

## **Solano's citizens full of vigor in 1870**

**By Kristin Delaplane**

Sunday, September 13, 1998

In 1870, Solano County was the eighth county in the state in regard to population. Powers and George A. Gillespie were operating the Weekly Solano Republican newspaper, which was published in Suisun City. George's brother, E.F. Gillespie, was the justice of peace. His office was in the railroad station in Fairfield.

### **Vacaville**

In the Vacaville area, attorney John Huckins was still practicing law from his Pleasants Valley ranch.

Charles H. Steven and his son were driving some hogs across the bridge at Ulatis Creek in Vacaville when the structure gave way and all plunged into the creek, some 12 feet. The two men and their horses escaped without injury and all the pigs as well, save one.

Parties were prospecting for coal in the hills west of Pleasants Valley where isolated chunks of coal had been discovered in ravines.

Henry Eversole was the town's undertaker and he had representatives in nearby towns; M. Carpenter in Silveyville, J. Smith at Dixon, J.A. Collier at Vaca Station

### **Elmira**

There was a Sunday school convention at the Vaca Station (Elmira).

### **Collinsville**

The busy Collinsville Wharf and Hotel was still operated by Thomas P. Hooper. Part of the operation included Hooper's Store, a country store with groceries, hardware and liquor and where local produce was bought and sold.

The hotel featured a restaurant, where patrons were generally passengers for the Antioch ferry. The ferry, which left daily, provided accommodations for horses, pigs, cattle, and sheep. Hooper's operation was first mentioned in the newspaper in 1866, when he leased the property, made repairs to the wharf and set up his store and hotel.

### Vallejo

John H. Lee was still the proprietor of the Metropolitan Hotel in Vallejo. It was the largest hotel in town with 35 rooms.

A main feature was the accommodation of spring mattresses.

Lee had been the proprietor as far back as 1863 when it was noted that he would be adding another story to the north wing.

In 1867, when the Ensley Gas Co. began laying pipes for the town, Lee was at odds with the service being installed and shot M.P. Young after the two quarreled in regard to fitting up the Metropolitan Hotel with gas. Young died as a result of his injuries. Lee was arrested on \$2,000 bail, but apparently was released.

The Capitol Hotel on Virginia and Brancifort streets was another notable hotel in town. William Likins had been the proprietor since at least 1868. The hotel was located within two minutes of the steamboat and ferry landing. Patrons took rooms by the day or week. Accommodations included room and board and there was also a bar on the premises.

The Vallejo Coal Mining Co. was formed and was to begin mining on the Suscol Ranch. The principal place of business for the company was in Benicia.

Three orphaned children were admitted to the Grand Templar's Home.

John Brownlie, an early pioneer of Vallejo, shipped half a ton of Monterey and Humbolt potatoes to his father in Scotland to be used for seed.

### Dixon

Nearly all the business that had been in the village of Silveyville had been moved to Dixon. The Suisun City dry goods store, J. Frank & Co., closed its Silveyville store.

John Frederickson was selling lumber at the Dixon Station.

There was a fight at Winkelman's Saloon between two local Germans, Karstenes and Stollensbaugh. Someone proposed shaking dice for drinks and the two friends stepped to the bar.

Stollensbaugh said to Karstenes, "Why are you blowing all the time about fighting? You can't fight. I can whip you."

Karstenes said he would fight him and the two men stepped outside. As they were scuffling, Karstenes stabbed Stollensbaugh. Stollensbaugh was in critical condition, the knife having grazed his heart.

### Suisun City

The popular Oriole Saloon was at the corner of Main and Solano streets.

On the steamer Paul Pry, Billy Towns was in charge of the dining saloon. Meals were 50 cents. By the fall the steamer Amelia took the place of the Paul Pry on the Suisun, Martinez and San Francisco run, departing from Suisun three days a week.

John M. Voorhamme, located on the south side of the plaza, was a carpenter and cabinetmaker and scroll sawer. In the fall, Voorhamme's sawing and turning shop was engulfed by fire. The fire spread to Capt. Johnson's outhouses, pig pens, barn and stable, taking his winter's supply of hay.

R.D. Robbins still operated a lumber company.

Household furniture and bedding, dishware, clothing and groceries were carried by J. Frank & Co on Main Street. All goods purchased by residents of Suisun and Fairfield were delivered without charge.

T.H. White & Co. were dealers in paints, oils and glassware. They carried brushes, varnishing goods, paper hanging, stoves and pumps. They were in Jacobs' building on Main Street, west of the plaza.

Frank A. Recner opened the Pioneer Suisun Barber & Hairdressing Saloon upstairs in White's building. This was located over his old shop. In 1866, Recner located in McGarvey's building upstairs, but then moved to the lower story of T.H. White's brick building.

Also upstairs in White's building, Dr. A.T. Miller set up a practice.

A new saddler and harness making shop was open by S.J. Perry in White's building.

Samarit Wilson opened the Mammoth Livery Stable W.T. Kennedy carried a large assortment of hunters' goods in his store. Kennedy had the entrepreneur spirit. In 1866, he was operating a saloon at the old corner of Main and California. He had converted his Confectioner and Fruit Store, which was at the same location in 1858. In 1863, the News Depot run by E.D. Wheeler was located in Kennedy's store. In 1866, in addition to the saloon business, Kennedy was selling violins, violin and guitar strings

and accordions. He also had cutlery, toys, canned oysters, pipes and tobacco, shot.

D. Sheets was a gunsmith in Owen's building on the corner of Main and Sacramento streets. He also repaired locks of all sorts.

F.O. Staples' shotgun, which had been stolen in a robbery at Piece's Cafe the year before, was found at the bottom of an old well between Suisun and Denverton.

A train hit and killed two cows belonging to the ranching partners Staples and Cannon. Their ranch five miles north of town.

The Pioneer Meat Market was now operating in Suisun on the west side of town.

J.D. Brower had the picture gallery on Main Street up for rent.

A homeless stranger was discovered in the rear of D.M. Stockmon's residence. The man had built a fire and made preparations to settle in for the night when he was discovered and carted off to jail, his new overnight lodgings.

There were a couple of Thanksgiving balls scheduled. T.H. Morton of Morton's Hotel in Fairfield gave one the night before Thanksgiving. The Old Vallejo Quadrille Band was engaged for the occasion. The Suisun Musical Society was holding the other ball at the Union Hall Thanksgiving night.

Wright and Henry were still the owners of the Union Hall. They changed the entrance and built a stage and provided comfortable dressing rooms.

Preparations were underway for Christmas festivals. One was to be in Suisun at the Solano Street Church, the other in Fairfield in the new schoolhouse.

John Barber died in Suisun Valley at 53. In 1856, peaches were in abundant supply and wagon loads were being sent to Benicia from the Barber ranch. Fairfield

The Fairfield schoolhouse was just being completed.

A "colored" minister from Oregon preached a sermon at the Fairfield Church to a large audience.

There were 12 prisoners in jail and there was some hue and cry about the cost of their clothing. They board of supervisors were presented with a bill \$270.90 for clothing them in a few months.

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