

VOLUME 38 NUMBER 4 DECEMBER, 1997

By Popular Demand, **THE BANJO BAND** is Returning to entertain us this year at our Annual Christmas Meeting. Everyone enjoyed them so much in 1995. It almost warrants finding our "dancing shoes!"

A CALL FOR AUTHORS TO BRING THEIR BOOKS TO THE DECEMBER MEETING. Tables will be set up so you can get some of our local books for Christmas gifts (or for yourself!) We have many talented members.

CHRISTMAS IN THE MINES

from *The Diary of a Forty-Niner*

Chauncy L. Canfield, Ed.

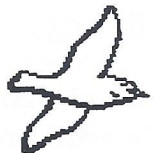
December 30, 1851. Selby Flat has had a sensation which has furnished the boys no end of fun. There was no turkey dinner Christmas, that is, at the hotel, although the landlord swears that his birds furnished a private feed to somebody and he is vowing vengeance on those he suspects depriving boarders of a grand blowout. The majority were skeptical as to there being any turkeys procurable and they backed their opinions with their money, while a few who were in the secret took all of the bets offered, knowing that the landlord had made arrangements a month previous with a peddler from the valley, who assured him that he was going to bring a load from a flock that had been raised on a ranch below Marysville and had agreed to deliver to him a dozen fat birds. Sure enough, a week before Christmas, he arrived with six coops full-a hundred altogether; had no difficulty in selling them at from eight to ten dollars each, and the

landlord got his dozen, as agreed. Those who bet on a turkey dinner wanted to be paid their stakes then and there, but the wagers were on a Christmas feast and the stakeholders decided to wait until that day before giving up the money. It was a sure thing, so no objection was made. The birds were cooped up and stuffed with all they could eat, the landlord advertised the feed at two dollars and a half a head, and was rash enough to promise mince pie for dessert. Two days before Christmas the dreadful word went around that the turkeys had disappeared, and the Flat was all torn up over the news. The landlord was frantic, but had no clue as to the thieves, although he, as well as everybody else around the Flat, suspected the Saleratus Ranch boys, they being usually at the bottom of any deviltry going on. He even went so far as to demand that the deputy sheriff should search their cabin, but Anderson declined unless a search warrant was sworn out, which the landlord, who had nothing to go on beyond his suspicions, could not very well do. The women pronounced it a shame and the men said it would be unhealthy for the occupants of any cabin near which turkey feathers or bones might be found.

It was just a plain, ordinary dinner at the hotel, except for the mince pie, and was followed by a Christmas dance. After the dinner the guests-about fifty of them-decided that they would pay a visit to the Saleratus Ranch and see what sort of holiday grub the boys were having. If they expected to find turkey they were badly disappointed, for there was nothing in sight but the regular old pork and beans and boiled beef. The ranch boys said that they had fully expected to eat a turkey dinner at the hotel, which, of course, was not to be had so as they had their mouths made for a taste of the bird, they were all going over to Nevada (City) for supper, as turkey was plenty in that place and, sure enough, about three o'clock they all started for that place. After that nobody suspicioned them, and it was the general belief that some thieving Indian from the campooda, over the ridge, had raided the turkey roost. I

was saddling up my horse to go into town when Charlie Barker came over to the creek and asked me and Pard to meet a lot of the boys down where Brush and Rock Creeks come together, about two miles below Selby Flat. He was grinning and chuckling over some great joke and wouldn't let on what it was, but teased us to go with him to the rendezvous. Pard suspected what was up and said that as an officer of the law he guessed he had better stay away, but just for curiosity I went along. The cabin we were bound for was Jack Ristine and Carter's place. The rest of the boys went up the road to Sugar Loaf, as if on the way to Nevada, but instead branched off down the ridge and hill, and when just before dark we reached the shanty, there were about twenty of them gathered there and, shameful to tell, the turkeys were there too. It seems that all of those who had bet on there being no turkey dinner were in a plot. They had stolen the birds, taken them down to the creek, killed and picked them, throwing the feathers into the running water, and then half a dozen, who were not suspected, had slipped away Christmas day and helped Ristine and Carter prepare the feast. It was a bully good supper and I must say I enjoyed it. The boys were full of fun, and as whiskey was more than plenty, they were soon full of that too. They sang and told stories until about eleven o'clock, then gathered up the bones and remnants of the supper, dug a hole in the bank of the creek and buried the remains three feet deep. They all stood around the hole, or grave, as they called it, bareheaded, while Arthur Brooks delivered a funeral oration over the "dear departed." As they were getting uproarious I slipped away and came back home. I told Pard about it and he laughed and said that the boys did not mean any harm but it was just a little rough on the landlord.

GONE TO THE GOLDEN HILLS
AFTON MOORE
GLADYS ROSS



CHRISTMAS 1912

as told to Mary Lou Lyon, by her Mother

When little Hazel was 5, her Mother took her and her little sister Gladys from their homestead in southwestern Kansas, near Mead, to their Grandmother's home in Marion, Kansas. Grandmother's farm was in a wetter part of Kansas than Mead. They even had trees down by the river.

Grandmother's house was a low rambling series of rooms that went up a step or down, depending on the land. They had added rooms as needed. The most important room was still the kitchen. It had a very large cast iron stove which burned wood and even had a reservoir for heating water on the side. The oven was large and a warming oven was on the back, in case the men didn't get in from the fields right on time. This stove had been used to fix many meals for workers on the farm as well as family.

On the right hand wall as you entered through the screen door, was a sink. In order to get water, you had to prime the pump and pump the handle to draw water up from the cistern under the floor which caught & kept rain-water. There were two large dishpans in the sink where the dishes were washed by hand and then scalded with very hot water to make certain they were clean. There were dish towels, too, to be used by the dish dryer.

Grandma's bedroom was through the inside kitchen door and a left turn up two steps. A little room off the kitchen was called the "Tramps' room" because that is where she allowed tramps to sleep when they came by. There were a couple of other bedrooms and a sleeping porch for hot Kansas summer nights all around the outside of the house. The dining room was just off the living room. Grandma kept her sewing machine in the dining room because it had the most windows. It had a cast iron heating stove in it to keep it warm, but was closed off in winter when it was cold and snowy. Grandpa Stafford kept his hunting guns on the wall

behind the open door. He was very particular about them and they were never put away dirty or loaded.

The parlor was to the right. No one went into the parlor unless they were invited to. Most of the time, the door was shut. I remember a very interesting round glass curio cabinet full of fascinating things that we were not allowed to touch. There was also a big conch shell on a table that grandma blew into to call the men in from the fields. It made a very loud noise. I don't know where she got that or the rest of her shell collection because Kansas is a long way from an ocean. Nana has a cast iron kitty that stood by Grandma Stafford's bedroom door. when she was a little girl, she remembers pulling the real hair eyelashes out of it. She has given Mary Louise a fish plate, a plain brown teapot from England and a tiny pitcher from the World's Fair of 1893 that had been Grandma Staffords. Mary Louise also has a crazy quilt with intricate embroidery stitches that Great Grandmother Stafford made for her when she was small.

On Christmas Eve, 1912, when Hazel was five, her Uncle Linzie was 11. She thought he was wonderful and they had many good times together. After supper, and the dishes were done, the family was taken to the glass doors of the parlor as a special treat. The French doors were opened and Hazel saw the most wonderful thing she had ever seen-her first Christmas tree with candles in metal holders with angels shielding the flame all over it lighting up the room. It was so beautiful, she could hardly breathe.

She turned to exclaim to Linzie, but he wasn't there. He had gone to the barn. He was missing it! Then Santa Claus came with his pack. Things were so exciting! She can't remember now what Santa brought her, but Linzie was missing him, too. Later when Linzie finally came in from the barn, she had so much to tell him about the wonder of that first lighted Christmas Tree and the special evening that he had missed.

What is your most exciting or nostalgic Christmas Memory? Everyone, even small children have them. Ask your family to share their memories at Christmas.

LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT, BOB FISHER

Dear Pioneers:

I would like to bring you the latest information on the activities at the Hacienda Cemetery in New Almaden. The cemetery had fallen into very bad repair; trees had fallen and others were growing in the grave sites. Pathways had to be made through the undergrowth and rubbish removed.



We are now in the process of repairing old cribs and building new ones. This work has been going on under the supervision of Richard Hill and Bud Amaral and recently Ralph Perez and Mannie Calvallo joined the activities and are busy sawing and hammering. Several cribs have been restored and more are under construction.

It is our intent to repair the headstones remaining and build new ones for those that have been removed from the cemetery. Once that work has been completed, we will have a cemetery we can be proud of.

Melita Kelly joined our Board in September as Marshal. She will be greeting you in December as you come to the luncheon. See you on December 6.

Bob

MEMBERSHIP It is dues time again. All dues are due and payable in December. Our total membership is 735 now and of those, 216 are Life Members. All others need to seek out Bob & Irene Johnson at the December meeting or send them \$7 at 445 North 15th St., San Jose, CA 95112. Check your label to see if you are one of the 47 who never paid for 1997. If you are, this is your last *Trailblazer*. unless you pay \$14 for the two years. We would hate to lose you, but must keep our membership current.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Margaret Borra
Beverly Blockie
Pastricia M. Day

Ruth Mattos
Rosemary Miceli
Robert Muench

Maralyn Gilovich
Henry & Patricia Harrison
Herbert & Georgia Lietz
Leonette McCulloch
Gwendolyn McDaniel

Winnie A. Severdia
Joyce Silveira
Mildred Simmons
Jack & Theresa Spinler
David Worsham

WRITING AWARD

At a recent meeting of Westerners, International and The Western Historical Association in St. Paul, Minnesota, Mary Lou Lyon was given the Coke Wood Award for a Monograph-her book on *Some Pioneer Women in Santa Clara County*. The lovely walnut plaque with a bronze buffalo head and brass plaque will be prominently displayed.

THE FIRE ENGINES THAT SAVED SAN JOSE

Leonard McKay, October, 1995

In April of 1906, a tremendous earthquake hit Northern California. The quake shook for 45 seconds, more than three times as long as our 1989 quake, and the severity in San Jose and Santa Rosa was more than it was in San Francisco. So how did it become known as The San Francisco Earthquake?

In part, it was because of the effort of our San Jose Firemen, and three little steam engines. One was an 1892 Amskoeg Steam Pumper, known as Engine #1. A steam pumper was an upright steam boiler mounted on a wheeled chassis that was pulled by a three horse team. Engine #1 was housed in the Franklin Fire House, and when the earthquake hit, the roof of the firehouse collapsed, but the heroic firmen managed to get it out of the house, along with the three horse team. They raced to the blazing fire at Second and San Fernando Streets. There it was hooked up to the hydrant and for 72 hours, it pumped without letup. The whole block of buildings was on fire, but the brave firemen using the engine and the other equipment managed to quell the blaze. The San Francisco firemen could not put out the fires there, as the

water mains were broken and because of the massive destruction, the quake became known as the San Francisco Earthquake.

I was fortunate to see Engine #1 recently in Portland, Oregon, where it is now owned by Bruce Kegg. The old steam pumper is in a thousand pieces, but Bruce is doing a magnificent job of restoring it to its original condition. When the City decommissioned it in the 1930's, it went to the Hunt Brothers Cannery in Los Gatos, where it served double duty as fire protection and in furnishing steam when the main cannery boiler was down. It was sold in 1947 to John Whisenant, who in turn sold it to Neil Pollard in Lodi, California. When Kegg bought it, it was in very bad condition, but he has put 2000 hours of his time and nearly \$40,000 restoring it. He is a marvelous craftsman and it will soon be reassembled. The San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission should give Kegg a plaque designating it, "The Engine That Saved San Jose."

From the *Trailblazer*, Winter, 1963, Vol #3, Number 1
Parcel Post Law went into effect January 1st, 1913 according to the *San Jose Mercury*. Postmaster J.R. Chace and Parcel Post Carrier J.E. Halliday delivered 430 packages today. The first package to be delivered by Parcel Post was sent out by Jay McCabe and delivered in 12 seconds after leaving the post office. This is the record time in the United States!

Pioneer Anecdotes by Marjorie B. Fisk

My grandfather, Julius A. Poppe came to San Francisco in 1844, and operated a cigar factory at the corner of Montgomery and Sacramento Streets. He settled his wife and mother-in-law on his ranch, in what is now called the "Valley of the Moon." Imagine the feelings of a young wife who spoke only German, having for neighbors a tribe of Licituit Indians and a Chinese boy, who was the "hired hand", and spoke only Chinese.

Grandfather gave his young wife a gun for

protection, but she would not accept it. "Give me an axe," she said, "with an axe, I'd never miss the mark."

Grandmother lived to be 98. She and I talked often about her early days on the ranch, and the axe that stood behind her door. "You know," she said, "there were three languages spoken on the ranch, German, Chinese and Indian. None of us could talk with the others, but we got along just fine." She stopped a moment, then added mischievously, "Maybe if we all spoke one language, then is the time I might have need to use the axe."

From the *San Jose Mercury*, September 21, 1876

The Pioneers of Santa Clara County enjoyed a Social-A Witty and Wise address by Judge Belden-And a grand feast of music, with table luxuries and rounds of dances in Music Hall last evening under most pleasing auspices.

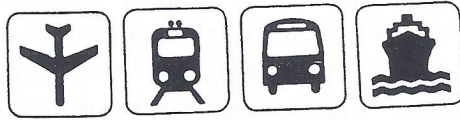
The Secretary, Alex P. Murgotten, gave a brief statistical review of the life, the present purposes and future prospects of the Society. The Pioneer order in San Jose at present numbers 372 souls.

The first social of the "Santa Clara County Pioneers" as earnest of the good times coming in the convocations of that body of hard and brave people, was most gratifying.

The Lewis and Clark Heritage Foundation will hold its 30th Annual Meeting in Great Falls, Montana; June 29 to July 2, 1998. The Grand Opening of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana will follow on July 4, 1998. For information on the meeting call 509-783-1207. Last July we saw a preview of the PBS epic by Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan at the 29th meeting in Skamania, Washington. I hope that you viewed it-it is excellent. If not, look for repeats on Channel 9, 54, and 60.

The North Dakota Interpretive Center opened in June near Washburn, N. D. It celebrates Lewis & Clark,

American Indians and a collection of Karl Bodmer prints of the Upper Missouri. The Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa opened on October 4, 1997. It celebrates Lewis & Clark, the Mormon Pioneer Trail and The Oregon and California National Historic Trails.



Touring With The Californians

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HELEN BROOKS & PAULINE HAWKINS
LUNCHEON SIGN UPS- 554-7587

REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION FOR WINTER TRIPS WILL BE AT THE DECEMBER MEETING. AT PRESS TIME, ROSE & OTHERS ARE ENJOYING A CARRIBEAN AND PANAMA CANAL CRUISE ABOARD THE HOLLAND AMERICA LINE, NOORDAM.

THE DECEMBER CHRISTMAS TRIP is planned for a day at Mission San Juan Bautista on Sunday, December 7th with lunch, a performance of La Pastorella, an historic traditional Passion Play produced by El Teatro Campesino in the Mission Church. This play is completely in Spanish, but whether or not you can understand the words, you can follow the play with the synopsis in the program and the antics of the costumed players and the historic music. The Annual Holiday Open House at the quaint shops in downtown San Juan Bautista will get you in the Christmas Spirit and inspire you with your shopping. The decorated Main Street will entice you into the antique shops, the Christmas shop, the Bakery with its traditional Christmas goodies and other specialty shops. If you have not been there in a while, you should also enjoy the State Historic Park with its Christmas decorated Mexican California Period buildings and costumed docents. Live again the period of San Juan's prominence, that of the 1840's California.

*This trip is filled, but you can put yourself on the waiting list for last minute cancellations.

1997 OFFICERS - CALIFORNIA PIONEERS
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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Jane Brownton-Corresponding Sec

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Robert & Irene Johnson

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Nancy Hill 408-258-3449

Californians Treasurer

Fern McLaggan 60 Palomar Real
Campbell, CA 95008-4207

P.O. BOX 8208 SAN JOSE CA 95155
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

PIONEER LUNCHEON
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1997
AT NOON LOU'S VILLAGE

Back by Popular Demand
THE BANJO BAND

OVEN BAKED HAM
SALAD & ROLLS
FRESH VEGETABLES
HOLIDAY DESSERT
& COFFEE

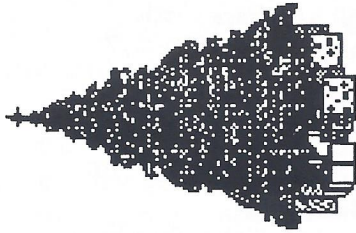
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