

Solano celebrates post-Civil War era in 1865

By Kristin Delaplane

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The following are newspaper accounts that appeared from January through May 1865 and giving an indication of life at that time. Solano County had a population of 8,000 to 10,000 people and ranked seventh in the state as measured by their wealth.

New Year's Eve 1864 in Suisun City was observed with a social gathering at the Pacific House, which included an ample supper and dance.

"Conspicuous among the oldsters were three or four old maids in limp dresses, powdered hair and spectacles beneath their caps, who helped to dance the old year out."

At midnight the fire bell was rung and rockets were set off.

Tom Roberts reoccupied the restaurant opposite the Herald office and owned the Roberts Hotel.

Dr. Coffran notified the public that he added dental work to his skills. He offered fillings in gold, silver and cement.

Dr. J.L. Cogswell, a traveling dentist in San Francisco, was offering his services for a time from the Pacific House.

Newly arrived, S.D. Campbell, physician and surgeon, set up a practice over Stockmon Bros. drugstore. Shortly after his arrival, the doctor suffered a sprained ankle falling from his horse while making a house call to a patient in Green Valley.

The Solano Street church had its floor carpeted, seats cushioned and the parishioners raised enough money to purchase a melodeon.

At the residence of Hiram Rush in Potrero Hills, Martin J. Copeland was married to Sarah J. Lang. A few days later, J. Lang and M.J. Copeland were involved in a fight and Copeland was arrested and bail set at \$1,000.

The town's pride was a new schoolhouse located on the north side of Morgan Street and run by A.L. White. Mr. Hatch, newly arrived from the East, was the teacher.

The story-and-a-half building was 40 by 26 feet. The main room was capable of seating 70 students, but only had 30 desks to start. The Herald reported it was eight desks brought in on the Princess steamship and they were double desks so they would accommodate 16 students.

A place over the door was left for painting the inscription "Suisun District School No. 5." The outside was painted cinnamon brown, the inside stained and varnished, and the main door was oak. Scholars in the district would be charged a \$1 a month and those outside the limits, \$3 a month. Stockmon Bros. was selling the speller and arithmetic schoolbooks.

The Princess steamboat was finally replaced by the larger Paul Pry.

The stage run by M. Cutler from Suisun City to the Knoxville quicksilver mines went by way of Gordon Valley, Big Canon, Crowley's Sulphur Spring House and Berryessa Valley.

David E. Stockmon died while in Napa in April at age 32. He was born in New York in 1833, and came to Suisun from Ohio in 1856 at the age of 23. When he died he left his two brothers and a sister living in Suisun as well as a wife and two children. His brother-in-law's name was J.H. Marsten.

Stockmon was one of the founders of the Engine Company and the Light Dragoons. His coffin was crowned with wreaths of pale roses and green leaves and flags were flown at half-staff. His funeral was thought to have drawn the largest attendance of any ever held in the county.

William J. Morris, a saddler and harness shop owner, was trying to lease the building occupied by him.

Lewis Pierce had plans to add another addition to his extensive warehouse and removed the second story of the brick building fronting Cordelia Street. His bulkhead at the wharf was repaired. He also was contemplating constructing a large hay barn near the "China City" south of the branch slough.

The partnership between Ballard and Hilborn was dissolved. Duane Ballard opened a commission warehouse on Davis Street in San Francisco. E.P. Hilborn expanded by dredging the slough in front of his warehouse wharf.

R.D. Robbins, located at Hilborn's Wharf, was dealing in redwood and pine lumber, fencing, posts, doors, windows, blinds, lime, cement, laths, hair, brick, etc.

The post office was located on Main Street near Sacramento Street. William A. Ames, who had been located in the Pacific House, moved his barbershop, "a shaving and hairdressing salon," to the Hemsath Block next to the post office. A shave, cut and shampoo was 75 cents. Ames was so successful in this new location that he had to employ another barber.

William Losh had the post office in his stationery store. He carried letter paper, bill and legal cap, envelopes, pens, penholders, pencils, ink. He advertised "quick sales and small profits."

Photographers Spoul and Sanders set up their gallery on the plaza.

Harvey Rice & Co. ran the Suisun Meat Co. Cal's Meat Market opened and started to advertise.

The Suisun Water Works was established in 1858 with J.C. Owen and Robert B. Cannon (and possibly V. Wilson) were partners in this business. In 1865, J.C. Owen's interest was sold at public auction to satisfy a judgment in the case of Yates vs. Owen. John A. Peyton, Owen's partner in Washington Meat Market, purchased the Water Works for \$3,600.

On Washington's Birthday, a parade by Capt. W.W. Allen's Suisun Light Dragoons was canceled due to the condition of the streets from recent rains. However, the company's military ball was a success. Tickets were \$2.50 and 45 tickets were sold.

J.B. Richardson took over E.D. Perkins' notions shop and was advertising a new assortment of tobacco brands. He carried snuff, tobacco, cigars, nuts fruits, vegetables, confectionery and coal oil. He was located on Main Street, one door south of the Pacific House.

A diamond breast pin was found at P.J. Chrisler's notion store.

Undertaker and coffin maker A.F. Knorp became the proprietor of the Cosmopolitan Saloon located at Main and Solano streets. French carom tables and pocket tables made it one of the best billiard saloons in the state. Knorp fitted up an icehouse and offered iced drinks and could supply families and invalids with ice during the warm season.

Spaulding and White purchased the old post office building and fitted up the lower story of the billiard saloon and bar.

In February, H. Hubbard and Co. sold the Solano Press to Woodford Owens and

James M. Brower, a justice of peace and conveyancer.

Lisle Lester, editor of the Pacific Monthly, came to town to give dramatic readings. Tickets were 50 cents. The Suisun Library Association was formed with 20 men and one boy.

Hunting season was on and Joel Price bagged a goose weighing 12 to 16 3/4 pounds between Suisun and Denverton. It measured 4 feet, 7 inches from bill to tail and 7 feet, 9 inches from wing tip to wing tip. It was the largest goose ever killed in this area.

The game law was in affect from March to September. The restriction applied to quail, duck, elk, deer and antelope. The fine for hunting these animals was \$25.

Mynheer Hanson was sailing the Nellie Gray when it capsized, dumping everyone on board into the slough. Mr. Wheeler of Grizzly Island, who was sailing the Fanny, rescued everyone.

The law firm G.W. McMurty and J.S Hail was located in Wheaton's building.

Mrs. Pearce sold millinery and fancy goods. This included new and fashionable goods, dress trimmings, infant clothing, toys, perfume, soaps, brushes, stationery, pens and ink.

The May Day Ball was at the Union Hall. Tickets were \$1.50.

Livery man W.J. Morris built a commodious livery and feed stable on the east side of the Plaza and called it The Golden Eagle.

The Cooke, Zoyara and Wilson's Grand Combination Circus of New York came to town. It included equestrians, an acrobatic troupe, performing dogs, monkeys and ponies. Admission was \$1.

A vocal and instrumental concert in Fairfield was given to raise money to purchase a melodeon for the Brick Church. The M.E. Church's Rev. W.S. Urmy wrote the following for the paper:

"Mr. Editor, Allow me through your paper to inform the public that Dr. W. Jacobs and Mr. John Woolaver are authorized to collect and receive rents due for pews in the M.E. Church in Fairfield. We thank those who have paid rentage and we would respectfully all to be as prompt as possible in this matter."

The courthouse walls were whitened, the woodwork repainted and carpets laid out.

Attorney P.T. Gomer's office was located in the courthouse and the law firm of W.S. Wells and L.C. Hays had an office in the old courthouse.

The public school charged \$2 per month for less than a whole term and \$1.75 for a whole term. The school was under the supervision of Sarah R. Pearson. It was considered a comfortable school with a playground attached.

Charley Webster took over the Union Hotel in Fairfield. J.G. Allison, previous owner of the Union Hotel (aka Allison's Hotel), was going to give a May Day Ball and supper at the Planter's House.

Thomas Fogarty was arrested for drinking and fighting. When released, he got in another fight. Both parties were arrested near Holsheuer's saloon.

While the officer was getting a statement from a witness, Fogarty got on a horse to escape. Sheriff Gillespie mounted a horse and went after the man. He did not overtake him until they were well past the cemetery on the Vacaville road. When he collared Fogarty, the man struck him and Gillespie lost his grip.

Gillespie drew his revolver, but Fogarty only responded with a vulgar remark and tried to flee on foot. Gillespie shot him in the back, not seriously wounding the man, but stopping him.

County treasurer John Ferrell was charged with embezzlement of public funds. There was a burglary and theft at the treasurer's office where there had been \$7,900 in the safe, mainly in \$20 gold pieces. The robbers took a total of \$7,634, all in gold.

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