

THE TRAILBLAZER

Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

Incorporated 1875

Volume 5

Summer 1965

Number 3

GARDEN CITY COLLEGE

(Permission to print the following letter is granted by Howard L. Worcester. It was written by his Uncle to Howard's father in Mason City, Iowa. The letterhead reads, "Garden City Commercial College, H. B. Worcester, Principal and Proprietor. Farmers Union Block, Santa Clara and San Pedro Streets.")

San Jose, Cal., July 22, 1884

My Dear Brother:

I received your kind letter of inquiry some time since, and just as we were going on our usual summer camping expedition, and being very busy, delayed replying.

I must now confine myself to the one topic of the school. Your estimate of the value of a Business Course to yourself and any other young man, is entirely correct. If it is by any possible means attainable, do not let the opportunity pass. Since our return from camping, letters have come, from Wilbur and Father. W- expresses the same interest in the B. C. that you do. I am anxious that he, as well as you, should have the opportunity you desire, and will make you this proposition. If you and Wilbur, can each pay your fare to California, clothe yourselves, and pay your own laundry bills (washing is not done in families here) I will furnish you both, room and board, for what just help in the house will cost, say \$3.00 to \$3.50 per week. This amt. to be divided between you; and will give both tuition free.

Will this do? If I was a "bloated bondholder," I would not consider the matter of board, but unfortunately --!

Think this over, tell Wilbur and let me hear from you. I want you to come & so does Nettie. I shall answer the other letters in a day or two.

Remember me filially and fraternally to all. As ever,

Sincerely yours,
H. B. Worcester

STOKES' TAMALES PARLOR

Leo Sullivan

Jim Stokes and his family were passengers on the crack Del Monte Express that pulled into the Southern Pacific depot at First and Bassett streets, on June 1, 1909. Stokes, his wife Mary, with seven of a brood of eight children, had left their native Salinas for San Jose that morning on a gamble; they were to take over a tamale parlor owned and operated by Mrs. Lupi Cota, a sister of Mary Stokes, Jim's wife.

The "Leading Tamale Parlor" (Jim's gamble) was located on the west side of south Second near Santa Clara Street, occupying two stores, No's 13 and 15, joined by an arch in between; tables filled the first and private eating booths the other.

The location was ideal. The Empire Theatre being but a stone's throw to the north, the Jose Theatre and Lyric Motion Picture House the same distance to the south. Times were good and the theatres were "packing them in." When the shows let out at night, around 2000 potential customers were crowding Second Street, either hungry or thirsty, and all waiting for their street car home. (As yet autos were few and far between.)

Tamales and enchiladas high in favor with the San Jose public, and Jim's business prospered. In a matter of weeks the "Leading Tamale Parlor" was known far and wide as "Stokes' Tamale Parlor" and became THE PLACE to go. Actors were regular customers and spread its reputation up and down the coast.

During World War I food shortages were acute and ingredients for Stokes' specialties were so scarce, that tamales and enchiladas were scratched from the menu. When consignments of beef and cheese did arrive the doors were closed, and the entire family as a unit turned to preparing the savory concoctions on the double. News of the windfall spread rapidly; at a signal, the famished customers were admitted and the resulting scramble became known as the STAMPEDE.

Mrs. Mary Stokes assumed the cares of management when her husband, Jim, passed away in 1943.

A steady increase in business called for larger quarters. A location on First Street, just south of the old Victory Theatre (now the Crest) was decided upon. The new spot proved satisfactory, but in a few years down-town parking became a problem. The exodus of business to the wide-open-spaces had begun which did not

augur well for the future, and when the landlord served notice that the building was to be remodeled, with a substantial increase in rent, the big decision was made - Stokes' Tamale Parlor would move again. It did, and reopened at Julian and Montgomery streets in 1957.

Tragedy struck once more when Mary Stokes, Manager and Mother, joined her husband, Jim, in death, June 6, 1957.

Illness continued to plague the family, so all concerned decided in 1960, to call it a day, shut up shop and retire to private life.

(Mrs. Adeline Schmidt, second child of the late Jim and Mary Stokes, is a member of our Society.)

* * *

APRIL 18, 1906

(The following letter contributed by Doris Ainsworth was written by her mother to her family in May 1906. They lived at 340 North 5th Street.)

At 5:13 a.m. I was awakened suddenly-found the room swaying, things tumbling off the bureau and shelves, and hoping it would soon be over, I held onto the bed. It lasted so long, I jumped out of bed and tried to reach my children who were in the adjoining room, but staggered to the door as though I was on board ship in a storm at sea. I called the girls to come to me while I held on to the doorway, which was the safest place, and saw their beds running backwards and forwards while they held on. Then at last came a calm!

The earthquake only lasted twenty-eight seconds, but seemed five minutes; another few seconds, and our house would have crushed us. We all quickly put on our garments and went to see what damage was done. Ornaments, glassware, china etc., on the dining room floor, everything in the drawing room was in a heap in the middle of the room, curtains with the poles wrenched out, and plaster all cracked and falling. The pictures were not damaged, and one was turned with its face to the wall.

As I ran out of the house the steps gave way under me, which was rather a jar after what I had gone through inside. Both the chimneys had disappeared, and bricks falling everywhere.

We came off easily compared with our neighbors, for three houses in our block were lifted off their foundations and placed two or three feet further on. A big packing house two hundred yards from us came crashing

down into the road. That was a terrible day for us all, for there were several shocks that day, and fire broke out in town, so we dreaded the night to come. We all made stoves of the fallen bricks to cook our meals in our back yards as all chimneys were unsafe. After supper, we and our neighbors all sat in a row on the edge of the sidewalk, until 9 o'clock, ready to run to the middle of the road at any slight shock. We then reluctantly repaired to our tents, which we put up ready for the night. There were so many dreadful noises all night, fire bells ringing, buildings crashing down, blowing up buildings with dynamite to stop the fires, dogs barking, cows mooing, I scarcely dared close my eyes. Fifteen lunatics had escaped from Agnew's Asylum -- I dreaded seeing one peeping into my tent. I was thankful when daylight appeared, and glad to find I was still alive.

We lived in our tent for seven days, until the rain drove us back into our house. Our cooking was very limited in our back yard, but we were grateful that we had plenty to eat.

The slight shocks continued until May 18th. At 8:20 p.m. there was a severe shock lasting fifteen seconds, but no damage reported. We took the children from their beds and slept in the barn that night, and again slept in the tent for seven nights until the rain drove us back to the house, where we shall stay until another scare. I live in fear and trembling from one day to another on this earth which is now a quivering jelly instead of being "terra firma."

Ada C. Ainsworth

* * *

SACRED HEART NOVITIATE LIBRARY

(Following information from Vol. 11, Nos. 11, 12, San Jose Public Library was contributed by Mrs. F.E. George.)

To the west of Los Gatos, in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, is located the Sacred Heart Novitiate and House of Studies, a campus reserved exclusively for members of the Society of Jesus who are preparing themselves for the priesthood.

Like all seminary libraries, theirs is a "special library." Its strong points are a faithful reflection of the subjects stressed in the four-year curriculum. The bulk of the collection is concentrated on the fields of classical Greek and Latin language and literature, English and American literature, history and religion.

The first few hundred books were brought by the pioneer Fathers who came to Los Gatos in 1888 to establish a seminary of the Order. The catalog was a rough checklist designed only to identify the books. This situation prevailed with minor improvements until 1947, when the first professional librarian, the Reverend Joseph W. Schechtel, S. J., was appointed. He embarked in an extensive book-buying program of both new and out-of-print works in order to fill the gaps which years of neglect had developed. A card catalog with full bibliographical description was started, using Library of Congress printed cards whenever they were available.

Today there are 36,292 accessioned and approximately 8,700 unaccessioned volumes, making an estimated total of some 45,000 volumes.

* * *

THE THROW OF THE DICE

Herbert C. Jones

(The following sketch brings to mind what far-reaching consequences, either in the lives of individuals or in the fate of nations, may depend upon the most trivial incidents.)

FREMONT IN CALIFORNIA

John C. Fremont married Jessie Benton, daughter of U. S. Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri. Benton was an anti-slavery senator, who also had a vision of acquiring the territory on the Pacific Coast for the United States. At that time it was thought that a river or canyon broke through the Sierra running from the Great Salt Lake Desert to the Pacific Ocean. Thus in the years following 1800 there appears on maps a dotted line labeled as "Probable Route of the San Buena Ventura River."

In 1844 Fremont had a commission from the Army to find this supposed river. He outfitted at the arsenal in St. Louis with mules, packsaddles, equipment and necessary supplies. He also, with other luggage, included a small cannon, about two or three feet long. (Today it is in the museum at Carson City, Nevada.)

While he was yet preparing for his expedition, a dispatch came from the War Department in Washington. Jessie Benton Fremont's intuition told her that the dispatch would countermand her husband's expedition. She therefore deliberately held the dispatch unopened for several days until Fremont had started on his expedition and was well out in the unknown wilds of the West. Then

she opened the message and found, sure enough, that it was a command from the War Department to Fremont to return to Washington and explain why, in planning an expedition into the territory of a friendly country (Mexico) he was taking along a cannon. The dispatch was purely an excuse to prevent Fremont from starting to the West, but to get him back to Washington where he would be assigned another commission. It must be remembered that in those days the Army was dominated by the southern or pro-slavery states, who feared that the Western Territory might some day become a part of the Union as an anti-slavery territory.

Fremont penetrated the Sierra from the Klamath region on south. He named Pyramid Lake, the sink of the Truckee River; he got as far south as the Mono country, only to find that there was no San Buena Ventura River as a route through the Sierra. It was then December. He did not have supplies enough to retrace his steps across the Salt Lake Desert. Instead, he went over what is now Sonora Pass, saving all his men but losing more than half of his 67 mules. Over the mountains, he saw the possibilities of California for the United States.

He returned on his second expedition in 1846 at the head of 150 or 200 plainsmen, as hardy a group of men as were probably ever gathered together in one command. His presence with such a force at his back was the hint for the American settlers to revolt from Mexico and set up the Bear Flag Republic at Sonoma. With that, the American fleet sailed into Monterey Bay and hoisted the American flag. The next morning, the British commander sailed in for the same purpose--to hoist the British flag--only to find that he was a few hours too late.

Thus we have the sequence of events: An American Commodore, Sloat--would not have taken this country for the United States if it had not been for Fremont's presence with a semi-military force. Fremont would not have been there the second time if he had not been there the first time; and he would not have been there the first time, if his wife had not held up the dispatch from the War Department.

* * *

SAN JOSE'S FIRST MAYOR

Arthur M. Fisk

Josiah Belden was elected the first Mayor of the City of San Jose, April 13, 1850 and served for one year. He was then elected to the City Council.

Belden was born in Upper Middletown, Connecticut, May 4, 1815. He was orphaned at the age of 15 and forced to quit school. He then apprenticed himself out to a jeweler in Albany, New York, seeking the security of a trade.

The year 1841 found Belden in St. Louis, Missouri, where he met several other enthusiasts who had caught the California fever. He went with them to Sapling Grove for an appointed rendezvous, with the intention of forming an emigrant company.

John Bidwell relates in his notes that the situation was, to say the least, dire. "When we reached Sapling Grove, the place of rendezvous, in May 1841, there was but one wagon ahead of us. For the next few days one or two wagons would come each day, and among the recruits were three families from Arkansas. We organized by electing as Captain of the company a man named Bartleson from Jackson County, Missouri. He was not the best man for the position, but we were given to understand that if he was not elected he would not go; and he had seven or eight men with him, and we did not want the party diminished, so he was chosen." As for the path westward, Bidwell remarked, "Our ignorance of the route was complete. We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge."

In a letter to his sister, Josiah Belden relates that, "after spending six months on the way, we arrived at Dr. Marsh's Rancho in California Territory, November 4, 1841."

Belden had several business ventures in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Jose. He also took a brief sojourn to the gold fields in the Mother Lode Country during 1848, but soon returned to San Jose to exploit a more profitable endeavor as a merchant, and owner of a "House of Deposit." There was wealth coming into San Jose and Belden saw a way to be of service. I.O.U. notes could be written according to the value of the deposit, but no interest was paid. Instead, the depositor was charged for the privilege of the safekeeping. These ventures, along with good investments in real estate, built his fortune.

On February 1, 1849 he married Sarah Margaret Jones, a pioneer of the 1846 emigration.

He joined the Republican Party in 1860 and served the Union during the Civil War. In 1881 he moved with his family to New York City, and it was there on April 23, 1892, that he died.

A PERFECT DAY

(The following poem was sent in by one of our members. Ordinarily we do not use verse, but thought you might relish this one.)

Grandmother, on a winter's day,
 Milked the cows and fed them hay,
 Slopped the hogs, saddled the mule,
 And got the children off to school;
 Did a washing, mopped the floors,
 Washed the windows, and did some chores;
 Cooked a dish of home-dried fruit,
 Pressed her husband's Sunday suit,
 Swept the parlor, made the bed,
 Baked a dozen loaves of bread,
 Split some firewood, and lugged in
 Enough to fill the kitchen bin;
 Cleaned the lamps and put in oil,
 Stewed some apples she thought would spoil;
 Churned some butter, baked a cake,
 Then exclaimed, "For heaven's sake,
 The calves have got out of the pen"--
 Went out and chased them in again;
 Gathered the eggs and locked the stable,
 Back in the house and set the table,
 Cooked a supper that was delicious
 And afterwards washed up all the dishes;
 Fed the cat and sprinkled the clothes,
 Mended a basketfull of hose;
 Then opened the organ and began to play
 "When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day."

* * * *

MY COUNTRY

C. C. Tillingham

I believe in the United States of America. It is my home, my country; it is my hope, my concern. Here I work and rest. Here I build and dream. Here is my security for my loved ones. Here my toil is rewarded with an unmatched abundance for my well-being. Here freedom to live, to think, and to worship are mine, guaranteed by law and Constitution. Here I am a part of the government, able to vote, to serve, and to carry my share of the common load. God grant me wisdom and strength to safeguard my country's welfare with devotion great enough to measure up to her greatness.

* * *

By-lines from the President

Alice M. Vetterle

With this issue of the Trailblazer I will have completed my second term as President and turned over the helm of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County to my successor. These two years have been a memorable part of my life and I shall not forget the many friendships I have made during my term of office.

The members of the Board of Directors who have served with me, and those who have served as committee members and others who have helped make our Quarterly meetings a success will long be remembered. The cooperation and loyalty of the Board Members has been greatly appreciated. We started the year with many of our experienced members, who had served many years, no longer serving on the Board. This is to be expected as new members come into our organization. Next year will also note the absence of familiar faces at the Board meetings. It is with deep regret that we acknowledge the resignation of Herbert and Pauline Jones from the Board of Directors as they have both been loyal and faithful members and a pillar of strength to me during the past year.

I have been honored to be able to participate in the Arbor Day tree planting ceremonies for the past two years and hope that this program will continue. The City of San Jose is to be commended for their part in perpetuating the Redwoods. A Redwood grove at the Rose Garden Park appears to be coming a reality for our descendants.

Our membership has continued to grow, and Mrs. Black, our Financial Secretary, is to be commended on her diligence in keeping our membership records current. At last report we had 664 paid up members with 60 delinquents.

Under the able direction and editing of Arthur and Marjorie Fisk, the Trailblazer has continued to expand. We hope they will continue with this publication.

Many of our members have actively participated in support of the San Jose' Historic Landmarks Commission's project of establishing a Pioneer Town. Through the diligence of the Commission chairman and your support, this has advanced from a dream to become a reality with the City Council of San Jose' granting land at Kelley Park for the project. We have contributed a small part financially toward this and perhaps in the future may see fit to participate further.

Let us all give our support to the new Board of Directors during the coming year.

LOOK FOR IT HERE

Your officers elected for the ensuing year, were duly installed at the Board of Directors meeting July 12.

Mr. Stephen Haines, San Jose State College student, and recipient of our Scholarship Award was the main speaker at our June 5th meeting. His subject was, "Progressives of Santa Clara County." ***

The Conference of California Historical Societies has been granted permission to reprint, from the Trailblazer, the article "Lingering By the Side of Friendship Road: by Lovesta Dorwin Davis. It should appear in the September issue of the California Historian. ***

The stump and root section of the famous "Roosevelt Redwood" transplanted last October in the southeast section of Vasona Park, is showing signs of new life, with green shoots from 6 to 12 inches in height. It has a good chance to live for many years in its new location. *

The master plan for the development of the San José Historic Museum Complex at Kelley Park, compiled by the Historic Museum Complex Steering Committee and endorsed by the Historic Landmarks Commission, has been approved by the San Jose City Council. ***

The cornerstone of the old Campbell Grammar School placed in 1922 was opened on April 19th. Newspapers and other relics from the vault are now in the office of the Campbell Union School District. ***

During May the old Theodore Lenzen home at 976 Lenzen Avenue, which was being used as an annex to the Doctors General Hospital was razed to make way for a parking lot.

Theodore Lenzen was born in Prussia in 1833, where he had studied drawing and architecture until he was 21 years of age, when he came to the United States. He came to San Jose in 1862 where he became widely known as an architect and builder. Some of his early day buildings were the Santa Clara College, Auzerais House, San José City Hall at Market and San Fernando streets, old O'Connor Hospital and the first San Jose Normal School building.

April 12, 1865, he married Caroline Wallauer, a native of Bavaria. There were four children from this marriage; Gertrude, Katrina, Emilia and Louis Theodore. *

The first electric street railroad in the United States opened May 20, 1888, between San José and Santa Clara. The line had an underground, third-rail power outlet. The system was replaced by overhead trolleys in 1891. ***

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Helen Andrade, Ralph Berggren, Ella M. Cline, Alice B. Covert, Dorothea Kern Devereux, Margaret M. Farnsworth, Virginia C. Gracier, Leah Hanna, Edna V. Hazen, Alberta L. Lesina, Ruth Marie Martin, Catherine Y. Mead, Vernon F. Mead, Georgia M. Melton, Nina Moon, Helen Stray Partello, Louise M. Plumb, Norman Robertson, Maude Shively, Dr. Douglas Wendt, Katherine D. Wendt.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

Marie A. Catusich, Emil J. Danielson, Thomas E. Dougherty, Hubert E. Hood, Julia Poage, Mae O. Smothers, Eva Sourisseau and Edith E. Van Every have been reported ill. Our very best wishes and hope for a rapid recovery are sincerely extended.

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the condition of any ill member, and report any sickness or deaths to the chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Ruth M. Heath. Phone 292-2609.

* * *

BEYOND THE HORIZON

Alice Nash Harris
1870 - April 4, 1965

Hans P. Schmidt
May 4, 1882 - April 16, 1965

Ethel Margaret Smothers
January 6, 1885 - May 11, 1965

Florence R. Cunningham
December 31, 1880 - May 31, 1965

Juanita H. Baker
October 17, 1890 - June 8, 1965

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

THE TRAILBLAZER

Issued in January, April, July and October

Editor: Arthur M. Fisk, 1335 Singletary Ave., San Jose

Associate Editor: Marjorie B. Fisk

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

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* * * *

The SOCIAL CLUB of our society meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday afternoon of each month. Card playing and various activities highlight each meeting. For further information call Mrs. Kate L. Owen, 295-1153.

BUS TOUR information for members of the Pioneer Society may be obtained from Miss Gertrude A. Bernhardt, phone 293-3087.

Any items for the Pioneer scrap book may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose, Cal. 95128.

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