

Volume 35

May, 1994

Number 2

HECKER PASS

By CHUCK MEYER

This article is an excerpt from the first-place winner of the 1993 California Pioneers of Santa Clara County Essay Contest titled: HECKER PASS - A Historical Adventure

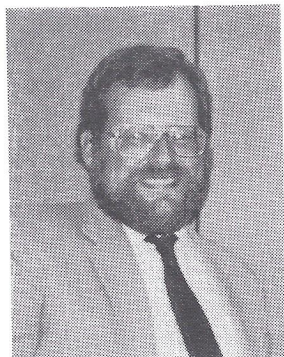
Henry Hecker, of German stock, was a native of Ohio. He was born January 14, 1861, in Marion, Ohio, north of Columbus. His parents, John and Mary Zuckman Hecker, were German immigrants.

He came to Gilroy in 1883, and soon went into business as a grocer with George Wentz, another notable in Gilroy history (Wentz served as Gilroy's mayor from 1914-18). Hecker soon bought out Wentz, and established

Hecker & Co., one of the area's most stable businesses. He continued the business until 1932.

Hecker served as treasurer of the City of Gilroy 1892-1916, and as president of the Bank of Gilroy from 1908 to 1916. He left that post to join the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors. His remarkable service to the board lasted three decades, from 1916-1945, and he served as president of the Board of Supervisors for several terms.

Hecker was instrumental in completion of roads and bridges, and he negotiated the 1927 purchase of the Mt. Madonna property from the Henry Miller estate for a county park.



Chuck Meyer

Continued to page 2

Hecker was married four times. His first marriage, just after his 27th birthday, was to Mary Wood, on January 18, 1888. They had one daughter, Mildred (later Mildred Kilpatrick), born October 3, 1888. Mary died in 1889. Hecker later married Martha Wood (Mary's older sister) on October 26, 1892. They had no children, and Martha died in 1897.

The next year, he wed Ethel Mary Holloway Miller, on October 18, 1898. She brought with her her two sons: Gerald Miller and Adrian Elmer Miller (known as Ted). Hecker later adopted them as his own sons. Their daughter Ethel Bernice (later Mrs. Leo Arena) was born August 20, 1902.

His fourth and final marriage took place much later in life, to Pearl Fredericks. In 1945, he retired from public life. He died on New Year's Eve 1947 at age 86.

As part of the roads and bridges committee, Hecker made a deal with Santa Cruz County to build a new road through Mt. Madonna to connect the two areas. In those days, each supervisor received his share of road funds. Hecker put his aside each year for his pet project. For many years, Hecker wanted to connect Gilroy and Watsonville, and provide a link for travelers wanted to go to the coast from the San Joaquin Valley. In 1928, his chance finally came.

According to San Jose Mercury News reports, the actual costs of building the road are not documented, but details of the completion of the project were. The road on both sides of the pass was made from dirt. There was a flurry of activity to complete the road on the Santa Cruz side prior to the ceremony.

On May 27, 1928, there was a lavish picnic held on the Santa Cruz side of the pass. About 6,000 people attended, and they stayed for the highway dedication ceremony. Justin Byers, who was the publicity chairman, sang "Trees" and "My Little Grey Home in the West." The 11th Calvary band from the Monterey Presidio played.

Then a group of 15 men took Hecker to another spot near the current site of Mt. Madonna Inn at the summit (1334 ft.). They showed him a plaque that they had installed in secret. It said: "HECKER PASS: This testimonial dedicated to Henry Hecker whose foresight made possible the completion of the Yosemite to the Sea Highway. May 27, 1928."

Continued to page 5



Miriam Clark



President's Message

Help!!! we need YOU! Al Gauger has graciously consented to Chair the nominating committee. I hope you will consider taking time from your busy schedule to serve on the Pioneers' board for a year. Your ideas and

suggestions as to someone who could/would serve will also be very helpful. Just give Al a call at (408) 448-8840.

To Tommy Warren and Robert Oliver who have served us well for several years as Membership Secretary and Second Vice President, respectively, and to Jim Reid, our Treasurer for the past year, we express our great thanks and appreciation for all the work they have done. We will miss them.

Hawaii was as beautiful as ever; Waikiki, busier; hotels getting higher and higher; the Arizona visit just as moving. Oahu was quite interesting; we spent a week visiting the historical and tourist attractions before meeting nine other Californians for a week cruise on the Constitution. It was an enjoyable way to get the flavor of the Islands. Barbara Johnsen did a great job of coordinating, as usual, and we appreciate her efforts.

At the June meeting we will honor the Essay Contest winners and be privileged to hear summaries of their essays. They are always so informative. Dr. Cecil Todd, whom many of you know from one of our trips to England, will also be honored. Be sure to be there!

S. C. COUNTY COURTHOUSE

By Loi Kha

This is an excerpt from an essay titled THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY COURTHOUSE: JUSTITIA DEDICATA which was submitted in the 1993 essay contest. Author Kha was a student of Kathryn Philip, Willow Glen High School.

Levi Goodrich supervised in the construction of the finest courthouse in California. This magnificent structure is of the Roman Corinthian Order of architecture and is situated on the west side of First Street, across from St. James Park. Its foundation wall resides upon a base of concrete to the depth and thickness of six feet. The lowest floor of the building is supported by heavy brick arches. The walls are all made of brick. The basement walls are four feet thick, and the upper walls are twenty-one inches thick. Above the basement are two stories, and the building's dimensions are in frontage 100 feet; in depth including the portico, 140 feet. The height to the cornice is fifty-six feet, and is 115 feet to the top of the dome, the least diameter of which is seventeen feet, and the greatest fifty feet. The portico is seventy-six feet in length, the height of the columns being thirty-eight feet and the diameter four feet. The windows are made of the finest French plate glass. All the windows are surmounted with pediments, those on the lower floor being arches. Each window frame is made of cast-iron and weighs about 3,600 pounds. Zinc covers the roof. The Grecian dome is lighted by eleven elliptical windows, surmounted with an iron railing forty-two inches in height, and is reached by a staircase of 172 steps, with three landings. This splendid edifice is divided into twenty-one rooms, two of which are designed as court rooms, and the others for different county officers. The larger of the court rooms is sixty-five by forty feet, and thirty-eight feet high. The room receives its light through the ceiling which is supported by fluted plasters of the Corinthian and Ionic Orders, and is divided into twelve deeply sunk panels set with opaque glass. Behind the forum is a recess over which appears the legend "JUSTITAE

Continued to page 5

Continued from page 4

ET CLEMENTIAE," Justice and Mercy. In the corners of the room are niches supported with water for drinking purposes. The whole building is supplied with water, gas, and all of the modern style of conveniences. It is heated by Chilson Furnaces, installed in the basement. The exterior of the building is made of imitation stone. The main entrance is by an ascent of nine feet, up thirteen granite steps. It leads to the iron door of the facade, which is eight feet wide and twelve feet high. The iron door is constructed into two parts that slide into the walls on each side. Above the main entrance on the frieze is inscribed the motto "JUSTITIAE DEDICATA," Dedicated To Justice. On January 1, 1868, following the twenty month completion of the courthouse, a dedication ceremony was performed.

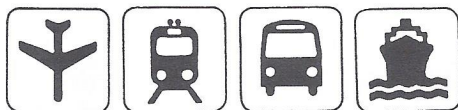
FORGOTTEN DUNGEON

Deep inside the old Santa Clara County Courthouse are two forgotten holding cells which historical footnotes had discovered during planning for restoration from the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. The cells were found on November 8, 1991. It was hidden behind a brick wall, dating back to 1868. The brick walls were plastered over, probably to discourage the prisoners from chipping away at the mortar to remove the bricks. Construction investigators found outlets for gas that powered the electricity, but no plumbing. The abandoned jail cells will not be renovated, but kept open as historical points of interest for visitors.



HECKER - Continued from page 2

Hecker was greatly surprised, and was soon overcome with emotion. "It was like he was heart-touched," recalled Louis Cupich, one of the committee members. "He cried like a baby. And he made us promise that as long as we lived we would hold a picnic here. 'Keep this going,' he asked us, 'until the last man dies.'"



Touring With The Californians

JUNE 23, THURS. YERBA BUENA GARDENS, JUST RECENTLY OPENED IN DOWNTOWN San Francisco, will be explored with a landscape artist. Lunch (included) at the Marriott Hotel Garden Terrace, and a brief tour of Fort Mason with time to browse on our own, completes the day's activities. Leave 9:00 a.m. and return 5:00 p.m. \$33.00 per person. Call Nancy Hill (408) 258-3449 for reservations.

JULY 20, WED. RALSTON HALL AND HALF MOON BAY. Guided tour of Ralston Hall, country mansion of the San Francisco financier, on the grounds of the College of Notre Dame in Belmont. Visit Half Moon Bay with time to browse the shops and historic buildings of old Spanishtown. Included lunch at the Anchorage on Cabrillo Highway overlooking the ocean. Leave 9:00 a.m. and return 4:00 p.m. \$25.00 per person.

AUGUST 23, TUES. U.C. SANTA CRUZ ARBORETUM AND ANTONELLI BEGONIA GARDENS. See rare and exotic plants from the Mediterranean, South Africa and Australia, plus Antonelli Begonias at the peak of their season. Hosted lunch at the Crow's Nest with a view of the Bay. Leave 9:00 a.m. and return 4:00 p.m. \$27.00 per person.

SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 8. A "stay-put" tour (one week at the same hotel) in NEW YORK with day trips to see such places as: Historic Hudson Valley, West Point, Hyde Park, Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Long Island, Rockefeller Center, Greenwich Village. In a week's stay in PHILADELPHIA See: comprehensive tour of the City, Cape May in New Jersey, the Winterthur Museum and gardens in Delaware, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania Dutch Country, Hershey Chocolate World and much more!!

RESERVATIONS FOR July, August, September trips will be received at the June 4th, Pioneers Luncheon or by phone beginning Monday, June 6. Request a brochure by sending a stamped, self-addressed legal size envelope to THE CALIFORNIANS, 800 Blossom Hill Road, #362, Los Gatos, CA 95032.

WHALE BLAZERS

SANTA CLARA, September 17, 1926 -- The Pioneers of Santa Clara County had been honored by members of the Santa Clara Women's Club at their clubhouse, 'The Adobe'. Among those featured on the program were Mrs. Dino who told of being present at Lincoln's funeral, and Mrs. Southwick who quoted many of Lincoln's quaint sayings. Also, Dr. Jane Bowen told of the mapping and naming of the streets of Santa Clara by her husband and other events of the town's early past.

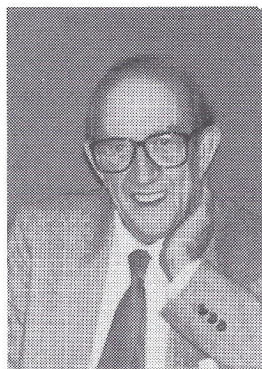
SAN JOSE, March, 1903 -- The L.Hart & Son baseball team won an easy victory over the California Pioneers by the score of 12 to 2.

APRIL, 1907 -- Our Pioneer executive board was making plans for the annual Alum Rock Spring picnic. The affair was to supply a basket lunch with coffee, tea and lemonade provided free. Fans and fly swatters were to be provided also.

OUR FAIR LADY OF 1960. The coronation ceremonies of this 1960 Santa Clara County's Fair Queen was regarded as being really regal indeed. According to Fair officials a good portion of the 'royal carpet' used by England's Queen Elizabeth's United States visit four years before was flown in from Pennsylvania's manufacturer's warehouse to be spread before the feet of Miss Judy Pepper, the beautiful 17-year-old Fair queen as she approached her throne fronting the main grandstand on opening night. The original red carpet was 2400 feet long and 3 feet wide. Fair officials were said to have treated it with all the guarded secrecy of an armored truck bankroll. Only the date of its arrival was announced. On September 6, the 'royal carpet' was taken from a Pacific Airline plane at the San Jose Airport, then by Loomis Armored Car to the San Jose First National Bank's main branch to be stored in its vault until Fair time.

**A. C. Todd, Historian and Author,
Joins the Pioneers at June Luncheon**

A. C. Todd, author of **THE CORNISH MINER IN AMERICA** and other books, and an honorary member of the Pioneers will be a special guest at the June luncheon at Lou's Village. Dr. Todd will be visiting from his home in Warwickshire, England.



Please Call.. **554-7587** For Reservations
24 HOUR SERVICE *Please CALL by Wed. Prior to LUNCHEON*

CALENDAR FOR 1994

Saturday, SEPTEMBER 3, 1994 Luncheon

Program to be announced.

Call in reservations by Wednesday, August 31st.

Saturday, DECEMBER 3, 1994 Luncheon

This is our annual Christmas Program

Call in reservations by Wednesday, November 30th.





Beyond The Sunset

Earl Brisbin
George L. Borba
Earl L. Frost
Frankie H. Hanson
Mary K. Sheridan
Esther T. Lowrey

Emma E. Naucke
Mary K. Sheridan
Mildred B. Simons
Frederick D. Southard
Mildred G. Winters
Elizabeth Worden

On behalf of the members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, the TRAILBLAZER extends sincere sympathy to the relatives and friends of our departed members.

Welcome New Members

Rose Crimi
John E. Hershbach
Linda M. Hershbach
Buck Norred

William C. Schobert
Eleanor R. Schobert
Evelyn Wahrer

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE LUNCHEON ON JUNE 5th



WHO
ARE
WE?



California Pioneers
of
Santa Clara County

Do you have a family member or a friend who would qualify and would like to become a member?

The CALIFORNIA PIONEERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY was founded June 22, 1875 to cultivate fellowship with members and friends at the meetings; to pay suitable honor to the memory of deceased members; to assist the afflicted; to maintain a library, collect and preserve articles of historic value of the pioneer days of the state and county; to assist financially to preserve historic buildings; to sponsor a scholarship fund for best essays on Santa Clara County history by students of High School, College, or by anyone who wishes to enter an essay.

Membership is available to those who are of good character, who have resided in the State of California 50 years or more, and every person who is a descendant of one who lived in California 50 years or more is eligible for membership in this corporation. A wife or a husband of fewer years may apply for associated membership.

Quarterly Luncheon meetings are the first Saturday of March, June, September and December.

Applications are available from the Membership Chairman, P. O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155, or from any member of the Board of Directors.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES

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ANNUAL DUES are \$7.00 per year and may be paid by sending your check along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

CALIFORNIA PIONEERS

P. O. Box 8208

San Jose, CA 95155

You will then receive your membership card in the mail.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS? Notify the Membership Chairman as soon as possible of any change. The Post Office will not forward your TRAILBLAZER. It costs us 29¢ for each returned TRAILBLAZER and an additional 29¢ to remail it.



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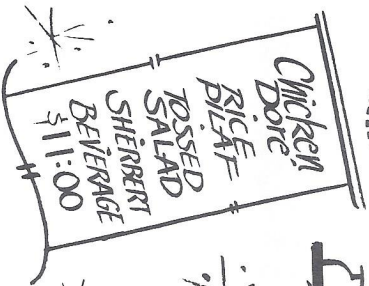
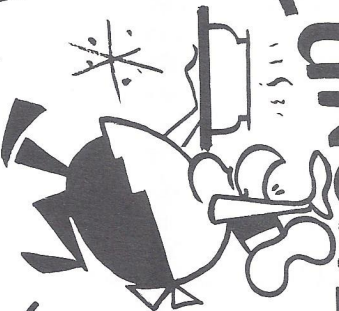
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THE CALIFORNIANS TRAVEL PLANNING SURVEY

JUNE 1994

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey.
Help us to serve you better! Please mail this survey
or bring it to the June luncheon or to the San Francisco
trip on June 23rd. The tour committee thanks you very
much.

A. WHAT TRIP DURATIONS INTEREST YOU?

_____ One Day _____ Overnight

Limited to weekends only? Yes _____ No _____

_____ 5-7 days _____ 7-10 days _____ 12-14 days

How much advanced notice needed?

_____ 6 months _____ 9 months _____ 12 months

B. DO YOU PREFER HAVING TRIPS LISTED IN ADVANCE
IN THE TRAILBLAZER in addition to getting a
trip flyer at the quarterly luncheons?

_____ Yes _____ No.

C. FOR LONGER TRIPS, WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

_____ Moving from place to place in order to
cover more territory.

_____ Seeing a limited area in depth by
"staying put" for several days.

(Staple or tape here)

D. WHAT TYPE OF TRIPS DO YOU ENJOY?

☐ Cultural and Historic sights ☐ Ocean cruise ☐ River cruise
☐ Travel by train ☐ Pageants ☐ Museum/architecture
☐ Mountain resort ☐ Guest ranch ☐ Landscapes and seascapes
 Other suggestions for one day and overnight trips _____

E. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING DESTINATIONS:

	High	Low	None		High	Low	None
Great Lakes Region (10 days)	_____	_____	_____	Ohio River Steamboat plus Kentucky (10 days)	_____	_____	_____
Texas Guest Ranch near the Rio Grande (7 days)	_____	_____	_____	Nostalgic journey thru Iowa (7 days)	_____	_____	_____
Arkansas River cruise (7 days)	_____	_____	_____	Canadian Rockies by Rail (3 to 12 days)	_____	_____	_____
OTHER SUGGESTIONS _____							

F. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR INTEREST IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

	High	Low	None		High	Low	None
Central America	_____	_____	_____	South America	_____	_____	_____
Mexico	_____	_____	_____	Italy	_____	_____	_____
France	_____	_____	_____	Greece	_____	_____	_____
Indonesia	_____	_____	_____	India	_____	_____	_____
Japan	_____	_____	_____				
OTHER SUGGESTIONS _____							

MANY THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.

Optional, but appreciated, your name _____, telephone number _____

Return address:

Place
29¢
stamp
here

THE CALIFORNIANS

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