

Newspapers tell varied tales of Solano County

By Kristin Delaplane

Sunday, December 21, 1997

The following are news items of interest from various areas of Solano County as reported in 1865.

Six miles east of Suisun City, Mrs. D.H. Fitzpatrick was selling her 160-acre ranch, which had been homesteaded in 1857. The price was \$2,000.

Mr. Hubbard and two other men were hired by Mrs. Fitzpatrick to slaughter some of her hogs. Somehow they slaughtered hogs belonging to Swan and Carpenter instead.

In Fairfield, English gypsies, a man and wife and four children, camped near the old courthouse and were making a living telling fortunes. They had a two-horse wagon and a tent as their accommodation.

Benicia

The Mining Press of San Francisco published Professor Laznweert's report concerning the cement quarry near Benicia. A series of experiments made by the professor determined that there was a sufficient supply of cement stone in the quarry to meet the demand of the entire Pacific Coast for a long time.

This cement, being a true Roman cement, was of better quality than the product imported from the East. It was of particular value for use in foundations that were laid in damp, moist soils; superior to brick and nearly equal to the best stone.

In February, Alfred L. Stiles took charge of the telegraph office when Mr. Nurse resigned.

There was a fire at 3 in the morning in a whiskey shop kept by Mrs. Hannah Shannehan near the barracks. The building and its occupant were burned.

A portion of Mrs. Shannehan's remaining skull revealed it was broken, but it was damaged so badly from the fire it could not be determined if she had been murdered before the building was set on fire.

The public school was held in the old State Capitol building. The schoolroom was furnished with a piano, a large globe and abacuses and maps.

Miss Atkins of the Female Seminary had returned from her tour of the Sandwich Islands and the Orient.

There was a fire in Sawyer's building. It was unoccupied. The blaze spread to a hay house just on the left as one went off the steamboat wharf.

L.B. Mizner resumed his practice at the corner of 1st and D streets.

The American Hotel was being run by Louis Glassen. The hotel had been entirely renovated and was suitable for families and single people. A restaurant and bar was attached.

The "Sociables" held a dance every Friday evening and was one of the main social attractions in the town.

Cordelia/Bridgeport

A March ball was planned by Mrs. C.J. Pittman at the Bridgeport House in Cordelia. Admission was \$2.

Silveyville

E.F. Silvey was having a grand ball in Silveyville for July Fourth. The committee was formed of persons representing Suisun, Vacaville, Tremont, Maine Landing, Rio Vista, Fairfield and Buckeye.

There was a large land sale when Matthew Wolfskill decided to sell his ranch on the Putah comprising of 800 acres. The sale price was \$36,000.

Rockville/Suisun Valley/Green Valley

The annual May Day picnic in Suisun Valley for the students of the Breckinridge Church in Suisun and the Rockville Sabbath schools was near D.J. Clayton's in the valley.

F.B. Gilmore was seriously injured when he was thrown from a wagon.

The ladies and gentlemen of "mature years," along with their families and friends, took an excursion to the Dingley's Mill. The company numbered 125 or 150, and they spent the day rambling up and down the hills. The table was spread with meats and other good foods

The house covering the famed wine cellar of John Votypka in Green Valley, together

with the wine press and other winemaking apparatus was burned. The damage was estimated at \$500.

Vallejo

Col. Knitzing arrived at Mare Island and was named the new commander of the Marine Barracks there. Surgeon John A. Lockwood was assigned to duty at Mare Island.

There was a notice that John Maquire and William H. Nugent were applying to run a ferry between Vallejo and Mare Island.

The Good Templers of Solano May Day picnic was held at Oak Grove near Suscol. The marine band of Mare Island was there to provide music to accompany the festivities and dancing couples.

The steamer Louise was launched. She was 90 by 26 and had a capacity of 80 tons. She was scheduled to carry passengers and cargo between Vallejo and San Francisco.

S.G. Hilborn was an attorney in Vallejo. C.W. Riley was the justice of peace and notary public.

William H. Seaholtz was the agent for the Dashaway washing and wringing machine.

Vacaville

On May 5, there was a fire at the college in Vacaville, which entirely destroyed that building and seriously endangered the boardinghouse nearby.

By application of wet blankets, the boardinghouse was saved. The loss was estimated at \$10,000.

The immediate presumption was that the fire was caused by an arsonist.

A meeting of the town folks was called and it was resolved to begin rebuilding as soon as possible. They received \$2,117.50 at the meeting as a start. Collinsville

In March, there was a notice of new ferry service between Antioch and Collinsville. The steamboat ferry was named Antioch, and it was run by Capt. Turner.

Miner's Slough

A corner's inquest was held by Justice Blakeslee for the drowned body of David L.

Rogers.

It was determined to be an accidental drowning.

Rogers was 5 feet, 5 inches. He was wearing a brown sack coat, black vest, stripped pants, a woolen checked shirt, undershirt, a white rubber coat, tan calfskin boots with brass plates on the heels and a black necktie.

In his pocket was a buckskin "porte monie" containing money.

Additionally, there were several letters addressed to Rogers from a F. White, a four-bladed Rogers knife with a buckhorn handle, a receipt for 21 copies of the Weekly Union and a note for \$32.38.

Rio Vista

John Kelley and Joseph Hale were arrested on a charge of stealing \$810 from John Overand, a resident of Miner's Slough.

Kelley was the one who actually stole the money. He buried it and went to Rio Vista, where he talked Hale into helping him recover the money.

They persuaded Henry Hunter to take a boat up to Miner's Slough for that purpose.

Hunter, knowing Kelley had no money of his own and aware of the Overand loss, informed the local justice.

The men were arrested immediately when they returned to Rio Vista and taken to the jail in Fairfield.

When tried, John Kelley was found guilty of grand larceny and sentenced to five years in the state prison.

Montezuma Hills

From Williamson's ranch in Montezuma to two bay mares were stolen or strayed and whoever had word of them was asked to leave word at Williamson's brick store in Fairfield.

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Creightons make mark on Vacaville and Elmira
Information for this article came from The Reporter (1883).

The old timer, D. Creighton, who had been a Vacaville area resident for over 20 years, was 71 years old in 1883 and was selling his ranch so he could move into town.

Twenty years before, he had landed in San Francisco with \$1.50 in his pocket. He had forced to relinquish half of this for bed and breakfast that first day.

He immediately made his way to Vacaville and, liking the area, he settled there. During those 20 years, he kept a diary of every event that transpired in the vicinity.

Unable to immediately sell the ranch, Creighton leased the fruit orchard for one year to John Merchant. A while later, he and Mrs. Creighton were surprised with a party at their residence. In attendance were their 21 grandchildren.

Out in Elmira, S.G. Creighton was the principal and teacher of the local school. He also had a drug store enterprise with partner John F. Griffin. They sold fresh oysters and fish every Thursday.

They sold ice in quantity at one cent per pound, candies, nuts, cigars, tobacco, stationery, pens, inks, pencils and lemonade. They also wrote insurance policies on crops. The post office was moved to the partners' place of business.

As the year progressed, Creighton was forced to give up his interest in the business. A number of citizens had expressed their misgivings at his involvement, while at the same time holding the position of principal.

Griffin not only carried on with the business, but also expanded to loaning money on grain to the local farmers. He also had plans to start a bakery business.

Meanwhile, S.G. Creighton displayed his devotion to his chosen path, when upon missing his train to attend the county's Board of Education meeting by striking out on foot for his destination. He made it to the Fairfield-Suisun area in time for the meeting.

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