

SARAH PARDEE WINCHESTER

from Lady of Mystery by Ralph Rambo

Sarah Pardee was the Belle of New Haven, Connecticut. She was highly cultured, a finished musician, an avid reader and spoke four languages. She was pretty, weighed less than 100 pounds and was four feet 10 inches tall. In 1862, she married Oliver Wirt Winchester, son of the famous rifle manufacturer.

Oliver, although in ill health, carried on most ably with the newly named Winchester Repeating Arms Company. The end of the Civil War did not affect the prosperity of the company because of the second western migration which followed the cessation of fighting. The practical repeating rifle became "The gun that won the West," with the "dubious fame of killing more game, more Indians and more U.S. soldiers than any other weapon in this nation's history."

Sarah had a baby girl, Annie in 1866, who died at one month. The grief over this loss affected the sensitive woman. Fifteen years later, her husband died of tuberculosis, leaving her alone. Doctors and friends urged her to leave the east, seek a milder climate and search for some all consuming hobby. One physician did suggest that she "build a house and don't employ an architect."

When she arrived in San Jose, she purchased an unfinished eight room house and began to remodel it. She became thoroughly enthused over the planning this took. She had no architectural training, but fancied herself to be talented in that line. She certainly had enough money to entertain any hobby she desired. Rumors had it that she

brought \$20,000,000 with her and had an average income of \$1,000 a day. Just where these facts came from is not known, but they were accepted for years. It is known that between 1881 and 1889, the dividends from her 777 shares of stock in the Winchester Company gave her an average annual income of \$43,335. When her mother in law died in 1897, she inherited 2000 more shares to a total of 2,777 shares.

Every morning, she made the rounds with her foreman to inspect the latest progress on the building. Some days, she sketched plans on the spot using a saw horse drawing table and any handy material, often brown wrapping paper (and she used both sides). The foreman's job was to interpret what she wanted. Glaring mistakes did not discourage her, she simply ordered the error torn out, sealed up, built over or around or even ignored. Some of her ideas were simply ingenious such as the staircase with two inch high steps. As she advanced in age, she was a victim of advanced arthritis and neuritis and that was as high as she could step. Later, when she was confined to a wheelchair, she had an elevator installed. She also had corner-plates on many of the stairs to prevent dust pockets. The clear glass on her shower was so the maids could watch in case she should fall. The arrangements of the jets at her shoulder height, which would be low for any one else, was so she could shower without getting her hair wet, something only men enjoy.

In each room, she had annunciators installed so she could signal her servants as to where she was. Illuminating gas was manufactured by a new process directly on the grounds. She invented a window catch patterned after the Winchester rifle trigger and trip hammer. She invented an inside crank to open and close outside shutters. Her 47 fireplaces had the first hinged iron drops for ashes and concealed wood boxes. She invented, patented and sold laundry tubs like those in her laundry room with the wash boards molded inside the front, rather than the free standing ones that were common. The barred inside windows had once been outside windows. As she added to the house, she

just left them as they were. The bell in the belfry was used for a fire alarm and as a start and stop signal for the workers in her distant prune and apricot orchards.

Of course, she was terrified at the 1906 earthquake as were many people. She had been trapped in a room. There was major damage to her house and she moved out for 6 months to a bayside barge while repairs were made.

The trap doors in the floral conservatory were raised to drain water from potted plants onto a second slanting floor and then outdoors. The outside faucets which project from under upstairs windows were to water the plants in window boxes, which were never installed.

She had a remarkable memory and knew the location of every piece of material in the mansion, including the vast store rooms. She asked Fred Larsen to fix a gate. He found 6 brass colored screws in a store room drawer. Later, Sarah asked, "Fred, there are six screws missing from the store room. Did you take them?" Fred replied, "Yes, Mam. I took them to fix that gate." She replied, "Fred, those screws were solid gold! I was saving them for something special; Let's use something cheaper." to be continued...

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE LOCAL HISTORY SCENE by HISTORIAN LEONARD MCKAY (at the March Meeting)

I drove out to New Almaden-passed an apricot orchard in bloom-beautiful white blossoms with a rich bed of golden and green mustard-beautiful-hard to believe the mansions on the hills.

Helen Arbuckle's ashes have yet to be scattered in her beloved Big Basin. Did you know that Andrew Hill wished for his ashes to be scattered there, too? Hill was so important in saving the redwoods. He was also Secretary of our Pioneer Organization which supported him with the Sempivirons Club, now the Sempivirons Fund. I made a promise to Jim and Susan that I would raise money to have a tree at Big Basin named in memory of Helen. Many have already sent money that will be applied to her tree. If we raise \$500.00, we

can have a tree as large as one man can put his arms around. If we raise \$1500, we can have a tree with a trunk as large as two persons holding hands outstretched. Donations are tax deductible. You can send them to my attention and I will forward them or you can send directly to the Sempivirons Fund.

Jim Arbuckle has tracked down four of Clyde's half hour video tapes made in the 1960's for our local TV station. He has copied them onto one tape which is available for \$21.60 from him.

A lot is going on at the San Jose Historical Museum. They are trying to buy the Lusardi Building next to the Peralta Adobe to use as archives. They recently opened a new exhibit at the Museum at Kelly Park on the Gold Rush. They are hosting the annual Meeting for the Conference of California Historical Societies June 10, 11 and 12. You are all invited to join in and enjoy the activities with other historical society members from all over the state.

March 11th was the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the San Jose Rotary Club. Eric Carlson has a web page on the internet called "Soft Underbelly of San Jose." He was on *Bay Area Backroads* two weeks ago, talking about Alviso. Judge Jerry Kettman has published a family history which is the best I have read on farming and cattle raising here in our county.

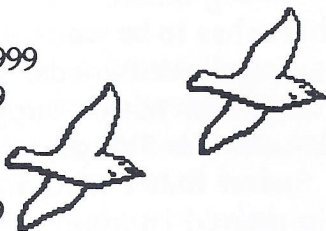
NEW MEMBERS (since March)

Charles & Elaine Alderete
Helen Eicher
William & Doris Meyer
Cheryl Lindsey

Robert Caldwell
William & Melanie Homan
Christie and Mary Santos
Joseph Walter

GONE TO THE GOLDEN HILLS

Carolyn Berry Hayes... February 9, 1999
James Reid... March 9, 1999
Ann Meridier... April 3, 1999
Walter Harriman... April 2, 1999
Vivian Moody... April 21, 1999



**CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
ANNUAL MEETING, HISTORY MUSEUMS OF SAN JOSE**

June 10-12

[As members of the Pioneers, you are also members of this statewide umbrella group and invited to attend all or part of the following program. Without paying registration, you can attend any one of those events with an *]

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Registration at the Fairmont Hotel 12-5 (\$35)

Executive Board Meeting, Empire Firehouse, 12-2

Board Meeting, Empire Firehouse, 2-5

No Host Social, 6-7

*BBQ Chicken Dinner at Museum grounds, 7-9 \$22

Gold Rush Exhibit open & museum grounds, 12-7

Friday, June 11, 1999

RVP meeting at Fairmont 8-9 am

Membership breakfast \$18

Annual Membership meeting, 9-12

at San Jose's Historic Athletic Club

Bus Tour & Lunch at Quicksilver Museum 12:30-4:30...\$18

No host social & tour of Historic Hayes Mansion 6-7pm

*Dinner & program at Historic Hayes Mansion 7-9:30 \$45

Leonard McKay will speak on the First Legislature with
Grandma Bascom

Saturday, June 12, 1999

*Genealogy Breakfast, Fairmont Hotel, 8-9:30, \$15

Mary Lou Lyon will speak on Juana Briones

Morning session at Peralta Adobe/Fallon House Historic Sites, 9:30-12 Noon

*Annual Awards Luncheon, 12-3, Hoch Germania, @20

Downtown Walking Tour or Restored Courthouse, 3:30-5

No-Host social hour at Peralta Adobe, 6-7 p.m. (outdoors)

*Pasta dinner & entertainment at Peralta Adobe, 7-9

FROM PRESIDENT DAVID McKINNEY

Spring brings my favorite Pioneer Meeting of the year, the Annual Essay contest. For those of you who have been meaning to come to a quarterly meeting but have not made it-this is one of the best. Come, meet and hear our prize winning essay winners! We are also expecting to have a special presentation from our historian, Leonard McKay.



In September, we are going to have a very interesting presentation by San Francisco attorney, John Boessenecker. He will speak about his most recent book, Gold Dust to Gunsmoke; Tales of gold Rush Outlaws, Gunfighters, Lawmen and Vigilantes, just published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

Lastly, our nominating committee headed by Evelyn Ucovich is looking for people to serve on our Board of Directors. If you are interested or know someone who is, call Evelyn at 408-287-8413.

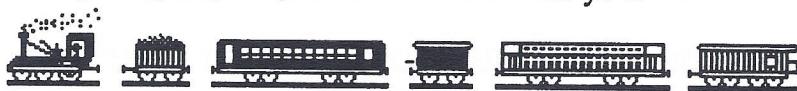
On behalf of the Board of Directors, we hope to see you at one or both of our quarterly meetings.

Eureka!

David

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Pioneer members, you still have time to pay your 1999 dues. Last year, the dues were raised to \$10 to cover expenses. There are presently 43 who have not paid their 1999 dues. We must also remind you that husband and wife team members must pay \$10 each to insure both a seat on the bus reserved for members. Non-members are seated on the excursions after members. Please send along a self addressed stamped envelope with your dues payment for your membership card's return. Bob and Irene Johnson, 445 North 15th Street, San Jose, CA, 95112-1726. Thank you.





Touring With The Californians

Rose Crimi Muench - Tour Director

Nancy Hill - Phone Reservations: 258-3449 Mon - Fri A.M.

Pauline Hawkins - Treasurer 1223 Redcliff Drive

San Jose, CA 95118-1228

Helen Brooks - Registration at Luncheons

REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER TRIPS begins at the June 5 luncheon. Checks are preferred over cash. Please form one line at the Treasurer's table. Non-members and guests may sign up starting June 14. If you do not get a trip flyer at the luncheon meeting, please send a stamped, self-addressed letter-sized envelope to Pauline's address above. Pick-up point (unless otherwise indicated) is at Valley Village, 390 N. Winchester Blvd., Santa Clara, at Dolores St. side.

JUNE 16, WEDNESDAY SOUTH COUNTY GEMS

We will explore some of the history of our neighbor to the south, Morgan Hill named for Hiram Morgan Hill, its prominent settler. Our first tour will be Villa Miramonte, which Hill built in 1887 for his bride, Diana Murphy. The home has just been restored. Its gardens have 150 rose bushes, which should be in full bloom for our visit. We will then proceed to the Morgan Hill Historical Museum, which documents the early years of the town. Lastly we travel to the Guglielmo Winery, founded by Italian immigrant Emilio Guglielmo in 1925, and still operated by his grandsons. We will have a guided tour of the winery, the food and wine shop, and wine tasting. We will have an included lunch on the lawn, at umbrella-covered tables overlooking the rolling vineyards. This trip is filled. You may place yourself on the waiting list. Leave: 9:30 A.M. Return: 3:30 P.M. Price: \$ 35

JULY 24. SATURDAY

HALF MOON BAY TOUR des FLEURS

The eighth annual Tour des Fleurs will take us on guided tours of three Half Moon Bay flower nurseries, which are not normally open to the public. Our included luncheon will be at various eateries along Historic Main Street or at Cameron's for some English pub grub, California style. Pioneers member and noted historian, Mary Lou Lyon, will narrate a tour of the old downtown area, including the 1921 jail, the 1863 Zaballa House, the 1858 Grammar School, and the 1928 art nouveau Dutra Funeral Home.

Leave: 9:00 A.M. Return: 5.00 P.M. Price: \$ 40

AUGUST 26. THURSDAY

HISTORY at SEA and in the AIR

The Bay Area is fortunate to have been selected as the permanent home for the U.S.S. Hornet aircraft carrier in Alameda. Commissioned in 1943, this highly decorated ship served in World War II as the launching ship of the Doolittle Raiders and the recovery ship for the Apollo 11 and 12 missions. We will have a guided tour, including the flight deck and the bridge. The historical museum in the hangar bay contains exhibits of vintage planes and memorabilia depicting the history of the ship. Our closely related visit will be to the Western Aerospace Museum next to the Oakland International Airport. Exhibited are 20 airplanes, the oldest from 1928, and displays featuring naval aviation, women in aviation, World War I and World War II planes and the Doolittle Raiders. Also included is the flying boat used in the filming of "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Our included luncheon will be at the Whale's Tail Restaurant, overlooking the bay with a panoramic view of San Francisco.

Leave: 9:00 A.M. Return: 4.00 P.M. Price: \$ 39

SEPTEMBER 16. THURS. MORE SOUTH COUNTY GEMS

As we travel south, we will stop at the "Wings of History" Air Museum in San Martin. Dedicated volunteers restore old

planes in the prop shop, and planes are on display in the hangars. We will next visit the Gilroy Historical Museum housed in the former 1910 Carnegie Library, a jewel of the Classic Revival style. Our included luncheon will be at Station 55 Restaurant, formerly the town fire station. Our historic tour of Gilroy will be narrated by Connie Rogers, a former Gilroy councilwoman. We will see homes in various styles from Victorian to craftsman, commercial and public buildings, the old City Hall, and the recently restored train station. Lastly, we will take Hecker Pass Road to visit the Solis Winery, dating from 1917, for a tour and wine tasting, and the Goldsmith Seed Company for a look at their demonstration gardens of fall flowers.

Leave: 9:00 A.M. Return: 5:00 P.M. Price: \$ 31

MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRUISE October 31 - November 8 We cruise the Upper Mississippi River from St. Paul to St. Louis on the Mississippi Queen, stopping every day to visit towns of Heartland America. We go through 27 locks as we drop a total of 400 feet elevation over seven days. Delta Queen Steamship Company has offered a very attractive group package with 35% OFF ON CABINS AND FREE AIRFARE IF YOU BOOK BY JUNE 25! Depending on cabin category, cost ranges from \$1895 to \$2575, and includes round trip air from San Jose; St. Paul overnight, breakfast and tour; seven day cruise and port taxes; St. Louis tour; and baggage handling. Trip cancellation insurance is optional. Shore excursions and gratuities on board are at your discretion. Act promptly to get a good cabin choice. Call Rose Crimi Muench, (408) 293-0896.

NEW YEAR'S 2000?

We will have an interest sign-up at the June luncheon for a trip to Victoria, British Columbia, staying at the Empress Hotel. What a way to ring in the New Year !

* * * * *

We are invited to participate in some forthcoming SIRS trips. Brochures are available. Call Ed Schwartz at (408) 268-3129.

JULY 2 - 5, 1999 SPIRIT of AMERICA

Lake Tahoe cruise, Virginia City tour including the Fourth Ward School, National Auto Museum, Reno and Carson City tours, Nevada Railroad Museum, and fireworks show. Includes seven meals, driver gratuity, and trip cancellation insurance. \$495.

AUGUST 3 - 25, 1999 IRELAND and NORDIC ISLES CRUISE

Holland America MS Rotterdam, from London to Copenhagen with stops at: Guernsey; Cork and Dublin, Ireland; Isle of Man; Reykjavik and Akureyri, Iceland; Faroe Islands; Shetland Islands; and Copenhagen. Price: \$4300 and up, depending on the stateroom.

PIONEER MEMBERSHIP PINS

At the last board meeting we discussed the Pioneer Membership pins. The year 2000 is also the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County. In view of this, the Board of Directors would like to have a membership pin that reflects this milestone in our organization's history. Therefore, we are requesting that our members make suggestions for the design of the pin. If you have ideas that you would like incorporated into the design, please send them to our president, David McKinney.

We still have a few of the current pins available for \$2.00. If you would like to obtain one of these membership pins, please see Jim Arbuckle.

Thanks

Melita Kelly

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

So far today, God, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper, I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over indulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed And from then on, I'm going to need a lot more help!

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Nancy Hill

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**Hacienda Cemetery &
Jackson Ranch**

Richard Hill

See above

Bud & Marie Amaral

See above

**Submissions to the Trailblazer
For the September Issue
must be received by July 25**

Mary Lou Lyon- Editor

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