

Big top's fall doesn't ruffle circus audience

By Kristin Delaplane

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Benicia was gearing up for its city elections in May. A meeting was called for nomination of city officers. The meeting was held in the Democratic Club Room located over the El Dorado Saloon.

To be voted for were the offices of mayor, marshal, treasurer, assessor (the editors remarked that the assessor did anything generally but assess), and four councilmen.

E.H. von Pfister was the city clerk. He was also secretary for the Masons.

Conflicting reports were given on the wages for these offices.

In a first report it was stated that the marshal was paid \$1,000 a year. A second report stated he received 3 percent of all money collected by him, but not to exceed \$500 a year.

The city clerk was paid \$600 in a first report and \$300 in a second report.

As clerk to the Board of Equalization of the council, the city clerk was allowed \$5 per day for each day's service in that duty. This \$5 was not to exceed \$75 a year.

He was also paid for making duplications of assessment book.

The assessor supposedly was paid \$400 a year, but the second report listed his salary at \$150.

From the second report, the treasurer was listed at \$100 a year.

Some students from the Benicia Female Seminar were invited by Capt. Kellogg and Capt. Turner, the civil engineer at Mare Island, to sail to Mare Island on the cutter William L. Marcy and visit the island for a day.

The first stop was at Capt. Turner's residence, where the group enjoyed the time by dancing.

They then proceeded to the joiner's shop where they danced some more.

After a day of touring the yard and dancing, the group sailed back to Benicia.

The officers of the barracks at the Benicia Arsenal gave a social party for their friends in the city.

All danced until the early hours of the morning.

From Suisun City came word that Mr. and Mrs. Marsh's 3-year-old son died. A cistern had been constructed in the backyard and was left open.

The little boy tumbled in and with 30 inches of water at the bottom, he drowned.

Nearby in the Suisun Valley came news that William Ledgewood's son William Henry died at 1 year.

It was reported that a daughter weighing 15 pounds was born to the wife of Mason Wilson of Vacaville.

A wedding also took place in the Vaca Valley at the residence of Mr. Heizer with Nancy Heizer was married to J.W. Anderson.

Paul Shirley, longtime sheriff of Solano County, married Mary E. Gift of Contra Costa County.

The Solano Herald moved its offices to L.D. Sanborn's building on the east side of 1st between D and E and was advertising for a worker.

"Boy wanted in this office - one that can make himself generally useful," the newspaper's advertisement for the position stated.

At this period of time, citizens were forming rifle companies.

A meeting was scheduled for those citizens of Benicia in favor of organizing such a rifle company. The meeting was to take place in the room above the El Dorado Saloon.

A new mail route was announced from the city of Napa to the post offices at Putah, Vacaville and Cordelia. The mail was carried by McKenzie & Co. stage line.

Livestock were a mainstay in these early days. A large drove of sheep - young, old and middle-aged - passed through Benicia en route to Vacaville.

Milton Brockman of Solano Sulphur Spring, located six miles from Benicia in Sulphur Spring Valley, was offering a \$50 reward for two horses that were discovered missing from his ranch.

When Lee and Bennet's Circus entered Benicia, it was preceded by a band. That evening there was a performance. Candles were used to light the arena.

After the audience was seated and the performance had begun, a wind came up, shaking the main pole and the candles. Shortly, the canvas gave way and covered the audience completely. They remained covered for a total of 45 minutes, taking it like troopers.

The circus performed the next day without further incident and then left for Vallejo.

It was announced that a steamer would run between San Francisco and Suisun City.

The editors put out a warning to the ". . . man who is in the habit of beating his horse in a most brutal manner in the open streets." The animal came near running into the Solano County Herald office for protection.

The May Queen, the newest in washing technology, was advertised as being L.D. Sanborn's in Benicia. It was a washing machine that handled washing, rinsing and had a wringer for drying.

Stockton was the unhappy destination for a few fellows. One man was arrested when the steamboat from Stockton arrived at Benicia.

When Mr. Emory stepped on board seeking his wife, he was arrested for stealing cattle in the Stockton area. He was taken back to Stockton.

Another man had to be escorted to Stockton for being crazy.

This was the second time the fellow, who had been living in the Suisun Valley, had been so afflicted with this disease. This time he had become so delirious, friends were compelled to take him to the asylum.

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