

## **Solano locale for business, hectic activity**

**By Kristin Delaplane**

Sunday, December 28, 1997

The clerk from the steamer Julia married Grace Woodbridge, daughter of the Rev. Woodbridge. To honor the groom's vocation, an anchor made of flowers was suspended from the ceiling of the Benicia church.

Sometimes the thieves prevailed in Benicia. The jewelry store of William B. Nurse was robbed of about \$50 worth of goods. Max Burkardt's restaurant suffered a small loss when robbed. A soldier was drugged at one of the whiskey mills (bottle shops that lined the hill) and robbed of \$100.

Another member of the Nurse family suffered a loss, but by fire. D.N. Hastings was offering a reward of \$250 for the naming of and conviction of the responsible person for setting fire to his house in the Sulphur Spring Valley.

There was a fight between two soldiers at the barracks in Benicia and an assistant at the hospital attempted to quiet them. One of the soldiers, Smith, fired at the assistant. Smith fled and was pursued by Sgt. Leach and two other men. When they were near the Catholic Church, Smith fired and hit Leach in the nose, the ball lodging in his throat. The wound proved fatal. Smith escaped and was last seen in Green Valley when he begged a meal McCary's (probably McCreary).

By the end of the year, the 2nd U.S. Artillery was ordered to the Presidio and the Benicia Barracks was to be closed.

In Vallejo, E. McGettigan purchased the interest of his partner in a successful soda and sarsaparilla business. McGettigan was selling his product to many of the bars, saloons and hotels. August Holoshur's (a.k.a. Holsheur's) lager beer depot in Fairfield was one of those carrying his product.

The army worm had destroyed a good deal of the grain between Napa and Vallejo; nevertheless, there would be an abundance of barley, an above average supply of wheat, and it was forecast that hay would bring in about 2 cents a pound.

A great deal of attention was paid to Calistoga, but many felt Solano County offered better resorts as regards scenery, climate and accessibility to the larger cities. The White Sulphur Springs, three miles from Vallejo, was considered better from a medicinal point of view and, as a place for the hot days of summer, far superior to any. The Suisun

Soda Springs in Tolenas were considered fully equal to Calistoga's.

Dr. W.H. Stanley, a dentist, was traveling to the Pacific House in Suisun on Wednesdays and Thursdays to accommodate the citizens there. Dr. Brewer of San Francisco was also practicing dentistry at the Pacific House.

One of the celebrated Button Engines was purchased by the Vallejo Fire Department.

About "300,000 plus a million" mosquitoes favored the town of Suisun during the season.

On a Sunday, a stranger boarded the schooner Mary Elizabeth at Hilborn's Wharf and took articles of clothing, estimated to be valued at \$60. Office Loomis overtook the thief two miles from town.

Warehouse and shipping entrepreneur E.P. Hilborn was busy repairing his wharf, laying down new plank, fixing up sections of the warehouse and having portions of the slough dredged to better accommodate shipping craft.

His competitor, Lewis Piece, built a new wharf connecting the steamboat wharf with the one south of the warehouses. He had the slough in his area dredged, one of the old warehouses moved and other changes that not only improved the looks of that portion of the wharf, but also provided ample wharf for the increasing shipping concerns.

At Pierce's warehouse, they did not store the grain sacks tightly one on top of the other. Instead they kept them separated with the sacks open and all the windows and doors open. This was done to give the grain a chance to dry, as farmers in their haste to make a profit, often cut the grain before it was ripe. The result was that a good portion of it could spoil if not stored properly.

The Knoxville Quicksilver Co. had proved to be a successful enterprise and was continuously shipping its product from Suisun.

The Golden Eagle, William J. Morris' new livery stable, was located on the east side of the plaza and deemed quite a handsome building.

E.D. Perkins was fitting up Reeves brick building on the corner of Main and Solano streets in Suisun for a grocery store. Previously Perkins had a tobacco stand with an assortment of nuts, fruit, vegetables and confectionery. This he sold to J.B. Richardson.

Barber William A. Ames moved from the post office block to the room formerly occupied by J.B. Richardson. Ames invented a new hair dye to cover gray hair. Shortly after this

success, his 28-year-old wife, Harriet Emma, died.

A.A. Bulard opened a new jewelry store in the post office and had a large selection of clocks, watches spectacles and jewelry. Those interested in this type of merchandise were told that Bulard's prices were a third below those of the traveling peddlers.

Undertaker and saloon proprietor, A.F. Knorp, was advertising that he could now supply Barstow's burial caskets, engraved if desired. All too soon, Knorp had to make use of his services when Albert F. and Margaret Knorp's baby girl, 11 months old, died, and shortly after their 2-year-old daughter also died. Only months later Knorp decided to quit the saloon business and was selling the Cosmopolitan Saloon.

E.F. Gillespie's 5-month-old son, Edgar C., also died.

The Suisun Light Dragoons were giving a Fourth of July ball at their armory. Tickets were \$2. Supper was an extra cost.

One evening an altercation occurred between W.G. Davison and B.F. Payton in front of Knorp's saloon. Payton drew a knife, inflicting a minor wound.

The entire A.L. Chapman family, who lived four miles outside of town, was seized with illness shortly after breakfast. It was thought they had been poisoned, but happily it was only due to a heavy hand with the cream of tartar in the biscuits.

Two men attempted to rob Harvey Rice's butcher shop. They made off with a large safe at 2 in the morning, dragging it across the rocky street. A.L. White heard the commotion and gave an alarm causing the robbers to flee. They left the safe about half a block from the butcher store along with the tools with which they presumably were going to crack the safe.

Daniel E. Sheets was the local gunsmith. He repaired guns, pistols, locks and was located in a room adjoining Lemon's butcher shop, (probably named Cal's Meat Market). During the later part of the year, the building occupied by Lemon and Kohn as a meat market and the one adjoining were purchased by several citizens. The buildings were removed, which made for opening of Solano Street to the wharf.

P.J. Chrisler sold out his newspaper and fruits and nuts store to J.H. Roberts. Roberts put the establishment in the hands of G.W. Lynch. William Losh, postmaster, moved the post office and telegraph office to Robert's news depot.

At Capt. Owen's saddler's shop a handsome set of harnesses was made by the craftsman John Reardon.

D.T. Truitt set up a photography gallery over McGarvey's tin shop in Suisun. He also was prepared to repair sewing machines.

Apparently, Truitt had suffered setbacks in establishing schools. In 1863, the newly opened Suisun High School was run with Truitt. In 1864, he started another school in the building formally occupied by Knorp's furniture store.

Apparently, he was not successful with his photo gallery as in a few months Fliggle's Picture Room opened over McGarvey's tin shop.

Thomas J. McGarvey, who had been a resident for the past eight years or more, left for New York. Although not a particular favorite with all the citizens, his departure was regretted by many. McGarvey had a two-story building known as McGarvey's building. Here he had carried on a business in tinware, carrying stoves, lead pipe and pumps. At one time attorney G.W. McMurtry had his office upstairs. Photographer Deloss Welch set up rooms in McGarvey's. This was followed by Truitt's enterprise and then Fliggle's.

Probably McGarvey's lack of popularity occurred in 1864 when he offered to lease a right-of-way for the Union Fire Engine Co. for them to more easily reach their building. Many took the stand that it wasn't his land, but public property and likely this led to a dispute.

A short time later, J.E. Fliggle purchased the old Eagle Hotel on Main Street and Woolaver was charged with fitting part of the upstairs as a photo gallery and part of the lower story for a produce market to be occupied by Anderson Bros. The rest of the lower story and part of the upper story was to be fitted up for Mr. Deline, a "plain and ornamental" housepainter, as his shop and residence. The Eagle Hotel had a varied history. At one time it was a Chinese brothel. In 1863, it was up for lease and in 1864, John Doughtry offered to rent it as either a residence or place of business.

Thanksgiving there was a ball at the Union Hall.

There was a meeting of the blacksmiths of Suisun and vicinity and they unanimously agreed that from January 1866 on no work would be performed except for ready pay and on a cash-only basis. A schedule of reduced prices was to be posted in each shop.

The president of this newly formed alliance was Lewis Storey and the secretary was John B. Shields. Wagonmaker and blacksmith Shields had been in business at least since 1863, when he formed a partnership with John Higgins. Shields & Higgins did everything from shoeing a horse to building and painting carriages. Wright & Henry were also still actively in business as blacksmiths and wagon makers.

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