succeeded, because to judge by a portrait of him, he became the very model of a distinguished, well-to-do, middle-aged citizen. The painting shows Charley dressed in a black suit, the ever-present hat pulled low on his brow, neatly trimmed beard, Masonic emblem dangling from his watch chain, and gold shirt studs.

By 1884 the railroad had destroyed the toll road business and the stagestop; and the older children were reaching an age where they required schooling beyond what was offered in the one-room mountain school. The McKiernans had reached a comfortable middle age and decided to move to San Jose where the family could take advantage of the educational opportunities offered in the city.

Would Charley McKiernan have been the same man if he had not met and married Barbara? Just as his encounter with the grizzly changed his life, so Barbara's support and influence no doubt helped to shape his later years. Without her he might have become an eccentric, surly recluse, living alone in his cabin on the ridge, hiding his disfigured face from the stares of the curious. But it is tempting to speculate that Barbara McKiernan had a lot to do with taming the bear-fighter and helping him to become a much-loved legend.

ELIZA FARNHAM

The County Board of Supervisors gave Sheriff James Murphy the job of exploring a route over the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1854, with the idea of opening a road to stagecoach travel. Fortunately for Sheriff Murphy, he was an excellent horseman and not easily discouraged

by the rough, steep terrain.

After Jones' Road ended at the sawmill on Limekiln Gulch flat Murphy had to follow the trails left by loggers through the mountains, descending into ravines, climbing out again, and keeping on the alert for grizzlies and mountain lions along the way. If a road could be built from Forbes' Mill through this almost impassable territory to the summit of the mountains, travel would be possible between the Santa Clara Valley and the port of Santa Cruz. Freight wagons could carry supplies and lumber, and stagecoaches could carry passengers back and forth. Word had reached him that Charley McKiernan already had done some road-building up on the Summit, so he pushed on in the direction of his cabin.

Reaching McKiernan's cabin after a grueling climb, Sheriff Murphy sat down with him beside a nearby cool spring and explained his mission. The idea of a road through the mountains appealed to McKiernan, and when Sheriff Murphy wondered whether it would be possible to ever get any wheeled vehicles over such a road, Charley informed him that not only was it possible, but that it had already been done. It seemed that a widow lady from back East -- a Mrs. Farnham -- had driven her buggy over the summit of the mountains, alone.⁴¹ Sheriff Murphy was so impressed that he proposed the summit pass be named in her honor, but since Mrs. Farnham didn't stay around to defend the title her accomplishment became lost in obscurity.

To those who knew Eliza W. Farnham this information probably would not have surprised them unduly. Eliza set a very firm course in life and was not to be easily deterred from it. She was a lady with a mission, and she would not let the lack of a road or a few wild animals (if she even considered this possibility) stand in her way. Her late husband, Thomas Jefferson Farnham, a lawyer, died in San Francisco in 1848, after spending eight years adventuring in California. Bancroft, in his Pioneer Register, wryly described him

⁴¹ Payne, op. cit., p. 12; also, Lyman Burrell's "Recollections", op. cit. Wulf says that she made the trip, but with a male companion.

as "a writer of somewhat fertile imagination", and roundly criticized his writings on California as "worthless trash" and "a tissue of lies." He and Eliza had three children, and upon learning of his death, his widow decided to go to California -- possibly to settle some financial matters.

A photograph of Eliza shows her to be a rather gaunt-faced woman with a prominent nose, and a firm determined chin. She is wearing wire-framed spectacles and her dark hair is parted in the center, smooth on top, with fashionable shoulder-length "sausage curls". Bancroft warily described her as "... a woman bent on doing the world as much good as possible ..." ⁴² -- and probably one to be avoided at all cost by the hell-raising male population in the California goldfields.

The trip around the Horn to California was a long, expensive undertaking, and Eliza hit upon the idea of financing it and accomplishing a good deed at the same time. She well knew that the men who had scrambled to the placer mines and diggings led godless, dissolute lives; and she also knew how to correct the situation. What these lost souls, abandoned to drinking, gambling, and (Heaven forbid) worse, needed was the uplifting, gentling influence of some good women in their lives.

On February 2, 1849, advertisements appeared in several Eastern newspapers calling for "intelligent, virtuous women" to go to California with her as "checks upon the many evils there." She received more than two hundred responses. There were a few strings attached: the ladies must be single or widowed, and over twenty-five; they must bring with them a character recommendation from their clergyman or other authority in their town; and they must be prepared to put up \$250 to pay the costs of the voyage, plus something to live on until they became gainfully employed in California, or, better yet, married.

⁴² H. H. Bancroft, History of California (San Francisco, 1886), Vol. XX, p. 734.

Eliza's plan had the support of such dignitaries as William Cullen Bryant, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, and the great advocate of Western migration, Horace Greeley. Armed with this authority and gratified by the response, Eliza planned to charter a ship to carry about 130 brides-to-be to San Francisco, but the great enterprise began to fall apart. Someone started a whispering campaign that Eliza was acting as a procurer to lure virtuous women away from the safety and respectability of home and family, and by the time she was ready to leave for California only three women were still willing to go.⁴³

Such a defeat would have discouraged a less determined person, but Eliza went ahead with the trip to California in 1850 and began writing about her experiences in the new state. Six years later her book, California Indoors and Out, was published. Some time before Sheriff Murphy's arduous trip in 1854, she made her trek over the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains, possibly gathering material for her book.

At a time when widows were expected to stay at home, or to at least remain in the background, she pushed her way into the outside world and the excitement of a new state to make a name for herself as a writer.

CHARLOTTE PARKHURST

If Eliza Farnham opened the door a crack for independent, self-supporting women, Charlotte Parkhurst kicked it open with a bang. Aside from Hank Monk, made famous by Horace Greeley's description of a hair-raising ride over the Sierras as his passenger, the name Charlie Parkhurst stands out in the brief, exciting story of stagecoaching in the West.

⁴³ Joan Swallow Reiter, The Women (Alexandria, Va., 1978) The Old West Series, p. 50.

Charlotte was born about 1812 in New Hampshire and orphaned at an early age. She first dressed as a male to make her escape from the orphanage, and probably never again dressed as a woman. Employment for a young girl in those times was out of the question, but boys could apprentice themselves in a business, learn the trade, and eventually earn a living at it. Charlie found a job as a stable boy, and it soon became apparent that the new apprentice had a special way with horses. Before long Charlie was handling teams, and from there it was a natural progression to becoming a stagecoach driver. The other drivers may have wondered why the new fellow didn't mingle very much with them and preferred to sleep in the stable with the horses, but they evidently accepted the small, wiry driver who claimed to get along better with horses than with people.⁴⁴

After gold was discovered Charlie came West, and from 1851 on was driving stagecoaches on nearly every road in the Mother Lode, with the reputation of being one of the safest and fastest drivers in California.⁴⁵ According to one source, "... in more than twenty years no highwayman had dared to hold up a stagecoach with Charlie Parkhurst on the box, for the first two who tried it had been shot dead in their tracks."⁴⁶

By this time Charlie was over forty years old and was described as being of medium height (five feet, seven inches), broad-shouldered, and beardless. A patch over one eye was evidence of an encounter with a horse that obviously didn't realize who it was dealing with; but the other gray eye, sharp as a hawk's, squinted out from under a battered hat that shaded a leathery, brown face. Charlie's voice was rather sharp and high-pitched, but she had learned to hold her own with the men by now -- she "smoked cigars, chewed tobacco, drank moderately, played cards, and shook dice for cigars and drinks; always cheerful and agreeable, but always reticent about personal matters." ⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁵ Ralph Moody, Stagecoach West (Promontory Press, 1967), p. 320.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Charlie worked for the Pioneer Line which was taken over by Wells Fargo in 1866 when the company bought out Ben Holliday. The Pioneer Line provided service between San Jose and Santa Cruz, and was the rival company that engaged Charley McKiernan in the great price war, so feelings occasionally ran high between drivers on the two lines.⁴⁸ Charlie's route out of Los Gatos went by way of Lexington, where driver and passengers undoubtedly stopped to refresh themselves at Sarah Paddock's Lexington House before the perilous ordeal ahead. Two horses were added to the four-horse team for the long haul up to the summit. Avoiding the toll gate to Mtn. Charley Road at Patchen, the stagecoach proceeded straight ahead up to the Schultheis ranch, then turned southeast down the ridge to pick up the Soquel Road leading to the coast.

Accidents were not uncommon on the narrow mountain roads: coaches were blown off the road during winter storms; dragged by runaway teams, forcing the passengers to jump for their lives; and horses were spooked by wild pigs running across their path. But the passengers and mail were getting through to Santa Cruz, and Charlie, despite the ravages of rheumatism (a common problem among drivers exposed to years of bad weather) continued to drive until the railroad began pushing into the mountains. Then she retired to a cabin on Bean Creek to raise cattle and haul freight for neighbors, with partner Frank Woodward, a bachelor.⁴⁹

Ulysses S. Grant was running for President in 1868 and Charlie registered to vote. "A bronze plaque erected in the town of Soquel, where the duly registered Charley [sic] Parkhurst had voted in November 1868, proclaimed that it marked the site where the first woman cast a ballot in a Presidential election."⁵⁰

The disguise was holding, but eventually the truth came out. When Charlie Parkhurst died in 1879, the neighbors came to the cabin to lay out the body for burial, and they discovered that the renowned

⁴⁸ Garrod, op. cit., p. 76.

⁴⁹ Young, op. cit., p.105.

⁵⁰ Reiter, op. cit., p. 178.

stagecoach driver was a woman. Rheumatism and cancer of the tongue were listed as causes of death, but the examining doctor, called in by the astounded neighbors, definitely established that Charlie had been a mother.⁵¹

The San Francisco Chronicle immediately picked up on the bizarre story, but unfortunately neglected to record Frank Woodward's reaction to the revelation that his long-time friend and partner was a female. Perhaps he was speechless.

ALICE MATTY

The advent of the railroad through the Santa Cruz Mountains marked the end for toll road keepers like Charlie McKiernan and stagecoach drivers like Charley Parkhurst, but it opened the way for the developing fruit and vineyard business. Small settlements sprang up as the railroad advanced and became shipping centers for produce and lumber. Wright's Station was one of these centers, and it was Alice Matty's home.

In 1887 journalist Josephine McCracken saw the town in its heyday, and wrote that Wrights (as it was commonly called) had "... a depot, hotel, store, post office, blacksmith shop, besides a number of decidedly ugly and disgraceful-looking Chinese stores and wash houses. Fir-crowned mountains frowned down upon it, and the hideous black mouth of the great tunnel close by is always wide open, with the evident and determined intention of swallowing up the train -- engine, cars, and all -- as it approaches from the San Francisco side."

Alice's father, Antone Matty, was originally from the Maritime Alps region of France. In 1880 he moved his family from San Francisco to Wrights, where he worked in the general store for eight years.

An overheated stove in the town's hotel caused a fire in 1885

⁵¹ Moody, op. cit., p. 322.

that burnt the entire settlement to the ground. While it was being rebuilt Antone ran the store from a boxcar parked on the railroad siding.⁵² By 1888 Antone had saved enough money to buy the store, and by 1896 he owned the town. Since they had six children, Antone was instrumental in organizing a school district, and soon the town had a school. It was a shingle-walled building with a belfry, and was in operation until 1928. Matty became a member of the Santa Clara Valley Pioneer Association, and later joined the Sempervirens Club, a conservation organization devoted to saving the redwoods.

Southern Pacific bought out the narrow gauge railroad about this time and decided to take advantage of the then-current craze for picnic excursion trains. They opened a short spur line along the creek at Wrights, named the area "Sunset Park", and began hauling trainloads of passengers into the mountains to enjoy the beauties of nature and the conviviality of unrestrained partying. The Mattys were scandalized by the riotous conduct of the city folks, who were reported to have gathered armloads of ferns and wilflowers, left a trail of discarded litter strewn along the railroad right-of-way, and kicked out the passenger car windows on the return trip. It took the earthquake of 1906 to finally shut down Sunset Park.⁵³

Alice, her sisters Teresa and Anna, and her three brothers grew up surrounded by the excitement and dangers that went with railroading at Wrights. When the station agent, Mr. Hunter, was replaced in the early 1900's Alice, by now a bright, conscientious young lady, was appointed to take over his position -- becoming the first woman station agent hired by Southern Pacific in California. Bruce MacGregor described the job: "The Wrights station agent inked in waybills for loadings of hay, beans, prunes, and figs, cargo that would fill two or three boxcars a day. The lumber freighting eclipsed all other cargoes combined."⁵⁴ There was a daily freight from Alameda and as many as half a dozen local freights

⁵² Payne, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵³ Bruce A. MacGregor, A Centennial: South Pacific Coast (Boulder, Colo., 1982), p. 195.

⁵⁴ Bruce A. MacGregor, South Pacific Coast (Berkeley, 1968), p. 136.

and mixed trains (passengers and freight) rumbling through the Santa Cruz Mountains every day on their way to Santa Cruz or San Jose.

In addition to preparing waybills, Alice was the telegrapher, the ticket agent, and she handled the manual signal levers that threw the switches when trains needed to be taken off the mainline and placed on sidings. Located where it was, in the bottom of a canyon, Wrights had its share of flash floods, rockslides, and forest fires; she frequently had to telegraph for a repair crew to clear rocks from the track, or shore up a sagging roadbed after a heavy storm. And with the increased rail traffic came an increase in the number of accidents, all adding to the pressure of her job. Her reputation as a quick wit was known up and down the line, and the other agents probably left their keys open to catch Alice's telegraphed messages.

Alice's brother, Louis, had been badly burned while fighting a forest fire that swept through the mountains in October of 1899. He and his brother Frank had gone to help put out the fire at Ernst Meyer's winery in Austrian Gulch. It was more than a neighborly act; their sister Anna was married to Emil Meyer, Ernst's son. Again, in 1904 Louis went out to fight another forest fire and lost his life. A few months later, in November, Alice's mother died. The family was disappearing. Anna and Frank were married and had their own homes, Teresa had died at eighteen in an accident, and now Louis and their mother were gone, leaving Antone and Alice alone in the big family home at Wrights. After all the years of excitement and activity everything seemed strangely quiet and subdued; even the town of Wrights seemed to be quietly fading away.

Alice never married, perhaps because she decided to stay at Wrights and look after her father, who lived until 1922. In later years she worked at the Bank of America in Los Gatos when it was located at the corner of Main Street and Santa Cruz Avenue.⁵⁵ The banking business must have seemed rather tame when she remembered

⁵⁵ Betty Ermert, telephone interview, March 28, 1986.

the excitement of the early railroading days at Wrights, a town that has so completely disappeared that today no trace of it is left except the ruins of the old tunnel.

ELSIE TORREY

Trains brought about a great improvement in mountain travel, but they traveled only where the tracks were laid, so people were still dependent on the faithful horse and buggy --or wagon-- in the early 1900's. Butchers brought their wares by wagon to supply the small hotels and resorts in out of the way locations, and householders along the way watched for the grocery wagon's weekly visits. If a rancher's wife had to take her butter and eggs down to a store in Los Gatos, she loaded them into a light wagon or buggy, after carefully packing the eggs in bran, and drove down the dusty, winding roads.⁵⁶

Mail delivery to the mountains was started about 1900, and in 1906 Elsie Torrey and her brother Lewis hired on as rural mail carriers. It was the beginning of a long and eventful career for Elsie, who drove her horse and buggy through all kinds of weather and over all types of roads to deliver the mail. During her last ten years with the Post Office she missed only two days of work: "... once when thrown from her buggy while fording the Los Gatos Creek during a downpour, and again when she fell while getting out of her buggy."⁵⁷ Reasons enough to take a couple of days off.

By the time Elsie signed on as a mail carrier she didn't have to worry about grizzly bears, since the last reported killing of a grizzly had taken place in 1888 at Ben Lomond, but in the summer there were still the rattlesnakes and yellowjackets, and in winter the rutted roads and swollen streams. While out one day making scheduled deliveries, Elsie's horse apparently had enough of risking

⁵⁶ Garrod, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁷ Bruntz, History of Los Gatos, (Valley Publishers, 1971), p. 135.

his neck trying to cross one of those raging torrents and refused to go into the water. After clucking, coaxing, and switching, it was obvious that her efforts to get the horse across the stream were not going to work, so Elsie removed her shoes and stockings, hitched up her skirt, and jumped out of the buggy. Taking the reins, she led the balky animal across the creek, and undoubtedly shamed him into completing the route.

For twenty-two years mountain residents could depend on Elsie to bring the mail through, and her retirement in 1928 marked the end of an era in rural mail delivery.

MARY ANN BROWN

Women came to the Santa Cruz Mountains for different reasons: sometimes they came to establish a home with their families; sometimes their work took them into the mountains; and sometimes they came looking for a refuge. Mary Ann Brown came for this reason when she arrived in Saratoga in 1881.⁵⁸ She was a widow who had seen much trouble during her life. She had married a strange, obsessed man, a widower with five children, who was twice her age; they had thirteen children, seven of whom died in childhood. John was a visionary, but a failure as a businessman. Mary Ann, although only sixteen when she married, seemed more mature and in control of her emotions. From childhood she had been taught that a woman's job was to keep house and bear children, and her physical stamina helped her endure the hardships of poverty and constant child-bearing.

She was plain-looking, with large bones and a square jaw, unsoftened by her straight black hair which was pulled tightly back into a knot on the nape of her neck, but John was genuinely fond of her. She carried with her over the years one of the letters he had

⁵⁸ R.V. Garrod, Saratoga Story, (1962), p. 23.

written while he was away from the family in 1847; "... the partner of my own choice, and the sharer of my poverty, trials, discredit, and sore afflictions for quite a number of years. I do not forget the firm attachment of her who has remained my fast and firm and affectionate friend ... I really admire your constancy ... I want your face to shine even if my own should be dark and cloudy..."⁵⁹

John may have been strict and hard on his family, but he was always hardest upon himself.

Four years after they were married John was wiped out by the Panic of 1837 and lost his tannery; but soon he was off to Massachusetts, leaving the family behind in Pennsylvania, to attempt a new venture -- the wool business --and failed in that, too. He returned home to try his hand as a farmer and wool-grower.⁶⁰ He had good stock; Merino sheep were the best of the finewools, but everything he put his hand to ended in failure, perhaps because he was convinced that the Lord had more important things planned for him.

When trouble erupted in Kansas in 1855, John moved his family, again, to a rocky farm in the Adirondack Mountains near North Elba, New York, and went off to join his four sons -- Owen, Frederick, Salmon, and Oliver. They urged him to come to Kansas and help them get rid of the pro-slavery people who were pouring into the new state. John Jr. was in prison, under indictment for treason, but was soon to be released and would join his father and brothers.

While Mary Ann and her two daughters anxiously waited for word from John, he and his sons carried out bloody raids on the pro-slavery settlers. Mary received a letter at last, but the news it contained was heart-breaking. Frederick had been murdered near Osawatomie. John didn't even stay to bury the boy, but took his cap and disappeared into the surrounding brush, leaving others to dig the grave. He did have the presence of mind, however, to prepare an account of the raid on the pro-slavery settlers for the newspapers back East, in order to publicize himself and his cause. It seemed as if his obsession

⁵⁹ Berrie Stavis, John Brown: The Word and the Sword (New York, 1970), pp. 31-32.

⁶⁰ Stephen B. Oates, "To Wash This Land in Blood", Pt. I (The American West, July 1969), p. 37.

left him no time to grieve for the loss of a son.⁶¹

By 1859 the situation reached a tragic climax when John and four others in his raiding party were captured at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, by Col. Robert E. Lee. Sons Oliver and Watson died during the fighting, and John was hanged for leading the raid on a federal arsenal. Mary Ann's years of wandering were about to begin.

The remnants of the family moved to Red Bluff, California, in the fall of 1864. The cross-country trip took six months, and they brought with them six of the prized Merino sheep as a foundation flock in the new land. Six years later they were on the move again, over the Trinity Alps to Rhonerville in Humboldt County. It seemed that there was no place for them to make a permanent home; but by 1881 Mary Ann, her daughters Sarah and Ellen, Ellen's husband James Fablinger, a school teacher, and their three little children arrived on the outskirts of the village of Saratoga. They had bought 160 acres of prune orchard on Bohlman Road, high in the hills above Saratoga, and were hoping to put down permanent roots in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Somehow, word got around that John Brown's widow was moving into the area, and when the family arrived it was met by a "patriotic" organization, the Knights of the Golden Circle, a group of die-hard Confederate sympathizers. The Knights had threatened to hang them if they attempted to settle in the area; but when they confronted the small group -- three women, three children, and one man -- with their meagre belongings, a strange thing happened. The local vigilante group must have realized that the bloody, divisive Civil War was finally over, and all that remained were scattered remnants of suffering survivors, many of whom were the innocent victims of circumstance. The Knights brought in their teams and wagons and helped the family haul their scanty household articles and livestock up to the new home.⁶² The Browns had finally found a place of their own.

Mary Ann spent only three years in her mountain home. She

⁶¹ Dates, op. cit., Pt. II (The American West, Nov. 1969), p. 61.

⁶² Garrod, R.V., op. cit., p. 23.

died of cancer in 1884 in San Francisco, but her body was returned to the haven that she and her family had finally reached after the long years of wandering. She was buried in the Madronia Cemetery at Saratoga, a long way from where John's body was laid to rest in the bleak, rocky soil of North Elbe.

JOSEPHINE CLIFFORD MC CRACKEN

Looking at the smoking ruins of Monte Paraiso, Josephine McCracken knew that the flames had destroyed more than a house. A dream that had been years in the building was destroyed in a few terrible hours when the forest fire surrounded the house on the summit ridge near Loma Prieta. Despite the heroic efforts of the neighbors and friends her home was in ashes, and all around her lay the blackened giant redwoods -- trees that had stood through the centuries, and had more recently escaped the axes of the loggers.

Even now, an idea was developing in her mind: was it possible that she could make other people aware that they were losing one of their most unique natural gifts -- to awaken them in time to save what was left of the great trees before accident or progress wiped them out? The urgency of this cause was the beginning of a small conservation group who had been directly involved in the great fire of 1899, the people who lived in and around Summit ridge.⁶³ When photographer Andrew P. Hill came to photograph the devastation of the fire, Josephine enlisted him in the fight to save the redwoods, and the Sempervirens Club had its beginning.

Josephine was a writer and her articles appeared frequently in the Santa Cruz Sentinel. Her stories about the fire and the heroism of the firefighters to save their homes and land stirred public interest to the point that preservation of the magnificent

⁶³ Patricia Loomis, "Early Settlers Saved the Redwoods", San Jose News, Nov. 10, 1973.

trees became a matter of statewide concern. Hill's photographs provided the graphic evidence of the destruction while Josephine's articles brought the element of human loss to the reader. Together, the combination resulted in the State Legislature creating Big Basin, the first redwood park in California.

It must have been gratifying to her to have been a part of this public awakening, to have influenced through her writings not only the public, but the law-making body of the state to take action on an important matter. She had not always had this kind of influence, and it was almost a symbol of how much her life had changed.

She came to the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1881 as Josephine Clifford, a single woman, forty-two years old, in search of a quiet place of her own after a particularly disturbing experience. The daughter of German parents living in St Louis, she had been well-educated in private schools and later at the Externat of the Sacred Heart Convent school. She took a job as a teacher after finishing her schooling, and in 1864 she met and married Lt. James A. Clifford, a cavalry officer.

When the Civil War ended, Lt. Clifford's Third Cavalry unit was sent to Ft. Union, New Mexico, to take part in the army's final effort to break the resistance of the Apaches. She traveled with the troops, as many army wives did, from Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, to New Mexico, and wrote about the long trip in "Marching with the Command". As barren and lonely as Ft. Union was, it at least had a few adobe buildings to give a feeling of some protection; but before long, Lt. Clifford's group was moved to the outpost of Ft. Bayard, Arizona, where he and Josephine lived in a large tent.⁶⁴

Once the novelty of the place wore off and the boredom of routine military life set in, there was nothing much to do but talk; and it seemed that James Clifford had something on his mind that he needed to talk about. He confided to Josephine that James Clifford was not his real name. He had changed his name and joined the Union

⁶⁴ Payne, op. cit., p. 73.

Army in order to escape the Texas Rangers. -- And why were the Rangers pursuing him? Well, it seemed that he had killed a man in Texas; self defense, of course. Now that he had relieved his conscience by confessing to his wife, perhaps he could rest easier. But something kept gnawing away at James Clifford; he began to watch Josephine more closely, to see how she spent her time and who her companions were. After all, she now had information that could destroy him if it ever came to the attention of his commanding officer.

The fear that his wife might betray him became an all-consuming obsession, and in order to have any peace, Clifford -- half-crazy by now -- decided he would have to frighten her into keeping his secret. The first hint Josephine had that James' mind had snapped was when she awoke one night to find him standing over her with a hatchet, threatening to cut off her head. Another time he tied her to the bed and held his service revolver to her head, squeezing the trigger several times while the hammer snapped against the empty chamber, threatening to kill her if she talked to anyone about his past. His behavior was driving her insane, and she could see no way out.

One day Josephine finally managed to elude James' watchful eye long enough to appeal to his commanding officer, who immediately arranged to provide her with a military escort out of Ft. Bayard. The distraught Lt. Clifford was placed under guard and eventually discharged from the army. Josephine never saw him again.

Since her mother, brother, and sister were now living in San Francisco, Josephine went there and obtained a job at the South Cosmopolitan School, teaching German; but her first love was writing, and before long her articles were being accepted by the Overland Monthly, a well-known magazine edited by Bret Harte and later by Ambrose Bierce. She began to number among her acquaintances such literary figures as Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, Jack London, and poet George Sterling. It was a far cry from the nightmare she had been living.

Artists, writers, and musicians were moving into the Santa Cruz Mountains as they became more accessible, and Josephine was one of the first to take up land near the small German settlement of Austrian Gulch in the shadow of Loma Prieta. There were very few single women living in the mountains at that time, but it might be assumed that after all Josephine had been through she didn't mind a little solitude.

During the summer of 1882, while visiting friends in Arizona, she met Jackson McCracken, Speaker of the Territorial Legislature, and they were married later that year in Salinas. After the fire destroyed Monte Paraiso the McCrackens rebuilt their home and stayed in the Santa Cruz Mountains until Jackson's death in 1904.

Once more alone, Josephine moved to Santa Cruz and found a new home, which she appropriately named "Gedenkheim" (Memory House), perhaps because she brought to it twenty-three years of cherished memories from the Santa Cruz Mountains. She continued her writing career and her efforts to protect the wildlife and redwood forests of the state until her death in 1921 at the age of eighty-two.

SARA BARD FIELD

Josephine McCracken had demonstrated that women could exert influence on legislative bodies to enact worthwhile laws if they could get public support for their cause. But until the second decade of the Twentieth Century women had no real voice in the government, because they were denied the right to vote.

Steps to correct this inequity were about to be taken by the first Women Voter's Convention at the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Twelve western states had already granted the right to vote to their female residents by 1915, and the western women

were determined to bring this message to the women in the East; in fact, they intended to take their message directly to President Woodrow Wilson.⁶⁵

The moving force behind this crusade was a little woman named Alice Paul. During the Exposition she and her supporters had collected enough signatures supporting women's suffrage to fill a petition more than 18,000 feet long. Now she was ready to send her emissaries across the country by automobile (an unheard-of thing in 1915). The crusading ladies would make speeches in all the cities and towns along the way and add more signatures to the petition, which would then be presented to the President when they met with him in Washington, D.C.

Two women had been selected to represent the Women Voter's Convention: Frances Joliffe and Sara Bard Field; and most intriguing of all, Alice Paul had found two women who would undertake to drive them cross-country in their massive Overland automobile. The driver and her "mechanician", two Swedish ladies who lived in Providence, Rhode Island, wanted to get their newly-acquired automobile back home. They generously agreed to take the two extra passengers along, and after a jubilant send-off in San Francisco, the Overland headed north to Sacramento.

In 1915 the only cross-country road was the so-called Lincoln Highway, not much better than a wagon trail. There were no road maps, no gas stations along the way, and certainly no motels to stay in. By the time the Overland reached Sacramento Frances Joliffe had become ill and reluctantly dropped out of the great adventure. Sara may have had second thoughts, too, at this point. It had all happened so quickly that she was still not sure exactly how she had ended up in the big car with two strangers who could barely speak English, on her way across the United States. After all, she was a poet, not a speechmaker, and now the responsibility for the success or failure of the crusade for voting rights rested squarely upon her.

⁶⁵ Amelie Fry, "Along the Suffrage Trail", (The American West, Jan. 1969), p. 16.

As the car turned east toward Reno, Sara must have thought about those last hectic days before departure. She had to make arrangements for her two children to stay with their father, her divorced husband, Rev. Field, a Baptist minister in Berkeley. When Charles Wood, her fiance, heard about the impending cross-country crusade he closed his law office in Portland and hurried down to San Francisco to see her off. His parting gift to her was a heavy robe of buffalo fur -- a most useful item, as it turned out, since they were getting underway in October.⁶⁶ Charles would have loved to make such a trip; he had campaigned all over the West in the army during the Chief Joseph War, and it would have been very comforting to have had him along. But Sara had too much pride and determination to admit her very real anxiety about this long trip with two strangers. What none of the three realized was that the trip would take over two months and cover 5,000 miles before they reached their destination.

Somewhere outside Reno in the Great American Desert, as it was then called, Sara became aware that Miss Kinstedt, the mechanic, was going to be a problem. She began complaining about the "unaccustomed servitude of her role", and resented that Sara always got all the attention when they arrived in a town and she made her speech.⁶⁷ The driver, Miss Kindborg, tried to smooth things over, but the mechanic kept muttering to herself in Swedish and throwing dark looks at Sara.

In Wyoming they had to push the car through snowdrifts; in Kansas the Overland dropped into a deep mudhole and they had to be towed out by an amazed farmer and his team of horses. "Well, you girls got guts," was his comment about three women attempting to cross the United States in the dead of winter in an automobile.⁶⁸

At one point during the long trip, Miss Kinstedt turned to Sara, riding in the backseat, and said, "At the end of this trip I'm going to kill you!"⁶⁹ Many people on long trips have probably felt

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

the strain of being at close quarters with a fellow-traveler who grated on their nerves, but there was something about Miss Kinstedt's tone, and the gleam in her eyes, that gave Sara a distinct chill; not even the warmth of Charles' buffalo robe could dispel it. Not until the trip ended did Sara find out that Miss Kinstedt had been a patient in a mental institution and was only recently released. In her enthusiasm over getting the campaign launched, Alice Paul hadn't thought to investigate the backgrounds of the two generous ladies who offered their car in the cause of women's suffrage.

Sara had one traveling suit, and when it needed to be cleaned they were forced to stay on an extra day in whatever town they happened to be in. She made good use of the time, though, by making her speech about giving all women the right to vote, collecting signatures on the petition, and meeting dignitaries, one of whom begged her not to jeopardize his political career by asking him publicly to sign the petition.⁷⁰

When the battered Overland finally reached Washington in December, Frances Joliffe -- happily recovered from her sudden illness -- met them for the parade to the White House. She had quite sensibly made the journey by train. President Wilson, amazed at the length of the petition when it was unrolled in the East Room, promised to support their cause, and he kept his word; but it took three more years before Congress passed the amendment. In 1920 all the women in the United States had the right to vote in the Presidential election of that year ... and Sara had a right to be proud of her contribution.

After the great crusade was over, Sara returned to California and married Charles Wood in 1918. He, too, had gone through a divorce and had given up his Portland law practice in order to devote himself full time to his writing.⁷¹ They built a home up a wooded canyon just south of Los Gatos, which they called "Poet's Canyon".

⁷⁰ Ibid. (Gov. Walsh of Massachusetts).

⁷¹ Charles Erskine Scott Wood, Earthly Discourses (Vanguard Press, 1937). Biographical notes.

It overlooked Los Gatos Creek and the new highway leading to Santa Cruz. Sara loved the solitude of their home, and she and Charles spent evenings walking in the gardens, where he enjoyed identifying the plants and explaining the uses of the many herbs that he cultivated. Describing one of those times, she wrote:

" Now evenings on our rocky heritage
You gather while we walk the tangled way
Wormwood and yarrow, fennel, mint and bay
Or, mornings, as an antidote to age
You bring me elderberry tea or sage. " 72

Together they planned a pair of statues to be placed at the entrance to Poet's Canyon. Sculptor Robert Paine was hired to do the work, and in 1922 "The Cats" took their place on either side of the gateway, a symbol of grace and dignity to everyone passing them on the way into the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The steep dirt road scraped over the hill to Lexington by Maggie Jones' father has long been forgotten, as have the settlements of Lexington, Alma, and Wright's Station. The stagecoach road leading out of Los Gatos has become Highway 17, and Charlie Parkhurst's six-horse Concord stage and Mrs. Paddock's Lexington House are nothing but memories of a time almost forgotten. The faint trace of railroad ties leading into the dark opening of Wrights tunnel reminds us that not too many years ago the canyon of Los Gatos Creek echoed and re-echoed to the train whistles. But, through it all, the mountains endured and continued to lure people to make their homes in the canyons and on the ridges. And some of these people were the women who homesteaded and worked in the mountains.

When we consider how sharply individualistic these Santa Cruz Mountain women were, we might wonder if there was any common thread that bound them together. What did poet Sara Bard Field

72 Sara Bard Field, Darkling Plain (New York, 1936), "The Herb-Gatherer."

have in common with the widow Mary Ann Brown? Or, for that matter, what common denominator did writer and conservationist Josephine McCracken share with stagecoach driver Charlie Parkhurst or homesteader Clarissa Burrell?

They shared something more important than having been pioneers in their individual ways, something even more important than their love of the sometimes harsh and unforgiving mountains where they made their homes. The single shining thread weaving through the fabric that each of them shared was courage; courage to be individuals who should be remembered.

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