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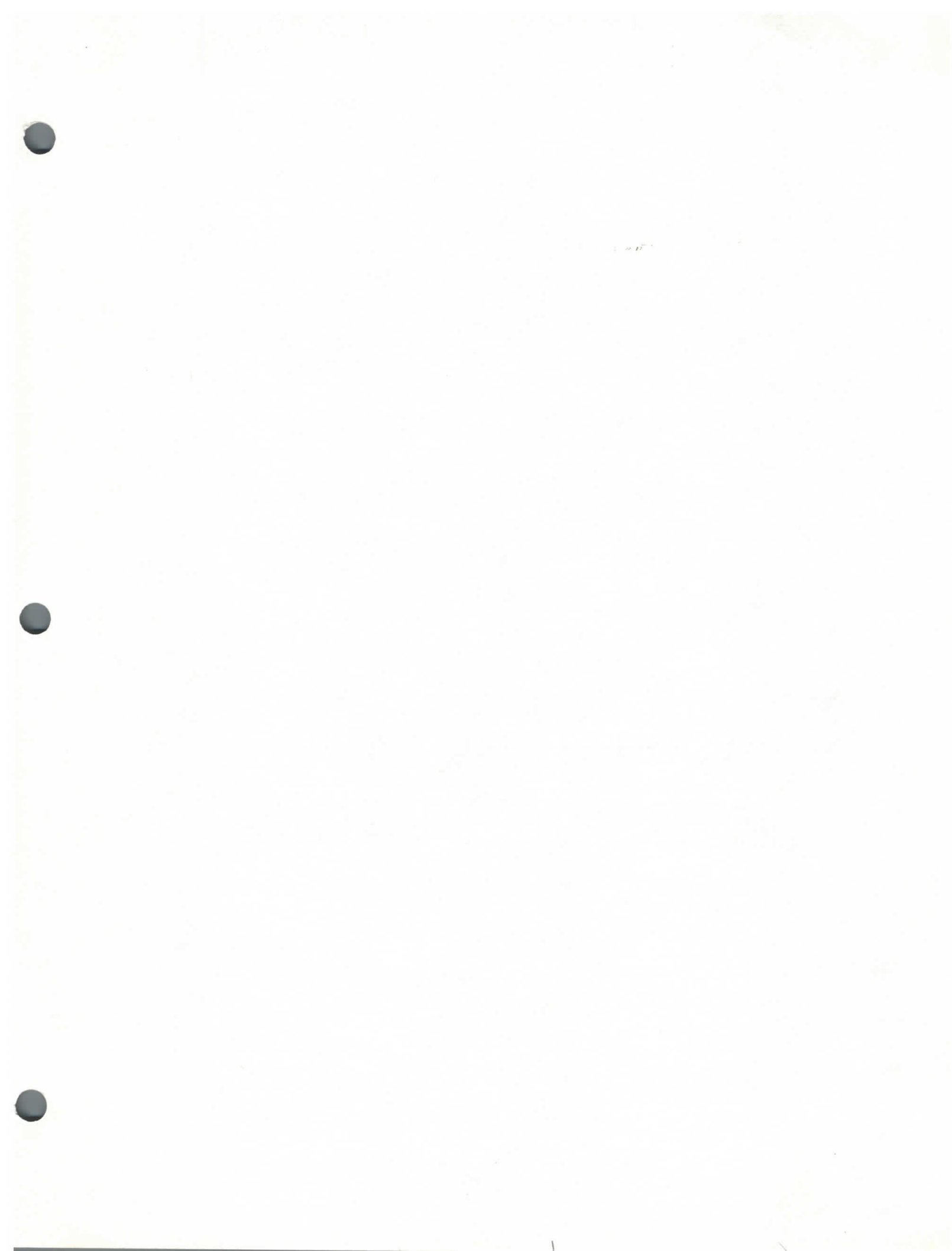
Z. O. FIELD, A CARPENTER FROM MAINE

By Joe Jenkins
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1051 HARRISON STREET, SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA. BUILT IN 1891 BY ZIBEON O. FIELD. (From "Picturesque Santa Clara, 1904")

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PREFACE

The most interesting thing about the past is the truth in it. No fabrication, regardless of its plot and cast of characters, can ever quite match the spontaniety of the truth. When truth mellows with the passing of the years it then acquires a patina of its own which we like to refer to as history.

History becomes really fascinating when we find ourselves personally involved. This essay will acquaint you with a man and his various accomplishments which helped to shape turn-of-the-century Santa Clara County. It will also let you know how my being an occupant of one of the early residences built by the subject has given me an insight into his work and his life. The man of whom I write is long gone. His efforts remain a living part of the present.

I address you regarding Zibeon Oreson Field, a carpenter from Maine.



Joe Jenkins
1051 Harrison Street
Santa Clara, CA 95050

April, 1981

Z. O. FIELD, A CARPENTER FROM MAINE

PART ONE

I'd like to take my story right from the beginning so that you can share with me the flow of events that led to my becoming acquainted with Z. O. Field. I spoke to you of personal involvement in the preface and would like to weave this story around that personal touch as it will best demonstrate how research evolves one step at a time and with what impact the bits of information hit us as we encounter them.

In 1974 my partner Lee R. Schwan and I began a search for a vintage home. I wanted to buy a Victorian and cling, just a little, to the past. For Lee it would be a first home and a project upon which he could practice his flair for carpentry. We found a small advertisement in an April issue of the San Jose Mercury which stated simply "Victorian House for Sale." There were a few desultory remarks about the place and a phone number. We called and spoke to a baby-sitter who told us through the snapping of bubble gum and indifference that she did not know anything about the place but if we wanted to see it we should be there by 6:00 p.m. the next evening. She managed a few directions and ended the conversation. Well, despite a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the baby-sitter and her hazy directions we decided to take a run down to Santa Clara and take a look at the place.

It was a Sunday and a clear, sunny day. We found the house with little trouble. I mused as we wended our way into the Old Quad Area of Santa Clara, "How many times I've been through this old neighborhood and never gave a thought to one day house hunting here." We pulled up in front of 1051 Harrison Street.....yes, it was the right address.....what a disappointment. Two cars were parked on the front lawn. A scraggly lemon tree was the extent of the front yard landscaping. An oiled driveway leading to nowhere. A garbage can with no lid and evidence of children and pets at play with little effort to control either. We both heaved a sigh and thought to ourselves that we had gone on another wild-goose chase. This time, however, we did decide to get out and take a better look despite the immediate impression. What rose behind the parked cars, the strewn about toys and garbage can was a home that transcended the lamentable scene around it. My first impression of the gray and white trimmed structure was that it looked like a New England school-house. The high pitched roof, the narrow silhouette, the steep stairs leading to the front door all somehow conjured up the country school-house look and it was love at first sight. Lee's response was somewhat more reserved and accompanied by under-the-breath mumblings about the run down state of the place and how much work would be involved.

We returned the following evening to find 28 people on the front lawn. My heart jumped into my throat as I gloomily predicted, "Oh, we don't have a chance. Look at all those people!" I had no idea of what perseverance really meant until I stepped out of the car and walked over to join the others. I really wanted to shout, "What are all of you people doing on my front lawn!"

A few moments later as the owners drove up I pushed my way forward and introduced myself. From that moment on I did not get further away than the elbow of the owner as I queried him with one question after another. "Has it been re-wired? How about the plumbing? Do you have the doors that go to that room? Does it have hardwood floors?" I hit all the points one feels one must before making such a major decision. As each question was answered I would flash a glance at Lee to determine his reaction. Finally we stepped into the back yard, walked deep to the back of the lot and took a long look at the place. People were everywhere. My heart was **pounding** with excitement as I asked the big question "What are you asking for the place?" Mr. Jackson, the owner, replied simply and firmly "\$38,500." I looked to Lee, he nodded affirmatively, and I blurted out "Sold!" A sense of relief flowed over me as Mr. Jackson announced to the crowd that the house had been sold. We gave him a check for \$1,000 and wrote on a little slip of paper that this deposit was to serve as our intention to buy the property at 1051 Harrison Street. We had just purchased the residence built by Z.O. Field in 1891 as his first home in Santa Clara for he and his wife Emma. It was from here that Mr. Field embarked upon what was to become a memorable career. It was for us the beginning of a new life and a search into the past that would make our newly acquired home take on a very special significance.

PART TWO

Soon after we moved into 1051 Harrison things began buzzing on the restoration effort. Perhaps another time I can discuss with you at length this aspect of our efforts; but for now we'll stick with research. We noted that some of the other old homes in our area had historical markers that provided important information regarding the individual home and its past. We were immediately inspired to investigate the "roots" of our place.

I had been employed by an insurance firm for six years so I was familiar with the Pacific Fire Rating Bureau's Sanborn maps. These were huge old maps that went through a community block by block and showed each residence in outline. I knew that the maps were dated according to when the property was built. I went to the San Jose office of the Bureau and found that their maps only went back to the 1920's. Someone at the Bureau suggested that I might contact the Sanborn people back East and see if they had older copies. I called them and they said they no longer had copies going back as far as we needed to go. The Sanborn people suggested that I contact the Library of Congress for help.

I did just that and Eureka! We hit it lucky. The Library of Congress responded with a document that advised us 1051 Harrison Street had been built in 1891. Remember now, we still knew virtually nothing of Z. O. Field nor did we have any data on the background of the house.

The following two letters I am going to quote just as I originally wrote them as they capture the spontaniety of the moment and again take you through our research as we approached it. Both of these letters were addressed to Mr. Richard Bartels, then Chairman of the Santa Clara Historical & Landmarks Commission. The first letter is dated July 7, 1975 and begins:

"Dear Dick,

Enclosed is our most valuable document to date regarding 1051 Harrison Street. This map was sent to me by Mr. Richard W. Stephenson, Head, Reference & Bibliography Section, Geography and Map Division, The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 20540 in his letter of July 3, 1975.

I have shaded 1051 Harrison in red on the map. Delighted to note that we and 1055 were the first two houses on this block. Since the block was sub-divided and recorded as such in November, 1890 one can only suspect that construction was begun very shortly thereafter to have appeared in the 1891 edition of the Sanborn maps. I have no idea, after learning how various permits, deeds, grants et al have been burned in a fire long ago how we will ever get any closer to actual construction date than this.....but, nevertheless, what marvelous documentation this is.

So far the following gleaned from the Polk-Husted directories has been verified by Mr. Schwan and myself during a very rewarding visit to the San Jose main library. Working backwards from 1909 we learned that the following folks lived at 1051.

1908-1909	Vida B. and Charles E. Berry
1907-1908	Henry S. Berry
1905-1906	Charles E. Berry
1904-1905	Henry S. Berry
1902-1904	Frank de la Fontaine
1901-1902	Savage family. (This must be 1051 Harrison although it is listed as 1057 which, since there is no 1057, we assume was a typographical error.

From 1909 backwards the Polk Husted records do not list property by number but, rather, as being for instance "On Harrison near Main" or "On Harrison near Washington." We believe that Zibeon Field resided at 1051 Harrison from 1892 to 1900; but we will not be certain of this until we are able to continue research in that gloomy basement in San Jose. Mr. Field was a contractor and carpenter.....and before living on Harrison he lived on Main Street near Benton. At this point we are strongly hoping that Mr. Field may have built our house.

Should you reach the basement of the San Jose haunt before we do (and I pray you will!) remember to start by looking at the 1912 book where you will find Henry S. Berry selling Leida Berry the property. Two transactions are recorded that day between the Berry's, perhaps being 1051 and 1065.

This is what we have to report at this time and we think it alot. I am so grateful for the cooperation of the Library of Congress..... and thankful that they had this information still intact. They have only one other map for Santa Clara, by the way, and that is for 1887 at which time there were no homes on Harrison between Lincoln and Grant.

Pardon our dust.....but isn't it fun!

Most Sincerely,"

Three days later I penned the following letter to Mr. Bartels:

"Dear Dick,

Well, the deed is done. I finally earned another "sick day" and spent it in the basement of the San Jose vaults. I have now traced the history of 1051 Harrison Street back to the bare ground.

The property at 1051 Harrison was sub-divided and recorded on November 20, 1890. Two days later a very energetic builder named Zibeon O. Field (hailing from Maine and then 32 years old) bought the land from H. M. Leonard. We know that he began to build soon after as the home appears on the Sanborn Maps of 1891. Zibeon had lived around the corner on Main Street near Benton; but chose to live at 1051 Harrison upon its completion. How dramatic the site must have been for Zibeon and his wife as theirs was the only house on the block and at that was placed right in the middle of the block between Washington and Main.

On September 22, 1899 Zibeon moved on to better things (we hope) and sold his home to Sarah C. Chappel. We believe that Sarah bought 1051 for a little investment as the Polk-Husted records indicate that a Mr. Allen, an agent for Southern Pacific rented the place for a year and then was followed by the Savage family. Later Mr. Frank de la Fontaine, an employee of Pacific Manufacturing Company and his sister lived there for about one year.

In 1903, May 13 specifically, Sarah gave up her interest in 1051 and sold the property to Henry S. Berry who was then selling groceries at 1014 Main Street. Henry and his wife Leida lived happily at 1051 until 1912 when Henry died and willed 1051 to Leida (along with some other property he owned on Santa Clara Street.....so Leida was not left in bad straits).

Leida remained in residence at 1051 Harrison until November 19, 1918 when she sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Antonio P. Sanchez who were recent arrivals to the Mission City from Malaga, Spain. The Sanchez family were destined to become the longest term owners of 1051 as they remained there as a family until the 1940's. Anna, the daughter, was only 15 when she moved into 1051 and later she was to marry there and remain with her husband for seven years until she moved next door to 1065 Harrison where she remains to this day. Anna Gil and her husband raised three children, all boys, who have remained in the Santa Clara Valley.

After the Sanchez family sold 1051 Harrison the average resident remained only four or five years. 1051 hosted rooms for single ladies, had an upstairs bedroom converted into a kitchen, then went back to single family status again and was home to a policeman, a fireman, and countless others along the way who owned it for investment purposes, etc.

The home Zibeon Field built in 1890 withstood a lot of living and, fortunately, was treated with generally good care over the years and in 1974 it was purchased by Joe Jenkins and Lee R. Schwan. The pair began restoration procedures immediately upon signing the final papers....no small incident in itself as dollars and cents from lenders are not easily gained when the property in question is 85 years old. Zibeon however, had made 1051 Harrison of California redwood and a sound brick foundation.

The City of Santa Clara's Bicentennial Committee chose 1051 Harrison Street in 1975 to be a pilot project in the beautification of the Old Quad Area and also to be a place of interest to visit on walking tours during the Bicentennial year of 1976. Restoration with emphasis on the American flavor of the house that Zibeon built is now in progress and the results of that devoted project will be open to the public in July of 1976.

Whew! And so we have done it, Dick. I am so proud to finally have all this information at hand. We have copies of the appropriate papers showing exchange of hands from start to 1918 when the Sanchez family bought it. Their stay until the 1940's takes 1051 up to modern times in my opinion. One day, say in another 85 years, perhaps some other energetic soul may wish to pursue the details of those "later" years. We will at least offer him documentation for the first 85 years of this home's life.

Most sincerely,"

Armed with all this information at hand we approached the Santa Clara Historical & Landmarks Commission and they subsequently awarded 1051 Harrison Street an historical marker which reads:

POINT OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

FIELD HOUSE

1051 Harrison Street

Built and occupied in 1891 by Zibeon O. Field, a carpenter from Maine.

A particularly fine example of architectural style this fancy wedding cake Victorian has a decorative carved pediment and bargeboard, shingle facing, carved ballustrade and lattice work Moorish archway.

Bicentennial Walking Tour Site 1976.

Placed by order of the City of Santa Clara City Council and the Historical & Landmarks Commission.

PART THREE

"A Carpenter from Maine" was a down-to-earth way of describing Mr. Field; but is certainly not all that I wanted to know about the man. Somehow I felt there had to be more. I knew that I could dig still deeper. Finding the avenues of exploration is no easy chore in itself. So much is left to the imagination. I knew he was a registered Republican and was 32 years old when he built 1051 Harrison Street. That was it.

Pondering the situation I asked myself, "Do you suppose he lived in this area all his life?" He'd only stayed at 1051 about 8 years and then moved.....where? I'd lost the thread on Mr. Field when he was about 40 years of age. However, something from a busy department of my brain whispered to me "If he did live here all his life then perhaps he is buried in this area." Brilliant! I visited what is now known as the Mission City Memorial Park Cemetery in Santa Clara and discovered that Mr. Field was indeed buried there in the Field plot. I was bursting with anticipation as the very cooperative caretaker led the way. The marker read "Zibeon O. Field, 1857-1933." Directly under his name was the inscription "Emma Ann Field, born 1856, died 1949." Surely, his wife! I made pages of scribbled notes and left the cemetery very pleased with my newly found biographical information.

Now that I had a date or two to go on I went to the San Jose Main Library and asked about old newspapers. They instructed me in the use of the micro-films on record and I began the tedious search beginning in January of 1933. At least I had the year. I soon learned to skim the papers looking for the obituary pages although it was not easy to resist

stopping to read other items of interest along the way.

San Jose's newspaper was then called The San Jose Mercury Herald. Month by month I scanned those pages finding myself very elated over the feeling that each page was drawing me closer and closer to the truth. I couldn't believe the prices of food. Auto's for sale at figures that wouldn't even make a down payment today. The theater's featuring all of my old heroes of yesteryear and then...."FIELD. In San Jose, Calif., May 19, 1933. Zibeon O. beloved husband of Emma A. Field, Father of Gertrude and Roy S. Field.....a native of Maine, aged 75 years." The funeral was to be on May 22, 1933 at 2:00 o'clock from Trinity Episcopal Church, Second and St. John Streets. The San Jose Undertaking Company made the arrangements. Interment was to be in Santa Clara.

It was very strange finally getting confirmation of facts that I had searched for. Reading the obituary somehow put me back into that time frame and with these facts finally revealed I felt so much closer to the man we'd come to call "Our Founder."

I further scanned the May 20 issue of the paper and found another article on Mr. Field. He had earned a short item on the local news pages that described him as "a prominent San Josean;" and "a resident for more than 40 years." He was active in fraternal circles and had departed our world leaving his wife and five children.

I read ahead to the May 22, 1933 edition which was the day Mr. Field was buried there in the Field plot that I had seen only days before. It was so much like being there when I read on about the man. I had literally begun at the end and worked back through the life of this man that had become so important to us some forty years later.

At this point, because it is in itself an historical document, I will quote verbatim the May 22nd article as it gives us, albeit briefly and in journalese, a biography of the man as we shall remember him and his accomplishments.

"San Jose Mercury Herald: Monday Morning, May 22, 1933

ZIBEON O. FIELD FUNERAL THIS AFTERNOON

Funeral services for Zibeon O. Field, 76, well known San Jose contractor and builder for 40 years past, will be held this afternoon at 2 o'clock from Trinity Episcopal Church.

Field, who died at his home here Friday night, was prominent in local lodges and was the builder of many of the principal buildings of the city, including the present San Jose High School, the Horace Mann School, the Victory, Mission and Jose theaters, the Montgomery Hotel, the Hall of Justice and several San Jose churches.

Born in Maine in 1857, he went to Kansas with his parents when 12 years old, hunted buffalo on the plains of Western Kansas at the age of 16 and in 1876 married Miss Emma Shatto.

He came to California the next year, settling at Tustin City, Los Angeles County, for 11 years. He came to this valley in 1890, living in Santa Clara for three years and then in San Jose.

He is survived by his children: Miss Gertrude Field, Mrs. Alma F. Bacon, Mrs. Bernice T. Hill, Mrs. Wilma A. Collins and Roy S. Field.

Active in Masonry, he was a member of San Jose Lodge No. 10, Howard Chapter No. 10, the San Jose council, San Jose commandry No. 10, Knights Templar, the Scottish Rite bodies and the Shrine. He was also a member of the Odd Fellows, the Elks and the Junior Order of United American Mechanics."

Further research led me to the "History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Coast Counties, California" which offered a longer and more elaborate biography of Z. O. Field. That report is attached to this paper in its entirety as documentation. The report presents, in the flowery language of the turn of the century, further particulars on Mr. Field and his contributions to the changing scene in San Jose and environs. There are references to "a number of buildings and residences" he "put up" in San Francisco. Sadly, these buildings remain obscured in the veil of the past as I have been unable to learn more about them. We wonder if perhaps he had anything to do with the Phelan Building in San Francisco since he did contract with Senator Phelan to build the fabulous Victory Theatre in San Jose. Always in research we remain excited by the future for surely it holds still more answers to the past.

The biography mentioned above concludes with a sentence I believe is one we'd all like to think might apply to our own lives in some way: "He is one of San Jose's prominent and very useful citizens, and enjoys the respect and good will of a host of friends."

EPILOGUE

Mr. Field did his work during an exciting era in our state. The taste of the times and the lower cost factors gave him the chance to build both commercial and private residences with an imaginative flair. He is most fortunate in that some of his best work remains standing today. One of his theatres, the Fox in San Jose, is undergoing massive restoration and if funding permits it will stand as a classic example of the Mission/Art Deco period.

Already restored and magnificent in its Victorian splendor is the Morse Mansion of Santa Clara. Gone with the wrecker's ball the glorious Victory Theatre. Fading with time the once fine Montgomery Hotel. Also missing from the scene today is the Mission style Horace Mann School built by Mr. Field. I am especially sad to see that one gone as it was Horace Mann where I began my education in 1941. Man puts up and man tears down. More importantly: Man remembers.

We at 1051 Harrison Street are remembering. Our restoration efforts continue with great care and love for what we are doing. The project has, of course, become all the more dear to us because of what we've learned about that energetic "founder" of ours. When completed the Field House will be a home-museum housing my life long collection of George Washington memorabilia. Every room will sustain the grandeur of yesterday and the history telling stories we will preserve there. The home will be open to the public on George Washington's birthday and on the 4th of July.

Already, though we are still a "hard-hat area", we've had many folks through the house and they have given us so much encouragement. The children are our favorite tourists and it is to them that we reach out most vigorously in communicating the accomplishments of Z. O. Field and the era in which he made his important contributions. We share that truth in the past with them that will give them reason to remember and appreciate in the future.

THE END

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

Bibliography:

"History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Coast Counties, California by Professor J. M. Guinn, A.M. Pages 902 and 903. Complete FIELD biography attached hereto.

"Picturesque Santa Clara, 1904". Chamber of Commerce type publication. Contains oldest picture we've found of 1051 Harrison and shows the H. S. Berry family on front steps. Santa Clara Main Library.

San Jose Mercury Herald, 1933. Issues for May 20, 1933 and May 22, 1933. Courtesy micro-films San Jose Main Library.

Sources:

Pacific Fire Rating Bureau
Sanborn Map Company
Polk-Husted Directories
The Library of Congress
Mission City Memorial Park Cemetery, Santa Clara

Special thanks to: The Santa Clara Historical & Landmarks Commission, Mrs. Ethel Lewis, Mr. Austen Warburton, San Jose and Santa Clara Library Reference Departments and Staff, Mr. Clyde Arbuckle and, most especially, Mrs. Anna Gil without whom we would have remained in the dark for much, much longer.

Extra special thanks to: "The Vaults" being the basement records department of the San Jose Courthouse where we stepped backward into time as we found one by one those of whom you have read in this paper.

Home Phone: 247-7051
Work Phone: 969-0371

Z. O. FIELD enjoys the distinction of being one of the ablest builders and contractors who have contributed to the architectural harmony of San Jose. He has a thorough understanding of everything pertaining to his chosen calling, and has never made it his policy to rest upon past efforts, but rather to press forward inquiringly and intelligently, profiting by every means of advancement at the disposal of men whose pleasure it is to house the families and industries of progressive communities. Since coming here in 1889 he has met with deserved appreciation, and many of the finest residences, churches and public buildings have been erected under his supervision. The Victory Theatre, the New Theatre, the finest residences in the Naglee tract, the Francis Smith residence, and many others evidence his practical and artistic methods. In Santa Clara he erected the S. C. Morse residence, and in San Francisco put up a number of buildings and residences. At the present time he has more work than he can attend to, a fact which in itself indicates his advancement and popularity.

Mr. Field was born in Farmington, Franklin County, ME, December 11, 1857, a son of Ansel S. and Clara (Butterfield) Field, and grandson of Zebeon, the latter born and reared in New England, and a farmer by occupation. A just pride of birth and ancestry has been one of the inspirations of which Mr. Field has never lost track. In dim English history bearers of the name wore the shield and breastplate of the Norman conquerors, and centuries later Sir John Field came upon the scene with his notable contributions to science and art. Allied with the family when it sent its representatives to profit in America were such romantic figures as Priscilla and John Alden, and into the sterner life of the country came the heroic figure of Cyrus West Field, born at Stockbridge, MA, November 30, 1819, who eventually formed the New York, Newfoundland & London Telegraph Company, which accomplished the union of Europe and America with the submarine cable. Israel Putnam, the Pumfret farmer of Connecticut, who went from his cornfield to the Revolutionary War, and gloriously served his country also in the French and Indian and Pontiac Wars, adds further lustre to the notable Field family.

Ansel Smith Field was born in Paris, ME, in which state he conducted farming until 1870, when he moved with his family to Washington County, Kansas. The wildest of surroundings met the new-comers in Kansas, and buffalo abounded, furnishing splendid sport for the male portion of the neighborhood. Having children in the West, Mr. Field came to Los Angeles, CA, in 1881, and for several years conducted a meat market business with fair success. His wife, who was a daughter of John Butterfield, a Maine farmer, died in 1897, leaving three of her six children, of whom Z.O. is the youngest. The other sons are James L. and John L., the former being a builder and contractor of Los Angeles, and the latter a carpenter and builder of San Jose.

Z.O. was thirteen years old when the family moved to Kansas, and he attended the crude public schools of Washington County, assisting with the clearance of the pioneer farm and hunting the buffalo with his father. In 1877 he came to Los Angeles and engaged in a butchering and stock business for several years, and later removed to Tustin, CA, where he set out an orange orchard, and at the same time learned the carpenter's trade. Later he carried on contracting in what was then Los Angeles County, but now Orange County, and in 1889 began his remarkably successful building and contracting career in San Jose.

In Washington County, Kansas, Mr. Field was united in marriage with Emma A. Shatto, a native of Indiana, and they became the parents of six children: Clara L. (the wife of Albert Briggs, a lieutenant in the United States Army), Gertrude, Alma P., Bernice, Wilhelmina and Leroy S. Mr. Field is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and a charter member of the Builder's Exchange. He is a Republican in politics, and fraternally is connected with the Fraternal Aid. He is a man of pleasing address, of fine managerial ability, and has the faculty of getting the best possible service out of his many employees. He is one of San Jose's prominent and very useful citizens, and enjoys the respect and good will of a host of friends.

The above from: Page 902 and 903: History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Coast Counties, California.

An Historical Story of the States marvelous growth from its earliest settlement to the Present Time by Prof. J. M. Guinn, A.M. (Author of a History of Los Angeles and Vicinity, History of Southern California, Secretary and Curator of the Historical Society of Southern California, Member of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C., also containing biographies of Well-Known citizens of the past and present.

The Chapman Publishing Company, Chicago, 1904.



