

THE TRAILBLAZER

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Incorporated 1875

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RHOADS' LETTERS

(The first of a series copied from original letters and permission to print granted by Dr. Earl E. Rhoads)

Gilroy, California

April 15, 1856

Dear Brothers:

I will endeavor in my poor way to write you a line or two, letting you know that we are in tolerable good health and hope this may find you enjoying the same kind blessing.

I received your kind letter, of the 31st of January, on the 2nd day of April, which was a source of great pleasure to us here - that you are all yet in the land of the living.

I have delayed writing a few days, thinking to hear from Justin. We got a letter from him written the 19th of February, stating that he had bought cattle, 100 head of steers, 3 or 4 years old for \$15 per head, and 50 head of cows with calves for \$17 per head. He said he would start in two weeks - we are looking for him every day.

We have had two weeks rain since I wrote to Viva and it is raining yet. Some wheat that was sown early is nearly ready to head out and is not over a foot high. But late wheat will make good crops.

Part of San Jose Valley is watered from artesian wells in San Jose and within two miles. They are bored with an auger generally from 4 to 6 inches big - some are 100 and to 2 and 3 hundred feet deep. They pipe them as they bore them, with sheet iron or zinc. The water rises generally 2 or 3 feet above the ground.

There was one that the water rose 6 feet above the top of the ground. They couldn't sink the pipe to the bottom and the water rose on the outside of the pipe. The ground got so soft around it that it sank. The ground for half an acre around it sank about 80 feet.

You must excuse me for not coming over to church with you in the sleigh. I will come at some other time. I shall now expect to get a letter from you every few

months. No more at present, but my love to you, my Dear Brothers.

Affectionately,

Amanda Esrey Rhoads

* * *

AGNEWS STATE HOSPITAL

(Material furnished by Herbert C. Jones)

Agnews State Hospital was established by the California State Legislature in 1885. A Neuropsychiatric Institution for the care and treatment of the mentally ill. The construction is on the site of the grounds originally granted by Pio Pico, Governor of California, to Marcello Pio and Christobal on May 9, 1845. J. H. Alviso, James Lick and other historical figures of early Santa Clara Valley history appear in the records as later owners of the original Hospital tract. The first purchase of land totaled 3235 acres and was made from Abram Agnew, who had used it for agricultural purposes.

The first contracts for construction were awarded in July 1886 for ward structures of red brick, four and five stories high. The first patients were admitted to the hospital, a transfer of mentally ill persons from the Napa State Hospital on November 26, 1888. The population of the Hospital continued to increase until there were 1800 by 1906.

During the earthquake and fire of April 18, 1906 all of the ward buildings were so severely damaged that it was necessary to raze them. One hundred and twelve patients and employees met their deaths at the time of this disaster. Many of the survivors were moved temporarily to the Stockton State Hospital, but over 860 were housed in tents and temporary structures on the grounds while the Hospital was being rebuilt. The reconstructed Hospital, with a capacity of 1800 patients was occupied in 1911.

In 1933, three large units to house 1500 patients were constructed at a site two and one-half miles from the main hospital. The two areas, designated as the West and East areas respectively, have grown to comprise more than 150 separate structures on 747 acres of land.

In 1960 the completion of the 505 bed Walter Rapa-port Receiving and Treatment Hospital, together with separate administrative facilities, resulted in shifting the Hospital Administration, as well as the admission of all new patients to the East Area. The present normal capacity is now 4,158 patients.

A HORTICULTURIST AND HIS MUSTARD FIELD

Lovesta Dorwin Davis

James Lick was in the habit of proceeding with his own affairs without comment, and was said to have been undisturbed by what others thought of him. But according to his contemporaries he was frequently offended.

Mr. Lick bought the first parcel of his Mahogany Mill Acres near Alviso in 1848, and twice thereafter added to the acreage. During the years he was building his fabulous Mahogany Mill, and subsequently the so-called Mill Mansion, he was also preparing the virgin land.

Before the Horticulturist could develop a show place in the Valley (always seemingly an aim of his) he must first attack the wild mustard that once flourished hereabouts. It grew so rank that birds nested in its branches; straying cattle, and children, could become lost in it. Mr. Lick made good use of his new "gang plow"---which so impressed his son, late of Philadelphia. To quote from John Henry's diary: "It is drawn by three yoke of oxen, and cuts the soil three rows at a time!"

Others also were impressed by Mr. Lick's agricultural methods. One authority said, "He brought every rod of his ground to spirit level; he sets every tree as high as every other tree, and prosecutes his work with the zeal worthy of any cause."

The Zealot's extensive orchards soon became a lovely sight. Perhaps the trees thrived so well because of Mr. Lick's own brand of home-made "bone meal." No story about the eccentric Horticulturist is ever complete without mention of a rich man going about the countryside in a rattle-trap buggy. He did the community a service by helping to clear away a great litter of bleached bones. They had been left roundabout in the east foothills by the early Spanish cattlemen, who had wanted only hides and tallow. The self-sufficient Grower evidently felt no need to explain the value of crushed bones as fertilizer for his particular kind of soil.

Mr. Lick imported many varieties of trees and shrubs. They took kindly to their new home, for the fancy-free Horticulturist imported boatloads of their native soil. He carried on a lively correspondence with other horticulturists the world over, gaining more information and more exotic stock for his own planting. One local historian credits Mr. Lick with being responsible "more than any other person up to the day of his death for California's wealth of imported trees."

His lovely gardens grew apace, and so did their fame.

Mr. Lick received many callers at his Mill Acres, some of whom came not only to see the rare flowers, but the fanatic Grower as well. One spring morning the Horticulturist looked up to greet a carriage full of effusive ladies. He welcomed them as civilly as he could, being reputedly shy and uncomfortable in the presence of women. They oohed and aaahed their dainty way along the paths until they came upon some imported plants that were not doing as well as Mr. Lick had hoped for them. One of the gushing visitors remarked in an aside to her companion that this garden was not nearly as lovely as the one they had visited a few days earlier.

As the story goes, touchy Mr. Lick overheard the tactless observation. He told the ladies that his loveliest plants were in a plot of ground beyond the mill. If they cared to see them he would lead the way. They would indeed!

Mr. Lick escorted them past the Mill where a piece of ground, lying fallow for the season, was overgrown with wild mustard taller than himself. He led the gullible ladies well into it, then dodged from their sight, leaving them to find their own way out.

The disheveled ladies emerged eventually, but Mr. Lick did not look up from his absorbing work among his well-loved flowers. He heard his callers sputtering as they climbed into their carriage and drove off. He may have glanced up to watch their glittering carriage disappear down the long driveway.

And we are privileged to assume that it did not occur to the self-satisfied Horticulturist that his already well-established reputation as a "mild lunatic" would soon grow as tall and rank as his fallow field of wild mustard.

* * * * *

WATER

Arthur M. Fisk

Far beyond in value, the discovery of gold, was the ARTESIAN WATER that came surging up from its hidden depths in Santa Clara County in 1854. What a wealth for this beautiful valley; it appeared to be the work of enchantment! Water for irrigation, and good water for drinking was a necessity for Santa Clara Valley and particularly San Jose where surface water was used for drinking and it was brackish and distasteful.

The first well bored was in January 1854 by Merritt and Brothers on Fifth Street near St. John. The bore

was six inches in diameter and struck water at fifty-five feet, but the boring continued and at eighty feet the water rushed up with great force and continued to flow unrestricted. This was our first artesian well.

Later in the same month a well was bored about three miles east of San Jose by J. L. Shepard. After the auger passed through a substratum of sand at about eighty feet, water gushed forth with tremendous pressure. The pipe was adjusted at 16 feet above ground and water was forced out at a much greater velocity than the well bored by Merritt and Brothers.

The third artesian well was bored by T. Meyers during February 1854.

In August 1854, G. A. Dabney bored a well near San Fernando Street, that exceeded all other in its volume of water. At a depth of about 60 feet the auger passed through a bed of clay and the water rushed up with a force that was hitherto unknown in well boring. It created a stream four feet wide and six inches deep and flooded the surrounding lands, so that it became a serious matter. The City Council considered it a nuisance, and passed an ordinance declaring that, "Dabney should stop the flow of water at once; and, if not, he should pay a fine of fifty dollars for every day he allowed it thus to run." The ordinance had no effect on the flow of water and it continued to run for about six weeks, until other wells were bored in that vicinity, which lessened its force and volume, so it could be capped.

During the next fifty years about 2,000 artesian wells were to gush forth in Santa Clara Valley. Many of our members can remember at the turn of the century the clear, cold, delightfully refreshing water from artesian wells in this vicinity, until increasing population and farm irrigation depleted the underground supply.

The original San Jose Water Company incorporated Nov. 26, 1866 with \$100,000 capitalization, supplied its customers from an artesian well owned by Donald McKenzie, which was located where the Montgomery Hotel stands. They had four blocks of water mains along First Street and Santa Clara Street. In 1869 water was piped in from the tail race of Forbes Mill at Los Gatos. In 1870 they began to develop a water supply from Los Gatos Creek where they had several reservoirs from which water was brought by flumes and pipes. The original 4-block water main has now grown into a complex distribution system with over 1400 miles of water mains, serving more than 116,000 customers.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY-1855

Excerpts from the Journal of the Rev. John Sessions, D. D. by courtesy of Dr. Earl E. Rhoads.

"July 21, 1855. On Wednesday Mr. Pendleton kindly offered to accompany me to San Jose and the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines. San Jose is a town in the agricultural region, at the head of this bay, about 54 miles from here, and the mines are some 14 miles beyond, in the mountains & already beginning to be a place of fashionable resort from this city & destined to be far more so, from the whole country.

We started at 9 a.m. in the steamer Union, with a pleasant company of perhaps 30 passengers, among them was Rev. Mr. Clark, an Episcopalian, who has been in this country some years. We had a pleasant time on the boat, & Mr. Clark informed me, when too late to avail myself of it, that on all steam boats & stages in this vicinity, it was customary to allow all Clergymen to pass free. The Capt. afterward informed me that the practice was beginning to be given up, as they found the number of Clergymen was too great, filling up their tables, &c. I have since learned that to a considerable extent all really acting Clergymen are carried free.

At the head of the bay the water grows gradually shallow & terminates in a vast marsh with narrow, winding channels, through which steamboats sail exactly as they do on the Raritan between N. York and Trenton. On the seashore there are rocky islands, so deeply covered with guano that cargoes of it have been shipped to the eastern states.

On landing at Santa Visa (Alviso), we took stages & rode several miles over a level unmade road, to Santa Clara, through wheat fields, extending for miles and miles, and containing thousands of acres of stout grain, now in process of harvesting. We stopped for the night at the "American House," kept on the temperance principle by Mr. Ottason.

In good seasons the wheat yield is 60 or 70 bushels to the acre and sometimes reaches 100. Soil is very rich & averages 5 feet deep. The Valley between the mountains is 18 miles wide-level & without a stone to impede plowing, which is expected e'er long to be done by steam, driving gangs of plows fastened together. We went over the grounds of one gentleman. He has 20 acres of garden, &c. with young fruit trees-10,000 peach trees-10,000 pear trees & 10,000 apple trees. There are two artesian wells

260 feet deep, sending large streams of water through long troughs, which are connected with hose, and spout in all directions over the grounds, to irrigate them.

Here is a Methodist College with over 200 students, male & female. Also a Jesuit College at Santa Clara Mission. This last I visited & was shown all through the premises. The buildings are what is called adobe, i. e. built of sun-dried cakes of mud mixed with straw. Each cake is about 2 feet long, 1 foot wide and 6 inches thick. These are laid up like bricks in a kind of mortar, and plastered over with a kind of mastic. The old church is roofed with tiles of clay, burnt just like the old Dutch tiles of Albany. Outside and inside it is covered with figures painted by the Indians who used to be here in large numbers but are now all gone. The grounds about these buildings are tasteful & full of flowers & fruit trees. I ate several figs-the first I ever tasted fresh from the tree. They were delicious.

The next morning after leaving Mr. Ottason's we went to San Jose=3 miles. The road is level & there are two rows of old willow trees on the sides of it all the way. There are also patches of cactus, or prickly pear, from 10 to 15 feet high.

Here the charm of this climate appeared to the greatest advantage. The sun was shining in full force, yet the sea breeze, which comes over the mountain, was modified & made just a soft cool breathing, no inconvenience from the heat was felt at 90 degrees.

It is a curiosity to see men ride on horseback here for another reason. Their gear is very odd. Saddles are of Mexican make-high before and behind, with very clumsy looking stirrups having a roll of thick leather around them; and the rider has a kind of leather leggings that come up to the knees. There are nice & common wagons and carriages here also, but not among the natives.

The number of cattle & horses is amazing. Frequently an old farmer will have several thousand horned cattle & as many horses! They are easily raised by reason of the abundance of wild oats and there being no winter.

The production of wheat is now so great in Cal. that they are shipping it to N. Y. It is worth here about half the price in N. Y., ie. \$6 or \$7 a barrel for flour. All vegetables are monstrous, but potatoes are the most remarkable for size & quality. Nothing like them can be seen in the east. They are monstrous-dry & mealy.

Here we called on Rev. Mr. Corwin & then took the

stage for the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines, 14 miles, & a charming ride. Sycamore trees 20 feet in circumference but the Red Wood is the most remarkable timber. It is used for rails, boards, shingles, house timbers &c. It splits so straight & smooth as to have the appearance of being sawed & planed. Its color is as dark as mahogany & looks like it, so that the houses built of it seem to be mahogany. It is a soft wood like red cedar. One man told me he measured a tree of it that was 48 feet in circumference & sold for \$400.

At the mines is a new hotel, not inferior in style, neatness and a fine table. Here we put up for the night. A little distance from the hotel is a soda springs. I went & drank of the water & found it as fine soda water as I ever tasted. Large quantities are bottled for use.

Visited the furnaces where the cinnabar is worked. There are long rooms of furnaces where the ore is heated. The liquid evaporates and condenses and runs into a tub; Whence it is weighed & put into iron bottles with a screw stopper. The mountain is entered about 400 feet by a railroad, at the end of the R.R. a shaft is sunk & descended upon a log ladder, a log with notches cut in it for steps. These ladders descend many hundred feet. Some of the way steps are cut in the earth or rock. Up these ladders the ore is brought on men's backs, each carrying a hundred pounds. If he should make a misstep in some places, he would fall hundreds of feet. The workmen in the furnaces have to be changed every few days to the mine and then back, by reason of the effects produced upon them in the works. It salivates them and after a while makes them deranged.

After tea, retired & at half-past four in the morning took the stage back to San Jose. We returned to San Francisco by steamboat and arrived here about 1 o'clock, having been absent a little over three days. My expenses were \$7."

* * *

DOOMED

From the four corners of Santa Clara County, the wreckers ball and the bulldozer are lords of the land. In the ruthless, if often well-intentioned, cause of progress, the state's heritage from pioneer days onward is being ravaged indiscriminately. Unless citizens and officials act to halt the holocaust, all that is beautiful in our architectural heritage will be memories and a handful of dust.

By-lines from the President

Alice M. Vetterle

Fellow Pioneers: Greetings for the Holiday Season!

Our December meeting will be at Lou's Village, where we will celebrate with our annual Christmas party.

Remember, as our membership continues to grow, our Quarterly Luncheon groups grow larger, and the Christmas party is one of our biggest affairs. Please get your reservations in early. It is disturbing to all of us to have to wait for tables to be set up at the last minute.

As in the past we will have a Christmas program with carols and all the trimmings.

I am saying "Thank you" in advance to Mrs. Kate Owen and her Social Group for the lovely decorations they arrange for this meeting and all through the year; and also to Mrs. Alma Andrews for her contribution of music at each quarterly meeting. I'm sure this year's party will be as enjoyable as those in the past, if not better.

Best Wishes for the New Year to all of you.

* * * *

LOOK FOR IT HERE

BUS TOUR - Saturday, November 21, "My Fair Lady" Coronet Theatre, San Francisco. Leave 11:30 a.m. \$6.50. Lunch en route.

1965 DUES may be paid now by mailing your \$2 to Mrs. Jessie E. Black, 82 So. 9th St., San Jose, Calif.

MARRIED - Clair B. Sheets and Hazel W. Imker, September 2, 1964. Our congratulations.

Due to typographical error on page 2 of the Spring issue the name of John Martin Ogan was misspelled. Mr. Ogan is the grandfather of Mrs. Hazel Ogan Withers a member of the Pioneer Society.

Imagine! Inadvertently bumping into your own son in London, England. That's what Clyde and Helen Arbuckle did last month.

Clyde Arbuckle was the principal speaker at the graduation ceremonies for the San Jose Hospital School of Nursing on July 10th. His subject was Pioneer Medical Men and Hospitals of Santa Clara County.

On August 2nd the U. S. Department of the Interior unveiled a plaque at New Almaden honoring this colorful mining community with a registered national historic landmark. Noting the key role New Almaden played in both state and national affairs. Clyde Arbuckle was the principal speaker at the dedication.

Austen D. Warburton was given a warm reception by the members and guests of the Santa Clara Woman's Club on September 18th, when he spoke on California History and Landmarks.

Over two years has elapsed since our organization started its campaign for a Historic Museum Complex (Pioneer Town) for San Jose. The Historic Landmarks Commission has been successful in presenting the program to the San Jose City Council and on September 21st the Council voted to set aside 16 acres in Kelley Park for this project, which will be under the supervision of the Landmarks Commission. The site will be bounded by the Japanese Tea Garden on the north, Coyote Creek on the east, Phelan Avenue on the south and Senter Road on the west.

Volunteer firemen of the Felton district are raising money to repair and preserve the covered bridge at Felton. Built in 1892 it is probably the only covered bridge left in the central coast area.

Fire recently damaged the 90 year old Edward McLaughlin mansion at Seventh and Reed streets. It was unoccupied and will be razed.

Bulldozers recently wrecked the Southern Pacific station at Los Gatos. The central part of the building was the original station built for the South Pacific Coast Railroad in 1877. A new United States post office will be built on the site.

The two-story home on the northwest corner of Union Avenue and McGlincey Lane, built about 1880 was recently burned down. It was in 1896 that James Dunham went berserk in the neighboring McGlincey home and strangled his wife, axed to death his mother-in-law and a maid, shot Col. McGlincey, his stepson James Wells and a hired man. Dunham escaped on horseback and was never found.

The old Millikin School on Lawrence Road has been demolished to make room for a six-lane expressway. The school property was acquired on July 18, 1867 and the school building erected about 1870. In 1926 Milliken and Jefferson School districts were "unionized," and later, one central school was built on the Jefferson campus.

The first Protestant school in San Jose was opened in 1851, by Reverend E. Bannister.

The first iron stove to reach Santa Clara County arrived in 1846.

The first house erected in Gilroy was built by James Houck, in 1850.

WELCOME

Due to a typographical error in our summer issue the following new members were omitted: Amelia Minietta, Angela A. Minietta, Bessie Olson and Izetta W. Pritchard.

Congratulations to our new members: Dorothy A. Anderson, Curt Bailey, Olive P. Bailey, Linnie Brizee, Lurline M. Carnes, Harry S. Clinton, Verna L. Clinton, Esther A. Coker, Leon C. Coker, Martha C. Dahlgren, Corris E. Fahler, Edwin R. Haller, Marion R. Haller, Hazel C. Herndon, Merle C. Hunt, Elba K. Hurst, Harriet S. Kahler, Gloria Leavenworth, Louis A. Lopes, Mary C. Lopes, Eugenia A. McKay, Mary G. Metcalf, Gaston Plat, Mrs. Gaston Plat, Elsie I. Smith, Hazel N. Smith, Marie Starkey, Della Stevens, Helen C. Sweeney.

* * *

Under the Weather

Miss Bernice Arnerich injured in an automobile accident on May 29th is now able to walk with the aid of a cane.

Miss Caroline E. Rogers, Mr. Percy H. Thompson, Mr. Olin S. Lake, Mr. Montrose Lillie, Mr. Carl Heredia and Mrs. Emma Rutan have been reported ill. Our 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 deaths to the chairman of our Sunshine Committee, Mrs. Ruth M. Heath. Phone 292-2609.

* * * *

Beyond the Horizon

Edith Aurelia Smith

April 21, 1897 - July 31, 1964

Evangeline V. Lewis

February 11, 1890 - September 15, 1964

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

THE TRAILBLAZER

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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.

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, Cal. 95128.

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