

# History Overlooked Some Vacaville Names

By John Rico

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**BITS OF NEWS ABOUT PEOPLE IN OUR PAST** - Quite often the unpublished quirks or idiosyncrasies of individuals in our past have escaped historians or news writers. It should be interesting to go back, pick out some of these people, and relate a few squibs which made these people a bit unique to their neighbors and friends.

Much has been written about the late Constable Joe Stadtfeld and his ability to protect himself with his flexible and forceful hands and arms, having been a prize-fighter. There has been very little mention of Mrs. Stadtfeld, who taught many long years at the Cooper School east of Vacaville, dispensing the primary fundamentals for future learning to hundreds of boys and girls. Constable Joe was injured in a farmer-laborer wage dispute in the early 1930's, from which he never recovered. His wife had preceded him in death, and having been an accomplished pianist the grand piano she used remained in the family's Davis Street home, gathering dust along with all of the other family possessions. In his declining years, when Stadtfeld lived alone, most of his food came from cans, and he easily disposed of the empty cans by tossing them into one room in the house.

Then there was Fred "Reco" Ream, cigar store owner and sportsman, whose gift of spinning tall tales brought laughter to many a Vacaville resident. Year in and year out, Fred Ream was the official score keeper in hundreds of athletic events. But, in his declining years, despondency took an upper hand, and Fred Ream took his own life with a gun blast.

And how about Undertaker Matt Stewart, jovial, pleasant and a "regular guy." He disposed of his funeral service here to put himself at ease, but his outer shell did not reflect his inner emotions. He too, took his own life with a gun blast.

Who will forget "Dynamite" Wells? He earned his nickname because he hired himself out to work with those dynamite sticks. It was not his unusual profession which sparked the prominence of his name, but it was his antics, such as sitting on the curb, taking off his shoes and socks, and enjoying the cold rain water as it flushed down the gutters.

If you lived in Vacaville and told someone you did not know Henry Schielke, you were an outcast. Gruff, rough Henry Schielke, local dray-man, fireman, special police officer and man around town, was known by his garb of blue jeans and wide suspenders. He took it upon himself to be a one-man rural fire department, stacking milk cans filled with

water into the back portion of his Studebaker touring car, and had a huge siren mounted on one fender, the sounds which could be heard day and night across the valleys. His mother, about 4 foot 8 in stature, was equally prominent around town, scurrying from her Parker Street home to various parts of community, wearing her apron.

And few people would ever put into a history book the name of Abe Beelard. Everyone in Vacaville knew Abe. He was one of the original members of the Vacaville Fire Department, and to earn a few dollars to support his family he operated an independent rubbish service. His equipment consisted of a team of horses, and the conventional farmer's hay wagon. He would haystack the rubbish on the wagon, stand erect, as he drove his team down Main Street, basking in as much glory as a parade marshal. Vacaville, businessmen, in those days stacked merchandise on the sidewalks, and as the wagon made its way down the street, almost in unison you could hear these merchants and clerks yell: "Hi, Abe."

It is hard to forget such a person as the late Frank Fadley. The product of a large German pioneer family, Frank worked as a rancher, nightwatchman and above all else, there was fire in his veins, because he was a fireman of the first caliber. He paid for this enthusiasm by being showered with burning gasoline on the night of April 11, 1941, when a storage tank exploded. He fought for his life during several excruciating months, burned to a point where they had to amputate some of his fingers. But he won the battle, and to the surprise of his fellow volunteer firemen, he again answered the fire alarms.

If you were unaccustomed to hearing four-letter words, you wanted to stay away from Dr. Warren Jenney. A chain cigar smoker, he minced no words when he wanted to give advice about your health. Whenever his services were needed, he asked no questions, saying only: "I'll be there," be it downtown or into the most remote rural areas. And when he cared for the sick, he made himself at home, staying to eat a meal, or grabbing whatever food he would see on the tables. He despised music in a room where there was a sick person, and as if by instinct he would turn off whatever musical gadget was blaring out those sounds.

Dr. M. P. Stansbury was a bit more reserved.

He ate his breakfasts downtown, and always ordered burned toast. A pal of his was Reporter co-publisher Edward Andrews. They looked alike, acted alike, and both had rooms in the same Buck Avenue home.

Mystery still surrounds the disappearance of Vacaville auto dealer R. C. Owen, who took off for San Francisco and was never heard from. In his years in Vacaville he was a

community leader, part-owner of the Owen-Marlor Ford Agency.

For \$60 a month, W.F. Hughes filled the chores of town marshal. In civilian clothes, and with one hand in his pocket at all times, most rowdies thought he had that hand on a gun. It was an injured hand.

From time to time, unusual persons come upon the scene. Such was the case of a man, short in stature, with red whiskers and red hair, who came to Vacaville from parts unknown. He took the name of Jesus. Being a pressman and an employee of the Vacaville Reporter, this Jesus spent much time up and down Main Street expounding his beliefs. Then, one day he suddenly disappeared, and many were the men and women along Main Street who missed this interesting character.

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