

Dixon's 1897 began with a ball

By Kristin Delaplane

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One hundred years ago, Dixon's New Year's Ball was deemed a success. Over 100 couples danced the night away to Newby's Orchestra and enjoyed a supper that was deemed magnificent in quality and quantity. A few couples did not want to depart even at 6 in the morning, but the worn out musicians laid down their instruments.

The Chinese New Year was less of a success. It was a very quiet affair compared to years past when more Chinese lived in the area.

The editor of the Dixon Tribune was A. L. Henry. The business manager was F. A. Hutton. At this time Hutton's mother, Charlotte, was getting plans drawn up for Vacaville's Triangle Building and a May construction date was set. The Tribune's former business manager, L. H. Peterson, was moving to Vacaville where he had a fruit and vegetable business in a building on the Triangle lot. In 1898, Peterson would file a law suit citing Charlotte Hutton for not honoring his lease to occupy the new Triangle building.

Dixon boasted several professional services. The Bank of Dixon had \$500,000 in capital stock. S.G. Little was the president, J.H. Rice the cashier. When the bank decided to downsize that year, Edgar McFadyen, assistant cashier for the past 10 years, was out of a job.

Attorney Albert Manning had his office at the City Hall. Dentist Dr. Robert Millar, who offered gas for all extractions and charged "prices to suit the prevailing hard times," was upstairs in the Hall Building. On Mondays, he went to Elmira. R.L. Reison M.D. was located in the Palace Hotel. Physician and surgeon A. Trafton was next to the California Drug Store. His residence was one door south of the Baptist Church. Dr. O.L. Rogers, a graduate of Nashville's Vanderbilt University, newly arrived and located in the Hotel Vendome. His residence, the Carr Cottage, was one block south of the Baptist Church. Rogers only stayed a short time. Then he and Dr. Reison moved to Sacramento as partners. Trafton wasted no time in moving to the office vacated by Reison. Dr. S. E. Morse moved to town and located in the Brinckerhoff and Ehmann building.

Photographer J.W. Bird set up a temporary studio in the Dixon Gallery. Then Baldwin, a Sacramento photographer, established a branch studio in the Royce Building.

Main Street was lined with business enterprises. A. Kirby, proprietor of the California Drug Store, brought in his son C.M. Kirby and the store's new name was Kirby & Son. Kirby's competition was McBride's drug store. H.W. Timm, located in the Masonic Building, was a wholesale dealer in beef, mutton, veal and pork, fresh and salted. Eppinger & Co. a large general store, was advertising mixed paints, the Casaday plow and wire fencing.

The other general merchandise store was S. Goodman & Co. G. Francesconi had a grocery store with Duprey & Son as his competition. That spring A.F. Duprey bought a drug store in Napa and left H.F. Duprey to continue the Dixon business. Duprey sold only for cash. He kept prices down by not opening accounts for which he would have to employ a bookkeeper. G.D. Schulze was the town's watchmaker and jeweler. George Steinmiller had the harness and saddler shop. Milton Carpenter operated the carriage making and machine shop. His buggies ranged from \$85 on up and he charged \$1.50 for shoeing a horse. He was just enlarging the refreshment section near the candy stand. M. Stenge was a men's tailor and Chaim The Tailor sold ready-made suits for \$18 and pants for \$6. A.H. Miller carried a line of ladies' and gents' clothing. The shop's interior was being kalsomined (a white or tinted liquid containing zinc oxide, water, glue, and coloring matter, used as a wash for walls and ceilings) by Ed. Fitzpatrick. People could complete their outfits by going into August Giesecke's shoe store. Once outfitted, citizens could send their laundry to Mason's Steam Laundry & Shirt Factory in Sacramento through the local agent.

Barber Alex Cohen, who also carried cigars, was set up in the Odd Fellows Building. Charles Richards was repainting the interior for Cohen. Or one could step in Grove's Barber Shop which offered the "best" baths in town as well. Grove's charged 15 cents for a shave. Seeing this, barber T.W. Norman reduced his prices accordingly.

The specialty of Jansen's Express & Dray Line's was moving pianos. He also sold hay, wood and coal. The City Dray Line, operated by Dan McKinnon, also sold wood and coal.

When G.A. Littlefield resigned as agent for the West Valley Lumber Co. in 1897, J.W. Shattuck took his place.

A gale wind knocked over the smoke stack of Joseph Lukes' mill, Dixon Roller Mills. The Dixon Brewery seemed to be prospering. Local lasses were finding work in the local office of the Sunset Telephone Co. The Dixon Light & Water Co. was established with water rates for a family of three set at \$1.50 annually; a charge of 35 cents for any additional members. Water closets increased the rates by 65 cents and bathtubs another 85 cents.

Saloons, hotels with bars and places to eat prevailed. J.W. Jamison opened a shooting gallery in the building adjoining his saloon. Gus Wolken opened the Little Casino in 1896 offering his patrons English ale and porter, Barlett water and Batavia arrac for punches. The Old Corner Saloon, operated by George E. Ehmann, was the "depot" for Ruhstaller's Gilt Edge Steambeer at five cents a schooner. Ehmann served a mercantile lunch and had billiard and pools tables and a club room. The New Corner Saloon was run by Herman Fisher. He had beer on draft and ice cold at five cents a glass and carried Buffalo larger. His business lunches consisted of a variety of sandwiches. The Dixon Bakery and Restaurant, which was newly repapered, was owned by J. Schneider & Son. They served meals at all hours and had fresh bread, pies and cakes for sale. Their special price of \$1 would buy 25 loaves of bread! For those wanting milk to go with their pie, the Solano Dairy run by L.S. Hyde sold quarts for five cents.

The Vendome Hotel was owned by Mrs. H.A. Morris who was recovering from nervous prostration. The Arcade Livery Stable was no doubt attached to the Arcade Hotel.

Paving the street was the town's priority. Both S. Goodman & Co. and Eppinger had ordered carloads of crushed rock to fill in the street in front of their premises. The town trustees ordered a carload for the street crossings. The mud was first removed from the streets and then rock distributed over the flat surface. This was called "macadamizing" the road.

The bicycle tire manufacturing company, Morgan & Wright, had a bicycle racing team of 29 men and trainers. Having spent three days in Dixon, the manager declared the Dixon Driving Park track, the horse racing track, the best in the state for bicycles outside of the Velodome. He was considering bringing the team there to train for the national circuit.

As the hot weather approached, awnings went up along Main Street, the ice wagon began its daily rounds and the street sprinkler wagon was in put into action. And the town was alive with preparations for the annual May Day Picnic and Races put on by the Dixon Driving Park Association. Bids were being accepted for the various concessions; bar, ice cream and restaurant, nuts, candies and lemonade, shooting gallery and the pools for the races. The program was to include field sports, games and sports for children, horse racing and dancing in the pavilion.

In anticipation, local athletes were in training and Coach Timm was assisting them for shot put, sprints, pole vaulting and the 100-yard dash. And, everyone was gearing up for the horse races for which the track at the Driving Park was famous.

With physical fitness on everyone's mind, one Dixon woman had a unique plan for

encouraging girls to cultivate housekeeping arts. She was going to form a physical culture club, starting with her three daughters. The girls were to wear bloomers and blouse waists. Every kitchen duty would be called an "exercise." Dish washing was for the development of wrist muscles and would appear three times a day on the program. Sweeping would develop the forearms. Scrubbing would prevent knee stiffening.

(Next week: Dixon's famous Holmstrom Case)

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