

## **Suisun newspapers face off over charges**

**By Kristin Delaplane**

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In 1863, at least two newspapers were being published in Solano County, both located in Suisun City. The Solano County Herald, which debuted back in 1855, billed itself as "the county's official paper." Ownership had changed over the years.

In 1863, the man in charge was O.B. Powers. O.B. Powers and Co., having made important additions to their stock of printing materials, were ready to print books, blanks, bill heads, circulars, ball tickets, programs, posters, and cards.

William J. Hooton, who was publisher for about a year in 1858-59, died at 35 in Sacramento where he had moved to take the position of clerk on the Swamp Land Commissioners Board.

The Solano Press was published by H. Hubbard & Co., and it started up in 1863 with offices in the Wheaton Building at Main and Solano streets.

Within a month there was a feud between these publication. The Herald attacked the Press for making allegations that a county representative had overcharged on his travel expenses. Apparently, this representative was also associated with the Herald. A caustic editorial resulted against the Press.

The News Depot run by E.D. Wheeler was located in W.T. Kennedy's store. He carried Eastern pictorials and periodicals. P. McElroy News Agent carried Eastern and California papers and periodicals in Vallejo.

A dead dog found on Main Street on New Year's Day was received as good news: "Let us hope this is a good omen. That many a worthless dog will be numbered with the dead ere this year shall come to a close."

There were New Year celebrations in Suisun City. Some people broke into a toy shop and made off with fireworks, but left payment for them on the counter. New Year's Day Mr. Owen, proprietor of the Pacific House, had a turkey dinner for a few friends.

The Owens retired from the hotel business just after the New Year and William F. Halsey assumed management of the Pacific House. The hotel, located in Reeve's Block and touted as first-class, proclaimed its table was always supplied with the best and liquors and cigars to had in the bar.

Shortly after assuming ownership, Halsey announced he was giving an Anniversary Ball at Wright & Henry's Hall. Tickets were \$4. Wright & Henry's Hall was apparently the place to hold parties. The Union Fire Co. was set to have their monthly soiree there. They were \$2 for tickets. It may also be noted that in Benicia there was now a second fire company, Phoenix Engine Co. No. 2.

Other hotel news included the following:

The Union Hotel in Suisun on Solano Street was operated by C. Webster as a boarding house. The City Hotel managed by Sumner A. Shorey had special accommodations for families and a bar that was always well stocked. The Eagle Hotel was up for rent. It was noted that locals knew it to be used as a Chinese brothel in recent times.

Outside of Suisun City, the American Hotel in Benicia was now owned by T. Bromley. This was also the location for the stage office. Stages departed for not only left for Suisun City and Vallejo, but also Napa, St. Helena, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Santa Rosa.

M. Cutler was still operating Cutler's Mail Line with four horse Concord coaches running the Benicia, Fairfield and Suisun City route. He now connected in Benicia with the Smith & Co. Stages to Vallejo and Napa.

The financial state of the county was made public. The county had disbursed \$85,657.04 throughout the year on roads, schools, and other services. There was \$23,068.54 cash on hand. The county's debt came to \$164,340.84

Miss Goodrich gave a lecture on "Woman's Duty to Her County" in Benicia and in Suisun City. Later she spoke for a program given by the Ladies Patriotic Association in Vallejo in aid of a sanitary fund.

George Eichnor was offering a \$10 reward for the delivery of a buff-colored pocketbook containing one ten dollar bill, one \$5 Treasury note and notes and papers of value. It was lost somewhere between town and George Haynes' ranch.

From Vacaville came news about the public examinations of students attending the Pacific Methodist College where W.T. Lucky was the president. The students were judged on grammar rules, Greek and Latin roots, geography, geometry, trigonometry, etc. A school catalogue stated that a student could also study music on the piano, guitar, harp or violin. That night a society connected with the institution had a program with speeches, debates and essays for an audience of some 250 people.

Shortly after the examinations, 21-year-old Maggie A. Smyth, a native of Missouri and

wife of Prof. Smyth of the college died.

The churches in the county were active. The Rev. R. Gober was to preach at the church on Solano Street, a Methodist church. The Rev. Mr. Bland was preaching at the church in Fairfield. The Presbyterian being built in Vallejo was blown down by a strong wind, the damage came to \$200. A yearly meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church was set to be held at the church at Rockville.

The rains came in January and February of 1863 spoiling some peoples fun in Suisun. One evening of amusement was canceled. "There was no lecture, no dance, no ball, no nothing." Other entertainment included the goings-on at the Young Men's Social Club that had their meetings on Saturday evenings and was not canceled.

Not all was peaceful in Suisun City at night. One lady took a rawhide to a man she claimed made indecent remarks. Her integrity was questioned by a few. In another incident, this one due to too much drink, profane and obscene language was shouted and the parties discharged their pistols just missing wounding a child on the sidewalk.

Boating news: The headline, "Age ain't nothing. Blood will tell" dealt with the fact that the schooner Ann Sophia came into her berth after a five hour run from San Francisco. A young couple from San Francisco arrived by boat with elopement plans on their minds. Philip C. Moody who had been speedily transferred to San Francisco by boat died nevertheless from injuries received by falling off a horse in Rio Vista. He 28 years old.

Though people often were sent to San Francisco for medical care, there were a number of physicians in Solano County and places for medical care.

Dr. T. M. Morton had returned to Suisun to resume his practice in the various practices of medicine. His residence and office were the second house fronting the Old Plank Road, the house formally occupied by James Flannery. Dr. T.M. Morton of Suisun City practiced medicine out of his residence, the second house North on the Old Plank Road, a.k.a. Suisun Street.

Dr. J.W. Steely, physician and surgeon, had been practicing medicine for 18 years. His light was at the Pacific House.

Dr. McMahan, physician and surgeon, had his practice in Fairfield. Dr. McMahan had attended the Eclectic-Medical Institute in Ohio. He devoted time to the study of "old chronic diseases", paying particular attention to diseases afflicting women and children.

Outside of Suisun City, P.J. Merwin was a surgeon-dentist in Benicia. His practice was over J.W. Jones drugstore on Main Street. He took his practice Washington Hotel in Vallejo every Saturday. He included some references in his advertising material: A surgeon for the Army. A colonel with the 3rd Regiment. A doctor in Woodland.

Proposals were being accepted for Care of the Indigent Sick. The successful bidder was to furnish a building for a hospital, food, medicine, medical attendance and cover all expenses in conveying patients to the hospital.

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