

Plenty of attorneys to fill 'old courthouse'

By Kristin Delaplane

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Times were good in the spring of 1864. It was noted at this time both the hospital and county jail were empty.

Perhaps that was due in part to the number of attorneys in the area. Attorney M.H. Wheaton had his office in the top rooms of the Wheaton Building over W. Owen's saddler's shop. G.W. McMurtry's law office was over McGarvey's tin shop. John D. Brower who was also justice of peace had an office over Lemon's Building.

It was Brower who in 1863 had rescued a young boy from drowning in a ditch.

Several attorneys were located in the "old courthouse" in Fairfield: J.C. Hinckley. Jno. District attorney Doughty. Thomas M. Swan. L.C. Hays. The firm of Whitman & Wells - Wells was also represented in Benicia.

With all these people located in this spot, good water was desirable and bids were being accepted for a supplier of pure and palatable water for the courthouse and jail.

Those holding county positions included John Woolaver as the county surveyor and architect and Col. John B. Frisbee as chief engineer.

The Suisun post office was moving to Bartlett's Building, which was next to and south of the Express Office.

When the Suisun & Knoxville stage broke down due to an axle tree breaking, the passengers were carried into Suisun via a spring wagon.

H.P. Hulbert former master for the steamer Rambler was now at the helm of the steamer Princess, which ran between Suisun City, Benicia and San Francisco three times a week.

On one trip, a coffee-dam was off-loaded onto the Suisun wharf. This machinery was to be further transferred to Lake County where it would be used for getting borax from the lake.

Other activity at the wharf involved the dissolution of the partnership of J.S. Hooke and R.D. Robbins in the lumber enterprise on the wharf. Robbins was remaining as the sole

owner.

These facts contradict Ed Uhl's recollections. "Robbins came into Suisun with blankets on his back in about 1880 and went to work for the lumber yard. But he never drew a dollar. Then, when they had a panic - we call it a depression - in the 1890's, he got the lumber yard, because they owed him quite a lot of money by then."

Another change at the helm occurred when Mrs. Boudrye & Co. leased to F. Boudrye all their work in manufacturing cement until 1865. The company name was changed to simply "Boudrye & Co."

Maurice Meehan reopened his Suisun City boot and shoe store. He carried "fine pump-sole, dress and quilted bottom boots and every style of pegged boots."

His stock included Benkert's, Conrad's and Seiberlich's Philadelphia sewed boots. Also French screwed boots as well as ladies, misses and children's gaiters.

A short time after this notice appeared, Meehan's little daughter fell into a ditch and nearly drowned. When rescued, she required resuscitation.

Meehan's name came up again when a \$500 reward was offered for a strayed 4-month-old, light-colored bay horse. News of the horse could be relayed to Maurice Meehan or J.G. Allison in Fairfield.

The Union Hotel in Fairfield, which featured a bar attached, good rooms, and beds, was being leased by Allison.

J. Carroll Owen disposed of the Suisun Meat Market when Harvey Rice & Co. took possession. Harvey immediately began to enlarge and renovate the shop.

Meanwhile, William F. Halsey, proprietor of the Pacific House in Suisun City, was getting out of the business.

He had his lease and all the furniture in the hotel up for sale. This hotel included 24 rooms, two parlors, a sitting room, a large dining room, kitchen and a washroom. A bit later, the remaining furniture was sold at public auction.

Tom Roberts operated a restaurant and boarding house in Suisun. The advertisement for his restaurant included graphics of oysters, a fish, a wild duck and a pheasant.

Undertaker Knorp became the father of a son that summer.

A coal mine was discovered 16 miles from Suisun on the road to the Knoxville mines, 40 miles away in Napa County.

A company of "Suisuners" formed for the purpose of working the mine.

It was noted getting the coal to market would be no difficulty as there was a good road from the mine to Suisun.

Examinations were taking place in Fairfield for those applying for certificates to teach in the public schools. Elmira's S.G. Creighton of was successful in his bid.

Rev. Peter Deyaert, pastor for the Catholics in Suisun and Napa, declared that a Catholic Church was being built on the corner of Suisun and Line Streets in Suisun City.

In other county news, Miss Lammond had taken over for Miss Atkins as principal of the Young Ladies Seminary in Benicia.

Willard's Hotel in Benicia, operated by Joshua Willard, was the first hotel from the steamship landing. There was also a restaurant attached to this hotel.

A coach convey passengers from the landing free of charge and a city coach took passengers to any part of the city for 50 cents.

Benicia's F.P. Weinman, who operated the famed Solano House, was now also in possession of the American Hotel. The latter he had up for sale or lease.

Col. R.A. Wainwright had just been appointed as command at the Benicia Barracks. Bids were being taken to supply the barracks with wood, hay and barley.

The contract for supplying beef for a year was awarded to James. M. Lemon of Suisun Valley at a rate of 10 3/4 cents per pound.

Col. Selfridge, who had been much criticized, was removed from his command at Mare Island and Col. Wainwright was appointed in his place.

Shortly after this announcement, Congress appropriated \$75,000 for a marine hospital.

By 1863, the King's Hotel had been erected at Maine Prairie.

Out in the same direction, Dr. Toland was successfully raising 1,600 sheep just above Rio Vista. Hay cut in the same area made up several cargoes that were shipped to

market. At the time, hay was selling for \$15 to \$20 per ton.

In Collinsville, Upham's cattle slaughterhouse business was cut into when the building burned down.

Peter Turrallo, a marsh land owner near Collinsville, hired Charles Monroe a.k.a. Charles Ward to help him in "ditching."

Monroe's eye caught sight of \$500 Turrallo had in coin in the house. Monroe disappeared with the money.

Turrallo made a trip to San Francisco and found him.

Monroe confessed to the crime, but by then he had spent all the money. Turrallo brought him back to Solano to stand trial.

In Rockville, Gilmore & Simonton, likely owners of a general store, were carrying the almanac.

The fields near the Suisun Creek in the Suisun Valley were planted in barley that year. This was an example of "rotary" farming. The year before corn and tobacco had been planted in these fields.

The first figs came out were retailing in San Francisco at 25 cents apiece.

There were 190 students at the Pacific Methodist College in Vacaville. Of these, 118 were male and 72 female.

There were 110 boarding as many came from out of town and out of the county. Of the total 190 students, 109 were from Solano County.

The Rev. W.T. Lucky, was president of the college and professor of Moral and Intellectual Science. Charles Smyth was the mathematics professor. Samuel B. Morse, the languages professor. Miss E. A. Stevenson was in charge of the Primary School. Miss S.M.E. Goddard taught piano and French. And Charles G. Brunelius taught music.

A well-broke pair of mules stood in front of E.F. Gillespie's. These 5-year-olds, which were a good size for teaming, were being sold by E.F.'s brother, George A. Gillespie.

The acquisition of a fire bell for Suisun City did not run as smoothly.

The "Battle of the Bell" began in 1863. No one could agree on the right bell and "discussions" turned into heated debates.

Finally a bell was agreed on, but when the brass bell arrived, the Fire Bell Committee Ballard, warehouse owner, Dinkelspiel, general store owner and McGarvy) was thoroughly displeased. Suisun City history buffs say it was considered too small and was passed on to the school.

The hunt for the appropriate bell continued.

After several more months of bickering, the Fire Bell Committee found a bell all could agree on. And it was only \$79. All were elated. It was made in 1862 and located in Sinica Falls, N.Y.

Fearing that its massive weight, 450 pounds, would make it too difficult to transfer by land, it was shipped via the Horn.

Thus the great bargain didn't cross over into the shipping costs. It cost a total of \$247 to bring the cast iron fire bell to Suisun.

In 1864, the Fire Co.'s Bell Committee was set to build a bell tower to the tune of \$400. It was noted that if this bell tower ended up being attached to the fire house, the building costs would be cut in half.

The committee was instructed to build the tower on top of the building. Within a few months, the bell tower on the firehouse was rapidly approaching completion.

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