

## Hoping for gold in them thar - rooftops?

By Kristin Delaplane

Sunday, August 11, 1996

In the summer of 1857, the citizens of Benicia were apparently considering seeking gold - on their rooftops! The precious metal was escaping from the chimneys at the mint in San Francisco.

It was a problem of such consequence that new flues were being constructed in a zigzag pattern so as to prevent the escape of gold dust from the mint.

Much of this dust had been scraped off rooftops nearby the mint and it was supposed that, as the wind current headed out toward Benicia, the citizens there would do well to check their rooftops for any dust that had possibly accumulated.

The American Hotel saga continued with an auction of Spanish and American carriage horses, two buggies and harnesses, and an eight-passenger Concord wagon with harness.

Meanwhile, the Solano Hotel was expanding.

A new family carriage was purchased to convey the hotel's numerous patrons to and from the steamboat free of charge.

J. Kerchner, a saddle- and harness-maker on 1st Street, was selling a horse buggy and harness and a good saddle-horse.

An alert was put out for a strayed or stolen light bay California horse marked with Clark's brand.

The horse disappeared from Dr. A. Verhave's premises in Benicia. Verhave was a physician, surgeon and accoucher - one who assists in childbirth.

Dr. D.N. Powers announced his practice as a surgical and mechanical dentist. His offices were located at the corner of D and 1st streets in Benicia.

The Fireman's Exchange Saloon on 1st between C and D was enlarged, renovated and refitted and a new stock of liquors, English ale and porter on draught and cigars were brought in.

Proprietor James Ewing hoped that "by strict attention to business to expect the same

liberal patronage as heretofore.”

There was a sheriff's sale due to a judgment found against Josiah Knight in favor of George Dingley for \$2,004. By now, George Dingley had his flour mill in Green Valley in full operation.

Samuel J. Agnew purchased L.D. Sanborn's interest in the Benicia's stove store, sheet iron and tinware manufactory, and he also operated the Suisun Tin Shop in Suisun City.

The Solano Herald's publishing partnership of Cellers & Gorman came to an end with B.L. Gorman taking the helm. C.A. Cellers was listed as Benicia's justice of the peace.

With the ending of the partnership, Cellers was calling on those clients whose accounts were in arrears to settle the books.

At this time, the Solano Herald was \$5 for a year or \$3 for six months.

Advertisers paid \$2 for 10 lines or less for the first insertion in the newspaper and \$1 for subsequent insertions.

The postmasters of the day were also listed: J.B. Frisbee in Vallejo; T.T. Hooper in Benicia; E. True at Oak Grove Farm; Wm. Hooten in Vacaville.

It was later reported that one night a thief entered the room of the county clerk, Mr. "Hooton" and robbed his trunk of between \$130 and \$200. It is unclear if this is the same gentleman.

The editors reported on a visit to Vallejo. "... From the appearance it presents, in not too many years it will be a flourishing city.

From the style of buildings which the citizens have adopted, a stranger will at once conclude that the population are active, industrious and free from the lassitude that always follows luxury.”

Mare Island was accepting sealed proposals for a number of items including bricks, stone, sandstone, granite, dress stone and pine sawed straight and square.

Hardware items included iron butts, copper wire, screws, brass bolts, gate latches, candles, a bench vise, flooring, paints and oils. Also whitewash brushes, stable buckets, stationery, firewood, oats, coal, water buckets and sperm oil.

Other news at the Navy yard included the fact that ferryman John Ward applied to the Board of Supervisors of Solano County for a renewal of his license to run a ferry from the Georgia Street wharf to the Navy yard.

Benicia greeted the two majors as they passed through town. These two had cut their way through the Mexican forces and were the only survivors of the ill-fated Sonora Expedition.

In political news, a Democratic county convention meeting was held in the city of Vallejo with J.B. Frisbee as chairman.

A meeting of the Whigs was called for in Cordelia to consider policy, the general organizing of the party and the nominations for a county ticket.

Appointed to the Whig committee were Thomas M. Swan of Goodyear, Thomas Brownlee and C.H. Hubbard of Val-lejo, John Cutler of Green Valley, Philip Palmer of Suisun, Dr. Rice of Vacaville, Milton Wolfskill of Putah Township and J.P. McCursick of Montezuma. The chairman was A. Goodyear and the secretaries were S.K. Nurse and E.L. Statson.

A mass meeting of the settlers of Solano County was held at Suisun City for the purpose of selecting delegates to the Settler's and Miners convention in Sacramento

In Benicia a poll was taken to test the feelings of the people on the proposed railroad from Benicia to Sacramento. There was not one dissenting voice.

There was a Masonic celebration in Vallejo with a procession, an oration and a ball that evening at the State House. The Masonic Hall in Benicia held a festive meeting as a morning affair.

A daily stage line between Suisun City and Vacaville was formed, operated by William H. Cole. It connected with the stage to and from Benicia.

That June, Solano County endured a heat wave, the ther-mometer reaching 110 degrees in Benicia.

One person did not endure the heat. A man named Kelly was working in the quarry on the government reserve near Benicia during this spell when he was overpowered with the heat and died.

The Vaca Valley was the scene of a domestic dispute that ended in tragedy. John Hurkins suspected John Hendriks of improper conduct with Hurkins' wife.

On returning from his work one evening, Hurkins found his children alone. He loaded his gun and waited. Shortly his wife and Hendriks appeared at the gate arm-in-arm. Hurkins fired, killing Hendriks instantly. He gave himself up and was immediately lodged in jail.

Edmond S. Conner , a Philadelphia fireman of 22 years and who had suffered from a fire in Nevada the year before, offered to aid in a benefit to raise funds for the Solano Fire Co. No. 1.

Connor and his wife performed as actors and apparently went from place to place giving benefits for fire companies. They had recently raised \$200 for the Petaluma fire company.

James H. Andrews, acting foreman for the Benicia fire company, accepted their offer. They performed at the court-house.

That night, an unexpected, heavy shower of rain came.

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