

THE TRAILBLAZER

Quarterly Bulletin of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County
Volume 3 Fall 1963 Number 4

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST AMERICAN SCHOOL

Arthur M. Fisk

The first American school in California was started by Olive Mann Isbell (niece of Horace Mann) in December 1846. Classes were conducted in a small, poorly ventilated room at Santa Clara Mission. The "schoolhouse" previously tenanted by horses and cattle, was 15 feet square, with an opening in the roof to let light in and smoke out.

Mrs. Isbell had neither paper nor pencil, but used a sharp stick on the dirt floor to outline lessons. She and her pupils also wrote on the palms of their hands with sharpened charcoal sticks. The few books available, had been brought across the plains. Records show they included McGuffey readers, spelling and arithmetic books. Crude benches were used for seats and a single table served as a desk for both teacher and pupils.

It was here in these humble surroundings that Mrs. Olive Mann Isbell actually laid the foundation for the California public school system.

Mrs. Isbell was born October 8, 1824, in Astabula, Ohio and taught in Ohio schools until she was 20, when she married Dr. Isaac Isbell. The young couple decided to come to California and got in touch with George and Jacob Donner. A party was made up, leaving Greenbush, Illinois on April 17, 1846. Upon arrival at Santa Clara the Isbell's took sanctuary at the Mission as it was under siege at the time. Mrs. Isbell died in 1899.

The first public schoolhouse in Santa Clara was built in 1850, in the vicinity of Liberty and Lexington Streets near the area where St. Clare's Catholic Church is now located. It was built by public subscription and enrolled children in the first four grades. It was not until November 7, 1855 that Santa Clara received its first tax money for the school, so for a period of five years it had to be supported by subscription funds. It was known as, "the little red schoolhouse," and served until 1867 as the "lap of learning" for the young. In 1867 the Santa Clara Grammar School was built and "the little red schoolhouse" was sold to Santa Clara College.

SAN JOSE HIGH SCHOOL CENTENNIAL

Herbert C. Jones

On the evening of Saturday, May 18, 1963, a banquet was held in Exposition Hall at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds attended by nearly 2000 guests, graduates of the San Jose High School, and their husbands or wives.

Mr. Gene G. Long, the present and 20th principal of the High School presided.

The main address was given by Mr. Clyde Arbuckle, San Jose City Historian. From him we learned that the School was established in 1863 when it occupied rooms on the second floor over a store at the present site of the Twohy Building, 210 So. First Street. The first separate building for the school about two years later, was a room on Washington Square (Normal Square) on 4th Street facing San Antonio.

With the growth of the city it was felt there was a need for a larger and more pretentious school. Accordingly in 1867 the School Board purchased property on the North side of Santa Clara Street extending between 6th and 7th Streets. Here both the grammar school and high school were housed in the impressive Horace Mann School building. The High School occupied the second and third floors, and the grammar school the first floor. The building was completed about 1868 and continued to be used by the High School until June 1898. For some reason, the records indicate the first class did not graduate until 1873.

That first class consisted of eight young people: Mary Bowman, Belle Churchill, Frances Freeman, Morris Harris, Angelo Heinlein, William Lucky, Charles C. Moore and Kitty Tonner.

By 1877 the two-year program was expanded to a three year course. Not until 1899, at the behest of the University of California, the high school course was extended to four years.

The population growth and the emphasis on free public education brought about the construction of a new building in 1897, on the Washington Square (Normal School) site, with instruction beginning in the fall of 1898.

Then came the earthquake of April 18th, 1906, which shook down the building. Rockwell D. Hunt, principal at that time, recalls the problem of housing the student body. Lincoln Elementary School at 408 Orchard Street (now 408 Almaden Avenue) provided the temporary home for the students.

A student campaign helped to secure the handsome new buildings at San Fernando and Seventh Streets. Just six months after the tremor of 1906 the townspeople voted a \$175,000 bond issue and the contract was let on June 20, 1907. The corner stone was laid on Admission Day, September 9, 1907, and a year later to the day the new five-building, university-style campus was dedicated. It was described as one of the finest in the State. The designers and the Board of Education decided to return to the thick walls and other earthquake-proof features which had allowed the Spanish Missions to withstand 'quakes.

A handsome auditorium, the central feature behind two towers, burned in 1935.

The enrollment in 1908 was 786, grown from 272 in 1898. By 1913 it had grown to 1057, and in 1924 reached a high of 3000. This was the peak because the school again became a three-year institution in 1925 when the first two junior high schools were opened - Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt.

A second high school, Abraham Lincoln opened in 1942, taking 590 students from San Jose High. A third senior high school, namely Willow Glen, opened in 1950, taking another 552 students. Today there are six junior high schools and four senior high schools in San Jose, with more on the drawing board.

As the San Jose State College (successor of the old Normal School) was growing it asked the High School to move from Washington Square. This it did, to its present campus at 24th and Julian Streets, opening in the fall of 1952. The decline in enrollment was only temporary. Already it had climbed back to 1524 students as it reaches the century mark.

During its hundred years of history it has turned out one California Governor (C. C. Young), numerous assemblymen and State Senators, judges of the Superior Court, as well as prominent educators, lawyers, doctors and business executives.

San Jose High School has had twenty principals, a list of whom and their years of service are as follows:

J. J. Bowen.....1863-65	L. B. Wilson.....1889-95
L. W. Reed.....1865-67	A. E. Shumate.....1895-02
William White.....1867-70	Rockwell D. Hunt...1902-08
E. J. Crossett....1870-72	Lewis B. Avery.....1908-13
J. B. Finch.....1872-77	Chas. M. Osenbaugh.1913-18
James G. Kennedy..1877-82	Raymond B. Leland..1918-33
Thomas E. Kennedy.1882-84	Forrest G. Murdock.1933-45
F. W. Simonds.....1884-86	H. Curtis Davis....1945-51

E. H. Roberts.....1886-87 Ben Sweeney.....1951-60
 R. S. Holway.....1887-89 Gene G. Long.....1960-

Former principals present at the banquet were Mr. Murdock, Mr. David and Mr. Sweeney. Dr. Hunt, 95 years of age, was unable to be present because of poor health but sent his greetings from Calistoga.

* * *

In 1851 the State Legislature passed its first school law. Among other things, this law authorized a state school tax of five cents per \$100, and a County school tax not to exceed two cents per \$100. The law was held up however, because of an error and was not amended until 1853. The law named the County Assessor as ex-officio County Superintendent of Schools, so J. H. Morgan became Santa Clara County's first Superintendent of Schools in 1853.

It was not until 1856 the City Council got around to passing "An Ordinance to establish and regulate a system of Common Schools for the City of San Jose." Later this ordinance was amended to provide for a "Superintendent of Common Schools," and in 1858, Rev. Eli Corwin, became San Jose's first Superintendent of Schools.

In 1855 the County Assessor gave way, and Freeman Gates, a teacher, became Santa Clara County's first duly elected Superintendent of Schools.

As late as 1866 San Jose could boast of only four shack-like structures with one and two rooms each, that were used for schoolhouses. In the seventies four "Ward Schools" were erected. The Fourth Ward School, (later renamed Lincoln) is still standing. It is located at the corner of Almaden and Auzerais, and until recently served as the office for the City Board of Education.

October 20, 1870, an impressive ceremony was held on Washington Square when the cornerstone of California's first State Normal School was laid. Masonic rites were conducted by the Grand Lodge of California, assisted by the Royal Arch Masons and the I.O.O.F.

The present day San Jose State College began its long and eventful career as a teacher-training institution. The claim of it being California's first is confirmed by legislative enactment, whereby authority was given to the Trustees to "adopt" the Normal School in San Francisco. Consequently San Jose's use of the year 1857 as the date of its founding.

The State Normal School was officially designated as San Jose State College in 1935.

By-lines from the President

Alice M. Vetterle

Our request for a Pioneer Town at the Fair Grounds was turned down by the Directors of the Santa Clara County Fair Association due to lack of available space, but we have not given up on the possibility of establishing a Pioneer Town in this county. Senate Bill 779 signed by Governor Brown on June 20th permits county boards of supervisors to acquire land for preservation of historical landmarks and it may prove a solution for this endeavor. We hope that we can inspire enough public spirited citizens to become interested in the project before it is too late.

In planning our quarterly meetings we highlight the Christmas Party. This year the party will take place at Lou's Village on December 7th. We hope to make this a merry time for all, and anticipate seeing the dining room filled.

Who knows, Santa Claus just might pay us a visit. Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season and a Very Merry Christmas.

* * *
DEATH VALLEY

Its Discovery and Historical Tie with Santa Clara County
Clyde Arbuckle

Late in the fall of 1849 a caravan of gold seekers crawled along the Old Spanish Trail between the Great Salt Lake and Los Angeles. It had arrived in Utah too late in the season to follow the Carson or Truckee River trails through the Sierra Nevada. So it headed for Los Angeles, intending to work northward from there via the San Joaquin Valley to the gold country.

Near the present Enterprise, Utah, six small parties composed of about 100 persons left the caravan. Forming what was later called the "Death Valley Party," they started due west across an unknown desert in quest of a shortcut to the San Joaquin Valley. Historians have identified them as the Manly-Bennett Party, Jayhawker Party, Georgians, Mississippi Boys, Captain Towne's Party and Wade Party. (The Manly-Bennett Party has also appeared as the Bennett-Arcane Party, taking the latter name from John B. Arcane, one of its leading members.)

But instead of reaching the San Joaquin Valley as they had hoped, they descended into one incredibly different. On December 24 they discovered Death Valley.

(continued in the January issue)

SANTA CLARA

(From the files of the Santa Clara Journal)

Santa Clara had a town government from 1852, but it was not until 1862 that a charter was obtained, which defined the limits of the town, provided for schools and defined the duties of its officers. This charter was amended in 1872 and again in 1886. The town as then laid out was two miles long and a mile and a half wide.

Santa Clara's original townsite was surveyed by William Campbell in 1850, and was divided into lots one hundred yards square. One lot was given to each citizen with the understanding that he was to build a house on it.

Protestantism was first introduced to California by the Methodists in Santa Clara, where they met in the home of William Campbell in 1846. They built their first church in 1853. In the same year they built a female seminary for young ladies, to the west of Main Street between Liberty and Lexington.

As far as is known, William Clark was the first American to locate in Santa Clara. In 1846 came the Harlands, Van Gordan, Samuel Young, Tabor, Allen, Jones, Dickinson, Bennett and the Isbell's. In 1848 Dr. H. H. Warburton (grandfather of Austen D. Warburton) and William (Big Bill) McCutcheon of the Donner Party settled in Santa Clara.

Mission Santa Clara had five sites since its founding on January 12, 1777. The first site was at the corner of De La Cruz and Kifer Road, January 12, 1777. The second site at Martin Avenue and De La Cruz in 1779. The third site at Campbell and Franklin Avenues, dedicated May 16, 1784. The fourth site was on the University of Santa Clara grounds in 1819. The fifth and present site is on the University of Santa Clara grounds and was dedicated August 11, 1825.

In 1851, Father John Nobili was asked to start a college at Santa Clara Mission and given \$150 with inspiring words of encouragement. The college opened its doors to 16 students, with two members on the faculty. Today the University of Santa Clara has more than \$11 million in assets, and when the present buildings are completed it will provide for a student enrollment of 2400.

A landmark of local interest is the lone redwood tree which stands beside the buildings of the old Pacific Manufacturing Company on The Alameda. It marks the former entrance to Cook's Pond Recreation area, operated in the late 1800's as a recreation center. The pond at

one time supplied water for irrigation of Mission Santa Clara's lands, and was thought to be bottomless.

An Ad appearing in the Santa Clara Journal in 1890 proclaimed in large type, "that the Port of Alviso was to be a New Chicago. Alviso is located at the head of San Francisco Bay, 40 miles from San Francisco and six miles from San Jose. This is a grand opportunity for investment. A new townsite has been subdivided and lots are for sale, ranging in price from \$5 to \$200. Out of the slough will rise a new commercial and manufacturing city. It is a certainty it will be the main shipping point of Santa Clara County."

The passing away of J. M. Greenleaf at Santa Clara, July 19, 1913, removes the last of the original conductors of the Central Pacific Railroad that were pioneers of that road. For a number of years he had the "run" from Winnemucca to Truckee. In the '80's he was again "Pioneer Conductor" on the Atlantic and Pacific. Mr. Greenleaf was 73 years of age, and came with his family to reside in Santa Clara in 1887.

* * *

LOS GATOS

The Los Gatos Town Council on July 6, 1891, enacted ordinance No. 39, which dictated that every property owner shall sweep the sidewalk in front of his house out to the center of the street every Thursday between 7 a. m. and 9 a.m. Another ordinance at that time shows the Town Council was away ahead of the Bay Area Air Pollution Board for it made it a misdemeanor to burn "by means of a bonfire, any rubbish, garbage, papers, offals, debris or dirt of any kind."

Ordinance No. 136, enacted September 8, 1908, rules that those townsfolds who keep horses, cows, swine or poultry shall haul the manure "to some proper place.... at intervals not exceeding two weeks between April 1 and October 1." The Council decreed that livestock stables, stalls, corrals and pens shall at all times be kept "in a clean and wholesome condition."

* * *

SAN JOSE

Telephone service was established in San Jose on March 1, 1879. One year later they had 35 subscribers and by 1882 there were 82 subscribers. In 1883 a telephone wire was strung to San Francisco, which became the first "long distance" telephone line in the west.

Letters to the Editor

The recent trip u p Highway 41 through Coarsegold, Fish Camp and Big Trees to Wawona and on up to Tuolumne Meadows recalled many childhood memories. For many years before 1920, my f a t h e r ran his stock from the San Joaquin Valley t o the National Forest area around Fish Camp and Wawona. The family followed the herd and camped for several weeks near Fish Camp and Sugar Pine.

We headed out from the ranch at Plainsburg, Merced County, and with Lady and Lucy hitched to the Spring Waggon and pulling a trailer, make our way u p the Buchanan Road via Le Grand to Raymond and Coarsegold along what is now Highway 41. Few details of these trips are clear to me now, but I do remember one memorable event on a return trip in August. We were caught by a thunderstorm n e a r Coarsegold. My mother and we three girls took refuge in a culvert while my father and brother struggled with the tent, which they erected in the road intersection.

There were no traffic problems then.

Other highlights of these trips were riding the logging trains to the mill at Sugar Pine, walking along the flume that carried the l o g s to the mill, and driving through the Big Trees.

Our visit to the Big Trees on this trip was just as interesting and awe-inspiring as I remembered. I am sure I appreciated the excellent talk on the Sequoias given by the Forest Ranger more on this occasion. It was most informative t o hear his comments regarding the effect of the modern methods of preserving the balance of nature, and the effect of the throngs of people tramping through the groves packing the surface earth; on the life of the Sequoias.

Thinking some of the group might b e interested in seeing the area around Wawona and Fish Camp as it looked over 45 years ago, I brought along some snap-shots of our camp at Fish Camp and of the family g r o u p traveling through the Big Trees in 1916. I also had found a photo-album of my fathers trip to Yosemite and Wawona in 1902. This latter proved quite a find to t h e manager of the Hotel at Wawona, who is planning to restore t h e old "Thomas Hill Studio," which adjoins the hotel. He asked if he could have prints of these two pictures, and Mr. Arbuckle is now having t h e s e made up for him. It's pleasing to think that through one of our Pioneer Tours we are playing a part in this restoration project.

Alice M. Vetterle

I can remember when I was a little girl hearing my grandfather Thomas Smith, tell about driving a stage-coach from San Jose to Santa Cruz with a stop over at Lexington Hotel to eat and change horses. I was born in Los Gatos and my parents moved to Lexington in 1894. We lived across the road from the old hotel until 1950, when the building of Lexington Dam spelled the end to many old landmarks at Lexington and Alma.

Hazel S. Lund
(Mrs. Lund enclosed a picture of the old Lexington Stage Barn. Editor)

* * *

My father, Mathew D. Green, was born in Tennessee in 1839, and came to California in 1859. He was the youngest of twelve children and the only one to leave his home state.

At one place on his westward journey to California he gave a negro his last fifty cent piece to row him across a river.

He first settled in Mariposa County and in 1870 came to San Jose where he devoted himself to work as a contractor. Some of the places still standing that were built by my father are the Dr. Wayland and the Reel residences on North Third Street and the East San Jose Library. He married Hattie Newsome in San Jose in 1879.

Inez Green Getchell

* * *

My grandfather, Capt. James Cass left his ship in San Francisco in 1849 for the gold mines in Amador Co.

He eventually wandered down the coast to Cayucos (Indian name meaning canoe) and in 1867 built a picturesque, two story, frame dwelling, at what is now the prominent downtown intersection of Cayucos. The old home is still standing and in good condition.

He went into business landing merchandise on the Cayucos beach, picked up from coastal steamers with a whale boat. In 1874 my grandfather and a Captain Ingalls built a wharf for the accommodation of merchandise and the visiting steamers plying between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The community quickly began to prosper and became one of the leading dairy and butter producing towns in the west.

Ida Freeman Skow

LOOK FOR IT HERE

MARRIED in Ferndale, California, June 2, 1963, John D. Blackmar and Jeanne Folendorf. Our congratulations.

MARRIED in Ross, California, June 29, 1963, Arch H. Vining and Gladys Ella Ingalls. They are now at home, 48 Shady Lane, Ross, California. Our congratulations.

Col. Waddell F. Smith, great grandson of William Waddell of the overland freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell, was the principal speaker at our September quarterly meeting. His topic "The Pony Express," which operated between St. Joseph, Mo. and Sacramento, Cal. 1860-'61. Russell, Majors and Waddell were the founders, owners and operators of the famous Pony Express.

Mr. Richard Barrett of the San Jose News was honored at our September 7th meeting for his untiring efforts to stimulate an interest in local history.

IF YOU ARE 85 YEARS OR OLDER, please contact Miss Edith Titcomb or your editor, as you will be honored at our Christmas Party on December 7th at Lou's Village.

Miss Gertrude Bernhardt will head a group of Pioneer members at a Thanksgiving Day dinner at the De Anza Hotel, November 28. For information phone 293-3087.

Our financial secretary, Jessie E. Black will have a special table at our quarterly meeting December 7th to receive dues for 1964 and of course those that may have forgotten 1963.

Clyde Arbuckle passes on an interesting bit of information from Ralph Milliken of Los Banos. When workmen were digging at the east end of Pacheco Pass for footings for the San Luis dam, they uncovered a redwood log about 100 feet down. The log was turned over to Milliken for display at the Los Banos museum. How many years would it take the top soil to accumulate to a depth of 100 feet?

Ever heard of Heinrich Alfred Kreiser? Well, he was Henry Miller of the cattle barons Miller & Lux. When Heinrich came to California he came on a ticket bought by Miller, so he changed his name to Henry Miller. One of his first land purchases was south of Gilroy. He teamed up with Charles Lux in 1857, and as Miller & Lux they obtained extensive holdings. A San Francisco court just recently settled Miller's estate. It amounted to \$40 million.

In behalf of the officers of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, "The Trailblazer" extends their wishes to you for a very happy holiday season, "Peace on earth and good will toward men."

Welcome

Congratulations to our new members: Oressa Anderson, Helen Mae Belmont, Aura L e a Boomer, Delight L. Brown, Frances Cousins, Minnie D u t r e, Ellen Theresa Flynn, Miriam Greene, Grace H. Hall, Dorothy Masten Hewitt, Ada B. Irish, William L. Jacke, Rena C. Keesling, A l i c e Custis Lloyd, Dorothea E. Madsen, Mabel L. Nichols, Jay J. Pancera, Myrtle Pancera, Earl A. Potter, Rhea Potter, Betty Jane Rank, David G. R o y, Mary E. Schmidt, Maude Stillwell Sourisseau, Josephine P. Thornton, Walter D. Thornton, La Verne C. Towner, Vern Bennett Towner.

* * *

Under the Weather

Mrs. Edith B. Hichborn underwent surgery f o r her knee in July and is recuperating very satisfactorily.

Mrs. Evelyn R. Sloan after a long illness is n o w convalescing at home.

Mr. Allen P. Lindsay and Mr. Hans P. Schmidt have both returned home and are doing good.

Kindly keep your officers informed as to the condition of any ill member, and report any sickness or deaths to the Chairman o f our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Lovene Luhrman. Phone 292-0070.

* * *

Beyond the Horizon

Carrie F. Williams

November 21, 1877 - June 30, 1963

Amanda T. Savage

May 20, 1893 - July 10, 1963

Minnie Blewett Williams

July 24, 1877 - August 21, 1963

Albert A. Haehnlen

August 21, 1872 - September 8, 1963

In behalf of the officers and members of the California Pioneer Society of Santa Clara County, The Trailblazer extends their sincere sympathy t o the relatives and friends of our departed members.

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Associate Editor: Marjorie B. Fisk

Staff members: Walter and Claire Harriman

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* * *

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

For information concerning chartered bus tours for members of the Pioneer Society, phone Gertrude A. Bernhardt, 293-3087.

Any items for the Pioneer scrap book may be sent to Mrs. Elsa Jensen, 520 Bradley Ave., San Jose 28, Calif.

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