



Volume 6

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Number 2

SAN JOSE'S GOLD BANK

Santa Clara County's oldest home owned bank was chartered July 11, 1874 as the Farmers National Gold Bank of San Jose', sixth national gold bank chartered in California.

These national gold banks were authorized to issue bank notes that were redeemable in gold upon demand. Gold was the predominant medium of exchange in California at that time, and commanded a premium ranging from five to ten per cent, with comparison to other mediums of exchange, such as currency or silver.

In 1880, by enactment of Congress, national gold banks were enabled to convert to national currency banks, and it was in that year that the name of Farmers National Gold Bank was changed to The First National Bank of San Jose'.

The price paid for the southwest corner lot at First and Santa Clara streets was \$71,225. The highest price paid for any single parcel of land in San Jose' to that date. The original bank building was a two-story structure and claimed to be the finest building in San Jose'.

The First National Bank building of San Jose' was undamaged by the earthquake in 1906 and became a depository for many San Francisco banks that had to be evacuated because of the earthquake and fire in that city.

August 1, 1909 work started on a new nine-story bank building, using steel cage construction technique, and designed to be earthquake and fire proof. The new building was completed in January 1911 and was the tallest structure in San Jose'. In 1928 another nine-stories were added to the building and a new vault, which was second in strength in California. Several years ago another \$2 million was spent in an elaborate remodeling job.

SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

(The astonishing growth and efficiency of the San Jose' Fire Department during the past 112 years is set forth in the following article from material furnished by one of our members, Battalion Fire Chief of District 2, Anthony Sapena.)

In 1847 "The Town Council" passed the community's first fire ordinance. It ordained that "no house or edifice shall hereafter be erected with a cover of straw, grass or flags, and all houses covered with said materials shall not be repaired after this date with the aforesaid materials."

March 27, 1850 San Jose' was incorporated as a city. Building material used at that time was principally adobe, canvas, reeds and some shaped lumber. The only fire protection available was by unorganized bucket brigades, who obtained the water from private wells and the water ditch (azequia), which ran parallel to the present San Pedro Street.

July 11, 1850 "The Common Council" passed the city's first fire prevention ordinance, which "prohibited the use of canvas, reeds and mustard for building construction materials."

December 30, 1853 the Common Council appropriated \$1,000 to purchase fire fighting apparatus.

January 27, 1854 the council passed an ordinance approving a "fire department," and the San Jose' Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 came into existence. The equipment consisted of a four wheeled wagon, equipped with leather buckets and four ladders, the longest of which was 16 feet. The city leased a lot from Louis Lightstone on Lightstone Street for 10 years at \$125 per year and erected a building for the fire department at a cost of \$1450.

June 21, 1854 Empire Engine Company No. 1 was organized, but did not acquire a fire engine until a month later.

July 10, 1854 the council passed the first false alarm law, ordinance, "that ringing the fire bell was to be used for alarms of fire only."

July 24, 1854 the city purchased a used hand pumper that had been used in San Francisco four years for \$1500, and some hose at \$1 per foot and Empire Engine Company No. 1 went into service. (present engine #2)

June 24, 1855 the Common Council authorized boring a seven inch well at Market and El Dorado (now Post St.) streets for fire purposes only.

May 12, 1856 the city purchased another used hand pumper from San Francisco and Torrent Engine Company No. 2 was organized and went into service. (present engine #1)

August 18, 1857 the Common Council passed an ordinance authorizing the election of a Chief Engineer for the fire department. Up to this time each company operated independent of the other and was governed by a Foreman. On October 5, 1857 John B. Hewson was elected the first Chief Engineer of the San Jose' Fire Department.

June 2, 1862 the council passed an ordinance, "requiring that brick be used for all construction in the First Fire District." The first district was basically from St. John to San Carlos Street (north to south) and from the west side of Market to Third Street.

November 26, 1866 the council granted the San Jose' Water Company a franchise to operate a water works from the artesian wells of Donald McKenzie which were located along San Antonio Street between Market and First. They immediately began laying the first water pipes in downtown San Jose'.

June 3, 1867 the Empire Engine Company received the City's first steam pumper. It was a Silsby engine and cost \$6,216. It weighed 4,500 pounds and had to be hand pulled to the fires by the firemen. It was not until March 9, 1871 that the council agreed to hire a man with a team of horses to pull the Silsby steamer.

December 4, 1871 the Franklin Engine Company No. 3 was organized and assigned the old hand pumper formerly used by Empire Engine Company. (present engine #3)

October 6, 1873 the council agreed to purchase a new steamer for the Torrent Engine Company, and on February 16, 1874 a new Clapp and Joses steamer was delivered to the Torrent Company.

March 2, 1874 the council agreed to pay the Chief Engineer and approved a salary of \$25 per month.

March 30, 1874 the council passed an ordinance, "forbidding citizens to use any water during a fire." The water mains were so small that it reduced the pressure if water was used by individuals.

April 24, 1875 San Jose' had its first disastrous fire. Auzerais Brothers store on Market Street (where P.T. & T. building stands) caught on fire. A strong north wind caused it to spread fast and completely demolished St. Joseph's Church. An investigation showed that the public did not obey the ordinance of March 30th concerning the use of water during a fire.

June 7, 1875 the Eureka Engine Company was organized and admitted into the fire department. They were given the old hand pumper formerly used by the Torrent Engine Company. (present engine #4)

For many years the San José Fire Department was a volunteer organization. It was not until October 23, 1876, that the city council voted to have a paid fire department, effective November first with 29 full-time employees.

November 15, 1876 the members of the Franklin Engine Company notified the city council of their intention of remaining a Volunteer Fire Company.

June 25, 1877 another important advance came, when the city council contracted with the A. D. T. for the installation of an electric fire alarm system.

January 5, 1880 the members of the Franklin Engine Company reconsidered and requested the city council to admit them as paid firemen. The request was granted.

April 14, 1883 the old Hunneman hand pumper was sold to the City of Ferndale. This pumper was built in 1821 and used in Ferndale until 1923.

September 16, 1885 the city council authorized the purchase of a new Hayes, Hook and Ladder.

During 1886 the city council passed an ordinance, "requiring all buildings in the First Fire District to have tin roofs. All outside doors and windows within 20 feet of another building must also have metal covered doors or shutters."

February 3, 1891 the city purchased a new Gamewell Fire Alarm System, which included 40 fire alarm boxes. (The original alarm bell of this system is now on display in the old plaza on Market Street near San Carlos. Most of the mechanism is on display in the city museum at the County Fair Grounds).

July 3, 1892 the famous "Fourth of July Fire" was started when a boy threw a lighted firecracker into a fireworks display on San Fernando Street near Second. Before the fire could be brought under control, most of the buildings on both sides of San Fernando Street between First and Fourth streets were destroyed. According to the journal of the Empire Engine Company their steamer pumped through 26 consecutive hours.

October 9, 1893 the city purchased a Double 80 Champion Chemical Truck, and the officer in charge became the first "Captain" of the San Jose Fire Department.

October 15, 1894 the first telephone was installed in the Chief Engineer's office. Prior to this date a few

electric lights had been installed in some stations.

January 4, 1897 the council ordered the Chief Engineer to have and wear a uniform.

During 1908 the city purchased its last horse drawn steamer and hook and ladder trucks.

November 30, 1914 the city council said goodbye to the "horse and buggy days" and purchased its first Sea-grave automotive pumping engine, and a new era had begun for the San José Fire Department. In 1920 the old hook and ladder truck purchased in 1908 was motorized and in 1942 the city purchased its first new fully hydraulic, automotive hook and ladder truck.

The San José Fire Department at this time is protecting an area of 109 square miles, with a personnel of 373. Within our city limits there are 20 fire stations which include 22 engine companies and seven truck companies. In comparison to the \$25 per month paid to the first salaried Chief Engineer, the salary of the Fire Chief at the present time is \$1576 per month.

(Ferndale still owns the old Hunneman hand pumper and keeps it in fine working condition for display and competition. It is now 145 years old.

San José's fine record of fire prevention, suppression and efficiency, and the excellent character of the fire department personnel has kept our fire insurance rates at a minimum for which we are all very grateful.)

* * *

A FEW FIRSTS

First civic settlement in California, November 29, 1777
 First public school in California, San José Granary, 1795
 First English speaking school in California at Santa Clara 1846-'47

First stage line in California operating to San Francisco 1849

First Governor of California, Peter H. Burnett, November 13, 1849

First California State Capitol, December 15, 1849

First California State Legislature, December 15, 1849

First Skinner seedling apples, developed here in 1850

First French prunes introduced here in 1856

First State College of higher learning 1857

First motion pictures taken at Stanford's farm

First electric street car service in California, 1888

First wireless in California built by Charles D. Herrold 1894

First Radio-telephone station in California, 1904.

YOUR LIBRARY - PAST AND PRESENT

Alice Leland Olsen

To understand the history of any public library one must first be familiar with the history of the city or town, as the public library in a town, just as the public library system in a large metropolitan city, is a reflection of the majority of the voting population. In many small towns the library has some basic classics, a few encyclopedia sets, an unabridged dictionary, a few other reference books, but mainly stocks popular fiction and best sellers of the past ten years or so, along with gift items that its patrons want to dispose of from their personal libraries.

As a town grows into a large city the interests of its population change, and there is a demand for not only a wider range of material, but there is also a demand for research material. All great libraries of the world have grown from relatively small beginnings and have been augmented by gifts of large and small private libraries and by gifts and bequests of funds to purchase needed volumes.

However, public libraries differ from private libraries such as the Huntington Library in that their collections must be available to all members of their communities and public funds may not be spent in the interest or interests of only a few. A library can widen and enrich in depth its collections in certain fields. However, this cannot be done at the expense of its general readers but only if funds are available or if gifts are made to these special fields.

San Jose in 1966 is a large metropolitan city, and the 1960 United States Census of Population, lists it as a Standard Statistical Metropolitan Area, separate from that of San Francisco or Oakland.

When San Jose in 1850 was briefly the capital, citizens donated books which formed the nucleus for the California State Library. However, this library was lost to the town when the capital was moved from San Jose. Sometime between 1867 when the Y.M.C.A. was founded and 1872 when the San Jose Library Association was incorporated, there was a public reading room in the Y.M.C.A. building available to its male members only. By 1871 the Y.M.C.A. was in financial difficulties and by 1872 was practically defunct. As they had the only library and reading room in San Jose, they asked the City of San Jose to purchase their books and in exchange they would furnish the required housing, reading room and care. This was the ac-

tual beginning of the San Jose Public Library

I. F. Thomas, a carriage maker, has been credited with the honor of being "the father of the San Jose Public Library" as he crusaded in the Spring of 1872 for a public library. Credit is due him and also the civic minded citizens who worked for and obtained the establishment of a library association. Nevertheless it was Adolph Pfister, City Mayor from April 1870 to April 1873, who made the first official move toward a public library. His letter to the Common Council of the City of San Jose is recorded in the minutes of April 3, 1871. "To the Honorable the Common Council of the City of San Jose. Gentlemen: In accordance with the proposals which I made to you on receipt of the first installment of my salary as Mayor, I have the honor to inform you that there is now at your disposal the sum of six hundred dollars, the amount of salary which I have received for the year just ended - for the purpose of establishing a Free Public Library. It is my desire in the establishment of such a library, care should be taken to keep it free from sectarianism, and to make it in fact as well as in name, a public library. Yours Respectfully, A. Pfister"

Mayor Pfister's entire salary for three years was turned over to the future library as was that of Mayor Bernard D. Murphy who served from April 1873 until April 1877 and again from April 1880 to April 1882.

Evidently Mayor Pfister had broached the subject to the Common Council previous to April 1871 and his use of the word "free" was the first time this was used in conjunction with "public library." His offer was made public and led to the purchase by the City of San Jose of the books in the Y.M.C.A. reading room. Many libraries of that era charged a membership fee. So when the San Jose Library Association, a private institution, filed its certificate of incorporation on July 13, 1872, fees were charged ranging from \$25.00 for life membership to lesser fees for honorary, annual and monthly memberships. The first president was Judge D. S. Payne with Adolph Pfister serving as vice-president, C. D. Wright as recording secretary, C. C. Stephens as corresponding secretary and Henry Philip as treasurer. A library and reading room was established on the second floor of the Knox Building's new addition with entrance on First and Santa Clara Streets. Mrs. S. L. Knox was one of the trustees. George W. Fentress was the first librarian. The library hours were from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

daily.

Members donated books, works of art and scientific apparatus. A substantial sum of money for the association was raised by the women of San Jose who held a large benefit tea party and a fancy dress party in Music Hall.

By January 1874 the collection totaled 3138 volumes with a valuation of \$1900. The association had 21 life members, 182 annual members. 206 monthly members and 10 honorary members. It is interesting to note that the rules contain no reference to young ladies or girls but mention that "Boys, who are well behaved, will not be interfered with, though they are expected to become members when they can, if their parents are not members. If they hide books behind other volumes, all privileges will be taken from them."

(To be continued in the Summer issue)

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By-Lines from the President

Minnie L. Clark

Genuine appreciation is extended to all the members of our Pioneer Society that supported proposition G in the recent bond election. Passage of this measure will hasten the progress of the developement of the Historic Museum Complex at Kelley Park.

Some day this will be an attraction for visitors from all parts of the world, for which we can be justly proud. San Jose has the distinctive honor of being the first Capital site for the State of California.

At our March quarterly meeting our speaker was Mr. Douglas H. Hubbard, Chief Park Naturalist at Yosemite National Park. He spent five years at Hawaii National Park and has been at Yosemite National Park for thirteen years. The subject of his address was: "100 years in Yosemite." He is the son of Dr. and Mrs. O. S. Hubbard, members of the pioneer society.

The recipient of our annual Scholarship Award is Miss Carol Anglin. She has for her research topic; "The American Alcaldes of San Jose." Miss Anglin is a graduate student with a major in Social Science and a minor in History. Dr. Benjamin Gilbert of San Jose State College will present her at our June quarterly meeting when she will give us the results of her research on this subject.

* * *

SMITH CREEK HOTEL

Arthur M. Fisk

The Smith Creek Hotel stood nestled amongst the native trees in a charming nook of the mountain, half encircled by a sparkling stream. 21 miles from San José and seven miles to the summit of Mt. Hamilton with 2152 feet of sheer ascent. It proved to be a favorite stop-over during the gay nineties and on into the early part of this century.

The hotel was a modest white, two-story frame structure, built in 1885, and operated for many years by Mr. Thomas E. Snell, a Smith Creek rancher, who at one time owned about 400 head of cattle. In 1894 the management was turned over to George P. Snell.

Ernest T. Childs of 660 Winchester Blvd., San José, recalls his father and mother telling of various incidents that happened at Smith Creek when they managed the hotel in the late 1890's and at the turn of the century. Mrs. Childs and her mother actually operated the hotel and Ernest's father Fred P. Childs drove the stage from the old Vendome Hotel in San José to the summit of Mt. Hamilton.

During President McKinley's visit to San José May 13, 14, 15, 1901 some of the president's party made the stage trip to the Lick Observatory. In order that some members of the party might keep an appointment in San José, stagecoach driver Childs broke all previous records by making the descending run in less than three hours.

During Childs service as stagecoach driver, the road between Smith Creek and the summit was washed out one winter and his determination to deliver the mail prompted him to carry it on foot to the observatory and pick up the return letters. Later Childs operated the Dashaway Stables in San José.

The Mt. Hamilton stage, drawn by four horses left from the old Vendome Hotel in San José at 7:30 a.m. and after changing horses at Grandview continued on their journey, arriving at the Smith Creek Hotel about 11 a.m. with a stop-over for lunch. Many prominent men and women of wealth, leisure and fame were guests at this famous hostelry. The hotel dining room was noted for its excellent meals, and the ranch butter and thick cream was remembered ever after.

(The hotel has been demolished, and it is the present location of the Division of Forestry's Smith Creek Fire Station.)

LOOK FOR IT HERE

1966 DUES ARE DUE. Please mail to Mrs. Jessie Black, 82 So. 9th Street, San Jose, Calif. 95112. ***

Mr. and Mrs. Leo W. Ruth celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, January 29. Our congratulations. *

The table decorations at our March quarterly meeting were arranged by members of our social club. The gorgeous camellias on the head table were furnished by Mrs. Violet Oliphant, who has over 100 bushes in her yard. *

The committee on printing the Scholarship Papers will have a report in the Summer issue of the Trailblazer with a coupon for the members to fill in and mail back.*

On March 9th, seven pine trees were planted in the "Pioneer Town" section of Kelley Park in honor of the Pioneers of Santa Clara County. Representing our society were: Minnie Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Arbuckle, Mr. and Mrs. William Heath, Dr. Earl Rhoads, Alice Vetterle, Tony Sapena, Laurence Bulmore and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fisk. *

The Historic Landmarks Commission has been instrumental in saving the office building of Dr. Henry Hulme Warburton. It will be on display in the historic museum complex at Kelley Park when the project is completed. ***

Leo Sullivan's new booklet, "The Musical Heritage of San Jose", is now in circulation. It is a neat little 24 page booklet and deals with what has happened in the musical field in San Jose. It dates back to that engaging span of years he covers, to the turn of the century.*

We hope you like the new look on the front page. It was created by one of our members, F. Ralph Rambo, retired Art Director and author of "Almost Forgotten" and "Remember When." Almost Forgotten went on the market in the Fall of 1964 and has sold over 10,000 copies. Remember When came out in December 1965 and has already exceeded the 2,000 copies mark. If you haven't read these two books you have missed a lot of good wit and humor in his reminiscences of life in Santa Clara Valley in the early 1900's. ***

On the history of San Jose we have not been able to find any material on Cook's Pond, The Ostrich Farm or Luna, Agricultural, Sodality and Scheutzen Parks. We would appreciate any of our readers sending us their recollections or information on these early 20th century attractions. Personal experiences would be good. ***

Each time I see the sign "Road Under Construction--Travel at Your Own Risk," I wonder at whose risk one travels the rest of the time. ***

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Anita E. Andrews, Henry Anet, Madeline Anet, Florence Bastian, Rose Biagi, Mrs. William Binsacca, Carl N. Bolfig, Ethel F. Bolfig, Alice Morgan Cox, Olive M. DeLapp, Charlotte Doyal, Dorothy Doyal, Florence Doyal, Veva S. Gladding, Jane M. Gregg, Henrietta V. Hansen, Howard W. Hansen, Adelaide E. Hascall, Myron E. Hascall, Ora Jones Johnson, Jewell M. Kiouss, Jennie G. Lindblad, Juanita Long, Mark Lucas, Harry W. McIntyre, Jesse C. Mosteller, Lillian Mosteller, Ina May Nelson, George B. Noll, Grace Winsor Noll, F. Ralph Rambo, Hazel K. Rebella, Geraldine F. Reed, Dr. Otto E. Reed, Lillian A. Richards, Norman M. Richards, Carl Sullivan, Gladys M. Tobey, Thelma D. Walrath, Hubert H. Wagner, Nettie D. Wagner, Vera Waybrew, Alyce Hart Wegener, Claire M. Willson, Mary Alis Woodington, Edith E. Young, Ralph L. Young.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

Mrs. Lovene Lührman and Mr. Rudolph Hipp 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 death to the chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Ruth M. Heath. Phone 292-2609.

* * *

BEYOND THE SUNSET

Lillian Bergendahl

May 13, 1899 - December 27, 1965

Minette Chloupek

September 12, 1884 - January 20, 1966

George T. Mayne

November 27, 1883 - January 26, 1966

Loy Bassett Hayes

June 18, 1897 - March 10, 1966

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

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Associate Editor: Marjorie B. Fisk

Staff members: Olin and Edna Lake

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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.

PIONEER SCRAP BOOK items may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95128.

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