

Ninety Odd Years Ago

By Ernest D. Wichels

Sunday, November 01, 1964

Tuesday is election day. The shouting, the charges, and the counter-charges, will soon cease and a few persons will be asked to “eat crow.” Elections have, apparently, always been the same.

The following is quoted from the Vallejo Chronicle of Sunday, Sept. 10, 1871, following an election:

“Services will be held today in all churches. The elections are over and the feeling that has run high will all be alleviated by the sermons of the preachers. Let the sanctuaries be filled!”

We acknowledge, again, our appreciation of the help so ably given by Wood Young of Suisun Valley, Historical Society historian. But there are sometimes two sides to every story, and Wood’s clues this week have produced some interesting versions.

A FISH STORY

First, he found this item in the Solano Republican of March 11, 1875: “Fish Day. On Friday, March 5, 1875, a monster sturgeon weighing 188 pounds was hooked and hauled aboard the Dharwar at South Vallejo.”

There was, apparently, a fishing season for sturgeon in those days, and the editor of the Vallejo Chronicle was determined to protect the local folks, because this is what the Chronicle wrote:

“Yesterday a large sturgeon was left high and dry on the flats near Kimball’s Ways at South Vallejo by the ebb tide. Persons living nearby described the stranded fish as 7 feet long and nearly 200 pounds in weight.”

The ship Dharwar was an English sailing vessel loading wheat at the South Vallejo grain elevators—one of nearly 20 that loaded for Liverpool that year.

GREEN VALLEY PIONEER

The other item is likewise from the Solano Republican of April 29, 1875: “Granville P. Swift, who for six to eight years has resided in Green Valley, was killed while en route

to a quicksilver mine near Berryessa. He was riding a mule and both the mule and rider were precipitated down a very steep embankment. Mr. Swift's skull was crushed. His remains went to Green Valley for interment in the Rockville Cemetery. He was aged 54 years, 11 months. A native of Kentucky."

The Vallejo Chronicle enlarged considerably on this story on April 24, 1875:

"The intelligence has reached us of the sad death of Granville P. Swift of Green Valley last Tuesday. He came to this state in 1844. In early days he mined extensively in the Sacramento Valley and made a large sum of money. He afterwards moved to Sonoma County where he purchased a fine farm. There he was noted for the remarkable habit of 'burying his money in different spots on the ranch, and then frequently forgetting where he had deposited it. It is said that plowmen in turning over the soil would once in awhile turn up a forgotten deposit. He then joined the Washoe (Nev.) excitement and went over to that district and invested heavily in mines and mills. He lost a great deal—enough to impair his fortunes. After the Washoe experience he located in Green Valley where he resided until the day of his death. He leaves several children. The estate of the deceased is estimated to be worth about \$100,000."

As is true of other hundreds of Solano County pioneers, there is a record today of the family and the property of Granville P. Swift.

His property in 1875 is the site of the present Green Valley Country Club. The beautiful stone building which houses the country club dining room was built by a man named Harbin nearly 100 years ago. One of the early owners of the Green Valley property was Stiltz (grandfather of our efficient chief of police in Vallejo); later, W. P. Durbin owned part of it. Then he sold a portion to our subject today, Granville P. Swift. Here we enter current history. Granville Swift's sister, Polly, married another early pioneer, Fred Sidney Jones, who came to Green Valley in 1868. The Jones family, onetime operators of the largest cherry orchard in the world, have been leaders in the agricultural development of Green Valley for nearly a century.

Mr. and Mrs. F. Sidney Jones IV, from whom the Green Valley Country Club purchased its property, now live in a stately colonial home on the highway two miles south of the club. Their son, F. S. Jones V, resides in Suisun Valley; one of the latter's sons is named F. S. Jones VI. This is a great tradition; for Green Valley has been an important area of Solano County since Captain John Sutter, General Vallejo, and others knew it as "Green Hollow" back in the 1830's.

NO BEASTS NOR FOWL

Early Vallejoans had their problems with livestock and poultry. The Vallejo Chronicle of

March 7, 1875, published Ordinance No. 30 adopted by the City Trustees: "It shall not be lawful for any horse, cow, hog, goat or other animal to run at large within the corporate limits of the city, and it is hereby made the duty of the City Marshal to take up and impound any such animal. J. M. Abbott, City Clerk."

On Aug. 10, 1871, the editor of the Chronicle commented on a complaint registered the previous evening at the trustees' meeting: "Some of the fashionables who never see the sun rise, are complaining about an enterprising rooster that crows every morning on York Street. Let this rooster attend your evening parties and he will. soon learn to sleep as late as you do."

On the same day the Chronicle urged its readers to attend a roller skating performance by a Miss Carrie Moore, because "she would be wearing bright green bloomers"—the most daring thing to have come to Vallejo!

Downloaded from the Solano History Database

<http://www.solanohistory.org/761>

<http://articles.solanohistory.net/761/>