

JOURNAL OF LOCAL HISTORY

VOLUME 4 No.1

MEMORIAL DAY ISSUE
SPRING 2012

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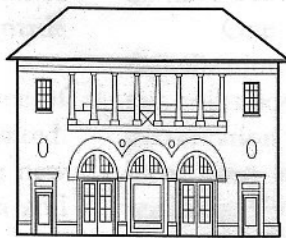
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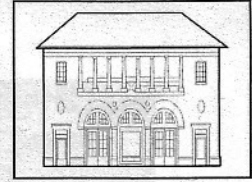


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President's Message

In this, the Memorial Day issue of the Journal of Local History, I happily report that the Historic Union Cemetery is in good condition after a very dry winter. And, members of the Cemetery Association continue to work hard keeping the Cemetery one of which we can all be proud.

Last year I wrote about the Association's wish to have two new monuments made, for John Greer and Sheldon Purdy Pharis, both of whom started small towns in San Mateo County. I am very grateful to Devil's Canyon Brewery in Belmont for their generous donation by which this wish became reality.

There is now also in place a monument for the 8 members of the Cloud family who are buried along the back fence. The generous contribution of Susan McClellan, Jean Cloud's granddaughter, made this possible.

Another stone, marking the resting place of Christopher Columbus Bollinger, has been repaired. This repair as well as the crafting of the three new stones was done by the people of V. Fontana and Co., our very good friends.

Those readers who wish to read more about Union Cemetery may visit its new web site www.historicunioncemetery.org. There, you will find biographical information and documentation of the lives of people buried in the Cemetery. All soldiers in the GAR plot are listed, there is a map of the cemetery with many of the plots identified, and

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copies of the Times-Gazette, Redwood City Democrat and the Redwood City Standard newspapers are included - almost 100 years of local reporting.

As time goes on, I will continue to add more information to this already informative site.

Local History Room volunteers continue to do a wonderful job serving the public while keeping the Room open from 1- 4 PM, Monday through Thursday each week. Additional help is always appreciated and more volunteers are encouraged to take part. Persons wishing to help could work for up to 3 hours a week and always with another experienced person. For example, as I write this, we do have a need for another volunteer on Mondays.

One of the projects already taken on is digitalization of all the taped oral history interviews in the collection. Tape deteriorates over time, and this preservation task is long overdue. Hopefully, it will have been successfully completed by the time you read this. You will be able to listen to interviewees tell their stories in their own voices.

Appreciation is again expressed for the continued support of Stuart Hoffman of Star Publishing Company.

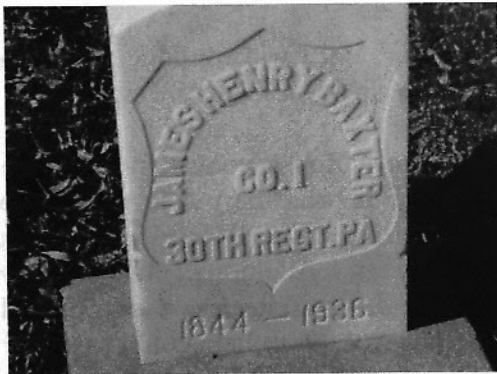
President: John Edmonds

Almost Empty Monuments

By John Edmonds

Several monuments in the Grand Army of the Republic plot are inscribed with a name but with no unit affiliation. This makes it very difficult to find out what role the person played in the Civil War and it is equally difficult to find out what role they played in San Mateo County history.

I try to find some sort of story for each of the soldiers listed on the internet site, but seem not to have been in this county until, literally, the day they died. I could not find a burial record, an ancestor record, a voting record or any other record that would help to identify either one of them.



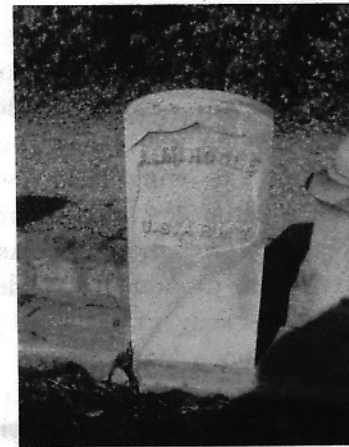
James Henry Baxter's tombstone

James Henry Baxter died at age 91 on September 2nd 1936. I assumed he was the oldest and the last of the soldiers to be buried in this plot.

Richard J. Williams died on December 10, sometime in the late '30s.



Richard Williams' tombstone



A.M. Hogle's tombstone

There was a little information on A. M. Hogle. He died on May 24th 1893, when he was 63 years old. He was from Illinois. That is all I could find.

Charles Sweeney was 77 years old when he died on January 7th 1909. I did discover that Charles registered to vote in 1900.



James Smyth's tombstone

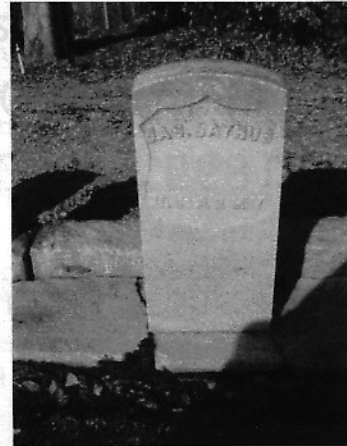
James Smyth was 70 years old when he died on May 4th 1902 in Redwood City.



William Lentz's tombstone

William Lentz died in Menlo Park on December 19th 1920.

This group of veterans was the longest group still living and they were the last group to be buried in this plot. Since that is the case, there were no other members to bury many of them and it was largely left up to the mortuary to place them in the Grand Army's plot. This may have something to do with the lack of discoverable information.



James Sayrus' tombstone

James Smyth died on May 4th 1902 at age 70. He came to this country from Ireland in time to fight in the Civil War. He became a naturalized citizen and arrived in San Mateo County sometime before 1890 where he registered to vote (while living in the Town of Purisima) I found that he was a carpenter by trade. Sometimes I am just lucky and information appears.



Thomas Warren's tombstone

So, if anyone can lead me to more information on any of these people, it would be my pleasure to give credit where credit is due.

Decoration Day (or Memorial Day) 1895 & 1900

By John Edmonds



Sheriff and Commander, Joel Mansfield

The Fallen Heroes

Memorial Day on Thursday, May 30 in 1895 was celebrated on a beautiful, sunny and colorful day. It was a grand day as the procession began to march to the cemetery from the assembly hall on Main Street. The next day, the Times and Gazette wrote:

"No finer day or more pleasant weather could be selected to commemorate the deeds of the heroic dead who gave up their lives for the country, than Thursday, Memorial Day. The air was redolent with the perfume of sweet-scented flowers and all nature seemed impressed with the occasion in honoring the departed soldier."

In 1895, the commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, George S. Evans chapter in Redwood was none other than the Sheriff of San Mateo County, Joel H. Mansfield. His words, spoken at the cemetery, are worth remembering and the newspaper quoted them exactly:

"Friends: As commander of this post, I welcome you in the name of my comrades to this public service. To us

Decorations Day is the memorial day of stalwart bravery, of patriotic heroism, of national faith.

It is the freedom day of a race emancipated from bondage and of a nation redestined from iniquity. It is clear to every soldier. It deepens in our hearts a memory of our brave and our beloved, the grand army of the immortals; and the memory makes precious to us the badge of the Grand Army of the Republic which we wear upon our breasts. May we join so reverently in these exercises that what we call a Decoration Day may be to our dead, their day of coronation...."

There was a dark and threatening sky over Redwood City at the end of May in 1900. The Grand Army of the Republic was at the Alhambra Theater on Main Street on the 30th, preparing for the Memorial Day ceremony and for the march to Union Cemetery. The move from the Congregational Church to the Theater was because more space was needed to hold the crowds of Redwood City folk who wished to honor their fallen heroes.

The usual joyful feeling was absent this day, perhaps because of the weather, but probably because the Grand Army had recently buried another one of their own in that beautiful GAR plot.



General John A. Logan, commander of the GAR in 1865

The hall was beautifully decorated with flowers and banners - by the Women's Relief Corps - and was packed with public school children. After a brief address by the post commander, Reverend Father Conian delivered the invocation, praying for the country and preservation of the Union.

An overture by the Shirley Company's Brass Band evoked great applause as did a piano duet by Miss Linda Mallan and Miss Laura Hanson, after which Miss Abbie Douglas gave a patriotic recitation. A vocal duet was sung by Pauline Beger and Mrs. Gertie. Reverend J. J. Martin was introduced and gave a stirring patriotic address that aroused the crowd to a high pitch of enthusiasm.

As the crowd waited for the final address, those at the back of the building could see the street from the doorway. The sidewalks were wooden and the street was muddy from the rain which had fallen the evening before. The thought of more than 100 people walking west down the narrow sidewalk to the cemetery was somewhat disturbing, as it was sure to be very slow going.

The procession which formed was led by the fire department, followed by the Grand Army and then the children. The Women's Relief Corps and citizens in carriages followed and the band played a dirge.

At the cemetery, Reverend F. H. Marr delivered the following address:

"These graves may well be called the Nation's Shrines. They are the Mecca to which patriots' journey this day to renew their devotion to the cause for which these heroes fought and died. Over their silent chambers we wreath these silent garlands of flowers - symbols of our love and gratitude. The fruits of their labors are a United Country. This is a sacred heritage purchased by their valor and sealed by their blood. We have come today to say, "Sleep heroes sleep, your deeds shall never die."

Note that Decoration Day or Memorial Day was then celebrated on May 30th each year, a Thursday in 1895 and a Wednesday in 1900. Congress made the day into a three day weekend with the Holiday Act of 1971 in order to give people a longer weekend at the beginning of summer. It certainly accomplished that purpose, but it distracted from the meaning of the day as

people enjoyed the weekend off work instead of the day: honoring brave souls who gave everything for our country.

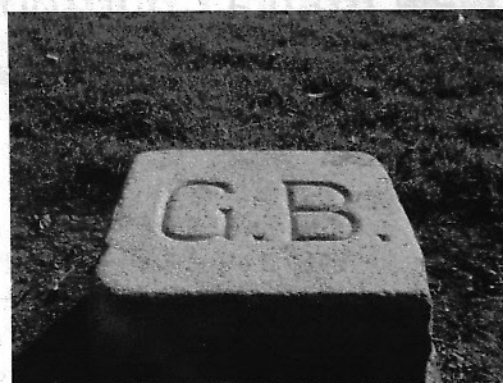
"National Moment of Remembrance" was a resolution passed in December, 2000 which asked the country to observe Memorial Day in a moment of silence or by attending services at the cemeteries.

I sincerely welcome those who come so faithfully to Union Cemetery each Memorial Day to bow their heads and open their hearts to those who have passed to the Golden Hills. All are invited each year.

"G.B."

(A Best Guess)

By John Edmonds



This is the tale of an unidentified stationary object, a "USO," and where it may be placed.

On the ground in a little grassy park on Main Street, beside the Redwood Roller Rink, there is a stone marked "G.B." right along the sidewalk.

City staff paid a visit to the Roller Rink people to explore the provenance of the stone, because the City wishes to make use of the little park in a way which does not include "G.B.". In their conversations and the follow up, it was revealed that the stone had probably been taken from Union Cemetery during the time that the cemetery was in terrible disrepair and many of the monuments were being removed.

But to whom does it belong, and where should it be placed? Best guess is that it belongs to Genevieve Badie, who was unmarried, and living in San Jose when she died. She was buried in Union Cemetery in plot 37H on July 22, 1904 with her father.

The Badie family lived in Redwood City at 912 Arguello, according to the census. We think that Genevieve's father was Michael, a laborer, and that she had a brother, John, who was a hod carrier – someone who carried bricks or mortar to the bricklayers on construction sites.

In the near future, "G.B." will be returned to its proper location, at least as nearly as we can tell. Plot 37 still exists, and there is no marker. While this is a logical place to put it, we still have no way of knowing for certain that "G.B." stands for Genevieve Badie.

View from a Courtroom Window circa 1865

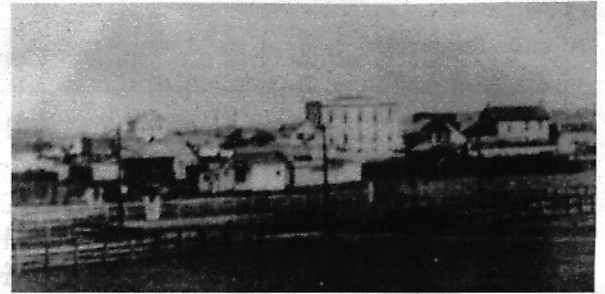
By John Edmonds

As I stood at the window in courtroom "A" and looked out over the eastern part of Redwood City, not all that long ago, my view was obstructed by several large buildings, and, certainly, I did not have the same view then that that I might have had in 1865.

I was the bailiff in courtroom "A", a deputy sheriff working with the judge, court clerk and court reporter. When court was not in session, I could allow my thoughts to drift back to the time when Redwood City was in the early throes of being born.

Having studied Redwood City's early history, I was able to stretch my "memory" back to 1865 when I would have been in the first courthouse to stand on "A" Street, exactly where today's "old Courthouse" is located. The courtroom was on the second floor then just as it is now. I write here of what I might have seen and what my thoughts might have been in 1865 had I then worked as a bailiff in that court.

To stretch after sitting in the bailiff's chair for too long (and often through proceedings which were too boring), I could walk across the room and peer out the window.



1st courthouse circa 1858 stood where the Old Courthouse Museum now stands on Broadway, "A" Street in 1858.

Not very far from the courthouse was a field that led up to Redwood Creek. Along the creek were Hanson and Ackerson Lumber Company's large sheds. I could see workmen removing milled lumber from double trailers that came down from lumber mills in the hills west of town and placing it in the sheds.

I could watch also as small lumber ships came west from the bay into Redwood Creek and sailed past "A" Street and "Bridge" Street and into the turning basin. Here they would often be stalled by the falling tide and settle to the bottom only to be raised by the flooding tide a few hours later.

When refloated, the boats would sail into the Littlejohn docks and put onboard loads of lumber, as much as they could each hold, to transport it toward San Francisco or San Jose.

Getting stuck in the mud became less of a problem after Mr. Littlejohn developed a system of dredging the creek. He was a very clever and talented man and the community deeply appreciated his inventive mind.

After an all too short stretch, I would have to call the court back to order for Judge Horace Templeton who wore his robe with grand style and usually had a smile on his face. He also was a man who liked to start on time and finish early.

He spoke warmly with attorneys and others but he was very firm in wanting order maintained in the court and proper procedures followed. Temp, as many people called him, was a gambler during his pre-judicial days in his home town of Searsville. He played poker in the Davis Hotel and generally won – he hedged his bets. There were wires running through the walls up to the second floor and a friend signaled him with information about his competitors' hands.

The wires were discovered after the hotel burned down and Templeton was securely sitting as a judge. Everybody had a good laugh about the discovery and nothing more was said.

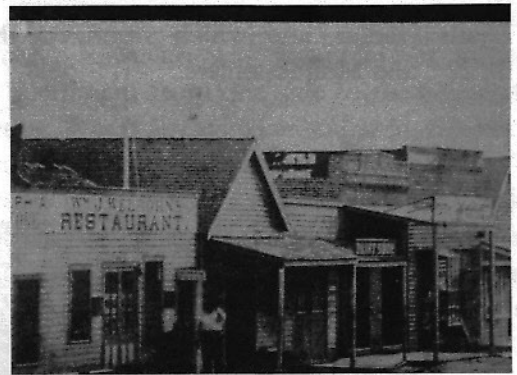
Judge Templeton was still living at Searsville and he had a rather long ride home. He was looking for a residence in town and sometimes went out during the lunch break to scout available housing.



Lumber ship at William Littlejohn's dock where today's city hall stands. The Congregational Church was at the northwest corner of Jefferson & Middlefield

From the window, I could see recently established businesses along "A" Street as well as businesses along the south side of Bridge Street. Also visible were some of the buildings on the north side of Bridge Street. Sidewalks were made of wood and streets were unpaved and muddy when the wagons drove through in wet weather. People were careful to get away from the road to avoid being splashed with the red mud.

I could also see the American Hotel on Mound (Main) Street facing up Bridge Street and "A" Street to the courthouse. This two story wooden building had a habit of burning down and being rebuilt, usually by a new owner. Masts of ships that came into Redwood Creek were substantially higher than the buildings along "A" and Bridge Streets so I could watch their progress pretty much as they went past Mr. Littlejohn's bridge and on into the turning basin. Most of the boats were about 15 feet long, with a single sail and a draft of about 8 feet.



South side of Bridge Street just west of Mound Street c1856. Street was mud and the sidewalk was wooden.

When the ships got to the docks I could note the variety and amount of material that would be shipped. Not just milled lumber, but hay, oats, leather goods. And, indeed, from time to time an entire wagon would be placed on board and anchored down for the voyage. During a typical week I could watch some 50,000 feet of boards and milled lumber leave the docks along with 1,730,000 shingles 108,700 fence posts and 152,000 cords of fire wood.

These boats sailed as far north as Sacramento and south to San Jose. Even Sausalito was visited, but boats usually went to San Francisco or Oakland.

It's not hard to imagine the immense amount of other business that was generated by all this lumber moving in and out of town every day. All sorts of people came through town and they required hotels, saloons, harness and leather shops, wagon repair shops and many other establishments.

Businesses along "A" and Bridge streets did whopping good business. Hotels, saloons and churches all provided much needed social settings for men who drove the double lumber wagons. These men had to spend the night before starting up the mountain again with empty wagons, to load up and return the following day. Almost all the other businesses travelers and farmers bringing crops to town or picking up supplies had to stay over as well, as things just didn't move very fast in those days. Saloons did a great business and one of the most popular was the Eureka Brewery, built by

Claus Hadler, and which stood on the corner of Bridge and Mound streets.



North side of Bridge Street. Notice the ship's mast as the inbound ship was passing to the turn around area. The building stands where later there was a See's Candy store (until a few years ago).

Many of these transient people eventually became permanent residents. Our weather and the beauty of the surrounding hills, bay and the nearby ocean made this an obviously desirable place to settle for life.

Indeed, once the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad began running, residents who were still employed in San Francisco had a convenient means of commuting.

It was no surprise that Redwood City experienced very rapid growth. One of the first stores erected in Redwood City, even before San Mateo County came into independent existence was the Diller store. John Vogan Diller came to Redwood City shortly after 1850 and built a brick building that still stands on today's Main Street, just north of Broadway.

He became a standout citizen and a rather wealthy one. In 1865, he placed an ad to sell his store in the Times and Gazette newspaper:

"New fireproof store, readymade for clothing, dry goods, hardware, cutlery and agriculture implements."

He sold the business to P.P. Chamberlain, who had come to town after the Civil War. Chamberlain also became an outstanding citizen and was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic.

As I enjoyed these few moments each day daydreaming about old Redwood City, I could easily see the value that Redwood Creek, or the Embarcadero as it was originally known, contributed.

The Kuck brothers built a store at first and "A" Streets and put an ad in the Times and Gazette:

Liquors, wines, crockery, hardware glassware, many other kinds of goods not usually found outside of San Francisco.



William Littlejohn

One day, William Littlejohn announced that he was going to the Assessor's office because of a new project. He wanted to put a fresh drinking water system into Redwood City. He said he could hollow out redwood logs and join them in order to run fresh water through them. Corners could be turned by cutting short sections and pinning them together so water could run to each business and to the new residences which were popping up almost daily. He got permission to work on the project and started that very day. What a brilliant man!

Hilton and Chew were early blacksmiths but in 1865 the team was Hilton and Titus and they were advertising their services in the Times and Gazette as:

"Blacksmith and wagon makers, Main Street, Redwood City, horse shoeing & wagon ironing, carriage building and improvement, painting."

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"Blacksmith and wagon makers, Main Street, Redwood City, horse shoeing & wagon ironing, carriage building and improvement, painting."

They were located on Main Street just below where Mound Street converged. Later, Mound Street was renamed and became part of Main Street - the Indian mounds were gone.

Each morning, James Peace could be observed coming into town from his boat where he spent his nights. Almost like clockwork, at the first break of light in the morning, he would appear, crossing the Littlejohn bridge to Bridge Street and then walking down to one of the nearby Main Street buildings, probably a saloon.

Dr. S. S. Merrill set up a drug store on Bridge Street and advertised in the Times and Gazette:

**“Drugs and Medicines, paints, oil,
paper hanging, coal oil lamps,
perfumery and fancy articles.”**



First Fire Station on Main St. next to Diller store

One of the prominent buildings I could see was the fire station. With its golden cupola and spire it resembles a church. It stood almost beside the Diller store and was one busy place. While there were not a lot of fires in town, when there was one, it was a huge problem and a lot of men became instant firemen. It was practically a law that every man was a fireman when situations arose. The day the American House, for example, burned to the ground, almost every man in town was involved in trying to save the building.

The biggest continuing problem for the fire department, however, was the creek. It impeded getting equipment from one side to the other in an emergency. When alarms were sounded, men could be seen running to the creek from both sides. The first two to arrive on each side would start cranking the heavy wooden wheels that made the bridge split and pivot, usually to let boats by, but at times of emergency, to get the firefighters over to one side or to get the equipment to the other, the central part of Redwood City.

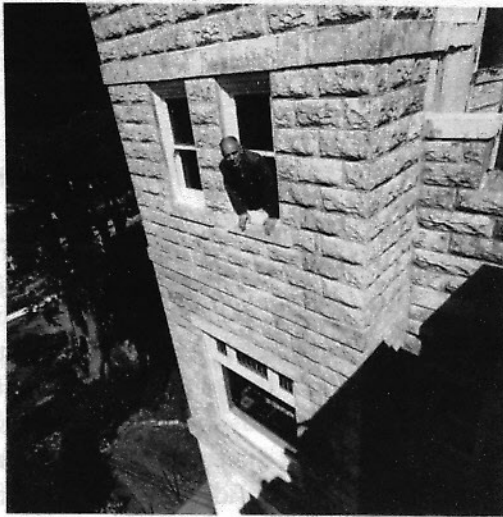
I am at a loss to explain how horse drawn water tanks could be pulled over that small, wooden, pedestrian bridge when necessary. I can only guess that, since the station backed up to the narrowest part of the creek, perhaps they had designed a raft of some sort to carry horses and wagons across. Pure speculation on my part. Two stations, one on either side of the creek would have been my preferred solution.

Today, when I look out the courtroom window and hear the sirens, emergency response seems so simple. Not the job, but the process. It was far more difficult in days gone by. Usually, in 1865, the buildings close to the burning one were saved as efforts were also made to save as much of the burning building as possible. The loss of any building was painful to the entire town as buildings didn't go up very fast and every building was of use to the community.

In the spring of 1872 a very large three masted schooner sailed from the Littlejohn docks where it had been constructed. The B. G. Whiting was to be the largest ship to sail in the Bay at that time. In the same year, Judge Templeton completed his term as County Judge and retired to his home on Phelps Street (now Middlefield Road). The good judge lived for another year and enjoyed the profits from his various investments, lumber mills on San Gregorio and Gazo's creeks a railroad to Pigeon Point (which had a lighthouse). Horace Templeton died on December 6th 1873, at 48 years old. Burial was in plot 135 in Union Cemetery. Today there is no marker on his resting place.

Sam's Castle

By Bridget Oates



With romance, elegant parties, and dashing uniformed gentleman, this charming castle story is what you might expect, but add in dramatic police raids and rumors of bodies buried in the garden, and you have the very unique tale of Sam's Castle. Built in 1908 as a haven for the earthquake-rattled Henry Harrison McCloskey (grandfather of former congressman, Pete McCloskey), the castle served as a home, speakeasy, rumrunner signaling station, abortion clinic, and U.S. Coast Guard lookout during World War II. Despite its turbulent history, however, this castle story has a happy ending.

Ever since the castle was built in Salada Beach (now Pacifica's Sharp Park), it has been known as the McCloskey Castle, Castle of Mystery, Chateau LaFayette—and for the last 50 years, "Sam's Castle." Sam Mazza purchased the "pile of bricks" (as he liked to call it) in 1959 for a cool \$29,000. He brought it back from severe disrepair, leaving an elegant, museum-like landmark of Pacifica's colorful past. Now in the hands of the Sam Mazza Foundation, the castle will continue to host fundraisers supporting charitable causes, as well as occasional tours and other events, just as Mazza wanted.

At once thought to be haunted, with bodies

buried on the castle grounds, the mysterious castle has thrilled, frightened, and intrigued people for over a century... for good reason.

Henry Harrison McCloskey could not have imagined his grand mansion would become the site of police raids and the source of screaming newspaper headlines. However, once the second owner, Galen R. Hickok, was discovered performing abortions there in 1916 that is exactly what happened. An insidious rumor soon surfaced that the doctor had buried bodies from his botched operations in the garden, prompting police to arrive at the castle with shovels in hand. Amazingly, they did indeed dig up bones. Chicken bones. The doctor was arrested and sent to San Quentin for five years, but trouble wasn't over for local law enforcement. Prohibition brought more police to the castle between 1922 and 1924, but this time they didn't bring shovels; they arrived with battering rams and sledgehammers after speakeasy-owner M.L. Hewitt barred the front door. Hewitt transformed the castle into Chateau LaFayette with dining and dancing overlooking the ocean. He blatantly ignored the anti-liquor laws, but then so did many bar owners in Salada Beach. The dense fog and unforgiving roads made it exceptionally difficult to police the area, and it was a popular haven for rumrunners. Hewitt signaled the liquor-laden ships from the castle and went right on serving his guests until his death in 1924.

The castle changed hands three more times, and then settled into a healthy respite while it was in the hands of the Eakin family. In 1942, however, the castle underwent another calamitous year when the Eakins rented their stately home to the Coast Guard's Beach Patrol during World War II. Lieutenant Carr and the thirteen servicemen that made up Company H moved in on November 18, 1942. Their vicious war dogs did not get the luxury of living at the castle; they bunked next door in kennels. The floors installed by master craftsman, Math Anderson, got a thorough polishing when the men were caught disobeying orders, such as patrolling together or napping. The accommodations were tight in that many servicemen and the castle took a beating during the year they were there.

The Coast Guard offered the Eakins a settlement, but unfortunately, Mr. Eakin died soon after and the repairs were not completed. Annie Eakin is rumored to have filled the castle with as many as twenty cats after her husband passed away and her adopted son Charles was institutionalized.

After Annie passed away, an artist couple and their children took up residence in the reportedly haunted house on the hill for five years. Pat O'Brien was a sculptor trained under the famous Gutzon Borglum, made famous by his work on Mount Rushmore. He left his enduring mark on the castle with a submarine portal in the front door. The castle never fully recovered its original grandeur until Sam Mazza, a painting contractor with an eye for "white elephants," saw the diamond in the rough.

When Mazza first acquired the castle, the garden was overgrown with four-foot tall weeds, and it had been ravaged by local kids who believed it was haunted. The young vandals broke windows and Sam's statues while hunting for paranormal visitors, so Mazza did what he knew best. He threw a party and invited the local kids, who never returned to the castle uninvited again. Italian-born Mazza brought the castle back from ruin and gave it a touch of class and whimsy.

Sam and his wife Mary never lived in the castle, but they loved entertaining there. For more than five decades, Sam and Mary hosted countless friends, beauty queens and pageant hopefuls, as well as politicians. One of the the Mazzas' most notable parties was held for Henry Harrison McCloskey's grandson, Pete McCloskey, after his election to Congress in 1967. At the momentous occasion, Pete's father, Paul McCloskey, was finally able to show his son around the house his grandfather built for the McCloskey family fifty-nine years earlier. Pete, coined the first "maverick," went on to make a run for the presidency, but he never forgot where his family came from. He has returned to the castle many times over the decades to share his family's history with locals.

Before Sam passed away peacefully at 96, he ensured that the castle would continue to thrive in the hands of the Sam Mazza Foundation. The intriguing historical mansion, often considered one of the Bay Area's architectural treasures, will continue to

entertain charitable organizations, ghost hunters, history buffs and those who just want to drink in the majestic view for themselves. Find out more about the castle at www.sammazzafoundation.com or look up the tour schedule at <http://pacificahistory.org/>.

Eds Note: The writer is the author of the Arcadia Press book, "Sam's Castle".

San Mateo County and Prohibition Scofflaws: Made for Each Other

By James O. Clifford Sr

Those who missed both the Ken Burns' television series about Prohibition and the County Museum's exhibit on the Roaring 'Twenties can still get a glimpse and feel for the era by taking a walk on the wild side—to the coast, where rumrunners rode pounding waves long before surfers.

One of the more interesting coastal remnants of the nation's dry spell is near Shelter Cove, where Prohibition agents blasted shut an abandoned railroad tunnel that bootleggers used for a warehouse.

Barbara VanderWerf recounts the saga of the tunnel in her book, "Montara Mountain."

At night, rumrunners took over the cove, known then as 'Smugglers Cove,' to off-load thousands of bottles of illegal whiskey from Canadian ships," she wrote. "The next day the whiskey was for sale in San Francisco speakeasies.

The 354-foot-long tunnel was built by the Ocean Shore Railroad, an ill-fated venture designed to link San Francisco and Santa Cruz along the coast. The railroad, which had a slogan of "Reaches the Beaches," lasted from 1907 to 1920, when autos increasingly lured away passengers.

According to VanderWerf, when plans were made for the present Highway 1, the railroad decided to

hold onto its right to the tunnel, blown entrances and all. Ocean Shore officials claimed it cost nearly a million dollars to build the tunnel through Pedro Point and carve a ledge along Devil's Slide. Besides, they argued, the railroad might start up again. The highways builders would have to meet the railroad's price or find another route.

Squabbling over money continued until 1935 when "surveyors staked out a new route behind Pedro Point and above the railroad right of way on Devil's Slide," VanderWerf wrote. "We drive that route today."

Some Shelter Cove residents of that era remembered the tunnel as a mystery spot. One said grownups told children that the tunnel collapsed on a train. This was possibly a way to keep curious kids from exploring a dangerous place.

An intrepid member of the Journal of Local History staff went to Shelter Cove to take a photo of what was left of the tunnel, only to be met by a screen of fog, as well as fences that carried signs warning about the dangers of mudslides.

"You can't see anything anyway," said a man who lives in a nearby home that once was a depot for the Ocean Shore. "It's all just mud."

The San Mateo coast was a natural for rumrunners. The Coast Guard had a difficult time enforcing the National Prohibition Act, later given teeth by the Volstead Act, which lasted from 1920 to 1933.



Fog at Shelter Cove hid rum runners.

One steamer, the *Ardenza*, brought in 25,000 cases of scotch in 1924 in a voyage that went from Scotland and through the Panama Canal. Most seaborne booze, however, came from Canada. Large ships at Vancouver took on cargo for markets in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. After delivering the goods, the ships headed back for another load.

Half Moon Bay was an excellent port because of the area's many landing sites, nearby roads, and sparse population.

Coast Guard Commander Malcolm Willoughby recounted the voyage of the *Ardenza* in his book, "Rum War at Sea," noting that the ship was able to stay in the region for seven months during its 1924 visit, calling the length of time "incredible!" There were reports that contact boats sailed from San Francisco Bay at certain times, "when a particular official on duty found it profitable to be unobserving," Willoughby reported. Finally, the *Ardenza* disposed of all its cargo and went to Canada, where the ship was seized for debt, sold to new owners and returned to Scotland.

Encounters between the Coast Guard and the criminals sometimes harked back to the days of wooden ships and iron men, when sailors with swords in hand yelled, "Stand by to repel boarders."

The late author June Morrall recalled one such fight in "Half Moon Bay Memories." The Coast Guard boarded a smuggler near Moss Beach and started to take the boat in tow, leaving a Coast Guardsman aboard the seized vessel, which turned out to be a mistake. The Coast Guard sailor was overpowered and the rumrunners tossed 400 cases of liquor overboard, cut the towline and sped away. The Coast Guardsman jumped overboard and made it to his vessel. The Coast Guard crew let go with rifles, machine guns and a deck gun, but the smugglers still managed to outdistance their pursuers in the dark. The next morning hatches and wreckage floated ashore at Moss Beach, indicating that the gunfire had, at the least, hit the fleeing boat. The rum boat was thought to have carried cargo from the mother ship, *Stadacona*, which regularly carried whiskey to points off the California coast, Morrall wrote.

In addition to the railroad tunnel, the coast has other reminders of the Gatsby Age, particularly the

Moss Beach Distillery which boasts a fabled flapper ghost. Other spots known for their shady past include the Miramar Beach Restaurant, called the Miramar Hotel during Prohibition. An imposing private residence in Pacifica, dubbed the "castle" for obvious reasons, was a well-known speakeasy. Farther inland, what is now Van's Restaurant in Belmont was owned in the 1930s by Elsie Smuck, whose services included gambling as well as liquor. Rumor had it that the third floor served as a bordello.

Hoarders Were the First Targets

Before bootlegging and rumrunners, the main source of liquor was not "rot gut," but good stuff hoarded by rich people who planned ahead. During the early days of Prohibition, the newspapers carried several accounts of private stocks of alcohol stolen from homes. In 1920, 38 gallons of whiskey was taken from the Portola home of a Union Oil executive.

Eileen Wieland, a student at College of San Mateo, wrote a research paper in 1978 in which she reported that such thefts occurred almost daily in the early years.

"One such attempt ended in failure at the home of the very famous and very wealthy A.K. Macomber in Hillsborough," she recounted. The liquor was stored in a vault with concrete walls measuring four and a half feet thick.

Fame was no shield. The San Mateo home of Bank of America founder A.P. Giannini was hit in January 1920 by brazen, but disappointed, bandits who found only wine. They left a note reading, "We're looking for booze. We don't like your vino."

One of the more sensational heists took place at the Fred McNear mansion in Menlo Park, which was leased at the time by silk importer Julien Hart. People in the house were held at gunpoint for the entire night, "although politely treated," Wieland wrote. "We believe that this liquor should be put in general distribution," a gunman told a hostage, adding that it wasn't right to "let the rich have it all to themselves."

The gang of nine left the next morning after breakfasting in the servants' quarters. Hauling away the \$35,000 worth of liquor stored in McNear's basement vault was not easy. The men had to remove a steel door that had a covering made of concrete. The first arrest was made the next day, and most of the gang was eventually behind bars.

It wasn't long before people were making their own libations. The San Mateo News-Leader reported that 69 stills, including one that could make 300 gallons a day, were raided in the county during the first six years of Prohibition. Most of the action took place in Colma and Daly City.

The newspaper also said 87 restaurants, hotels and resort areas were raided during the same period. All this action took place in a county with a population of 36,000. Also, the figure did not include gambling dens, cigar stores, barber shops and other similar smaller places that were raided over and over again.

It was the rumrunners and their customers ashore who stole bigger headlines with exciting, colorful stories, such as the aforementioned Coast Guard action, that were sure to bait news reporters. Take the case, no pun intended, of Jack Mori, who hired an armada of small boats to haul the smuggled liquor to a dock at what is now Pacifica. Police in 1924 confiscated \$50,000 worth of alcohol at Mori's Salada Beach roadhouse, which constituted one of Prohibition's richest hauls in the county. The seizure included 1,000 cases of whiskey.

Some sophisticated smuggling systems employed flashing light signal codes, such as a red light meaning "danger, sail away," or one flash standing for "wait, delay." It was said the engine of a car was used as a donkey engine with a cable line. The dock extended 250 feet into the surf. The liquor was brought over the cable by means of a breeches buoy with the power supplied by the car engine.

Lighthouse keepers had a bird's-eye view of some of the operations. Jessie Mygrants Davis, daughter of Pigeon Point's assistant keeper, called the rumrunners "quite ruthless men." "They were audacious enough to use the lighthouse derrick

to unload their ships," she said. "They always came on moonlight nights, so we could see them clearly."

Davis is quoted in JoAnn Semones book, "Shipwrecks, Scalawags, and Scavengers: The Storied Waters of Pigeon Point," which recounted the night Davis' father, Jesse Mygrants, was forced at gunpoint to drive some rumrunners eight miles down the coast.



Still Equipment

(Courtesy of the San Mateo County History Museum)

Were Italians "Profiled?"

Illegal alcohol was a real moneymaker in San Mateo County, despite countless fines and arrests, which usually resulted in a few months in jail and fines of up to \$500. Looking back, however, one has to wonder why so many of those arrests involved Italian names. A knee-jerk reaction today would bring on a quick news conference by a lawyer alleging "racial profiling."

As noted earlier, many arrests took place in Colma and Daly City, towns with a large population of people of Italian heritage. Yet other areas saw little action by law enforcement agents. In his detailed book on California and Prohibition, "One Eye Closed, the Other Red," author Clifford James Walker claimed "every town on the Peninsula had its bootlegger." He quoted a native of La Honda, where "easy" was the operative part of speakeasy, as saying he couldn't recall the "prohis" arresting anyone.

Drinking establishments "never got knocked over, and I don't think they paid anyone off."

Why were so many Italians arrested for Prohibition violations in San Mateo County? That is exactly the question asked in the Fall 1981 issue of *La Peninsula Magazine*, published by the San Mateo County History Association.

Perhaps government officials in the county were influenced by a widely held view that Italians were inherently criminal, speculated the article entitled: "The Italians in San Mateo County."

"This myth, no doubt, was rooted in a general fear of foreigners and in the highly publicized escapades of gangsters in the East," the piece said. "Italians did have a significant involvement in illegal operations, but it is probably that Italians, as a group, were watched with undue care by prejudiced county officials."

Could it have been that Italians were just doing what they had always done and done well? Many Italians had made their living as saloon keepers, and Italians knew how to make homemade vino. Under Prohibition, it was still legal to make up to 200 gallons of wine a year for family consumption.

In addition, Italian farmers lived in remote areas where illegal activities could go unnoticed for a long time. In one example, Prohibition agents found a 350-gallon still in a barn at the Sapore Ranch in Colma. Also well concealed was the operation at Gambetta Dairy in Portola Valley where the moonshine was hidden in milk cans.

The Ken Burns series on Prohibition was quite a history lesson, and not just about alcohol. There were segments that underscored the anti-immigrant feelings of Native Americans who associated alcohol abuse with foreigners. One in particular zeroed in on the part anti-Catholicism played in the defeat of the presidential bid by New York Governor Al Smith. Some viewers might have been surprised to learn how powerful the Ku Klux Klan was in the North during Prohibition, or that the KKK was so strongly anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish.

The years 1910 to 1920 brought millions of immigrants to America, with the Italians leading the way. The number of Italians reaching America's shore during that period totaled over 2 million.

About 1.5 million Poles arrived at the same time as well as 2 million Jews from Eastern Europe.

Tensions against the newcomers led Congress to pass a very restrictive Immigration Act in 1924 that, among other things, limited the number of Italians allowed into the United States to 4,000. In contrast, during the first decade of the 20th Century, an average of 200,000 Italians entered the country each year.

Prejudices might have festered on the federal side of law enforcement, but it is hard to believe it did with San Mateo County officials. For one thing, San Mateo County Sheriff James McGrath was a close friend of Emilio Georgetti, known as a gambling "king" in the north part of the county. The friendship went back to the men's younger days when they worked together in a shipyard in South San Francisco.



*Redwood City Police Officers With Distillery Equipment
Confiscated in Local Raid (c.1921)*

The Peninsula's Wide Open Spaces

McGrath became a symbol of the old adage that people get the leaders they deserve. San Mateo County and Prohibition was a marriage made in heaven or hell, depending on your point of view. The county has a long history of tolerating people behaving badly or perhaps, just being tolerant. The county was formed in 1856, the same year the Vigilantes drove hoodlum elements out of San Francisco, with some heading south.

San Mateo County soon became the location of activities illegal in San Francisco, everything ranging from prize-fighting to gambling. McGrath, a native of New York, found the Peninsula to his liking, and vice versa. He was elected in 1927 and was continually returned to office until 1951, when reformers replaced him with Earl Whitmore. Even if McGrath wanted to clean up the county, he didn't have the muscle. The Board of Supervisors failed to give him the needed money. As late as 1946 there was only one deputy patrolling the north county.

To be fair to McGrath, it should be pointed out that three sheriffs preceded him in office during Prohibition. In addition, McGrath promised tough enforcement after a deputy was shot to death at a speakeasy.

The deputy was Pierre "Pete" Larrecou, a World War I veteran who was raised in Menlo Park and belonged to several fraternal groups. His death in 1927 during a robbery at the "eating establishment" south of Atherton helped launch a new crusade on crime.

Little wonder that the exhibit at the County Museum that ended December 31 was billed as exploring a time when San Mateo County was known as the most corrupt county in California. The exhibit, called "Broads, Bootleggers and Bookies," allowed visitors to decide for themselves if the county earned such a label, said Mitch Postel, president of the San Mateo County Historical Association.

Among other things, the exhibit featured a variety of stills used to make booze, which could be dangerous. In 1922 a man was killed in a still accident in Half Moon. Four years later a barn burned down in El Granada when a 600-gallon still exploded. Other displays included flapper outfits of the period, gambling gear, and even a speakeasy kitchen. Signs informed the visitor that the illegal alcohol was called "bathtub gin," "hooch," "sauce" or "coffin varnish."

"It was fascinating learning the slang of the time," said Carmen Blair, the museum's deputy director, who spent months transcribing tapes and collecting oral histories, some of them shown in a video that was part of the exhibit.

Blair, who wrote an extensive article on Prohibition for the Winter 2011 edition of *La Peninsula*, decided that the 20s might not have been the county's most lawless period, but it was certainly the most colorful.

How Did It Happen?

San Mateo County could be viewed as a laboratory for what was called "a noble experiment." It had all the ingredients—hijackings, stills, gunfights, speakeasies. It was a microcosm of the rest of the nation. Experiments are supposed to provide answers, and to many members of future generations, the biggest question was: How did the United States get to the point that alcohol was outlawed? An important question, important enough that historian Daniel Okrent wrote a long article on the subject for *Smithsonian Magazine* and later appeared as an expert in the *Burns'* series.

Okrent reminded viewers that during Prohibition the Constitution outlawed ownership of only two things; slaves and alcohol. The real genius behind the drive to force acceptance of Prohibition was Wayne Wheeler of the Anti-Saloon League, he said. Wheeler was able to bring together groups that on the surface were directly opposed to each other.

"Wheeler's devotion to the dream of a dry America accommodated any number of unlikely allies," Okrent wrote. These groups included the Ku Klux Klan, which joined the radical Industrial Workers of the World in the drive against liquor.

"The Klan's anti-liquor sentiment was rooted in its hatred of the immigrant masses in liquor-soaked cities; the IWW believed liquor was a capitalist weapon used to keep the working classes in a stupor."

Anti-German hostility in World War I also played a part. A dry Wisconsin politician named John Strange said the "worst of all our German enemies ... are Pabst, Schlitz, Blatz and Miller."

Wheeler's league made common cause with progressives who wanted to wrest political control of cities from forces they thought bought the immigrant vote through saloons. Women's groups that lobbied

for a woman's right to vote fought to take away the right to drink. Prohibitionists joined racists whose greatest fear, Okrent said, was a black man "with a bottle in one hand and a ballot in the other."

And, of course, there was the religious factor that resulted in the "dry Protestant" and the "wet Catholic" stereotype, an image shattered in the San Francisco Bay Area by a Catholic priest, Father M. J. Whyte of St. Martin's Church in Sunnyvale. White was a commanding speaker who argued the anti-saloon position at rallies from Antioch to San Jose. Whyte kept up his attacks despite New York Anti-Saloon leader William Anderson grabbing headlines by claiming Catholic leaders viewed Prohibition as a Protestant "victory" and thus wanted to bring back the saloon. Whyte's rallies included one at the Sequoia Theater in Redwood City, where saloons were forced to close before the 18th Amendment. The town trustees in 1918 passed an ordinance that shut saloons but allowed the sale of packaged goods. City officials said that twenty-five drunks a month were tossed in the Redwood City Jail before the saloons were outlawed, but after that the place was nearly empty.

An even more intriguing question than the "how" of Prohibition is "why?" Mary K. Spore-Alhadeff looked into this aspect in "Saloons, Breweries and Bordellos," which is a chapter in the book *Redwood City: A Hometown History*.

She noted that the southern part of the county was pretty much a male domain during its formative years when young, single men were engaged in such physically demanding occupations as the lumber trade. The 1906 earthquake helped change that when families started coming in from San Francisco and public opinion "began to turn against the saloons."

In 1908, the Redwood City Council adopted an ordinance regulating the liquor trade.

A year later, saloons were banned within 200 feet of a public school, meaning at least three of the four saloons on Broadway would have to close their doors.

Around this time the "family men" began forming fraternal organizations. "One of the primary attractions of these organizations was the opportunity to get out of the house from time to time and drink in the company of their friends, without encountering the rougher element which patronized the saloons downtown," Spore-Alhadeff wrote.

This change in attitude led to the aforementioned enacting of Prohibition in Redwood City in 1918. While it is a good example, Redwood City was not an exception. Most towns gave men, especially bachelors, several saloons to select from.

After California adopted a local option law, half of the counties and cities went dry by 1918. Ironically, shortly after Amendment 18 was ratified by the needed number of states, California voters defeated two liquor prohibition initiatives. It was clear that while the citizens of California were against prohibition, their elected officials were for it, more than likely because, as the Burns' series noted, they couldn't get elected without the backing of Prohibition organizations. This could be the biggest lesson from the legacy of Prohibition: that a determined minority can reach its goal by making politicians fear their power. Things don't seem to change much.

(Source Note: Much of the information for this article was supplied by Carol Peterson, the archivist at the San Mateo County History Museum. The source items included La Peninsula magazine and research papers by students at College of San Mateo.)

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Also, we are missing copies of some old phone & city directories, for the years 1908, 1910, 1912-16, 1918-19, 1921, 1924 & 26. Any one able to donate any of these? Or others from the 30's, 40's and 50's?

The Wild and Woolly Days of Menlo Park

By Lydia Dioli Cooper

Well, after visiting the exhibit *Broads, Bootleggers & Bookies* at the San Mateo County History Museum, I started thinking how Menlo Park might have played into this. I soon discovered that Menlo Park not only had a checkered past during the Prohibition period, but it was THE thorn on Leland and Jane Stanford's side before Prohibition. Since the Stanfords were, let's say, not "into drinking," the sale of alcohol in any form was forbidden in Palo Alto. Enter Menlo Park.



During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Menlo Park had a growing population of Irish and Italians. And yes, these two groups were "into drinking." So one can just imagine what happened next. In 1895-96, liquor licenses were given to B. F. Burke, C. W. Coxen, J. H. O'Keefe, Thomas McIntyre, P. Lenehan, and Frank Roach. Saloons, (such as The Blue Goose Saloon and Classic Saloon) retail establishments selling liquor, and of course, wine and grappa made in Menlo for those Stanford athletes, fraternity boys and students looking for an easy place to escape.

Charlie Meyer's saloon on El Camino and Oak Grove was a favorite for these young revelers. Football victories, fraternity initiation--you name it--was an excuse to come to Menlo. Drunkenness resulting in rowdy behavior caused many citizens (if

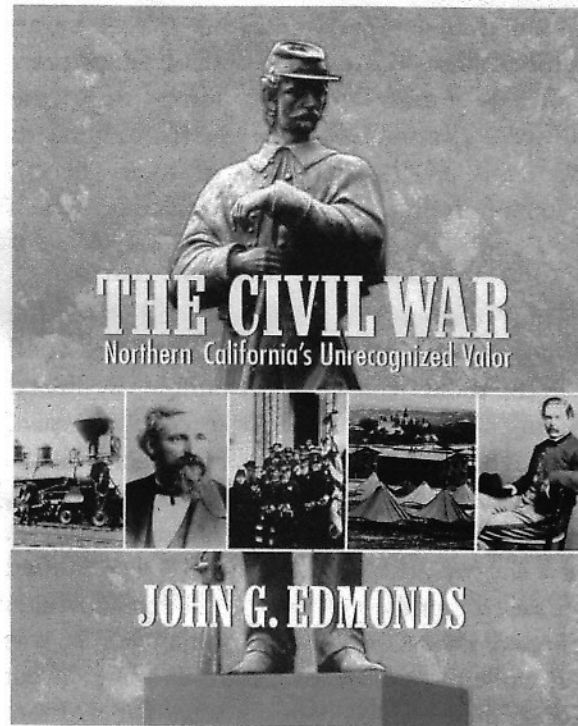


there were many in the early 1900s) to look upon these young men as a curse on their quiet village. Yes, the residents were outraged. And so was Mrs. Stanford. Jane Lathrop Stanford, who died in 1905, demanded in her will that "no alcohol" be served within one mile of the Stanford Campus. The will, however, was filed in Santa Clara County and did not have any influence in San Mateo County. Later, as recorded in a local newspaper in 1908,

The anti-liquor sentiment is starting to catch fire all over the Peninsula...Possibly starting out with Stanford's demands, the general feeling is that there were far too many drunks in and about the town. A meeting of the Menlo Park Improvement Club brought this feeling to the fore, and steps were taken by its members to stop further sale of liquor in the town....

The pastor at the Church of Nativity along with the archbishop of San Francisco pleaded with Stanford administrators to do something. President David Starr Jordan was so outraged he campaigned to close not only Menlo Park's saloons, but saloons in and around the university. Finally in 1909, a law was passed making it illegal to sell alcoholic beverages within a 1.5 mile radius of Stanford. How did this affect the "drinking establishments" in Menlo Park? Charlie Meyer's saloon did close, along with many of the other established saloons. But did this stop the making of wine and grappa? You decide.

And this all took place prior to Prohibition. Can you imagine what Menlo Park was like during Prohibition? I see another article forthcoming.



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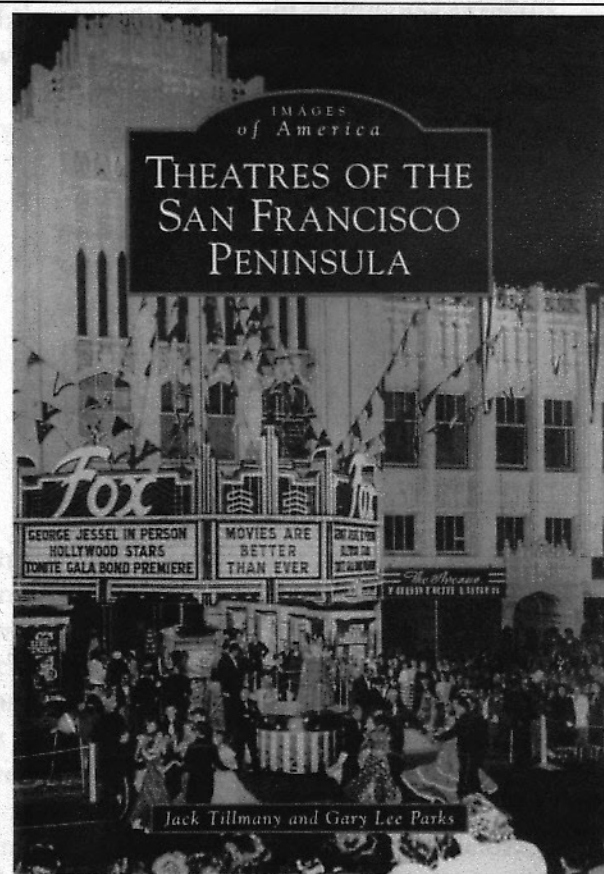
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Hope you enjoy the new and improved Journal of Local History. Please send us a line at gsuarez@redwoodcity.org or call me, Gene Suarez, at 650-780-7098.

We welcome any comments or constructive criticism. Our next issue will appear in the Summer 2012. We all wish you a pleasant Spring.

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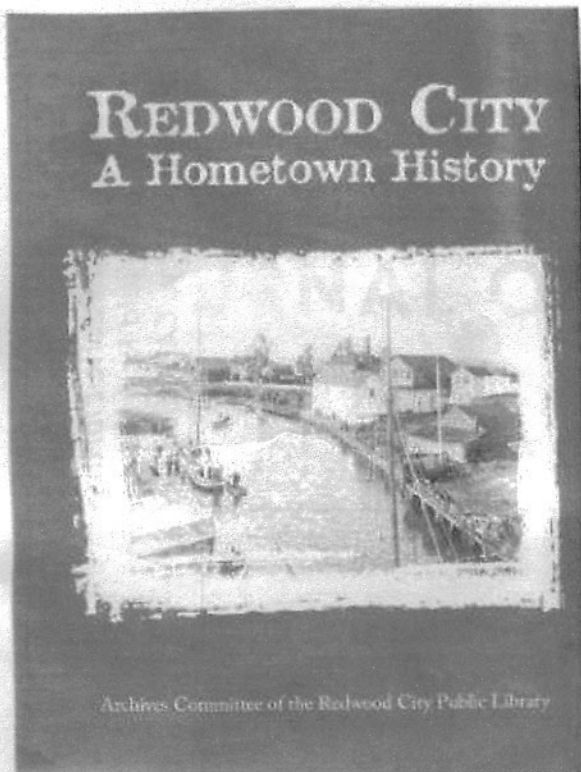
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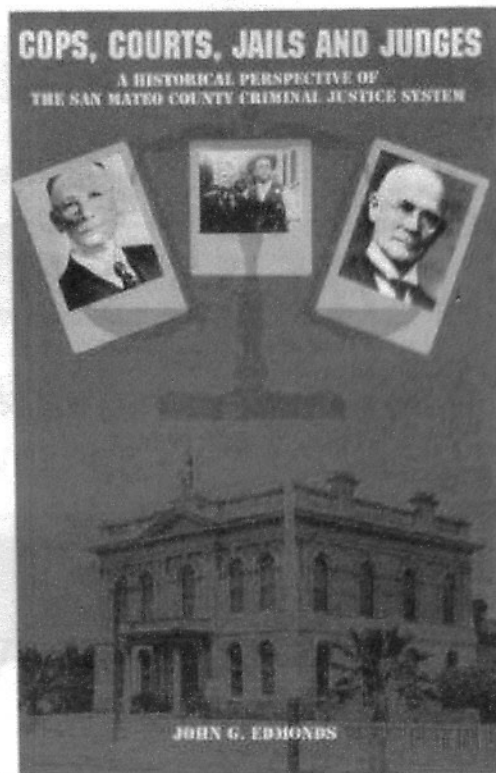
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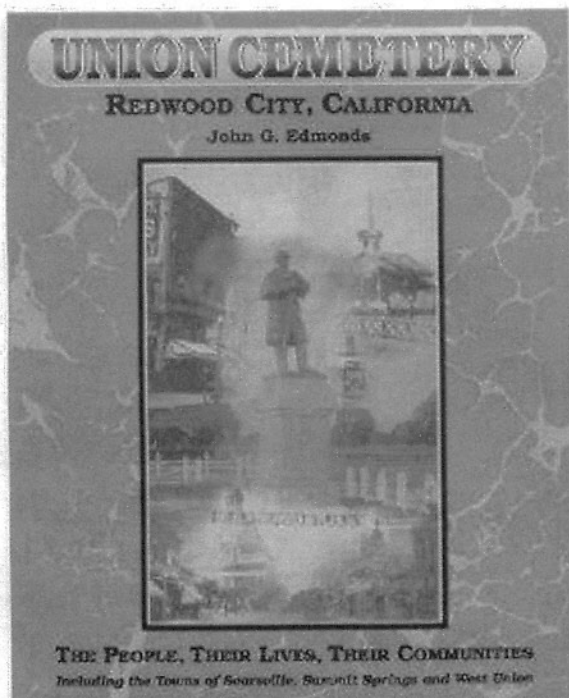
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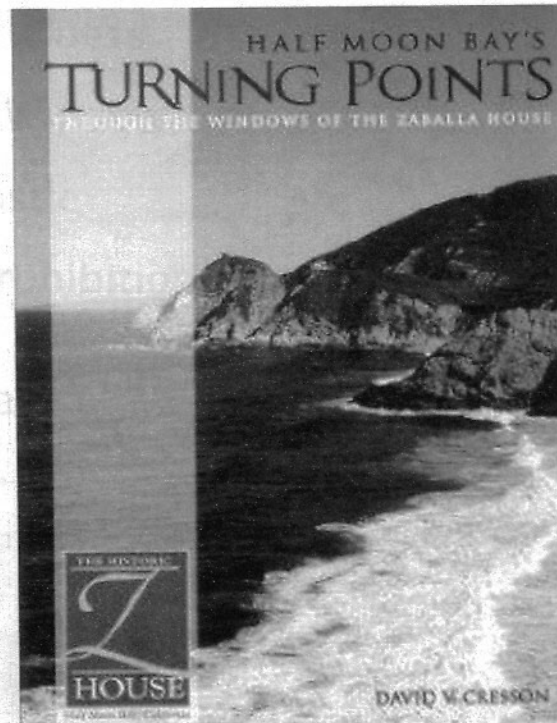
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