

Healing springs, fine hotels and plumbing

By Kristin Delaplane

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By October 1858, the Solano County Herald publisher, William J. Hooton, had managed to move his printing equipment by dray from Benicia to his offices in Suisun City located in a new building on the south side of the Plaza.

This momentous move was made because of the county seat being situated in Fairfield.

The publisher addressed this in the first edition from Suisun dated October 2.

"We avail ourselves of this location to come into more intimate communication with the people of this county. We shall expect an increase of patronage. We have long been conscious that the difficulty of distributing our paper to the county subscribers was a great obstacle to its circulation, but are confident that with a central location we shall be able to overcome all the difficulties," he wrote.

The paper's agent in San Francisco was Thomas Beves at the corner of Washington and Montgomery.

In Benicia, the loyal Joseph W. Sanborn acted as agent and in Vacaville, the task fell upon postmaster and general store proprietor E.F. Gillespie.

Israel Brockman was a main advertiser in the paper and his enhanced ad for the Solano County Sulphur Springs illustrated that resort's growth.

"The celebrated Springs, situated 3 1/2 miles NE of Vallejo and 5 1/2 miles NW of Benicia, is one of the one of the most delightful and retired positions in the county. The efficacy of these springs over various morbid affections is no longer problematical. Their value is established. Hundreds with truth, we aver, date their riddance of rheumatic and cutaneous diseases from their visit to the Springs. A large and commodious house is erected. As a resort for the pleasure seeking of this and adjoining counties, it is most desirable having good roads in all directions. Billiards and other amusements with choice liquor and a good Table. Baths warm and cold," read the advertisement.

Meanwhile, Mr. Osborn, the sheriff, was out collecting taxes.

It was not his job to travel about, but he did so to accommodate the citizens. He was in Benicia for two days, Vacaville three days, Silvey's (Silveyville) one day and Tuft's

(Tremont) two days.

Benicia's Solano Engine Co. No. 1 traveled to San Francisco to attend a gathering of firemen. The Howards received the group, who were their guests for the duration of the event.

News of the Benicia Boy, John "Jack" Heenan, told of his training schedule for an upcoming fight.

He was walking 10 to 20 miles a day, fighting the bag, raising weights and practicing with the gloves. In addition, he was following a life of perfect regularity.

Born in 1835, Heenan came to Benica in 1853 with his parents, who were farmers. When not fighting, the 6-foot Heenan worked at the Pacific Mail dock as a blacksmith's helper, wielding a 20-pound sledge. He was to be recognized as the best heavy-weight of his time.

Publishing out of Suisun City, the Herald now carried many ads from that section of the county.

The Confectioner and Fruit Store at the corner of Main and California in Suisun City was operated by William T. Kennedy.

J. Frank and Co. (Successors to McCory & Ballard) were wholesale and retail dealers in dry goods, clothing, groceries, boots and shoes, hardware, etc. They also bought and exchanged for local produce.

Cutler & Anderson's Livery and Feed Stable at Suisun and Solano streets had horses and buggies for hire.

Cutler was also proprietor of the stage line that ran between Suisun City and Benicia.

J.W. Owen's Livery & Feed & Sale Stable was at the Old Stand on Main Street at a corner of the Plaza. The firm had horses and carriages for hire and also provided a boarding and grooming service for horses by the day, week or month.

Godfrey and Mead was the local photography establishment, where photos could be reproduced as ambrotypes, melainotypes and patent leather.

They had rooms on the south corner of Main and California streets.

As an aside, George McKown - the former Solano County photographer - had his

gallery in San Francisco on Clay Street and also advertised in the Herald.

He was now operating alone without his partner, Bishop.

Dan T. Day was proprietor of Western Hotel (later the Union Hotel).

It was on Main Street near Solano Street. His ad let the public know that the building had been recently renovated, remodeled and newly furnished.

“The proprietor will give his whole attention to the Western and with his experience in the hotel business he can safely promise entire satisfaction to all who may become his guests. The Table will always be supplied with every luxury the market affords. The Bar will constantly be stocked with the choicest wines, liquors and cigars,” the ad stated.

Court news was in evidence with some highly recognizable names: Stephen Cooper vs. Juan Felipe Pena, Mason Wilson vs. Mary Hall, and S.C. Hastings vs. John B. Frisbee.

Lawyers Witman & Wells were doing business from the Lemon Building in Suisun City and the Hastings Building in Benicia. J.G. Lawton Jr., attorney, counselor at law and justice of the peace, had an office at the corner of Suisun and Solano streets.

Attorneys Swan and McMurty were operating in an office on Main Street over Lemon's Store.

The partners had previously operated with Swan in Fairfield and McMurty in Benicia.

Chrysler & Bartlett ran the Suisun City Billiard Saloon. A. Chrysler had owned the Cordelia House in 1856 in Cordelia.

At some later time he was noted as the proprietor of A. Chrysler's Saloon on Main Street in Suisun City. Apparently he took on a partner and renamed the his saloon or moved to another location in Suisun City.

The Suisun Water Works were “prepared to furnish wholesome, fresh water to the inhabitants of the Suisun City and Fairfield.”

Water could be introduced in any part of a building by pipe.

Livery stable owner J.C. Owen and Robert B. Cannon were partners in this business.

“. . . Scamp or samps” killed Mr. Olinger's mare. Olinger lived near Vacaville and the mare was valued at \$500.

Another horse was missing. "A Spanish dun-colored (neutral brownish gray) horse, dark mane and dark short switch tail, branded '69' on the left hip and an indistinct 'O' on the left shoulder. Horse shod all round. . . . with a Spanish saddle and American bridle and martingale was taken from the camp meeting ground near Mr. Berry's in Suisun Valley. I will pay \$20 reward for the recovery of horse and saddle. R.D. Burnett, Suisun City."

The editors of the Herald spent some ink on the sad plight of Antonio, a Spaniard and retired vaquero. Antonio had been thrown from his horse and his leg was badly broken below the knee. Doctors McMeans and Stockman found it necessary to amputate.

The suffering man was put up in a room adjoining the Herald's office and an extensive article appeared in the paper:

"He wants nursing and proper food. Some days he has very little of either and is unable to help himself. Yesterday he complained of not having sufficient to eat. Mr. Morton of the City Hotel has been furnishing him with food at his own expenses. It is not right for one man to give his time and aid of charity when that duty falls on every man to aid the sick and afflicted. We hope in the name of humanity and common decency, the citizens of Suisun will see that Antonio has everything necessary to make him comfortable," the article said.

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