



Volume 6

Summer 1966

Number 3

MUSICAL HERITAGE

(The following excerpts were taken from Leo Sullivan's book "The Musical Heritage of San Jose'." Permission to print was given by the author.)

The writer served his music apprenticeship, playing for dances at the turn of the century. Every hall in San José and the Valley echoed to the strains of his fiddle and bow, including the magnificent Vendome Hotel on North First Street. For the last time on the night of April 17, 1906.

It was a ritzy affair. Ladies resplendent in silks and satins, swains in customary "soup and fish," frolicked thru "The Cotillion," the current popular circle dance. Forming a great ring, the dancers went "Grand Right and Left"--the men to the right, the ladies to the left--the lady on his right when the music stopped, was the gentleman's waltzing partner. The gala occasion ended on a happy note at 1:00 a.m., the morning of April 18th. We were scarcely in the Land of Nod when the giant quake sent us reeling out of bed in seconds.

In 1920, Art Hickman, furnishing music for the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, introduced the then obscure saxophone. Hickman, experimenting, hit upon the winning combination, causing a sensation that revolutionized the entire dance world.

Local leaders of large bands in the "fabulous twenties" the writer recalls, were Elwood Hart, Bert Marquart and Tony Passarelli. Of these, Hart and Passarelli alone survive.

At this writing I'm sorry to add,
Only night-spots are places live music is had.
Of course it's not right but, these are the facts.
Dance bands play only Fridays, Holidays and Sats.

YOUR LIBRARY - PAST AND PRESENT

Alice Leland Olsen

(Continued from the Spring Issue)

The City Charter forbade the council to create a debt, but in the 1880 city election the proposition was passed by the voters "to establish a free public library" by a vote of 1232 to 605. A new city hall was turned down in this same election. On February 25, 1879 the Library Association turned its library over to the City of San José including \$1600 in its building fund as well as books and other property. In 1880 the California Legislature passed an act giving the City of San José the necessary authority. This was also the year that the legislature passed the "Public Library Act" by which county and municipal libraries are still governed.

Under the city's control the library has been located at various places. It was first at Santa Clara and Lightstone streets (now alley) where Hart's Department Store is now located. Then it was moved to the Hagan Building, west of the I.O.O.F. Hall, and then to the new City Hall in the Plaza in 1889. The first library building was on Washington Square and was opened in 1892. Since 1937 the library has been located in City Hall Park in the former U.S. Post Office Building. In a few years it will be at its new location on Almaden Avenue between Auzerais and San Carlos Streets.

Andrew Carnegie's gift of \$50,000 made possible the building of the "Carnegie Public Library" in Washington Square at the corner of Fourth and San Fernando Streets. Built of sandstone and brick at a cost of \$140,696 and of "Romanesque" style, it opened in 1903, having five basement rooms and four rooms on the main floor. By the 1930's it had become too small for the book collection and working staff and was sold to the State of California for \$55,000, for use of San Jose State College. In turn the City of San Jose paid the United States government \$50,000 for the former post office building in the City Plaza. This building was remodeled at a cost of \$39,000. On June 23, 1937 dedication of the "new" library building was held with an elaborate program in the Plaza Park.

Mrs. Geraldine Latham Nurney has been City Librarian since March 1, 1943, succeeding Mrs. Edith Daley who retired on that date after serving since October 1923. Other head librarians since George W. Fentress of the Library Association were: William Redding, Miss Agnes Barry, Miss Nellie Egan, Miss Mary Barmby, Miss Nell McGinley and Charles F. Woods.

Through the years six branch libraries have been added, the first two by annexation. The East San José Carnegie Library at 23rd and Santa Clara streets was built in 1907 and became the East Branch when East San José was annexed in 1911. On July 1, 1937 the Willow Glen Branch of the Santa Clara County Library became the Willow Glen Branch; Willow Glen having been annexed on October 1, 1936. This county branch had opened on July 1, 1930 and had been housed in a Sunday School room of the Willow Glen Episcopal Church, in Pfeifer's Electric Company's store, and then since January 2, 1935 housed in a store building at 1312 Lincoln Avenue. It continued at this location until the present Willow Glen Branch building at 1159 Minnesota Avenue was opened to the public on January 15, 1949. Other branch libraries and a bookmobile (1958) are: Rosegarden Branch (1960), Cambrian Branch (1961), West Valley Branch (1964), and Hillview Branch (1965). The next two branches will be Calabazas Branch and Seven Trees Branch. Several other branch libraries are on the planning map for the next several years, including two regional branches.

Cooperative agreements with the Santa Clara County Library, Santa Clara City Library and Sunnyvale Public Library make possible library service to all patrons of these libraries at any of the libraries or their branches. Materials that circulate beside books and periodicals are: pamphlets, films, filmstrips, phonograph records, sheet music, librettos, scores, mounted pictures and original paintings by members of the Artists' Guild of Santa Clara County. Bibliographies are compiled and telephone reference service is maintained. An Xerox machine copies library materials at a nominal fee. In addition, books are selected and delivered to shut-ins; projected books and a ceiling projector are loaned to patrons confined to bed; and talking books and a record player are available to incapacitated patrons. The Children's Room and the branches have regular pre-school story hours; story hours which include puppet shows and book clubs for children through the eighth grade.

The Staff Association sponsors a program for Senior Citizens at the Main Library. Staff members do this on their own time as their contribution to community welfare. Plans for increased service in the future include the possible use of computers, teletype machines and closed TV-circuits. As your city grows and the use of new technical processes grows, so will grow your San José Public Library.

PRESENT PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING

Arthur M. Fisk

Theodore Lenzen was the architect for the old post office building on Market Street, which location prior to 1887 was San José's Chinatown. The building was started in 1892 and completed in 1894, but did not open for business until February 1, 1895. It was constructed with sandstone which was quarried at the Graystone quarry in the Santa Teresa Hills near Alamitos Creek. The marble used in the entrance halls was imported. Above the building was a tall steeple, which was destroyed by the earthquake in 1906. When the structure was repaired the steeple was not replaced and the tower was redesigned as it is today. In June 1937 it became the present public library building.

Nels Johnson a native of Denmark was the creator of the "Century Tower Clock" which strikes the hours in the tower of the San José Public Library building. Johnson installed the clock himself in 1909. It is one of five known clocks of its kind installed in the world and as far as we know there are only two left. The clock is powered by gravity with 500 pound weights. The cables are cranked up every three or four days by the custodian, Les Clements, who informs us that the clock will run for seven days on one winding. The bell is located about six feet from the clock and is struck by a 16 pound sledge which operates on a track. The simple mechanism is in excellent condition after 57 years of service. Within the next few years the library will move into its new building and the old post office building will become the San José Art Gallery.

* * *

Letters to the Editor

Dear Marjorie and Arthur:

My father's lumber yard and mill was located on St. John Street and took in the whole block from 4th to 5th. It went back quite a ways; I'd say to the end of the new Adventist Church on Fifth Street.

My Dad, M. D. Green, had the lumber yard and Charles McKiernan (Mt. Charlie) operated the mill. The lumber yard and mill were started in 1878. My father bought the mill later from the McKiernan heirs in 1889 and operated it until 1902.

I can remember when Mr. Payne (Charlie Payne's father) ran the engine in the mill, and when the P. G. & E. had their engine room and power plant in back of the mill

on Fourth Street toward Santa Clara.

I remember this because the P. G. & E. had large barrels of tar in back of their plant and I would stop by to break off some tar and chew it. This is probably why I still have most of my own teeth.

My father had a large photograph of Mr. McKiernan (Mt. Charlie) which I gave to Mr. Arbuckle for the museum. Clyde said it was their only real photo of McKiernan, the rest were just newspaper prints.

Inez Green Getchell

* * *

Dear Mr. Fisk:

Agricultural Park was located on the curve of The Alameda and was bounded by Hester Street on the North, Park Avenue on the West and South, Race Street and The Alameda on the East. It contained the County Fair Grounds a Race Track, Skating Rink and Ball Park, the latter had a Bicycle Race Track surrounding it. Several famous ball players got their professional start here, Hal Chase was one of them. The bicycle races were well attended and I saw races between our Garden City Wheelmen, the Capital City Wheelmen (Sacramento) and teams from Oakland and San Francisco. Otto Ziegler was one of our best riders and Johnny Berryessa, Pete Castro, Plin Maggini and Carl Showalter were some of the others.

When the Hanchett interests decided to sub-divide Agricultural Park, the ball park was moved to Luna Park, the entrance of which was at North 17th Street and Berryessa Road. It started out as an amusement park, with the ball park adjoining it on the East. The "Big Red Cars" of the Interurban Line went out N. 17th Street to Alum Rock Park. Later the amusement section was taken over by the National Axle Company. (This was a stock scheme in which many San José people lost money.) The ballplayers were in the old California outlaw league, Elmer Stricklett was manager. Harry Wolters (later, was baseball coach for Stanford for many years) was the star pitcher and also played center field. He was a fine batter as well as pitcher. Hap Smith was right fielder, and later played with Brooklyn for several years.

There were two beer gardens in the San José area--Cedar Brook on Keyes Street and Scheutzen Park at the end of the cemetery car line on Monterey Road. Scheutzen was a good sized place and well run. Many people attended the barbecues held there by various organizations. Often the park would be filled with many family parties.

The Southern Pacific had a park on their Almaden branch line; it was located on Almaden Creek just south of where it joined Guadalupe River. The Southern Pacific ran special trains from San Francisco on Sundays. It usually took several S. P. policemen to keep order. This was known as Sunset Park and has not been used much since the use of motor cars became popular.

Sodality Park was located on San Carlos Street, just west of Bird Avenue. It was used almost exclusively for baseball. Charlie Bishop was manager of one of the teams and Luke Williams was another popular manager who was active in baseball for many years.

Arch H. Vining

* * *

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Fisk:

Did you know that Pacheco Pass, the gateway between Santa Clara and San Joaquin valleys, was first traversed in September 1806 by Sargent Luis Arguello?

Did you know there were 1,492 farms in Santa Clara Valley by 1880? There was an estimated total of 1,600,000 orchard trees, most of them apples. By 1890 there was twice as many trees--most of these were prunes.

Did you know that former President and Civil War hero U. S. Grant, visited San José on September 26, 1879? There was a parade, an official greeting at the Court House, horse races at Agricultural Park and a banquet at the Auzerais House, which was regarded as Santa Clara County's finest hotel.

Did you know that business firms began to move to First Street in the late 1850's? Prior to that time most of the business houses were on Market Street.

Did you know that weekly mail service was established between San Francisco and Monterey via San José in April 1847? The mail was transported by boat to San José and by horseback from here to Monterey.

Did you know that William Campbell established a sawmill on Campbell Creek in 1847? Many American settlers began arriving in Santa Clara Valley and after the gold rush in the early 1850's business picked up rapidly and Campbell took advantage of the market for lumber.

Did you know that two of the favorite events of Santa Clara County residents in the early 1900's was the Rose Parade, resumed in 1925 and the Saratoga Blossom Festival, observed since 1900?

Florence George

* * *

THE THROW OF THE DICE

Herbert C. Jones

The following sketches bring to mind what far-reaching consequences, may depend upon the most trivial incidents.

Mr. E. B. Williams was a graduate of Stanford's first class of 1892. In the summer after his graduation, he and some companions were bicycling from Southern California into Yosemite. The group tossed a coin to decide whether to go up the coast road or the San Joaquin Valley. The lot fell in favor of the San Joaquin Valley route.

In Visalia while the others stopped to rest under the trees at the courthouse, Mr. Williams went in to see the County Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent asked him if he would be interested in a teaching job for the coming year and Mr. Williams replied "he would." The Superintendent then called up a school principal, turned to Mr. Williams and said: "You now have a job for next year." He taught for some years in Visalia and there met the girl who became his wife. The whole course of his life was determined by the toss of a coin.

GRANDMA BASCOM

San Jose' would unquestionably today be the capital of the State of California if it had furnished adequate hotel accommodations for the members of the First Legislature. As it was, there was only one available hotel, when the Legislature met. In addition there was a boarding house run by Mrs. Bascom (called Grandma by many of her lodgers). In order to provide sleeping quarters the hotel cleared out the dining room at night and put down mattresses and cots. Grandma Bascom took in Senators and Assemblymen, who together with some other boarders, made thirteen in number. She partitioned off her rooms with sheets, and as she said: "The town is more than full. Some guests even have to sleep in attics."

Had only the Legislators and public officials been provided with adequate housing, the Legislature would have had no occasion to move to Vallejo.

BIG BASIN PARK

When Andrew P. Hill was given the commission by an Eastern magazine to take pictures of the redwoods for it, he took the train to Felton Grove. Here he was denied the privilege of going in to take pictures which would publicize the Grove. As a result, there was started agitation to secure the lands of the Big Basin for a State Park. This is the oldest of our State Parks.

100 YEARS AGO

(From the files of the San José Mercury)

The Mercury took exception to the pronunciation of Spanish words by Americans. "The Spanish word 'vaquero' is usually pronounced by Americans 'buckaro', with the accent on the 'a'. 'Rodeo' is commonly pronounced 'rodere'. This correct orthography of the words has the rhythm to conform to the usual American pronunciation."

In January 1866 the Mercury states, "the city of San José will have paid off the last dollar of her funded and floating debt, will owe no man anything and have money in her treasury. Whoever can point out a town or city of this size in the universe that ever got out of debt under Democratic rule may 'take our hat'. Our Mayor and Common Council must be perpetuated!"

Referring to the San Francisco and San José Railroad the Mercury states, "The railroad company have just completed a fine improvement in the roofing over the space between the passenger and freight depot, and extending the same over and along the track for 300 feet. This will prove a great convenience to passengers in rainy weather. The company have also graveled the surroundings of the depot in such a manner that the muddy scenes of last winter will never be repeated."

The Mercury reported that the slag from the New Almaden furnaces contained gold. "The amount was said to vary from \$10 to \$20 worth per ton. This waste material could be submitted directly to the simple amalgamating process for extraction of gold which is in a free state. The cost of such a process will be nearly nominal."

The Mercury warns the residents of their waste of well water. "The conclusion is inevitable that our flowing wells are draining the life out of the soil and if they continue to remain unchecked, our Valley will soon be useless for agricultural purposes. It is obvious that all our wells flow from the same fountain." Today you can readily see the result from our waste of water in Santa Clara Valley.

* * *

"Charges on the public debt now amount to \$22,000 per minute, day and night, 365 days a year. In 28 years we will have spent as much on interest alone as the entire debt, yet still owe it all!" Representative H. R. Gross.

Our Postmaster General has promised "almost overnight delivery anywhere in the U.S." We would settle for overnight delivery in San Jose--a service we enjoyed 50 years ago.

By-Lines from your Presidents

It has been an honor to have served as your President this past year and I sincerely appreciate the co-operation of the very efficient Board of Directors and all the members of our Society.

We now have a membership of 825, which gives us the distinction of being the largest organization of its kind in the State of California.

It was an honor to have had a part in the tree planting ceremony at Kelley Park on Arbor Day, particularly because it was in the section set aside for our Historic Museum Complex. It is very gratifying to watch the progress and see the preservation of some of our historic buildings, before they are all demolished.

Our Society has many phases of interest to offer our members, the quarterly luncheons at Lou's Village with interesting speakers, Our Christmas Party, our Scholarship research paper by a student from San Jose State College. The TRAILBLAZER edited by Arthur and Marjorie Fisk with Olin and Edna Lake as staff members, is of great interest to the membership. We have many delightful bus tours under the leadership of Miss Gertrude Bernhardt. Mrs. Kate Owen is President of our Social Group which enjoys many pleasant afternoons at Casa de las Amigos. I wish to thank the Social Group for the lovely decorations they have provided for each quarterly meeting.

We have all enjoyed the lovely music provided by Mrs. Alma Andrews at each of our quarterly meetings, and I wish to thank her for this kind contribution. Last but not least I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to those members who have had charge of the reservations for our quarterly luncheons.

Minnie L. Clark

* * *

In this, my first official message to you as your new President, may I sincerely thank each of you for granting me the privilege of serving in this office. It is with humility that I accept this challenge, and I assure you that I will continue to work for the advancement of our society.

At our next quarterly meeting September 3, we will honor one of our members, Mr. Frazier O. Reed, a direct descendant of James Frazier Reed of the ill-fated Donner Party. Mr. Clyde Arbuckle will be the moderator.

Jessie E. Black

LOOK FOR IT HERE

Your officers elected for the ensuing year, were duly installed at the Board of Directors meeting July 11.

Miss Agnes C. Ryan, long time librarian was honored at a dinner party given for her at Villa Felice on April 12. Miss Ryan retired from the Alum Rock branch of the County Library System after 43 years in the service. ***

Mrs. Mary D. Warburton was honored by the Tribune recently as "Woman of the Week." Still serving as garden chairman, Mrs. Warburton is the only living charter member of the Santa Clara Woman's Club. ***

A number of prominent Gilroy citizens met in Gilroy on April 29th to organize a Historical Society to preserve old landmarks in particular. Under the guidance of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Bolfig it was an enthusiastic beginning and we wish them every success. ***

Saratoga Historical Foundation saved the old Welch home from the wrecker's hammer. The building about 100 years old will be placed in the Saratoga Civic Center as a temporary haven. ***

The San Jose City Council has agreed to purchase a parcel of land adjacent to the Peralta Adobe, which will provide access from Almaden Avenue and a small plaza to enshrine San José's oldest adobe ***

INDIAN LORE OF THE NORTH CALIFORNIA COAST by Austen D. Warburton is now on sale at Books Inc., Town & Country Village. It is a hard cover with 174 pages loaded with Indian lore and illustrations. ***

Report on availability of some 22 historic structures for the Historic Museum Complex at Kelley Park has been made by the "Available Building Committee," consisting of Arthur Fisk, Chairman; Clyde Arbuckle, City Historian and Verne Troup, Architectural Engineer, City of San José. It is hoped the City Council will approve a budget to cover the cost of moving these buildings and permit hiring of a full-time museum building director during this fiscal year. ***

An account of a motor trip in an old "490" Chevrolet to Yosemite Valley and over Tioga Pass by us in 1922 is on file in Yosemite Park Museum Research Library. If the members of the Pioneer Society are interested in this adventure we could publish it in the TRAILBLAZER. What is your pleasure? Marjorie and Arthur Fisk. ***

Advertisement--70 years ago. "James Radley & Son, Locomotive Headlights. Manufacturers of the best Kerosene and Sperm oil headlights now in use." ***

WELCOME

Congratulations to our new members: Alice Abell, Norma Baker, Blanche L. Buckman, Hazel G. Bushnell, Aileen A. Dixon, Henry Dykmans, Sophie B. Dykmans, Joseph E. Freine, Lenore Barrett Freine, Adele Schilling Grube, Russell S. Grube, Yolanda Hayes, Johanna Haynes, Maude Haynes, Henry W. Hazen, Lillian O'Hanlon Hollingsworth, Norman S. Hollingsworth, Edna R. Johnson, Edward O. Johnson, Grace Ann Miguelgorry, Virginia Kent McKay, May Moran, Gwendolyn M. Newbold, Melita H. Oden, Evelyn Osterman, Anna Sanfillipo, Margaret Shadduk, Madeline J. Smalley, Louise Thaysen.

* * *

UNDER THE WEATHER

Mr. Hubert Hood, Mr. Herbert C. Jones, Mrs. Alice Sanford, Mr. Leo Sullivan and Miss Gertrude Bernhardt 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, Miss Lucille H. Snyder. Phone 295-9117.

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BEYOND THE SUNSET

Sara Smitherum

December 2, 1885 - March 24, 1966

James H. Walker

March 31, 1894 - April 2, 1966

Winifred MacLeod Schoenheit

June 27, 1876 - May 7, 1966

Martha Louise Price

December 22, 1872 - May 16, 1966

Pearl B. Bennett

May 24, 1882 - June 15, 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

Issued in January, April, July and October

Editor: Arthur M. Fisk, 1335 Singletary Ave., San Jose

Associate Editor: Marjorie B. Fisk

Staff members: Olin and Edna Lake

Subscription rates to non-members \$1.00 per year. Single copies 25 cents each.

Officers for 1966-67

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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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