

We Need An Almanac to Reveal Name Sources

By John Rico

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THE ORIGIN OF NAMES - Have you often wondered, especially the many newcomers, how names of streets, parks, schools and places receive their names? Frankly, that's a good question, and one which is impossible to define.

I reside on Westwood Street, and do not have the vaguest idea as to why the name Westwood was chosen. The late Ralph Button, a fruit farmer, owned the property Which was subdivided into home lots. Perhaps the area is west of downtown, and the fact that there were some trees there gave birth to the word "wood", thus comes the name Westwood.

At one time I also resided on Peach Avenue. That name originated from the late Frank H. Buck's peach orchard from which the homesites were carved. Then I also resided on Vine Street, where there were no vines. The original dirt road was named for a pioneer settler, Vine, who had a small ranch along the road.

If you care to read over a conglomeration of street names in Vacaville, you can find them on maps which have been published. Many of the names originated from individuals, living or dead, who at one time or another resided here; other streets are names of designations which are difficult to comprehend.

Residents of Lover's Lane are fortunate to be associated with such an amorous designation, but I caution that this is one of the oldest streets in the community, and it earned the name because lovers actually parked their horses and buggies along the original dirt road, and "did their thing."

Vacaville's first park, known to the community as Andrews Park, became a reality many years ago when the Vacaville High School board of trustees abandoned the area in favor of its present Monte Vista Avenue site. The late Edward Cleveland Andrews, 81, bequeathed in his will the sum of \$2,500 for park purposes in Vacaville, and because of this gift the City Council honored his name. Some people would say that the late Andrews "bought" the park name, but those who knew him will agree his many contributions throughout 42 years on Main Street, qualified the designation. He was co-publisher of the Vacaville Reporter until his retirement in 1942. He died in Oakland in 1946.

There's the Edwin Markham School on Brown Street. The proper designation should

have been the Charles Edward Anson (Edwin) Markham School. Many residents here today, and practically all of the school students, will ask: "Who was Markham?"

Markham, as a boy, came to the Lagoon Valley area of rural Vacaville, and spent his childhood days there as a sheep and cattle herder. He received some of his schooling here, and departed the area in 1870. He followed the teaching profession and wrote poetry as a pastime, giving the school children of this nation "The Man With the Hoe."

Then there's the Willis Jepson School, honoring Vacaville native, the late Willis Linn Jepson. Born in the area of rural Jepson Road, east of Vacaville, he died in 1946. He became a professor at the University of California, and during his many years with that university distinguished himself with several books on the subject of botany. He was a charter member of the Sierra Club.

Vacaville's junior high school on Peabody Road, bears the name of Will C. Wood. Very few of the younger residents of the community know much about the background of Will Wood. He was a native of Elmira, born in the area in 1881, received his grade school education in Elmira and then became a graduate with the class of 1910 of Vaca High. He became a prominent statewide for his educational endeavors, and as a reward served as State Superintendent of Schools. He also served as State Superintendent of Banks. He died in 1939.

The Padan elementary school honors the late Eugene Hamilton Padan, 54, principal of the Vaca Valley Grammar School at the time of his death in July, 1944. A native of Butte County, Padan had been with the school system here for 21 years, coming here in 1923. With many men having served as principal of the local schools, residents today may be enlightened to know that Padan earned the honor bestowed him by the school trustees. His ability to communicate with children of the grade school level was the characteristic which gave him the popularity he had earned.

In providing the names to be honored, it can be said that most of the accolades are justified; some are not, but that is the way it has been and that is the method which will continue. In recent years giving out these awards to the living is proving more popular than the procedures followed in the past.

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