

June Was a Hot Month - More to Come

By John Rico

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THERE ARE FIGURES AND MORE FIGURES - Everyone talks about the weather but no one can do anything about it. That's what has happened here in the month of June. The weather during the past 30 days has drawn about as much front page publicity as did the economic situation across the nation.

There have been statements issued that June may have been the month which broke all previous records, but that's probably not true.

What may be true is the statement that the June hot spell did break all recorded temperature records. Those records go back about 130 years. But who knows just what kind of weather prevailed here in June 200 years ago; or a million years ago; or a hundred million years ago?

Judging from the landscape here and the rock formations in some spots, there was a time in our early history when it really got hot here. The massive rock formations on Old Rocky, just north of town, are proof that far back those rocks came from a very hotspot.

Published records reveal that although June, July and August are the warmest three months of the year here, a mean average for the entire year gives the Vacaville area a comfortable 60 degrees.

Past records do show that June historically is not an exceptionally hot month here. That honor goes to July and August. But in 1981, our weather pattern has been thrown into a quandary, with the 11 days of June weather which hit 100 degrees and over, being topped by the 109 high mark of June 18.

Although 109-degree weather is a bit uncomfortable, in our past there have been days which registered as high as 117.

Today, most people find hot weather rather uncomfortable because they depart an air-conditioned home, get into an airconditioned car, and drive off to their airconditioned place of employment.

Let's go back a few years to days when there were no air conditioners. Many people remember those long days of picking fruit in Vacaville orchards under a boiling sun, and there was no time off due to the unusually warm weather. The fruit was ripening fast

and it had to be harvested, or else sacrificed by letting the golden yellow apricots and peaches drop on the ground. What about the men working in the tomato fields; the women and children cutting apricots and peaches in sheds where an occasional breeze was the only air conditioning. And those pesky flies seemed to enjoy crawling over the juicy fruit and then take a walk on human bare arms and faces. Many were the cutting sheds which provided a bucket, filled with a damp sack, and when lighted the smoke had some effect keeping the flies on the run.

Only the more affluent families could afford an ice box, and accept regular delivery of a chunk of ice from the, Solano Soda and Ice Works. During the quiet early morning hours you could hear the drip, drip, drip of the melting ice. It sounded as though someone was pounding on the roof with a hammer.

The keeping of weather statistics throughout the years in Vacaville has been on a haphazard program. The late C. J. Uhl, Vacaville rancher, tabulated weather statistics here for nearly 30 years prior to his death in 1965. His son, Ed, continued to maintain the record for several years. The gauges were on the Uhl ranch, Just north of Albertson's Store.

The Vacaville Fire Department consented to continue the chore of tabulating local weather statistics, an the gauges were moved to a site near Fire Station No. 1 on Dobbins Street. It was soon found there were too many trees in the vicinity, hindering true readings on the rainfall and temperature gauges.

The latest move was to Station No. 2, commonly known as the Cooper School site, about three miles east of Vacaville. Open space nearby compiled with regulation of the U. S. Weather Bureau, and the gauges were installed there.

The equipment used to record temperatures is installed in a wood box, about 3 feet by 4 feet, and mounted about three feet off the ground. It sets in an area where there is no shade at any time of the day. The four sides of the "box" are louvered. Firemen check the thermometers at 5 p. m. daily and collect the readings.

Firemen at Station No. 2 are of the opinion the temperature in that location may be a trifle cooler than in other sections of the community. At 8:05 Monday forenoon the station had a reading of 69 degrees. At several downtown locations where business firms maintain time and temperature displays, the following readings were recorded on Monday morning: At 8:36, Heart Federal Savings, 65 degrees; at 8:38, Eureka Federal Savings, 73' degrees; and at 8:42, Sacramento Savings, 74 degrees.

All of the rainfall and temperature data gathered at Station No. 2 is forwarded to the National Climatic Center, NOAA, Environmental Data Service, Federal Building,

Asheville, North Carolina 28801. Interested persons may secure weather data by writing to this address.

When Dr. Warren Stitt published his findings on the climatic conditions of Vacaville and the beneficial effects on the human body, we are wondering if he had experienced the unusually hot weather of June, such as has antagonized Vacavillans for most of the month of June 1981.

Although Dr. Stitt made some boisterous statements concerning the beneficial points of warm weather on the human body, I would have to agree with him on warm weather, but I will also disagree that warm weather is the elixir for longevity.

Those of us who have resided here for many years fail to notice any appreciable improvement in our summer weather from year to year. Local weather is unpredictable; it has been that way for hundreds of years, and it will continue to be.

We must also admit that the weather "jumped the gun" in June 1981. Figures will show that historically June is not one of the hottest months of the year. As a youngster, I can well remember the curse of hot weather especially on the Fourth of July which mandated we all stay home and work in the fruit harvest. The Fourth of July celebrations could wait, but those ripening apricots could not.

If you area newcomer to Vacaville, and are told about our unusual June weather, you may need to believe that statement for this year, but keep in mind California could be translated into Italian meaning "hot oven."

And above all, summer has just started.

So go out and buy that bonnet; that suntan lotion; briefs; and check the air conditioning unit in your home. There's months ahead of more hot weather.

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