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(1)

# Belmont Memories

By RUSSELL A. ESTEP

Unless you have lived here for some time you may not be aware that you are living in what used to be one of the old Spanish Land Grants. This one where Belmont is located was called "Rancho de las Pulgas." (Ranch of the Fleas) This land grant was given to Arguello.

It is said that his home was in a log cabin on the south side of San Carlos Avenue, at the intersection of Cordilleras. There used to be a good spring there, which probably is presently hooked to the sewer.

The Rancho contained large acreage, comprising much of Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City. Records show it to have been 12 square leagues, also that it was four leagues in length and one league in width.

You will find that Arguello's widow and son later lived one block north of San Carlos Ave, on the west side of Cedar St. and that they were in that location when California became a state.

S.M. Mezes, an attorney, represented the Arguellos in clearing their titles in 1850 and he was given 3/20ths of the Rancho for his services. Mr. (or Senor) Mezes represented the Arguellos before the Federal Land Commission, the Federal Courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Finally the Arguello's land titles were cleared.

Mr. Mezes could have chosen any part of the large Rancho for his home—but he chose Belmont. You will still find a part of Belmont land titles listed as "Mezes Tract," and a street here carries his name.

Of course there have been many other tracts here in Belmont since

then. One of the others was "Bay View Heights" on the west side of what is now El Camino Real, at the south end of Belmont.

This subdivision was laid out by the Bay View Heights Corporation in the 1920s. The Bay View Heights was originally the only restricted portion of our city. The tile-roof homes were of 1200 square feet floor space. The Belmont Country Club Subdivisions, No. One to No. 10, were all laid out and sold by the Monroe, Miller, and Lyon people between 1924 and 1927.

Now let's go back away. Count Cipriani bought land from the Arguello's, and started to construct a large home. He returned to Italy to take part in the Garibaldi wars, and in 1854 sold his ranch to William Chapman Ralston.

Mr. Ralston added on to the large house until eventually it had 50 bedrooms, and it became the show-place it still is today. The house is a State and National landmark, and is open for tours. The Sisters of Notre Dame own it, and occupy some of the bedrooms.

If you haven't toured the Ralston home, this is something you should consider doing. To see it, you drive around the little center divider on the north side of Ralston Ave., where the driveway leads up the hill to Notre Dame College.

Follow the narrow paved driveway along through the trees for approximately two city blocks, and there you will find the huge old mansion on your right and just ahead you will see Mr. Ralston's old stone carriage home.

This should give you a start in seeing our Belmont. I will tell you more next week.

(3)

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

Continuing from last week about the source of Belmont street names.

Sixth Ave. in Belmont used to be named Schmoll St., for the Schmoll family who lived on the street.

Furlong St. was named for James Furlong, a Belmont Postmaster.

Waltermire, Emmett, and O'Neill Sts. were all named for the early owners of the "pink" building on Old County Road, at Ralston Avenue.

Hainline St. was named for one of our city engineers who laid out the area.

Davey Glen St. was named for Keith Davey, President of the Davey Tree Surgery Co., a National Organization.

Willow Lane was formerly Willow St., named for the Williams and Rowland families — the only people living on the street at first.

Sharon Ave. was named for former Senator Sharon of Nevada. Sharon was a Director of the Bank of California, and it was he who was most instrumental in not allowing William C. Ralston any time at all to replace the \$5,000,000.00 the bank accounts were short that audit day in 1876.

Sharon replaced the money and took Ralston's property in Belmont. Mrs. Ralston arranged to get possession of the little gardener's cottage at Carlmont, after Mr. Ralston's death the following day, and she moved there.

Robin Whipple Way was named for the first boy from Belmont to be killed in World War II. Mrs. Whipple, a widow, lived in Belmont with her large family, and Robin was her eldest son.

Pullman Ave. was named for a member of the Pullman family. He was the inventor of the sleeping cars. The Pullman family owned about nine acres at the N.W. corner of Alameda de las Pulgas and Ralston Avenue, and their log cabin hunting lodge burned there several years ago when Mrs. Annette Alexander's chauffeur went to sleep and let a log roll out of the fireplace onto the carpet. I'll tell you more about this later.

Bragato Road was named for the Bragato Brothers, who were paving and earth-moving contractors.

Quarry Road was named for the large quarry on what used to be a very large hill — or mountain. Many people referred to it as "Belmont Mountain." The hill was used for redrock fill when the Bayshore Highway was built.

A Japanese family named Kamiya raised flowers on the north end of the mountain, and people named Newhall lived on the south end. Newhalls had a long driveway up to their house from El Camino Real (now Old County Road). Later Newhalls sold to DeNivernay.

There are many other street names to be described but let's digress now for other things. Did you know we had an airport in Belmont for many years? It was located where the Mae Nesbit School is now, and it extended over Sterling Downs. The gravel runway ran N.W. and S.E. Flying lessons were given, and short airplane rides were arranged. There were quite a few airplanes tied down there.

Also during World War II there used to be some army barracks on the north side of Ralston Ave. where the Bay View Plaza Shopping Center is located. Many soldiers were stationed there during WWII. The barracks were mostly covered with tar paper, as though those in charge expected a short war.

Our present Congregational Church was originally the club house for the Belmont Country Club Properties. For a while during World War II it was used as an advance electronics school. (After the war it was used a while for medical research by Kaiser Industries.) When the electronics school was there some of the young men used to come down to the pink building (now the Country Store) so they could visit with the Belmont girls at the USO.

The soldiers on the flat ground wanted all the Belmont girls for themselves so they told everyone the boys from up on our hills were "hillbillies." The electronic experts were working on very secret things so they went along with this, and removed their shoes, rolled up their pants, and had great fun.

More next week.

# (4) Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

After the dog racing track moved to Bayshore City, which had been incorporated to accommodate them, Belmont didn't remain quiet very long. Some people said to trace one's ancestry it would be very easy for a geologist to obtain names from the bedroom walls at the old Belmont Hotel. (red bldg.)

The entertainment girls found that a good place to write names of their clients. Bootleg whiskey (and sometimes better stuff) was dispensed at both the Belmont Hotel and the Van's restaurant. Some people referred to Belmont as Rattlesnake Gulch!

The newly built Bayshore Highway became inadequate in only a few years. It had to be widened, and since the huge mountain between El Camino Real and the Bayshore had all been used for fill for the narrow highway, more dirt had to come from some other place.

There was another quarry on the west side of Crystal Springs Lakes and dirt was trucked from there for the widening. For a while the large trucks ran almost continuously behind one another.

Spilled dirt was falling from the trucks as they came down Ralston Avenue, and citizens complained. Then the city council passed an ordinance that these trucks would have to be separated by at least one minute.

A terrible thing happened when the brakes on one loaded truck failed on the hill just west of Alameda de las Pulgas. The truck rolled faster and faster until the driver guided it into

the large tree which used to stand on the south side of Ralston near where our Carlmont Shopping Center is located.

The loaded truck hit the tree and the gasoline tank exploded, engulfing the driver's cab and the driver in roaring flames. The driver died from the impact. The load of earth slid forward covering him. He had been killed, cremated, and buried. But he saved the lives of several Belmont people who had been driving ahead of him on Ralston Avenue. He was a hero, yet no one seems to recall his name!

To make room for the widening of Bayshore Highway it became necessary to remove Shantytown. This consisted of many small shanties east of Bayshore, in the general area of Marine World.

Many people from San Francisco had used these for hunting lodges, and a few people lived in the shanties all the time. Just before the shanties were burned by our fire department, I called on one occupant. It was very interesting to me to walk along the board walk, all the time hearing the sea gulls, and with the wind blowing from my left, and the tide running noisily in a nearby slough.

When the tide changed every seven hours the people's toilet was flushed. They carried their drinking and cooking water in buckets from old "Sarge's" service station. His rock-walled station had been built on the west side of Bayshore highway, at Ralston Avenue after the first highway was built. He had been in the army during World War I and

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## History

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was proud of this.

The people whom I visited said their annual shanty rent was only \$5. I'm sure they were never able to find such low rent again. Shantytown was destroyed in 1953.

Although there are at least two individuals presently engaged in movie sound track work in Belmont, there were movies made here in the 1920s. They were produced by the "Paul Gershwin Movie Co." The movies were the "Pop Tuttle Series," and were often run throughout the country for fill-ins at hundreds of theatres.

The producers got permission to change the name of Belmont on the train station to "Plum Center" dur-

ing filming. Many Belmont people were used as "extras" in these movies. The films usually began when "Pop Tuttle" met a train.

At first he used a horse and buggy, then later a Model T Ford, both re-built to resemble a short-run bus. After meeting the train Pop Tuttle would lengthen his act by driving around awhile, then he would return to the old Belmont Hotel with persons who supposedly were guests off the train.

A very overweight actress was always in the scenes. In one scene the automobile had been arranged so one end could be raised to allow the fat girl to board the train more easily. The pictures were referred to as "light comedies."

More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

Don Jose Dario Arguello once owned Belmont. Of course the city wasn't here yet, but he owned the area where our city now is. In 1795 Arguello was given a large land grant by King Carlos of Spain. It comprised the areas of Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont, and a part of San Mateo. He had arrived in San Gabriel with his bride in 1781, then came north as an Ensign to the newly established presidio in San Francisco. Later he was Governor of California, when the Spanish capitol was in Monterey. Don Jose Dario was given his grant in appreciation of his military service.

One of his descendants is living here in Belmont. When I learned this, I was as amazed as I would have been had I found "Friday's" footprints on the beach!

This man lives on Harbor Boulevard, and he is large in stature, has the manners of a real gentleman, and shows every indication of his heritage.

The Arguello name was formed in ancient times by the District Councils of Val de Lugeros, Medina de Arguello and la Tercia del Camino, in the steep mountains of Leon in Spain. This was near the judicial district of La Vercilla. It was from there that the family came to North America.

Records tell of knightings of seven Arguellos in the 1500's and 1600's in the old kingdom of Leon. They were a great family of nobles.

Upon taking possession of the 35,000 acres here on the Peninsula, the Arguellos began raising cattle. They had a market for all they could raise, at the presidio in San Francisco, and at Mission Dolores. In the event that any were left over, they could be skinned, and the hides sold to ship captains who would take the hides to the east coast to be made into shoes, and other leather products. The rancho prospered, and descendants of Arguello continued cattle and horse raising for several generations. Following the gold rush in 1849, and California's entry into the Union September 9th, 1850, the livestock market was very strong.

Even as late as 1885 beef cattle were being driven through Belmont to slaughter houses at Butchertown on Third Street in San Francisco. Mrs. Adelia Vannier once told me she had seen the herds when she was a girl, and she told of the cowboys all wearing leather chaps so they wouldn't get hooked. These were very wild cattle.

Some old records tell about cattle prices and at times the cattle only brought \$2 per head. When it was only hides to be sold the early cattle raisers were satisfied to accept this. Labor was cheap, Arguello's land was free and clear, gardens provided most food that was needed, so a profit was still possible. And there were no taxes for many years.

After California became a state, and Senora Arguello had deeded some of her land to Mezes as payment for straightening out title problems, and after her sons had received their portion of the large land grant, each recipient raised livestock. Records show that ranching flourished here on the Peninsula.

Redwood City has an Arguello Street, and San Carlos an Arguello Park, but Belmont hasn't honored the historic family.

Shouldn't something be chosen to carry their name here? After all, they really seem to deserve such an honor. They had owned Belmont. More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

Mr. William C. Ralston, who was Belmont's most prominent early citizen, had a great past before coming here. He didn't just "pop out from under a rock," full-grown man. Everyone has heard about how he later had a huge income from the Comstock Lode at Virginia City, and of his many projects in San Francisco, and other California areas. But what about before he arrived in Belmont?

Mr. Ralston was born in Ohio in 1815, and died in San Francisco in 1885. Among other things before coming here, he had worked as a clerk on a river boat on the Mis-

issippi on trips to New Orleans. As a young man, he had also owned one-half interest in another river boat. Then one of his friends wrote to him from Panama that money could be made easier there. This was a long time before the Panama Canal was built. The route across the Isthmus was only a rough trail. There were thousands of people arriving from the east coast by ship, and from the Gulf coast. All wanted to go to San Francisco. The year was 1849 and gold had been discovered the year before at Coloma. Mr. Ralston joined his friend at Cristobal, and his age was only 23.

He and his friend formed a partnership and arranged to have trails widened. They obtained a boat to take people on the Chagres River, then the lake, and then by mule train across the divide and down to Panama City. The trip could be made, with considerable difficulty, in 10 days. Many of their laborers contracted yellow fever or malaria, but young Ralston remained in good health. He helped to establish a hospital, and he had many improvements made in the local cemetery where many of his employees were soon buried.

He began planning a railroad across the Isthmus. He thought this could be built, and that it would speed up moving people and equipment to the Pacific side. He studied the route and roughly mapped it. He decided that if he could transport more people he would make more money.

He and his friend were soon able

to acquire an old ship which not only had sails, but sidewheels. Their ship operated from Panama to San Francisco. In 1851 Mr. Ralston traveled to San Francisco in the course of business. Arriving, he found San Francisco already had a population of 55,000 and business appeared to be booming. The gold rush had brought thousands of people to the Bay area, many overland, and many by Ralston's route across Panama. He recognized the opportunities in California. When he returned to Panama he was exuberant when telling his partner about what he had seen.

Mr. Ralston was only 25 years of age, and was meeting very wealthy and influential people. Mr. Vanderbilt had many interests in San Francisco, and offered Mr. Ralston a high salary to work for him. Mr. Ralston accepted, and took up residence in San Francisco.

In the year 1864, at age 29, he bought his Belmont house from Count Cipriani.

No story about Horatio Alger could ever match the success story of William C. Ralston. Perhaps this is why such a high percentage of Belmont young people so quickly outdistance people from other areas when entering the business world.

# Belmont<sup>(7)</sup> History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

You must agree that our city is unique, now that you have learned that many Belmont streets were named for Belmont people. Our Belmont is also unique in other ways.

Although we know of no minerals in Belmont, there was a school of mines here in 1903. It was called the Western School of Mines. It was operated and owned by Prof. John C. Jens, and classes were conducted in his large home on the N.W. corner of Ralston Ave. and South Road. The Castle Rock Apartments occupy that location now.

Prof. Jens never had many students, but just enough to hold classes. His students dug tunnels into the hill south of Ralston Ave. so they could acquire practical experience. They needed to learn how to timber a mine overhead to keep the earth from falling in on them.

At least one of their tunnels still exists. The entrance has been sealed, but two years ago a boy came to me asking about a mine entrance he had found! I advised him not to try to enter for there could easily be a dangerous cave-in.

The Jens house was built on solid rock, and had a good view of San Francisco, and Mt. Hamilton could be seen from the upper rooms. The school closed its operation after a few years.

Presently the Fluor Mining Co. has offices across from Marine World, on Marine-World Parkway, but they do not operate a school of mining. However, they do have over 200 employees, and their building is said to

be the largest office building on the Peninsula. Unfortunately, their building is within the city limits of Redwood City and not in Belmont.

Recently you have probably read about the up-graded old railroad station in Millbrae. The Belmont Chamber of Commerce tried to get the Southern Pacific Co. to up-grade the old Belmont station, but it didn't succeed.

At one of their meetings during 1952 this was first discussed and a vote was taken to ask the S.P. to send a man from their company to present their side of the story, and to hear ours.

The Chamber of Commerce and Belmont citizens all seemed to want a new station, or at least, to have our old station up-graded. When the S.P. man came to our meeting at Bondy's (now the Iron Gate) he died just before he was to talk at the meeting. He had a heart attack at the head table. The S.P. never sent Belmont another speaker.

They had our historic station torn down and it was replaced with a

building that had been a former real estate office from east Hillsdale Blvd. in San Mateo. The building was to be a combination station and restaurant, just as it remains today.

Do you remember our Belmont Dog Racing Track? It was located south of Ralston Ave. between Old County Road and the Bayshore Highway, in 1931. Night races were held with large crowds attending. Many Belmont men worked at the track. Others who didn't work there objected to the gambling and what they considered rowdiness connected with the crowds. Finally an election was held and the largest vote was to close down the racetrack.

Soon afterward the track owners were successful in starting a new town, south of, and adjacent to, South San Francisco. They incorporated it and named it Bayshore City. Our Belmont track and all the dogs moved to the new location. For a while Belmont was quiet again. Then something else happened.

More next week.

# Belmont History

(8)

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

People living in Belmont have always been proud of their city. If you chance to meet someone from Belmont in a far-away city and ask where he is from you will notice that he wants to impress you when he says he is "from Belmont, California." In the 1920s there were only a few families living here. Did you know that those people saved our city's name? It happened this way.

Some promoters from elsewhere didn't realize the strong camaraderie in Belmont. They spent thousands of dollars dredging a channel from the Bay to Belmont. Their intent was to divert ships here that had expected to dock in San Francisco. The men intended to change the name of Belmont to "Port of San Francisco."

They expected to profit greatly by changing our city's name! The promoters didn't foresee a negative reaction here. They failed to discuss their project with Belmont people until a channel had been dredged. To attract attention to their project they had an old WWI navy destroyer tied up here for many months. A large sign by the first Bayshore Highway proclaimed the area to be "Port of San Francisco." Then the promoters received a shock. They were informed by the post office department that a vote by the Belmont citizens would be required before any change of name took place. The promoters were not entitled to establish a post office because nobody lived permanently at their project.

A meeting of Belmont citizens

was held at the Belmont schoolhouse. Most local people attended. There weren't many, for the town's population was less than 900, including children and the aged.

The postmaster told the assembled Belmont citizens and the promoters that it would be difficult — if not impossible — to change everyone's address immediately. He said great confusion could result. The citizens didn't want the change. They voted to retain the name "Belmont" for our city, much to the disappointment of the promoters.

Following this, the navy destroyer was soon removed, and the promoters disappeared into the woodwork — nobody seems to know where. But Belmont benefited, for when the promoters left, the ship channel remained, and presently our Belmont Sea Scouts use it.

Have you seen the plaque just north of there at the S.W. corner of Ralston Avenue and Old County Road? This was placed during our bi-centennial in 1976 to commemorate a Spanish Expedition two hundred years earlier, in 1776. But there had been an earlier Spanish Expedition through here in 1774.

According to the log of the earlier Expedition they had turned eastward from the coast and traveled to the location of our Belmont, through what the Indians called Devil's Canyon. (Presently our Ralston Avenue) These men weren't concerned that their route was through Canada del Diablo for they had faith in God. They had Father Francisco Patau along. So why worry?

# Belmont<sup>(9)</sup> History

By Russel Estep

Unless you were familiar with Belmont before WWII you may find it difficult to visualize the many changes here. Did you see the General Motors Exhibit at the Seattle World's Fair in 1962? Their diorama displayed a town with many houses. It had narrow streets, wagons drawn by horses, and some large trees on a hill nearby. In the moving diorama the model houses would be replaced with modern structures. The street became wider, cars replaced horses, and after 50 years, the only thing to remind you of the earlier town was the larger trees and the hill nearby. Belmont's changes have been even more drastic.

Can you visualize Belmont's area west of ElCamino Real with only a very few houses, and our hills farther out, as bare, except for brush and some trees? The unpaved streets were mostly narrow, one-lane roads, with prevailing winds blowing swirling dust.

Many rattlesnakes were killed each summer. When Ralston school was built, children found a rattlesnake inside a classroom. In 1952 when Walter Schueler built his new house at the west end of All View Way, he killed several rattlesnakes. Belmont was very rural.

Mr. L.C. Vannier had raised prize chickens earlier in Belmont and his daughter, Miss Doris Vannier, once showed me a trophy he had received for his chickens. His were White Rocks, Plymouth Rocks, and Silver Wyandottes. His trophy was dated 1913.

Other people raised dogs here. The breeds were Samoyed, Chows, Cokers Spaniels, and Irish Setters. All Champions. Some people kept milk cows. Belmont was very quiet. Roosters crowed in the early mornings.

In 1956, when Mr. Charles H. Cook was Mayor, our City Council appointed Mr. Al Penna to be Chicken Inspector, and to report any loud-crow-ing rooster to the police department. Al told me that he never got up to report any, so nobody received a citation. He liked to hear them crow.

West of El Camino Real and north of Ruth Avenue, there was a wooden frame covered with cloth, under which Chinese raised flowers. Their flowers were mostly Asters, Sweet Peas, and Chrysanthemums. The

flowers were also commercially grown on the north side of "Newhall's Hill," which many people called "Belmont Mountain." The large mountain was between the railroad tracks and Bayshore Highway, and south of Harbor Blyd.

Belmont has changed now, even more than was shown by the Seattle diorama. Our trees are larger and the one big hill is gone. Chickens, dogs, and cows, and commercial flowers, are no longer grown here. No rattlesnakes have been seen for years. Our streets are paved and wider, and houses cover the hills. Of course we still have breezes, but they prevent smog. The wind is usually prevalent in the afternoon. Sometimes it starts suddenly.

A few years ago while I was showing a house on Chevy Street, the prospective buyer and I were standing beside my car after coming out of the house when I remarked to her that "she would like living there in the little valley, because the wind didn't blow as strongly as it did farther out in the Belmont hills." Then my straw hat blew off. The lady laughed, and I didn't make a sale, but being in Belmont is more important than money! I haven't worn a straw hat since, however!

More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

(10)

Belmont has had people with very diverse ideas right from the start. However, Belmonters have been fairly evenly divided on most things.

The diversities of thinking in Belmont first came to my attention in 1916, when my uncle Ernest Williams gave me a ride around Belmont in his new Dodge car. When looking for an address on one of our narrow, rough, dirt roads, he stopped to ask a pedestrian how to find the people. The man pointed eastward. We proceeded farther along and met another person and my uncle inquired again. This man assured us we would find the people far to the west. Anyway we found the place.

Near the start of WWII I had won a contest for writing an article on "Why Everyone Should Learn To Fly." My prize was to be a short flight with Christopherson from the Belmont airport. As we climbed into the small airplane he explained to me that he wished the runway ran in a slightly different direction, but the man who put it there had different ideas. We were soon high above the hayfield comprising Hillisdale. To the north I could see the telephone building in San Francisco. It was the tallest building for many years.

Soon we were over west Belmont and I was impressed by seeing so much vacant land from the air. Thousands of useable lots, I thought. Then we were over the ridge where Crestview is located in west San Carlos. Below was the large old house on the point of land at the east side of the ridge. The house had been converted to a restaurant. Many Belmont people liked to go there to enjoy the panoramic view while eating.

As we circled and came in for our landing I saw below us the hay field

south of Ralston Avenue, west of Bayshore where the old dog race track had been in 1931. A builder was soon to build homes there and he named the subdivision "Home View." The name was appropriate since all you could see from most houses was the home of neighbors!

The Belmont airport property was not within our city limits, and when Oddsted Construction Co. bought most of the land for housing, the company wasn't immediately successful in getting Belmont to take the property into the city and to provide utility services. Some who were on the Planning Commission said "Yes," while others said decidedly "No." At this point the San Mateo group offered to provide utilities if the land could be a part of their city. Belmont acted, and took in the area. Oddsted built the homes. They named their subdivision "Sterling Downs." Houses could be built for only \$3.50 per square foot, and usually sold for \$9,500 up to \$10,500, but inflation soon caused prices to rise.

Belmont can still expand upward, but this won't happen for a while. Do you remember the diversity in San Francisco when the Transamerica Corp wanted to build a tall building? Neighbors turned out in great numbers to complain to the Planning Commission that their adjoining property would never have sunlight again if the tall building was allowed to be built. The architect changed his plans so the tall building had a sharp point at the top.

In 50 years Belmont might have tall buildings. Maybe pointed at the top. Not room enough for a restaurant. Just a table and two chairs where people with diverse thoughts could enjoy dinner and a view while they tried to settle their diversities.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

Belmont has always endeavored to educate its youth and to help them in every way. This, of course, helps to perpetuate our city. Belmont's first school was held in a real estate man's living room in 1859. A few children from San Carlos and Belmont attended. Then in 1873 a one-room schoolhouse was used on the Old County Road. As Belmont's population grew, it became inadequate. Then in 1890 a two-story schoolhouse, with several classrooms, was completed on the east side of Old County Road, about a half-block south of Ralston Avenue. Presently, in 1981, Belmont has seven public schools, in addition to two parochial schools.

The parochial schools are the Notre Dame school and the School of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The public schools are the Ralston, Louis Barrett, Mae Nesbit, Fox, Cipriani, McDougal, and Central.

Most were named for Belmont individuals. Mr. Louis Barrett was a Belmont School Trustee, City Councilman, Mayor, and also Chief Forest Ranger for Northern California.

Benjamin Fox was Superior Court Judge at the time when the election was held to decide whether Belmont or Redwood City would be the coun-

ty seat. Although Belmont had won the election, Judge Fox decided that there had been a mouse in the wood-box. Two hundred fifty votes favoring Belmont came from a tiny community of Crystal Springs, and it only had 25 voters! Another election was held, and that gave the county seat to Redwood City. This happened in 1856.

Mrs. Mae Nesbit was one of Belmont's much loved, and long-time School Superintendents.

The Cipriani school was, of course, named for Count Cipriani — one of our first residents. The Ralston school was named for William C. Ralston.

Governor John McDougal lived in Belmont in 1854 after resigning as California's second governor.

The Central School used to be where the Safeway store is located, at a location that was then the center of town. When it was moved to the hillside north of Ralston Avenue the name was retained.

Getting back to the Barrett family; their home was where the Wells Fargo bank is presently located. Mr. Barrett planted a small redwood tree which has grown into the tall, beautiful tree we see there. The tree was used by the Chamber of Commerce for Belmont's Christmas tree for many years. However, there were earlier Christmas trees.

Our Chamber of Commerce has tried to help children with their celebration of Christmas. An earlier tree was another tall redwood that stood one-half block west of El Camino Real, on the south side of Ralston Avenue. It was removed when office buildings were constructed there.

Still another redwood tree was decorated by the Chamber of Commerce before that. It is on the west side of El Camino Real, one block and a half south of Ralston Avenue, in front of what used to be Atlas Cleaners.

Presently Belmont's official Christmas tree is growing up through Pine Brook Inn. Each Christmas the Chamber of Commerce holds a cocktail party there, and during their party they turn on the tree lights. Many Belmont school children wait outside for the switch to be thrown. Then they applaud and leave.

Inside the Inn, the grown-ups continue with their adult celebrating, all glad to have helped Belmont's children. Some of the adults become so happy they seem to "glow." If this happened anywhere but in Belmont I might think it was for another reason.

More next week.

(12)

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

Important people have lived in Belmont right from the start. A descendant of the Arguello family still lives here. Count Cipriani was here in 1850. He had bought some land from the Arguello family, then built a large house. In 1854 he sold his property to William C. Ralston. Senator Sharon (from Nevada) took over the Ralston property when Mr. Ralston's bank records were discovered to be more than five million dollars short.

Before Senator Sharon died here, his daughter had married Lord Hesketh. The wedding was held in the large mansion. Later Sharon's son developed Sharon Heights, on the west side of Menlo Park. You may remember that large shingled house which stood north of Page Mill Road. It is gone now, to make room for a shopping center. That was Sharon's son's home.

Many other well-known people moved to Belmont. Former Governor McDougall lived in our city, where Twin Pines Park is located. Later George Center, director of the Bank of California, lived here.

Mr. Philip C. Habib makes his home here. You have probably noticed his name in the newspapers for it has been he who has traveled to Arabian countries and Israel to try to keep peace. He represents our country, and our President, and Belmont.

Mr. George Tiegel, owner of the Tiegel Manufacturing Co., has his factory adjacent to Belmont on Bragato Way. His complicated battery assembly machines were invented by him and they are exported all over the world with Belmont, Calif. stamped on the sides.

Mr. Keith Davey. (Davey Tree Surgery) lives in Belmont. Mr. Swift, owner of the Swift Lumber Co. and of several steamships, used to live here before he passed away some years ago. The Swift Tract was named for him.

Many well-known nuclear scientists live in Belmont, as well as top men and women of our government. If you will go to any library and look

in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the West, or Who's Who in California, you will see names of your neighbors. Belmont has a greater percentage listed than nearly any city in the U.S.A. Of course our city is three times larger than Atherton and Hillsborough, but the percentage is important.

If we listed all our Belmont prominent persons in this short newspaper column, it would more than fill the entire page. There are not only hundreds, but many thousands here.

When you are in a Belmont store you will be rubbing elbows with prominent, and well-known people. Many bank presidents live in Belmont, as do famous authors, artists, and some of those well-known sports figures you see on nightly T.V. Also "Scotty" Campbell, one of the most decorated heroes in the Canadian army during W.W.I., lives in Belmont. Scotty is 93 and still active, and now and then you will see him walking in our downtown area. On week-ends you may see some of the others out trimming their lawns and shrubs.

These prominent and outstanding people might at first glance look like people anywhere. But take a closer look. Have you ever traveled to Kentucky, and Texas? Surely those race horses standing in the shade in the white-washed corrals in Kentucky don't resemble the horses you might see in the Texas pastures. There seems to be something distinguished in the appearance of our Belmont people. Our Belmont people with Phd's, EE degrees, Md., LLD., and MA degrees, etc., seem to have a look of success about them.

People living in Belmont are proud to raise their children here, where their neighbors are polite and understanding. While there seems to be considerable crime in some other cities our Belmont crime rate isn't high.

Belmont has been proven to be an excellent place to raise a family. In 1930 the population was about 900, and now it is over 26,000. This can't all be because the night trains whistle.

More next week.

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

For many years the Alameda de las Pulgas has been one of our busiest streets. Many interesting things occurred on the "Alameda", as most of us call it: especially on that portion south of Ralston Avenue.

If you haven't lived here for more than 25 years you won't recall that there used to be a jog in the Alameda where the Carlmont Shopping Center is located. There was a boy's school at the location. It was first called the Belmont School for Boys, then the Reid School. The Alameda turned south off Ralston Avenue about where the Bank of America is located. It passed around the football field, then turned westward to its present location. The Reid School had been established in 1885, and was considered to be one of the best boy's schools anywhere. In 1918 the school was taken over by Archbishop Hanna. The school was renamed St. Joseph's Military Academy. Then in 1952 the property was taken over by the Sisters of Mercy, and renamed The School of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It became a school for both boys and girls. The school retained its excellent reputation. When it was a boy's school, people often said that enough religion was interjected into the curriculum that boys from the school never got themselves into any trouble while there, or afterward. One boy remarked, "How could we? We were down on our knees quite a bit."

About 1956, Mr. Almon Roth bought most of the property for a shopping center. Many of the school buildings were demolished, but a few west of the Alameda were retained. These are still being used for a school.

From the present shopping center,

to the farther end of what is now Carlmont High School grounds, the Alameda used to be a narrow, two lane, graveled roadway. It had tall eucalyptus trees on each side, and shrubs were growing along Mr. Bourdette's fence. It was a relaxing experience just to drive along there.

Mr. Bourdette owned the property where the Carlmont High School is now located. His home sat back from the street and had a large palm tree out in front. He had a fine pear and prune orchard.

Did you know that prunes are picked off the ground and not from the trees? The sugar content is greater if the prunes are allowed to ripen until they detach themselves from the tree limbs.

People who picked up prunes usually were paid 10 cents per box, and by working very hard and fast they could usually earn as much as \$2 per day for 10 hours work.

When the Carlmont High School was finished it was reported to be one of the best designed high schools in California. Costs were higher than expected and some voters were unhappy, but they accepted the project eventually.

Mr. Bourdette had held back Belmont's incorporation in 1927. His suit proclaimed that he hadn't been consulted about the city including his land in the city limits. However, in 1929 the court decided in our city's favor, and our Belmont finally became a city—with a prune orchard.

Each summer many Belmont youths picked prunes in Belmont. They were not only on their knees at the St. Joseph's Military Academy, but at the Bourdette place.

Belmont had no crime. Maybe that had something to do with it.

More next week.

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

Many people living in Belmont don't know how lucky they are to be living here. Did you know that when the big earthquake hit April 18, 1906 that Belmont encountered little, if any damage? A few years ago Mr. Al Fagerberg, who was associated with the San Mateo County disaster planning, told me that in the event of a disaster, such as a major earthquake, there were plans to evacuate people to Belmont. The reason we had no damage during the 1906 quake was because much of what was then Belmont was built on solid rock. There are still houses here which withstood the 1906 earthquake. Many other old houses have been bulldozed down to make room for more modern structures.

The Ralston home is among the old houses still standing. Several old houses on Sixth Avenue, and the pink building known as The Country Store were here. Also the building directly across Ralston Avenue, known as The Opportunity Shop, was here. The old red building north of Ralston Avenue, on the east side of Old County Road withstood the earthquake. At that time it was a part of the Belmont Hotel.

Another old house on the east side of Old County Road, about one-half block south of Ralston Avenue, was here. The small concrete building at the north end of the old pink building was a saloon during the 1906 earthquake, and it was reported that they didn't even lose a bottle!

The dangerous San Andreas earthquake fault lies along the center of the lakes west of Belmont. Our city has been growing closer and closer to it year after year. Yet builders report that even there they often encounter bedrock near the surface.

The little Episcopal church on 5th Avenue was moved to its present site in 1935 from the west side of Old County Road, about a half block south of Ralston Avenue. It had no

damage during the big quake.

Other houses which withstood the earthquake and which have been bulldozed down, were the Splivalo house, which was the home of the Splivalo family, until it became the California Sanitarium. It was located on Lake Street, near Lyall Drive. Another was the O'Neill home on the east side of Old County Road. It was bulldozed down only a few months ago, in early 1981.

The Hanson house at Ralston Avenue and Sixth Avenue was here in 1906. It was removed to make room for Sixth Avenue to connect with Hill Street. It had been used by the Buena Campbell Sanitarium for many years. After the removal of the home, the Sanitarium owners built a new sanitarium farther up the hillside.

Mrs. Annette Alexander's large home and sanitarium withstood the earthquake. It too was bulldozed so the Belmont Hills Sanitarium could be built.

In 1906 at the time of the earthquake, the George Center house in Twin Pines Park hadn't yet been built. I have a newspaper clipping stating that their large, new home was completed in October 1906, several months after the big quake.

Old-timers in Belmont have felt various types of earthquakes and they know they aren't always alike. They have experienced the rolling shakes, the single big bump quakes which diminish gradually, the revolving quakes, and just common shakes. From experience in the past, Belmont people may assume that when the next big shake comes, there may not be damage, except for broken windows: providing the next big quake is of a type similar to 1906. However, windows were smaller in 1906, and Belmont might have some broken plate-glass windows.

Aren't we lucky to be in Belmont?

More next week.

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

When the early settlers came to California many tried to settle where they had an available water supply. They preferred to live by a creek so they would have drinking water and a place where their livestock could be watered. These early settlers usually established riparian rights to their water supply.

Belmont has one of these live creeks. On some maps it is listed as "Belmont Creek" but most folks call it "The" creek. Maybe we are lucky that it is known as a "creek" for many easterners referred to creeks as "runs." They have Bull Run, Pine Run, Cedar Run, Porcupine Run, and many more. In California we only have one creek named "Run" and that one is east of Redding, in Shasta County. It is "Oak" Run, and it was named by old Dan Hunt when he settled there in 1850. Anyway, a "Run" might suit us better than what some miners named streams in the Sierras, where they called them "Cricks"!

In 1850 when Count Cipriani lived here he saw the large spring, with its outflow going down the canyon toward the Bay. Yet he didn't do anything to develop it. The spring was located in the canyon south of what we call Ralston School. Development, and use of the spring water came when William C. Ralston arrived here. Water was needed to irrigate the many plants and shrubs he had brought from places around the world, and also to irrigate his hay field in the valley west of his house. Some reports say he tried to find water under his large house, and that miners borrowed from the Comstock Lode dug a huge cistern big enough for a small boat, but the Sisters at Notre Dame report they haven't ever seen it.

Mr. Ralston had bought his house from Count Cipriani in 1854 and workmen immediately began improving it. He didn't have electricity, and his best method for irrigating was to use gravity water. Accordingly, he had many Chinese laborers construct an earth-fill dam to form a lake from the outflow of the big spring in the canyon in west Belmont. Today we call the lake "Water Dog" Lake.

Much of the creek is covered over, yet it appears at Pine Brook Inn and the nursery beside it, and also between El Camino Real and Old County Road.

Water Dog Lake is owned by the Sisters at Notre Dame, but they lease it back to the City of Belmont for \$1 per year. There is an old dirt wagon road going up into the canyon west of Bonnie Brae Retirement Center, on Carlmont Drive. However, the gate is usually locked. There haven't been any drownings in the lake for several years, and no life guard is on duty. The lake is deep and not safe for poor swimmers.

During heavy rains the creek rises from the runoff from the hills. Now and then the creek rises so it is out of its banks east of the railroad tracks. Several winters ago when the creek was muddy and roaring, debris caused it to back up near Sixth Avenue and it threatened to flood the downtown portion of Belmont. One of our city workers tried to clear the obstruction from under the Sixth Avenue culvert, but he slipped and disappeared in the darkness under the street, in the cold, brown flood waters.

When he didn't reappear downstream at the railroad track opening, another Belmont man tied a rope around his waist, then had other men hold the rope end, while he jumped into the creek waters to find the first man. He too, disappeared into the creek tunnel. Downstream a short distance, he found the first man desperately holding onto a projection. After tying his rope around the man, he signaled to those waiting on Sixth Avenue to start pulling them back upstream. By risking his life, he saved the city workman.

When you need help in Belmont there is always someone willing to risk his life for you.

More next week.

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

Belmont's first postmaster was a Mr. Flashner, appointed July 18, 1854. The alley on the north side of Ralston Avenue, between the Standard Service station and Bay View Plaza, was named for him. Perhaps not much of an honor for a man who helped make Belmont history, but how about Mr. Steinberger? He too did a great deal for early Belmont and they named a slough for him. All our streets weren't named for people.

About 25 years ago the sales manager for Conway and Culligan, San Mateo builders, came to my office and rolled out some blue prints on my desk. The prints were for a proposed sub-division.

"How would you like to sell some new houses?" the man asked.

I noticed that they planned to build far out on Ralston Avenue. Out beyond where the Ralston school is now located. I said, "Nobody would want to live so far out! You might as well build your houses at Lake Tahoe, Mt. Lassen, Tioga Pass, Yosemite, or way up on the Muir Trail!" That is how remote the area seemed 25 years ago. The man laughed, and rolled up his plans and left.

Conway and Culligan built the houses. Then they sold them as fast as the houses were constructed. They named the streets Tahoe, Lassen, Tioga, Yosemite, and Muir Way. Now Belmont homes occupy what was vacant land even farther out toward the west. It was hard to visualize that Belmont would grow so fast. Yet there was still vacant land. Realtors used to keep several hundred of their "for sale" signs on our vacant lots. Many were available. Although when the Belmont Country Club Properties subdivisions were being promoted at prices from \$500.00 to \$3,000.00 per lot, many sold for less after the promoters went bankrupt. Of course the promoters included memberships in the Country Club,

but anyone could buy a membership for about \$100 anyway.

To further illustrate the amount of Belmont's open space, you will be interested to know what happened when I was showing a lady property in San Juan canyon 35 years ago. As she glanced upward at the steep hillside, she remarked, "This looks like goat country."

"Oh no!" I told her. "This is in the City of Belmont."

A woman in Belmont raised goats, and she was pasturing them that day. When we drove around the next turn the entire hillside was covered with goats. My customer laughed.

Other streets named for individuals were Molitar, Monserrate, and Mills. Molitar was named for Augustus Molitar, and Monserrate for Simon Monserrate Mezes. He was the attorney who straightened out the land titles for the Arguello family after California became a state Sept. 9, 1850. Mills Avenue was named for Darius Ogden Mills, who was president of the Bank of California during the time when William C. Ralston was cashier. Later Mr. Mills became Secretary of the U.S. Treasury in Washington, D.C. His home was not in Belmont. It was at the north end of what later became Millbrae, up on the hillside. Tall trees surrounded his large white house, and you needed to drive west of El Camino Real a few blocks to see it. It is gone now, making room for many smaller homes.

Those old-timers still living in Belmont remember many changes. Perhaps it has been somewhat like seeing a young boy become a man. Or like seeing a flower spreading its petals reaching outward toward full bloom. Finding a suitable simile for the growth and the many changes in Belmont becomes difficult. Belmont is a wonderful city and its growth and changes will continue. But there is much more that I haven't told you. More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

Belmont's Twin Pines Park is beautiful, and probably the best small city park anywhere. If you haven't seen it, you should do so. Plan to take a picnic lunch and sit on one of the picnic benches among the trees beside the creek. You will hardly hear the traffic noise on Ralston Avenue and you will be surprised how rested you will be when you leave.

Belmont has owned the 17 acre park only a short time. It was bought with bond money for \$630,000 on June 9, 1973.

In addition to the large house, which had been built for Mr. George Center, and completed (according to a newspaper clipping) in October 1906, there is another smaller home there. The smaller home was where the Fisher family lived. The Fisher home was sold many years ago to people named Gardiner, and they also lived in it for many years.

In 1974 the Chamber of Commerce dedicated a grove of large redwood trees in Twin Pines Park to Mr. Keith Davey of Belmont. You will see the plaque attached to a boulder beside the trees on your right as you walk toward the Fisher house. He is president of the nationally known tree surgery company bearing his name.

The former Fisher home is presently used for our Parks and Leisure Services Department. The small buildings to its right were built for the Twin Pines Sanitarium for their use. Their meetin rooms are available for Belmont groups.

The little log cabin, brought from La Honda in 1931, sits unoccupied by the creek. Stroll through it while you are in the park.

The Belmont Police Department occupies rooms on the left side of the mansion. Most Belmont residents favor this as it helps to keep vandalism at a low level. The Arts group occupies some of the buildings directly back of the mansion.

The 1860 entrance into the park,

then known as Janke Picnic Grounds, was from the corner of Sixth Avenue and Ralston Avenue. Later the Janke Picnic Ground was known as Belmont Park, and included other land to the west, which is presently the Belmont Hills Sanitarium property.

Early pictures of Belmont Park show a bridge-across the creek and a small clearing on the steep hillside for additional picnic space:

It is difficult to visualize that in 1876 7,000 members of the IOOF Lodge held picnics in the park. Yet they came from San Francisco and San Jose by train. The little park must have been jumping on such occasions. Incidentally, Mr. William C. Ralston was a member of the IOOF Lodge. Their members were all Protestants until recently. When Mr. Ralston died in San Francisco in 1876 the coroner's jury was made up of lodge members, and the doctor who did an autopsy was reported to have been a lodge brother.

Recently our Belmont Homeowners Associations have held picnics in Twin Pines Park on July 4th, and the attendance has been as many as 500 persons. Some of the Associations put up booths and sell hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream, beer, and other things to raise money for improvements in their areas. Our very active Belmont Lions Club participated in a booth this year to raise money to help Belmont Scouts whom they sponsor.

Former Governor John McDougal, George Center, and Louis Barrett, and others who lived in the area of the park after Janke Picnic Grounds was closed, would no doubt be pleased if they could see the beautiful park now. It is being well-kept, and much enjoyed. If you haven't been there, then jump into your car and travel there tonight. You'll be glad that you did, and take time to walk on the trails, and see everything. It's really beautiful, and a credit to our city.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The Four Belmont City Clerks

City Clerks are very important people in the running of a city. Belmont has been very fortunate in those we have had. We haven't had many — only four since 1926.

The first was Daryl W. Callen, who was appointed when Belmont was incorporated in 1926, but he didn't stay long. When Mr. Bourdette's lawsuit was filed to stop incorporation, Callen quit. There was no money yet in the treasury and he didn't want to work for nothing. His name remained however, as City Clerk, until the lawsuit was settled in 1929. Then, in 1930, Ray Kelly was elected to fill the post.

Belmont was fortunate in having City Clerks who had a good sense of humor. They all seemed to enjoy their work. Ray Kelly told me he never let the job get him down. While he was clerk he kept the city records in his home on Sixth Avenue, for there was no city hall. Meetings were held in the old Central School, site of the Safeway store. Kelly was City Clerk from 1930 until 1938.

He was active in many projects in and out of the city. Later he was a president of the Lions Club. He also served on the Board of Sequoia Hospital, and he was president of the Board in 1961, 1962, 1967, and in 1968.

In 1938 Catherine Hearstner was elected City Clerk. She was fondly referred to as "Kitty". Everyone liked and respected her. Kitty Lane was named for her. During her time as City Clerk the city grew from a population of less than 3,000 to 12,000 and there were growth problems. Still Kitty had time for community activities.

She was a Charter Member of the Belmont-San Carlos Soroptomist Club, and she was instrumental

in starting the first Catholic Church near the entrance to the Ralston mansion.

Soon after Kitty's election as City Clerk, Belmont's citizens approved a bond issue of \$46,000 to build a city hall. It was built on Sixth Avenue where it remains today, but it was added onto during Charles Cook's term as Mayor in 1956 to include the City Council chamber, and City Manager's offices.

Kitty and her husband, Joe, were instrumental in getting the Belmont County Water District started and the first meetings were held in their home.

Following Kelly's retirement in 1936, James McLaughlin was elected Belmont's City Clerk. McLaughlin, as everyone refers to him, is well liked and respected. He is serving in his 15th year. He is doing a good job, and although he is a full-time Clerk, he tries to help the community in his spare time.

He is a member of the Lions Club, is a past president of the Northern California City Clerk's Association, Past President of the Hibernian Luncheon Club, President and Manager of the Young Christian Workers, and he has received the first Annual Distinguished Service Award from the California State Association of Local Elected Officials.

He is author of two books, one of which is titled, "Complete Guide to Governmental Insanity, with Rhyme and Reason". I am told that his book is a classic among city officials throughout the country. He says his ideas for the amusing book didn't all originate in Belmont, but from all City Councils in general.

Belmont is lucky to have this man in our city government!

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

Many Belmont people have asked about the Belmont postmasters and post offices. It is probable that in 1854 Count Cipriani picked up his mail from Marcus Flashner at Angelo's Corners, which was the intersection of our present Old County Road and Ralston Avenue. Marcus Flashner was Belmont's first postmaster. Succeeding him was John Ellet, who received his appointment in 1856. Later in 1856 Marshall Palmer was appointed. Adam Castor was appointed in 1857, then Edward Waltermire in 1861.

William C. Ralston arrived here in 1864 and bought the Count Cipriani home, and Mr. Waltermire was still postmaster. No doubt Mr. Ralston picked up mail from Mr. Waltermire.

When Mr. Ralston died in 1875 Charles Janke was postmaster, as he had replaced Mr. Waltermire in 1871. Also there seems no doubt that Mr. Janke had known Mr. Ralston.

Walter Emmett was named postmaster in 1880. Since Mr. Emmett and Mr. Waltermire had jointly operated the general merchandise store at the corner of Old County Road and Ralston Avenue, it may be that they rotated the postmaster appointment.

The post office was not always in the same building at Angelo's Corners. Records show that it was in at least two of the buildings at that intersection many years ago. However, it remained longest in what we call the "pink building," which is the Country Store. That building was partitioned off so the little post office was on your right as you entered from the door on Ralston Avenue.

El Camino Real was moved west of the tracks in 1918. Later the post office was moved also, to a location on the new El Camino Real, about a block south of Ralston Avenue.

Many years later the post office was again moved. This time to Sixth Avenue, about where the Wells Fargo parking lot is.

After being there a few years it was again moved: this time to a building on Ralston Avenue where the Bay View Plaza parking lot is. It remained there until it was moved to Masonic Way.

Before the last move, the government men were searching for a location where the customers would find it convenient, and where there would be room for parking. They made a study to learn where the most mailings came from, and discovered the area across the railroad tracks provided many more cancellations than did the area west of the tracks.

Mr. Juel Christensen offered to provide land for a building on Masonic Way. This was the desired area. The government men approved Mr. Christensen's offer, and agreed to lease-back a large building if he would have it built. He agreed, and had the building constructed.

During the 12 or so years since the building was completed, the city of Belmont has grown, and the post office has kept up with our city's growth. The post office presently has 20 routes in our city, and 46 employees.

We have ample parking and we find that we are waited on promptly and courteously at the counter.

Although there have been many postmasters in Belmont during the years, our present postmistress is Mrs. Janet Jensen.

We who receive mail in Belmont feel very fortunate in having our present postal facilities, and our friendly postmistress.

# Belmont History.

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

Many people in Belmont aren't aware that Belmont has other wonderful recreation places in addition to Twin Pines Park. In 1956 David Comb had a large ice skating rink built on a large flat lot at 815 Old County Road. The building is 100 feet by 200 feet in size, and the large ice rink is 85 feet by 175 feet. It is referred to as Belmont Iceland.

The Belmont ice rink is the only ice arena from San Francisco to Mountain View to offer ice Hockey on the Peninsula. Many famous ice skaters have come from Belmont, taking the name of our city world-wide. The Italian Skating Champion, Renee Biagi, trained in Belmont. Peggy Fleming skated here.

Also Linda Fratiani and Charlie Ticklev, and David Comb skated on the Belmont rink.

Karen King, formerly of the Ice Follies and the Donny and Marie show skated here. Kevin Maloney, formerly of the Ice Capades, skated here. David Comb was formerly with the Ice Follies, and now is with the Ice Capades.

Manager of the Belmont rink is William Pattullo, himself a famous skater, and the office manager is Dorothy Woodbury, both Belmont citizens.

Thickness of the ice is three inches, so Belmont skaters aren't skating on thin ice.

The Belmont airport used to be at the location of the ice rink. Some of us flew out of it many times. The Mae Nesbit School near the ice rink also occupies some of the old airport property.

The Belmont Iceland employs some championship persons. Grete Borgen, Norwegian champion and formerly with the Ice Capades, and Holiday on Ice is one of them. Lucien Boyer, Gold medalist, and

former champion of Germany, with a full background in ballet and jazz, formerly with the Ice Capades, Ice Follies, and Holiday on Ice, works at the arena. Beth Ann Carroll, formerly with Shipsted and Johnson Ice Follies is another. Tom Huff 1974 bronze pair medalist, world team alternate, and formerly with the Ice Capades is here. Jim Hulick, National pairs champion, and formerly with the Ice Follies, is here. Don Jacoby, holder of 5 gold medals, twice national gold dance champion and formerly with the Ice Follies is here in Belmont. Linda Leaver, Gold medalist and official coach for the 1981 national sports festival works at the Belmont rink.

Wendy Lufrano, from the Ballet on Ice works at our rink, as does Leigh Whitten, United States gold medalist, former championship competitor in U.S. and Europe, and 1970-71 official trainer to the Finnish, European and World teams is here. Janice Woodbury, formerly with the Ice Capades and Hollywood Ice Revue of Europe, is at the Belmont rink. What a lot of talent in Belmont!

Belmont is also the home of the El Camino Ice Skating Club, and home of the San Mateo County Jr. Hockey Club and the Stanford University Hockey Club.

Belmont people needn't travel to other cities to see world famous skating. Among all our wonderful Belmont assets, we have some of the world's finest skaters. If you haven't been to the ice rink you should go there to see what Belmont has to offer in recreation. No place surpasses Belmont for recreation! David Comb really helped our city when he built the ice rink in 1956. All of us are grateful.

More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

## Service Clubs: A Tradition of Help

Once as I sat in a meeting in San Francisco the speaker laughingly said that "a conference is a meeting of important people, who singly can do nothing, but together decide that nothing can be done!" This hasn't happened when I have attended any Belmont service club meetings.

Belmont has several service clubs, all of which really help our city. In 1947 the Lions Club was chartered, and I believe that it was the first service club. Others followed. Soon we had a Kiwanis, Rotary, Exchange, Soroptomist, Women's Club and several others. Presently the Rotary seems to be the largest, yet the Lions are very active.

These Belmont service clubs really do try to help our city. The Rotary has many civic projects. The Lions help the blind and often pay for eye tests, and new eyeglasses for Belmont school students who cannot afford the cost. The Lions also sponsor several Boy Scout troops. Several years ago however, they gave up sponsorship of the Sea Scouts. It seems that a scout master at that time took along a group of girls on the Scout ship, and the ship grounded on a mud flat near Vallejo. It couldn't be pulled out of the mud until high tide the following day. Parents became upset.

Our service clubs provide a way for businessmen and women to quickly become acquainted. One executive for Pan American Airways once told me that when at Singapore he had joined a service club and found himself on a first-name basis in a few minutes — instead of weeks or months.

Our service clubs meet for lunch, either weekly, or semi-monthly. Programs are usually provided which, one Rotarian told me, are like a grab bag. He said they never know

how well the speaker can present his subject. These service clubs are chapters of national organizations, and when traveling, their members may make up meetings in other cities.

Of course there are also service clubs for the ladies who are in executive or ownership positions. There are Lioness clubs in San Francisco and Half Moon Bay, and Chapters of the Women's club, and business and professional women's clubs everywhere.

Each year the Lions collect for "Aid for the Blind" for two days in early October. When in Maryland a few years ago I was approached by a man there participating with his club in White Cane Days.

The Rotary and Kiwanis have special collection days for their projects, and they do a great service for our community.

The president of Belmont's Rotary this year is our police chief, Mr. William Singer, and the president of our Lions Club is Mr. William B. Miles, print shop owner.

The Belmont Women's Club meets regularly, and they do much for Belmont. When two of the El Camino Real bells were stolen several years ago, their long-time member, Mrs. Juanita Doyle, arranged for their replacement. (Since then, thieves have again stolen the bells!) The Women's Club also had a large room at Twin Pines Lodge rebuilt, painted, and a kitchen added, several years ago. They have since completed many other projects.

If you are in business in Belmont, you will do well to join the Chamber of Commerce, then a service club.

More next week.

# Belmont History

By RUSSELL A. ESTEP

Unless you have lived here for many years perhaps you haven't heard about the large oyster beds that used to be here. The oysters were grown by the Morgan Oyster Co., who brought spawn from the east coast.

The Belmont oyster beds were at the edge of the bay. Mr. John S. Morgan had grape stakes driven close together into the ground in shallow water to protect his crop from sting rays which tried to eat his oysters. All this was right near our present Bayshore Highway, at both Belmont Slough and Steinberger Slough.

The oyster beds had been there for many years before the highway was built, and also before the promoters had the old destroyer tied up there.

People do not eat oysters where there is pollution, but at that time there wasn't a problem. Belmont's population was very small and for many years everyone had outside toilets. Ships on the Bay were mostly sailing ships. Later the ships burned coal, and still later they started burning oil, and that's when the Morgan Oyster Co. troubles began.

Belmont had been growing and the first sewer line was run down Ralston Avenue from where the Belmont Shopping Center was later located. That sewer line terminated at the Bay not far from the oyster beds. That didn't please Mr. Morgan.

The oysters were taken to San Francisco seafood markets and the shells ground for cement. The ce-

ment for the first Dumbarton Bridge in 1927 came from those shells.

For many years shells were taken by boat to Petaluma and ground for chicken feed. Belmont's oyster industry was thriving. When ships converted to oil, and the San Francisco shipping increased until there were as many as 25 ships arriving each day, with about the same number sailing from San Francisco, the Bay became polluted. Because of sewage and spilled oil, Mr. Morgan's oyster company had to close. The Bay waters were becoming too polluted!

Closing of the oyster beds changed the lives of young Belmont people. They had enjoyed their evening swims near the oyster beds, and then sunning on the sand later and shucking oysters. A pleasant way to spend an evening! But with pollution increasing in the Bay waters, and the closing of the oyster business, the young people found themselves deprived of pleasure. Later some of the young couples married.

Their children would not have the fun their parents had. Yet with Belmont's hills still uncrowded, the later youngsters would enjoy a good view as they became acquainted in parked cars in at least two Belmont locations. One was along All View Bay, which was a single track dirt road, and the other was Camino Vista, which also had a dirt road to the end of what became a cul-de-sac. Romance still flourished in Belmont!

More next week.

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL A. ESTEP

About 25 or so years ago, an attorney from Portland named Mr. Ivan F. Phipps came to me asking if I would help him to get a permit for a proposed cemetery, in or near Belmont. I had no idea how to help him. He explained that he had successfully started three new cemeteries; two in Tacoma, and one in Seattle. He said all of them were on hilltops, and since the Belmont area had so many hills he thought this an ideal location. He said that it seemed when people live where they have a view, they often prefer to be buried in a similar spot. He said each of his three cemeteries had been on hill tops. He asked whether we already had a cemetery.

I told him that there was an indigent burial ground just north of Adelaide Street, in west Belmont, and also in the late 1800s 10 acres had been set aside for a cemetery across our creek, where Escondido Avenue is. I explained that I had a newspaper clipping about the Escondido plot, and that once a woman who lived on the street told me she had trouble sleeping and dreamed a lot; but still I had not heard of any burials there before the houses along the street were built.

Mr. Phipps explained that he owned large acreage on the west side of Skyline Blvd. west of Belmont, and that enough of it was north of the Half Moon Bay road to make

room for a good cemetery. He wanted me to help get the permit. Thinking the idea hopeless, I didn't do anything about his suggestion. He returned to Portland.

Three months later he re-appeared asking if I had his permit. I told him I had been too busy, and he became upset, and said he would go to the County Planning Commission himself, and make the application. When he returned to my office he said they didn't seem to think anyone would want to be buried on such a cold, windy hilltop. They laid his application over for three months to study it. This happened three more times — his request was not acted upon but held for further study. Finally, after a year, he came to my office after seeing the Planning Commission and said they had agreed to give him a permit but he must actually have had a burial at his land before a certain date and hour. They just wouldn't believe that he had such a good idea.

Laughingly, he asked me if I couldn't die? He offered me a free plot, but I told him that I had too many plans for the future, and, beside that, I just didn't have time to die. Even to help him.

He came to my office on the morning of the last day for his permit saying, "Quick! Get me a hammer and saw." As he made a crude cross from some scrap wood he found nearby, he explained that an elderly man from the poor farm had died. He had the body transported to the top of the ridge, on Skyline where he already had a bulldozer preparing a grave. I should say that he laid the body gently to rest. But Mr. Phipps was in a hurry.

Following the burial he reported immediately to the Planning Commission. Now he really did have a "going" cemetery. He named his cemetery "Sky Lawn." then hired (on a commission basis) a company to sell his burial plots. Within a

very short time there were many burials, and then Mr. Phipps sold the entire cemetery to another man at a large profit. It had worked out just as he predicted a year earlier.

Several years ago when one of my Belmont salesmen died from a heart attack he was buried at Skylawn. He had said he liked the wonderful view from there, especially of the sunsets out across the Pacific Ocean.

Just as Mr. Phipps had said, people who live in Belmont do enjoy a view!

More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

## Liberty Bells: Victim to Thievery

Earlier this year the entire United States was startled to learn that a thief had stolen George Washington's dentures. They had been displayed in a museum in Washington, D.C.

Thieves have also been active in California. Our state has lost historic bells marking the route of the Padres from San Diego to Sonoma. Recently two of these historic bells were stolen in Belmont. Why anyone would take historic items is something to ponder over. Surely these thieves must have sick minds.

Our state is comparatively new, and was only admitted into the Union September 9, 1850. We haven't much history so we value what we have. Our state's earlier history was made by the Spanish explorers and settlers. The Padres explored the route for our missions, starting in 1769, when Mission San Diego was established. Following San Diego, other missions were spaced one day's travel apart — usually 25 to 50 miles. That distance must have seemed very great when people had to travel by horseback or by donkey cart. There were 21 missions, and they were used as stopping places, between San Diego and Sonoma.

The bells were placed by an organization known as the El Camino Real Association, which comprised members of the Woman's Club, Native Daughters, and other historic-minded groups. Here in Belmont lives one of those patriotic people — Mrs. Juanita Doyle. She was active in helping to get many of the bells and has since been very active in having stolen bells replaced.

When it had been decided by representatives of the various organizations that suitable markers should "line the route of the Padres" a contest was held to learn what the public thought would be a suitable design. The bells won

that contest.

Four hundred fifty bells were placed along El Camino Real. Two were in our city. One was near the railroad station, and one on the west of El Camino Real, near The Van's restaurant, north of the first bell.

Although the first bells were made from expensive material, the later replacement bells were cheaper, and made of aluminum. The tone of the later bells was flat. They were only to be used as historic markers for the route of the Padres. The first bells were placed by a Mrs. A. Forbes about 1906.

Probably Belmont's first bell was placed on the Old County Road, at Ralston Avenue. The Old County Road was known as "the route of the Padres" until 1913, when the present El Camino Real was built.

The original bells were placed one mile apart all the way from the San Diego mission to the Sonoma mission. One wonders if any attempt was ever made to ring the number one bell, then to ring the next, and so on, until the final sound reached the Sonoma mission? We all know how fast sound travels at sea level, but there would have been some mountains to cross. Also there would have been a slight delay for response at each bell by the person stationed there to pull the rope. We will never know about this. The clearly-ringing bells were all stolen, and most have been replaced by flat sounding aluminum bells.

We wish Mrs. Juanita Doyle success in her endeavor to have the two Belmont bells replaced. When, and if, they are replaced, let's all "keep our eyes peeled" to prevent future thieves from taking these historic items. We thank Mrs. Doyle and others for what they have done to preserve Belmont's history.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

## The Birth of Radio Station KGEI

After the end of WWII Belmont people found it easy to find ham operators. Local plumbers wondered how many others had come from the Peninsula.

A local man smilingly suggested that perhaps they listened to Belmont's ham operators. Don Harscher lived on Buckland Road, which was then county property. He always gave his address as Belmont, California, and if the static was bad he used phonetic when giving his call letters. His call was W6LF, and his phone number became W6 "Leaky Faucets." Don sold his house and retired to Florida.

Other transmissions from Belmont were made from the General Electric broadcast station. It was here during the war — from 1940 — until 1956. The antennas were near the Bay-Highway. Announcers gave their address as Belmont, California, which we all liked to hear. Our salty ham operators provided an effective broadcast which is important for local transmissions.

Then there was an FAA station here, and one of their operators, Don Bartlett, lived on Cipriani Road.

Later a Mr. Steffens owned a broadcast station here with antennas near the Bay east of what is now Redwood Shores. He operated it from 1958 until 1959, then it was taken off the air until 1960. That year the Far East Broadcast Company took over the property. They soon had the station operating again. Although they were in county terri-

tory down by the Bay, they gave their announcements as "Belmont, California." We liked this.

They still own and operate the station, known as KGEI, and their station manager is Mr. Jack Brooks.

Their broadcasts blanket all of South America, although they beam to Brazil. Their Brazil programs are in Portuguese.

They are a non-denominational group. One fourth of their programs are religious in nature, and three fourths are news.

They also broadcast to Japan, and run 250,000 watts at that time. Reports are that reception is 100%.

Their Japanese programs are also heard in China and eastern Russia.

The Far East Broadcasting Co. has a new antenna on order. When it arrives they are expecting their programs to be almost like "local" in South America and Japan.

We in Belmont have a problem — since Redwood City has taken in the bay marshes, KGEI is in Redwood City, and no longer in Belmont.

Belmont enjoyed many years of good publicity when the announcers gave their location as Belmont. Now KGEI programs are originating in Redwood City.

South America and Japan may think Belmont has slid into the ocean! We feel sad about that! But how can we let them know there is still a Belmont? They might even wonder whether we still have leaky faucets!

More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

## When the Chickens Crowed

Some time ago you could have heard chickens crowing in the early mornings in Belmont and you might also have heard cows bawling. Some Belmont people kept milk cows. Mr. Bert Johnson tells that his family kept cows. Their home was at the south end of Fifth Avenue, and later their house became "Villa Chartier," and good food was served there. Later the restaurant moved to a larger building in San Mateo.

Bert Johnson's father was one of those men who worked in the Spring Valley pumping station, which was between El Camino Real and the railroad tracks. The pumping station was just across the San Carlos border, near the eucalyptus trees. Bert tells that coyotes howled at night, only 60 years ago.

Of course the Johnson family really didn't need to keep the cows. They could have bought milk from the Baywood Dairy. Mr. Thomas Therkildsen was delivering milk from his dairy at Hillsdale which he called "Baywood Dairy." When he moved to O'Neill St., Belmont, near the south end of Hiller St., he retained the name. Later Mr. Therkildsen enlarged his dairy operations, and he owned more than 400 acres of Brewer's Island where Foster City was developed. Mr. Therkildsen farmed his acreage and raised hay.

After establishing his Belmont dairy outlet he operated four milk delivery wagons. As large grocery stores opened in Belmont he was forced to reduce his deliveries from four to only three per week.

In 1948, Mrs. Stella O'Donnell began working in the dairy office, and continued there until her retirement, which came just before Mr. Therkildsen's death. O'Donnell Park, at the east end of Ralston Avenue, was named for her husband, Vincent O'Donnell.

As Mr. Therkildsen reduced his

work load, and disposed of many of his cows, he bought milk for his retail outlet from other farmers.

After Mr. Therkildsen's death, his 400 acres were sold to Jack Foster, who had come to the Peninsula from Hawaii. He attended one of our Belmont Chamber of Commerce meetings, soon after his arrival, and showed us plans for Foster City. We found it hard to imagine that his development would have so many as 60,000 residents. Yet, it presently has more than that number.

Before coming to the Peninsula he had built Foster Towers at Waikiki Beach and had planned it to be condominiums. The idea of condominiums hadn't caught on yet, so for awhile his tall building was used for a hotel. Also in Honolulu he had donated an entire city block in downtown Honolulu to be used for a city park.

Our neighboring Foster City was built on natural land — not fill land, and the entire acreage is several feet above high tide.

Foster City was one of the first developments on the Peninsula where the developer built houses, sold them, yet retained title to the land under the houses on long-term leases.

Recently I happened to notice a travel brochure which advertised a Dude Ranch vacation in Wyoming. The brochure suggested that people might plan restful vacations there where they could hear chickens crow and cows bawling. Belmont people move here because they find our city rural and restful. Most say there is no place to compare with Belmont.

Belmont yards and houses are neater and better maintained than those in other cities. Perhaps our local people find it unnecessary to leave town so often, and can take better care of their property. They surely don't need cows and chickens anymore to get "that restful feeling."

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

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## The Native Inventors of Belmont

Recently some people were moving into their new home in Belmont when they found the water heater hadn't been connected. To connect it would require an expert because of its placement, and because many pipe connections were required.

They were unable to understand just what was needed, and since it happened on a weekend they were unable to find an available plumber. Then a neighbor volunteered to help with their emergency. Belmont people seem endowed with the ability to do many things others seem unable to do.

There are many inventors in Belmont, one being Mr. William Holmes. Mr. Holmes recently received a review of some of his inventions on national TV. One invention would enable persons on high-rise rooftops to escape. San Francisco's Fire Chief, Andrew Casper was interviewed about that invention on TV during a fire in San Francisco and said it had merit.

During the Las Vegas high-rise hotel fire much good publicity was given to Mr. Holmes products. Both interviews indicated that his inventions might have saved lives.

Another of Mr. Holmes inventions was shown on TV following a large earthquake in Italy. That invention consisted of a water jack that would raise great weights quickly. Mr. Holmes had taken one of his models to that country and saved many trapped people. Still another of his inventions would provide oxygen for persons trapped by fire and unable to escape. He has many additional patents, most covering ways to save lives.

Another Belmont inventor is Mr. George Tiegel, owner of the Tiegel Manufacturing Co. in Belmont. He left Germany following WW II and went to Anchorage where he worked as a machinist. Then about 32 years ago he came to Belmont. His wife and small children accompanied him. He then invented a complicated machine which would make it possible to assemble a group of storage batter-

ies instead of just one at a time. No doubt most of us are familiar with Rube Goldberg's cartoons. Mr. Tiegel's complicated battery machines remind some of us of the Goldberg ideas, though the battery machines really work.

Tiegel Manufacturing Co. of Belmont export these machines, and other Tiegel inventions, all over the world. Belmont, Calif. is placed into the metal with dyes, and people seeing one of the machines 100-years from now will know that it came from Belmont.

Another Belmont inventor with his own factory here is Mr. Ames, of the Ames Dry Wall Taping Co. on O'Neill Street. His dry-wall taping devices are in use throughout the United States. Contractors everywhere find it easier and faster to finish a dry-wall joint with the Ames invention. Only a fraction of the previous time is needed to finish a sheet-rock wall.

Then there is the story circulated a few years ago about Eimac. Prior to WW II Bill Eitel and Jack McCullough were operating their ham radio very late at night. The story is that there was a radio tube rolling around the table top that had a broken glass.

The filament hadn't been harmed. Bill and Jack prepared a sandwich of bread covered with white karo syrup and spilled some. The tube rolled through the syrup and some attached itself to the filament.

After they had a new glass envelope placed on the tube they found that it stood higher voltage without burning out. After having the syrup analyzed they obtained a patent. From that time onward they patented many other inventions, and their factory became the largest radio tube factory in the world. When they retired the story is that Jack gave \$5 million to Stanford University.

There are other inventors in Belmont. What success stories are to be found in this locality! Belmont people are really fortunate to be living here. The opportunities are endless.

More next week.

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

## In the Beginning . . .

Belmont has many churches, the first was started in 1863 by the Episcopalians on Old County Road but it was also used by the Catholics.

The little building was later moved to Fifth Avenue, where it still stands. It was constructed of redwood and is presently used for weddings and funerals. The much larger, new building adjoining it, is filled to capacity each Sunday. Soon there were other churches.

The Catholic congregation had grown and they built St. Michael's church at Carlmont, back of the present larger church. St. Michael's is worth a visit when you have time. Although it was built in 1920 and is 45 years old, it is well preserved.

A later Catholic church was built near the entrance to the Ralston mansion and is presently used as an Art Center.

The Catholics also have a "church-in-the-round" near Bayshore Highway, at Sterling Downs. You can get there from Chesterton Avenue.

Notre Dame College has a large and beautiful chapel where the acoustics are remarkably clear. From the rear it is possible to hear a pin drop at the altar.

The Baptists have a church on Bishop Road, at the end of Chesterton Avenue, as well as a small church on Alameda de las Pulgas,

their church near Carlmont High School and it is filled on Sundays. Many attend to hear their outstanding minister.

When the Belmont Country Club Properties went bankrupt, there were many investors who yelled "foul." Reversing the cycle may have come about when the Congregationalists began using the building for a church.

When Belmont voters decided not purchase the beautiful Pullman Estate at the north-west corner of Alameda de las Pulgas and Ralston Avenue, the Greek Orthodox Church bought a few acres and built their church among the trees. The beautiful trees on the corner property were removed when the Safeway Store was built.

The Belmont Bible Church is far out at the west end of Belmont. It is near the entrance to Hallmark Drive. It too, is well attended.

Then there is the Lutheran Church near the entrance to Davis Drive, at Ralston Avenue. They have a church school which is well attended each Sunday.

Belmont people don't have "blue noses" and they hope our city will always remain at the top of the "up cycle." They believe that crimes committed during the past few years have mostly been by "insiders."

# Belmont History

By Russel Estep

## From Horses to SamTrans

As in earlier eastern cities Belmont's transportation has been varied.

Probably, Los Cochinitos Indians who made their homes here had no need for horses. With an available food supply from the bay, and the hills to the west where deer were plentiful, they had no need to travel. Probably their traveling was mostly by "shanks mare." Reports indicate that they were listless. They may not even have had wheels!

When the Spanish came in 1774, and again in 1776, they came by horseback.

With the Arguello land grant in 1795 horses became very plentiful. They were used for riding, as well as for pulling wagons. One report states that the Arguellos had as many as 2000 horses at one time.

Later the Belmont horses were shod at Hammerson's blacksmith shop on Old County Road. He had worked for Mr. Ralston, then for Mr. Sharon, until Sharon's death in 1885. The blacksmith shop was at the corner of Old County Road and Ralston Avenue for 70 years or more.

The blacksmith was kept busy. Horse-drawn stages had operated from Belmont to Half Moon Bay, as well as the horse-drawn coach from San Francisco through Belmont to San Jose. Then, just before the Civil War ended, trains came through Belmont over the just-completed track. The tracks were not as smooth or straight as they are now and trains didn't go very fast. Now and then the Ralston horse-drawn carriage actually beat the train from San Francisco to Belmont! Trains now run each 15 minutes morning and even-

ing.

Prior to WW-II Mr. Messner operated a Belmont taxi service.

For awhile after WW-II bus service was provided from Hillsdale down the Alameda and along Ralston Avenue, once a day. Hours were irregular, and there weren't many passengers. It seems to have been mainly so someone could hold a route franchise.

Presently Sam Trans has giving good service on El Real, north and south. Sam operates busses in Belmont on a regular basis. They appear to have bought many large busses for the future, for during the day their busses seem to be carrying few passengers, or none at all. Yet we are told that they are making a profit, and none of their routes are losing money! Of course in the mornings and evenings commuters fill the busses, so maybe it all balances out.

A Belmont resident can go from here to the San Francisco airport in only 15 minutes by Sam Trans. This is better transportation than most cities can boast of. Also it only takes one-half hour by Sam Trans to reach the San Jose airport. The Oakland airport is less than an hour away.

While standing on the sidewalk a few days ago I noticed a young man on roller skates north-bound on El Camino Real. He was traveling fast. A sign on his back proclaimed that he was doing this for "Multiple Sclerosis." Then, a few days later I saw a boy on a skate board southbound on El Camino Real.

Maybe Belmont didn't have good transportation for a long time, but when it came it was with a variety!

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## A Look at the Powers That Be

Belmont has always been administered by Councils. The Costano Indians had Chiefs and Councils. They were called Cochinitos by the Spanish, meaning little pigs, because they were so dirty. Can we imagine a group of them hunkering down under the trees in Twin Pines Park trying to solve a problem?

Our Belmont City Council meets on Monday evenings, and the meetings are conducted by very efficient Mayor Joe Green. Although our City Manager, Jim DeChane, manages the business of our city, the Mayor handles the Council meetings and how the city is run, with the help of the city councilmen and women.

For many years our city government didn't have a city manager, for awhile we had a city administrator. There were changes back and forth, until finally it was decided that a Mayor, and City Manager were what we needed. The city had grown and there was much to be done.

Our first Mayor was Thomas Bennington, who became Mayor in 1930.

Each City Manager, Administrator, and Mayor has helped to move Belmont ahead. For instance, when Fred Nelson was City Manager, he was instrumental in getting the streets paved west of Sequoia Avenue and north of All View Way. Houses were built there which added to our city's tax revenue.

Arthur Brandow was our next City Manager and many things were accomplished while he administered Belmont.

Presently James DeChane is City Manager and he has done many things to help our city.

Cigar smoking Wallace Benson remained Mayor longer than any-

one and Benson Way was named for him. Citizens fondly referred to him as "Wally".

Another City Mayor was Charles H. Cook. Charley manufactured more wheelbarrows than anyone in the country. His factory was located on the east side of Old County Road in the 1300 block. Before he died he sold his factory and bought and operated the Belmont Casino. The city was growing fast during the time when he was Mayor. Many meetings were necessary to keep up with the city's growth. Charley was busy in his wheelbarrow factory. Newspaper reporters in some towns to the south seemed to use Belmont as a whipping boy. Some of their stories carried a very negative flavor about our city. When the Mayor and City Council met at the Villa Chartier for lunch to discuss city problems one of those reporters apparently got word from a Judas at the table. Headlines appeared saying Belmont's officials had a "Wine and Dine" project going at taxpayer's expense! Some people claimed the Brown Act resulted partly from this.

Another early Mayor was Robert Hunter who did much for Belmont. Other good Mayors were Margaret Buckley, William Hardwick, Walter Worthge, Frank Gonzalves, Robert Jones, Ferdinand Guillani, Dr. Morton Podolsky, Edward D. Vallergera, and many others whose names I haven't room for.

Some past Councilmen seemed to have different objectives, but presently our City government is operating smoothly. Belmont's fast growth has required co-operation from many people. Our city will continue to grow in the right direction under the able direction of our City Councils.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## Unusual and Exotic Dining Places

Belmont has had some unusual eating places, and some menu's that people now-a-days might consider exotic. For instance, in my files of old clippings there is an announcement dated December 27, 1894, which states: "The Bachelor Club of Belmont is making active preparations for another of their famous festivals, this one to out-do any former spread by a large majority and no recounts. This is to be a Chicago supper and of course the piece de resistance will be "suckling pigs."

Presently there are 32 eating places within our city limits, in addition to some bars which serve sandwiches. Belmont folks need not leave town to find a restaurant. Several of our outstanding eating places are, The Iron Gate, Pine Brook Inn, Holiday Inn, Daniel's, China Village, and The Van's.

The Iron Gate is owned by Mr. Al Malatesta. Formerly it was The Chuck Wagon, owned by Ed Coffman. Prior to then it was owned by Mr. Bondeson, and was called "Bondy's." For awhile a radio star lived above the restaurant. His name was "Cottonseed Clark." His western broadcasts were popular.

The Pine Brook Inn beside the creek at Carlmont Shopping Center has large picture windows through which the view is relaxing. You will find yourself looking out at the trees, and shrubs in the nursery adjoining the dining room. One of their waitresses was noted for her

ability to squeeze a wine bag under her arm and shoot a stream of wine into a glass across the table. She seldom missed the glass!

The Holiday Inn across Bay-shore Highway has a good coffee shop and dining room. Their cooks are excellent.

Still another good spot is The Van's on the hillside west of El Camino Real. In 1915 the building had been the Japanese building during the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. A lumber dealer named Mr. Swift owned land in Belmont. In 1918 he had the building placed on barges and floated to Belmont, then trucked to it's present hillside location. Later Mr. Swift sold the property. People now enjoy a fine view of the bay while dining. The place was a favorite spot for many people during prohibition. It was well patronized. People told of friendly girls upstairs who never became lonesome.

Although Belmont people aren't especially of Italian heritage there are three restaurants here that cause tourists to wonder. The restaurants are, "A Guy From Italy," "Two Guys From Italy," and "A Slice of Italy." All good eating places if you like Italian food.

Eating habits have changed. None of our thirty-two eating places offers a menu with "suckling pigs." Who would want to eat the poor little piggies anyway? Bothers me to think about it.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## A Look at the Year 1955

How quickly things become history in Belmont! The Belmont Courier-Bulletin dated December 1, 1955 is before me, and many items in it may have been forgotten.

Here is an item saying Ildo Rosellini was turning over the Mayor gavel to Wallace Benson. The article goes on to say that "Wally" had been Mayor before that, in 1953-54. Wally's election was unanimous by vote of the City Council. The paper states that 12 items were on the Agenda for the night's meeting.

Another item tells that a vast San Juan sewerage plan was in the works. The plan, as presented by City Engineer Ray Murphy, described 720 lots as possible, and 444 as perhaps, all to be served by the new assessment district that would be formed.

Then there was to be a school expansion at the Barrett School. It would cost \$39,000.00 and would add eight new classrooms.

An annex to the small city hall was voted upon and final plans approved for a \$48,000.00 addition, to include the present Council Chamber, which would seat 200, and also offices for the Mayor.

City Administrator, Fred Nelson, was complimented by the Chamber of Commerce for obtaining bids for only \$5 per foot, including curbs, gutters and paving, for the Belmont hills street improvements.

The Men's Club of the Church of the Good Shepherd elected their officers for 1956, and G. A.

Wallerstedt was elected President.

The Belmont Lions Club was to hold a Christmas party in Lind Hall.

The Locke Drug Co., owned by Leon G. Plank, advertises they can provide prescriptions. The store was at 6th and Ralston Avenue.

Bobbie Jean Wallace, or 2033 Lyon Ave., was married to Harold Courtney, of Eagleville, Modoc County — a cattle rancher.

The Ralston Market, (which is now the Santa Barbara Savings), was owned by Alvin L. Penna. He had an advertisement in the paper offering eggs for .53¢ per dozen, coffee for .79¢ per pound, rib steak for .69¢ per pound, and six cans of beer for .39¢.

Tom Jent, of 1851 Alden St., who had been among the top in cross country running, placed second in the North Coast Section Finals. He was aged 16.

December 1, 1955 was "Safe Driving Day" in Belmont. Citizens were cautioned to drive carefully because traffic was becoming congested.

The Belmont Chamber of Commerce requested Fred Nelson, City Administrator, to make better use of the city street sweeper.

What a lot of news from just one issue of the 25 year old Belmont newspaper! It is interesting to think that what Belmont people do today will be "history" tomorrow!

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## Belmont Bank Industry

Banking in Belmont hasn't always been as it is now. As late as 1950 there were no banks in Belmont. Of course William C. Ralston had started the Bank of California in 1864, but that was in San Francisco.

Few persons from Belmont made daily trips into the City for banking. Belmont people could bank in Redwood City and San Mateo, use the sugar bow, or bury their money. Or maybe put it under the mattress.

Realizing the great need for more accessible banking, the Belmont Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in having a bank started here about 1950.

It was located about a block south of Ralston Avenue, on the west side of El Camino Real. Mr. George Mills was its first manager, and Miss Betty Watt was secretary and teller. Later she became Mrs. Roger Casey, and she moved to San Carlos.

This first bank was in operation only a short time when the First National Bank in Redwood City took it over. Then Mr. Mackey became manager, and George Mills took a bank manager position in the financial district in San Francisco.

Later the First National Bank was taken over by Wells Fargo. They moved the bank from El Camino Real to Sixth Avenue, about a half block south of Ralston Avenue where it remained for many years. Then Wells Fargo bought the former Barrett property and moved again. They are still at their newer building on Ralston Avenue.

The Chamber of Commerce had used a large redwood there for Belmont's official Christmas tree. It had been planted by Mr. Barrett.

Belmont people were glad the tree wasn't disturbed.

Belmont's population continued to grow. Soon Wells Fargo had competition. The Bank of America was established when the Carlmont Shopping Center was completed about 1957.

With Belmont's fast growth, both banks were kept busy. Long lines formed at teller's windows and you had to wait and wait. Then another bank appeared.

About 1963 the Hibernia Bank opened a branch on Ralston Avenue in the Carlmont area. They found themselves busy right from the start.

Then the California Canadian Bank opened on El Camino Real one-half block south of Davey Glen Avenue. They too, were soon busy.

Then the Bank of America opened a second bank in the Sterling Downs Shopping area, referred to as "Bel Plaza".

Suddenly Belmont was well served by five banks, and then the savings and loan companies moved in. Now we have four — Bay View Federal Savings and Loan Association, Santa Barbara Savings and Loan Association, All State Savings and Loan Association, and the West Coast Federal Savings and Loan Association.

With Belmont's population growth having increased from 5,567 in 1950 up to 26,500 in 1981, and new houses everywhere, and streets covered with paving, things have changed. Suppose there were no banks here.

With everything covered, you might not find an open place where you could bury your money. One thing for sure, Belmont people are no longer bothered with a lump under the mattress!

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The Roots of Medical Care

Belmont is really a very healthy place in which to live, but if anyone is in need of medical help it is available. In fact, it has been available here for a long time.

The first sanitarium here was the Gardner Sanitarium, which had been the Ralston home. Following Mr. Ralston's death in 1875, Senator Sharon owned the mansion until his own death in 1885. Then, in 1901, under the ownership of Dr. Alden Gardner, the large house became the Gardner Sanitarium.

In 1918 a second sanitarium was established here, in the former Hansen home which was on the north side of Ralston Avenue. The large house was demolished a few years ago to make room for the extension of Sixth Avenue toward the north, into Hill Street. Although the sanitarium had carried the name "Nerve Rest Sanitarium" the name was changed to "Buena Campbell Sanitarium" and the institution was moved into a new building on Hill Street, a little higher up the hillside. Presently it is mainly used for a convalescent hospital.

In 1924 the California Sanitarium was established in the former large home of C.R. Splivalo, San Francisco's macaroni king. The building is gone now to make room for condominiums, but it had been on the west side of Lake Street, about a half block north of Carlmont Drive. The sanitarium was supported by the Charles Howard Foundation to help children who had tuberculosis.

In 1924 Mrs. Annett Alexander established her Alexander Sanitarium in Belmont. It was on Ralston Avenue and treated persons with nervous disorders. Following Mrs. Alexander's death in 1959, others acquired the property and re-named it Belmont Hills Sanitarium, and it is still known by that name.

Then, of course, there was the former George Center home in Twin Pines Park. We refer to it now as The Mansion. George Center was cashier of the Bank of California.

An old newspaper clipping in my files states that the house was completed in October 1906, and the Center family moved there from San Francisco in that month. Starting in 1925 the house was used for a nervous disorder sanitarium. The owners gave it the name "Twin Pines Sanitarium."

You might think this would be enough sanitariums for Belmont, but Mr. Edward Drotleff later had the Carlmont Convalescent Hospital built. It is located on Carlmont Drive, one-half block west of the Alameda de las Pulgas.

Ed's father was a builder in Belmont. Ed lost both hands while working for him. Mr. Drotleff had placed dynamite under a stump to clear a lot for a new house. The explosion failed to materialize and Ed ran up to see what was the reason. At that instant the explosion came and Ed's two hands were gone.

When he recovered, he had mechanical hands fitted, and he learned to manipulate them expertly. Following his recovery he became a successful Belmont businessman. He arranged for his father to build the Carlmont Convalescent Hospital, probably remembering the many months he had spent convalescing.

Unfortunately, both Ed Drotleff and his father died after the hospital was completed, and placed in operation.

Although Belmont has adequate hospitals and sanitariums, good climate, a comparatively easy life, and just about everything anyone could ask for, even good Belmont people seem not to live forever.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## A Look at Real Estate

At a Belmont Lions Club meeting 30 years ago the speaker was describing towns and subdivisions, and he stated that real estate people are really the "Mama's and Papa's" of all towns.

Mr. A. P. Johnson was the first real estate man to have an office in Belmont. His office was on the south side of Ralston Avenue, a short distance west of El Camino Real, in 1904.

Other offices opened in 1924 when the big developments came. Mr. Daniel St. George, with Sprague Smith salesman, sold property in Bay View Heights. Monroe, Miller, and Lyon, sold lots from their small, round real estate office at the intersection of Alameda de las Pulgas, and Covington Avenue. James Monroe later operated an office near St. Joseph's Military Academy, where Carlmont Shopping center is now located. There were several other early offices.

Louis Morton's office, with Kenneth Henker and myself salesmen, was on the west side of El Camino Real near Harbor Blvd. in 1946. The building burned and we moved across the street. Then I took over the office after Lou Morton had a heart attack.

Paul Gardiner's office was on El Camino Real, north of Hill Street. In 1949 Embert M. Brown came over from Hawaii and opened an office north of Gardiner's.

Not much of Belmont was built up yet, so my office kept an average of 50 "For Sale" signs on vacant lots. Each morning I got up at 6 a.m. and drove around the Belmont hills to check on my signs. Embert Brown often went out at night and placed his "For Sale" signs six inches in front of mine, thinking it was funny. When I would ask him about that, he always said, "You pick the best spots." We worked mostly on open listings. It became a sort

of game, and both Embert and I thought it was funny. There were many amusing things happening in real estate offices. More than 30 years ago the following happened in my office.

A middle-age couple came into my office one morning, followed by a large dog. The man said they had read my advertisement and would like to see that particular house. The large dog appeared to be friendly so, to impress the couple, I patted the dog, and shook his paw. Then we all went to my car to drive to see the house. Both people got into my car's front seat. The dog was left standing there wagging his tail. I opened the car's rear door and the big dog hopped into the car and sat grinning on the middle of the back seat. I drove to the house that was listed. When we arrived the people walked through the house, and the big dog followed. The people looked into every clothes closet, and the dog looked also, all the time wagging his tail. When we returned to my car the people climbed into the front seat. I opened the rear door and the big dog hopped into the car and again sat on the middle of the rear seat.

Back at my office, the people told me they liked the house and would think it over and would see me in the afternoon. Then they climbed into their car prepared to leave. "Wait!" I exclaimed, "you've forgotten your dog."

"No," the man said, "that isn't our dog. We've never seen it before. We thought it was yours!"

I chased the dog south on El Camino Real and never saw him again. Probably he was lonesome. Or maybe that was his day to look at houses.

Anyway, in a Belmont real estate office there is always something to laugh about.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## Where Are the Trees?

About 25 years ago, there was a movement in Belmont to have trees preserved. If anyone wanted to cut a tree more than one foot in diameter he had to first obtain permission. No doubt this was a good idea, but where have all the Belmont trees gone? We used to have many more than we do now.

A March 17, 1888 clipping states that "The San Francisco people who have recently purchased Belmont property are making things lively. They evidently mean to make it one of the most attractive spots in San Mateo County. Mr. P. Swift, the lumber dealer, has constructed an elegant residence at a cost of \$6,000 and has planted 2,500 trees. John Lewis, partner of Mr. Swift, has planted 2,500 trees on his property. William Swift, bookkeeper for Lewis and Swift, has set out 750 trees. B.F. Ellis, contractor and builder, 400 trees. C.C. Ross, 25 trees. Mrs. Hall, a wealthy lady from Fresno, 300 trees. John Sanderson, contractor and builder, 500 trees. Springer and Baulsbury, of the new sash, door and planing mill, 2,500 trees. Mr. Riddle, of the Pacific Coast Steamship Co., 300 trees, making a total of over 10,000 trees planted in Belmont this season."

What a forest Belmont must have been in 1888. Many later property owners continued planting trees. Nowadays, we don't see many people planting trees, except possibly a small one on their front lawn and perhaps in the rear yard.

But with crime problems at present, would we find it safe if we had a jungle? Safety problems were mentioned when the Lions Club recently paid for four trees to be

set out in McLaren Park in San Francisco. Many thought it wouldn't be safe to walk through a grove of trees.

By 1888, there wouldn't have been danger from Indians. The Costanos tribes had been friendly for many years. Also in 1888 there was scarcely any crime. Belmont didn't even have a policeman until 1930.

When we look at our Belmont hills and see those trees that are left, we get a good feeling. We feel thankful that the earlier citizens left their heritage of trees, even though many trees have not survived.

A few years ago a middle-age couple fell in love with a Belmont lot that was covered with many trees. They bought the lot through my real estate office and paid a premium price for it — just to get the trees. They enjoyed many Sunday picnics on the lot.

Later, when they had a house built, their builder found it necessary to cut most of the trees. He cut all the trees but one. The people tied a yellow ribbon around that one. When they sit on their patio and look out at that single tree I wonder whether they have remorse. I wonder if they enjoy their house as much as they formerly enjoyed the tree covered vacant lot.

With so many Belmont trees gone to make room for housing, and with our fire hydrants camouflaged with historic designs since the 1976 bi-centennial, our Belmont dogs must find things rather rough. Maybe they have to visit nearby towns more often. I just wonder.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## Christmas Celebrations

Christmas has been celebrated in Belmont for at least 151 years. No doubt, Charles A. Angelo, an Englishman, celebrated Christmas at his hotel, known as "Angelo House" at the corner of Ralston Avenue and Old County Road. His road house was a stopping place for horse-drawn stages carrying passengers from San Jose to San Francisco. He had opened it December 18, 1850.

Before 1951 outdoor decorations were mostly on individual stores and houses. The first decorations to be strung across a Belmont street were placed by Mr. Edward D. Vallerga and myself in 1951. The city had loaned us a fork lift and we used it to reach up high on the P.G.&E. poles in the first block of Ralston Avenue, west of El Camino Real. We also hung one string of decorations near the pharmacy operated by Mr. Leon G. Plank. Afterward the Chamber of Commerce received a stern letter from P.G.&E. ordering us to take the decorations down, saying they weren't allowed on their poles. We replied that we hadn't known about the restrictions. However, since it was almost Christmas, we didn't have time to immediately take the decorations down. They remained up until Christmas.

The Chamber of Commerce had no money to buy decorations. Mrs. Annette Alexander provided money so we might rent them. We arranged to rent them from the Pioneer Flag Co. in San Francisco. The owner, Mr. Maurice Perstein, had appeared at a Chamber of Commerce meeting and quoted prices. We could either buy the decorations for \$125.00 per string, or rent them for about half that. We rented them.

In 1956 we managed to buy a Santa Claus outfit, and Mr. Charles H. Cook put it on and had someone pull him along Ralston Avenue in

a child's red wagon, while he tossed wrapped candy to Belmont children. The children and Charley had a great time.

Mrs. Alexander later provided the Chamber of Commerce with money to buy several strings of decorations, and also to buy one long string of lights. We had the lights placed around the redwood in front of Atlas Cleaners, which was located on El Camino Real one and one half block south of Ralston.

The following year Mrs. Alexander donated another \$1,000.00, to add to money we had collected from Belmont merchants. In addition to the decorations in the first block of Ralston Ave., west of El Camino Real, we could also place some farther out near the Alameda and Ralston Avenue.

Other trees were periodically lighted with our string of lights. One was on Ralston Ave. where there is a beauty shop now, and another was the large redwood planted by Mr. Louis Barrett, beside the Wells Fargo Bank building.

In 1957, after the Carlmont Shopping Center was built, the merchants decorated a redwood tree growing up through the Pine Brook Inn. It is lighted by our Mayor each year, and is our official Christmas tree.

Belmonters appreciate what our city manager, Mr. Jim DeChane, has done in the last few years by having city employees place our Belmont Christmas decorations.

Time goes on and Belmont grows older. We wonder how Christmas will be celebrated in Belmont after another 151 years? Each member of the Chamber of Commerce, and this newspaper, wishes all Belmont citizens a very Merry Christmas!

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The City That Wasn't

Those who have served in the military have often said they had "near misses." Belmont itself, had a near miss a few years ago. Proposals were made, and a study conducted, to decide whether Belmont and San Carlos should be consolidated. Citizens of both wrote pro and con letters to the newspapers. We might have had a city called "Carlmont" if it had come to pass. Many Belmonters thought there were things to consider other than economics.

Belmont is not like other cities: it is a distinctive place. This was recognized in 1904 when the San Mateo County Souvenir Magazine ran the following: "Belmont is the only point in the county, or for that matter, on the peninsula, where the foothills approach the railroad closely. It lies at the mouth of a beautiful wooded canyon, which opens out on the level land, affording an excellent position for home sites. Everyone who visits Belmont and its environment feels the charm of the place."

Although inflation exists within our county, demand for home sites in Belmont has been impressive. Inflation seems to have exceeded some other places, possibly because of this demand.

A clipping in my file, dated August 2, 1900, states, "The former Ralston home, now belonging to the Sharon Estate, has just been sold to Dr. A. M. Gardener of Napa for a price of \$35,000." Just think what it would be worth today!

Another clipping dated November 24, 1857 states that Joseph Osborn sold 1.239 acres in Belmont to O. F. Cipriani for \$3,300, land which he had previously bought from the Arguellos and Mezes on July 30,

1853."

Then another old clipping dated August 5, 1864, "Sale of 5 acres in Belmont for \$1,600 by Clark and Waltermire of Belmont, the land covering the site of the Belmont Hotel." Old County Road and Ralston.

Then another early deed dated September 13, 1864 covering sale of 15 acres by Carl Ferdinand Janke to Carl August Janke for some \$500."

In considering present Belmont property values it is hard to evaluate property values in the future. Thirty five years ago I bought several Belmont lots in the western hills for \$100 each. I was told that I paid too much and would never get my money back. Yet the following year inflation must have suddenly come to Belmont, for I sold the lots for \$200 each — double what I paid! Today those lots are all built upon. If they were vacant they would each be worth \$75,000.

Because Belmont's location is midway between San Francisco and San Jose, and because of its natural terrain with an abundance of view homes, it seems likely that property here will always be in demand.

Even the name "Belmont" causes people to become interested. There are many cities named Belmont throughout the country. The sister city to our Belmont is Belmont, Mass. It is much like Belmont, Calif. and its population is similar.

We are glad to be neighbors to our adjoining cities, but we feel fortunate that our city's name remains. Where might we find a sister city named "Carlmont"? There are probably some people in Belmont who are glad that we had a "near miss."

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The Great Railroads

When William C. Ralston's Bank of California financed the building of the first railroad between San Francisco and San Jose it is probable that no one considered noise from the trains could be objectionable.

The first tracks were poorly laid, the rails were much lighter than now, and trains had to travel slowly. In 1864, after the trains began operating, Mr. Ralston seemed to enjoy illustrating the slowness of the new trains by sometimes racing them to Belmont — and winning, with his horse-drawn carriage.

There was no railroad station here during the first three years after the trains came. An old clipping states that on August 10, 1867; "Belmont was to have a depot at last, as the railroad company, having erected a new depot at Menlo Park, they had no further use for the old one, so they got it on a car and Tuesday last hauled it to Belmont at which point it has been anchored." But Belmont didn't have it for long.

An old clipping dated December 7, 1872 states; "The railroad depot at Belmont was destroyed by fire on the night of Monday last. A freight car in on the ground, to be used as a warehouse."

Then a later clipping says; "The railroad company is building a passenger depot building at Belmont to take place of the one lately destroyed by fire." This date was February 8, 1873.

This depot remained in Belmont for 79 years, until 1952, when it was bulldozed down and replaced by the present building, which was moved to Belmont from East Hillsdale Blvd. in San Mateo. It had been used there for a real estate office.

Belmont gained a very good citizen by having a railroad station here. On June 1, 1926 Mr. Hardy Hannibal became their agent, and telegraph operator, as well as railway express agent.

The shipping platform was at the north end of the building, and when Belmont people shipped freight

or express packages they would hear Mr. Hannibal's telegraph sounder clicking loudly.

He could read Morse code while busy at other things, but would suddenly go to his key and respond, then return and continue with his other duties. Other operators told me that Mr. Hannibal could easily read forty words per minute, which is considered fast.

It was said that he had a "good fist," meaning that he sent code efficiently, and spaced his letters evenly.

Mr. Hannibal was the only man in Belmont who was always addressed as "Mr." He was that kind of man. No one called him "Hardy." He was a director of the Belmont County Water District for 31 years. The pumping station at Ralston Ave. and Chula Vista Ave. was named in his honor. Also he was manager of the Chamber of Commerce for three and one-half years.

When Mr. Hannibal retired in 1960, the railway express was requested to move out of the railroad station. They had no place to go so I let them move into my real estate office. Then I was their agent for seven years.

Fast trains now roar regularly, and loudly, through Belmont. About 13 years ago, following several fatalities at our crossings, our city council notified the railroad company that their trains must comply with Belmont's speed laws.

They must not exceed 35 miles per hour within our city limits. Upon reaching Belmont's borders the trainmen started pulling their whistle cords, and held them open until leaving Belmont.

The railroad company claimed that they knew nothing at all about this disturbance. A columnist claimed Belmont's population might double in nine months. The noise was awful. Sleepy-eyed councilmen later rescinded their order, and the night whistling stopped. Belmont people could once more "pound the pillows." What a relief!

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The Water Flows

Just as a riverbank is influenced to a certain extent by the river flowing past it, cities are influenced by their neighbors. There used to be a large metal building immediately adjacent to Belmont at the south. It was where pumps were kept which forced water up into a tall standpipe west of El Camino Real. Then the water flowed by gravity down another pipe and northward on Old County Road to serve San Francisco.

A shopping center presently occupies the site of the large metal building, and condominiums have been built on the right-of-way where the pipe went up the hill to the standpipe.

The water came from the Calaveras reservoir east of Niles Canyon. The pipe came across the bay in the area of the Dumbarton bridge.

The city of San Francisco and the Peninsula cities had been growing very fast and the pumping station was becoming inadequate. Something must be done, and soon, or there would be a water shortage. A movement was started in 1916 to try to obtain more water. A San Francisco supervisor named Mr. O'Shaunessy spearheaded a project to fill the valley west of Belmont with water brought down from Yosemite in the high Sierra. Opposition was strong, and soon

opponents started calling Mr. O'Shaunessy "Old Shagnasty." Yet his plan finally won approval.

A dam must first be built at Crystal Springs Canyon west of San Mateo so the valley could hold the water. Highway No. 280 was constructed in later years and the Doran highway bridge is above the dam. A larger dam was built in Yosemite where a large valley there would become a reservoir. With transportation slow it was found that a railroad to carry construction material to the new dam-site was needed. There is an interesting book about the railroad, titled, "That Dam Railroad." No doubt there were problems.

With dams completed, one pipe was installed to bring water into the valley west of Belmont, and finally the valley became a lake as we see it today. Later, a second pipe was installed, and now there are two pipes, each six feet in diameter. These can be seen beside Edgewood Road west of Redwood City. They terminate at the Pulgas Water Temple, beside the old Canada Road.

Water from the pipes is brought to Belmont down Edgewood Road to Old County Road, then northward to Belmont, then along Ralston Avenue to the Hardy Hannibal

Pumping Station at Ralston Avenue near Chula Vista. There it is pumped uphill into large tanks. Some of these are on Folger Drive, one is on Lyon Avenue, and others located in Belmont's western hills.

Although Belmont has an adequate water supply for continued growth, there are some in Belmont who worked at the old pumping station who lost their jobs. The father of our bi-centennial "king," Bertram Johnson, was one who had worked there. The Johnson family had lived at the south end of Fifth Avenue, and Mr. Johnson only needed to cross El Camino Real to his employment. The Johnson house was later sold to the Chartier family, who started their Villa Chartier there. Later, Chartiers built a restaurant in San Mateo, and sold their Belmont property to Herndon's who operated a restaurant. Herndons retired, and the old historic house was torn down, and an apartment house occupies the site.

Since 1929 our Belmont County Water District has had six managers. First was W.E. Crutis, Dec. 1929 to Dec. 1944. Then W.P. Davis, Jan. 1945 to July 1950. Then Arne Hersom, July 1950 to March 1963. (The Lyon Avenue water tank was dedicated in his honor) Warren McClure became manager in April 1963, and served until Nov. 1975. Then Mr. Heidrick was Manager from 1975 until June 1979, when our present manager, W.J. Mitchell became manager. All have been well qualified for their positions.

These men have provided Belmont with exceptionally pure drinking water. Impurities are only four parts per million. This is said to be equivalent to water from high up in the Alps. After all, the water here does originate in California's high Sierras. This pure water has done much to keep Belmont people healthy. We are proud of our Belmont County Water District.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The Overpass Passes By

Recently while I was busy on the telephone, a nervous man came into my office. I pointed to a chair and he sat down. Then he began figeting and crossing and uncrossing his legs. My reasoning for his actions wasn't what I suspected. When I got off the phone he told me that he had waited and waited to cross the railroad tracks while a long freight train was passing, and that he was in a hurry. He wondered why there wasn't an overpass?

I told him neighboring cities don't all have overpasses, and maybe just waiting for a train is what people need. It should give them time to relax and think a little: something many people don't have time for anymore. As he calmed down I told him about the overpass Belmont nearly had several years ago.

He was much interested in looking at the two brochures, both pro and con, with pictures of what might have been. I explained to him that many Belmont people didn't want an overpass. I also explained to him that when it had been publicized that an overpass near Ralston Avenue would be 40 feet in height the voters turned it down. As he examined the pictures closely he said, "It appears that the only 41 foot height might have been the top of some light poles placed on top of the structure."

I showed him plans for the routing, where the proposed structure would leave Ralston Avenue, east of Old County Road, pass over the old saloon (concrete building) at the north end of the Country Store, then pass over El Camino Real, near the Standard station, then return to Ralston Avenue, across the street from the Wells Fargo Bank.

The man asked whether other routes might later be acceptable? I told him possibly Davey Glen, Harbor Blvd., or Hill Street might do.

I told him how years ago the railroad company had a crossing

guard in a little house west of the tracks, on the south side of Ralston Avenue. The guard used to sit there and when a train approached, he came out waving his red flag to stop vehicles from crossing. In lieu of the overpass, the Chamber of Commerce finally succeeded in having crossing arms placed at Ralston Avenue, and also at Harbor Blvd., but this was after two men had been killed by trains the same day at Harbor Blvd., and one a week or two later at the Ralston Avenue crossing. I also told him that now the Old County Road and El Camino Real stop lights are synchronized and the waiting period is less than it used to be.

Before the crossing arms were installed, there were some close calls. About 35 years ago, while I was waiting behind a small pickup truck for an approaching train to pass at the Harbor Blvd. crossing, a gardener ahead of me drove onto the tracks. His small pickup truck was loaded with sprinkler pipes. He made it across the tracks but the engine hit the projecting pipes and scattered them along the tracks. He had a narrow escape. The man could hardly speak and he became extremely pale. He was shaking badly. The train stopped, but continued on after the trainmen determined there was no damage, and nobody hurt. I helped the man gather up his pipes.

Finally, at my office, I asked the man sitting by my desk what he wanted when he came in. He replied that he was a stranger here, and was a civil engineer, and wanted to find the City Hall. So I directed him there. I forgot to ask who he was, and still do not know. Anyway, after talking awhile and resting in my office he appeared to have calmed down. I felt good too, because I had tried to project some good will about Belmont, and had told him something about Belmont's history. Things that he hadn't known.

More next week.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

Belmont has always been a "live town" and there have been constant changes here. Psychologists say when there are no changes there is death. That is something Belmont needn't worry about.

In 1918, during World War I, when the El Camino Real was moved west of the railroad tracks, Belmont had a large change. A narrow street that had been west of the tracks disappeared. What had been El Camino Real was re-named Old County Road.

Many persons think only Spanish explorers came through Belmont in the early years. Actually the British were here too. An old record states that, "the wooded hills sloping steeply to Belmont delighted Captain George Vancouver's appreciative eye when he paused here for lunch November 20, 1792, on his way to Mission Santa Clara with a military escort from the anchorage near the San Francisco Presidio of the British warship "Discovery," first non-Spanish vessel to enter the bay."

Captain Vancouver would have traveled on what we call Old County Road, which must have been a primitive single track, if even that.

In 1918 there was a rush to improve roads for military purposes. Many of us remember seeing those army trucks from Menio Park's Camp Fremont.

El Camino Real was a two lane graveled roadway when first built. The paving came later.

Widening to its present width came much later. Only thirty five years ago El Camino Real was narrow. There wasn't much traffic, and if you needed to walk across it you had no problem. There used to be a mailbox across from my office in the 1400 block. When I glanced up and down El Camino Real there weren't always cars within sight and I didn't need to hurry to reach the mailbox.

One of the first businesses to be established on the new El Camino Real was a service station at the corner of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue. Mr. Myers opened it in 1919. Then an old clipping dated Oct. 2, 1924 states, "F. W. Myers has sold his interest in the Belmont service station to F. W. Battenberg of Mountain View."

Mr. George Pyatt operated his vegetable stand on the west side of El Camino Real for more than thirty years, then sold out in 1959. He retired to a mobile home on the Delta and passed away after a few months. Pyatt Avenue had been named for him at the north end of what we call Sterling Downs, but the street was later renamed Sterling View.

There were few houses or businesses along El Camino Real, even after World War I. Mr. Messner operated a taxi service and Daniel St. George moved his real estate business from Ralston Avenue to El Camino Real, where the Iron Gate parking lot is presently located. There were no buildings along the east side of El Camino Real, except our railroad station.

Since World War II there have been many changes on El Camino Real, always updating to keep up with progress.

For two thousand years Italy has had their famous Appian Way, but Belmont has El Camino Real — the King's Highway: route of the Padres from the San Diego Mission (1769) to the Sonoma Mission (1823). Thousands of famous people have traveled our portion of El Camino Real. Perhaps in two thousand years tourists will come to see our El Camino Real. Ever think about that?

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL ESTEP

Historical items occur when people, things or events change. This has been happening for more than two thousand years in Europe, and some people there find it hard to understand just how America might have much history. Yet here in Belmont, since settlers came in 1851, there have been many interesting changes.

A large hill located between the railroad track and the Bayshore Freeway is gone. An old news item dated Sept. 19, 1874 states: "Belmont derives its name from Belle Monte, meaning beautiful hill, and undoubtedly having allusion to the prominent elevation, about sixty feet in height, below the railroad and public road and standing isolated and alone. It is said the locality was named in 1851 by Messers Steinberger and Beard, who at that time were large owners of real estate in the vicinity." The 1874 writer of the item must have been a native Californian for no self-respecting Californian would ever refer to a hill under two thousand feet as a mountain. The hill the writer mentioned was all used for earth fill when the Bayshore Freeway was constructed. Throughout the United States there are many Belmonts.

Then there is the hill west of El Camino Real at the south end of Belmont. It was here in 1851, but it hasn't been in Belmont for a long time. When developers wanted to develop the top of the ridge, Belmont couldn't easily furnish utilities to the site. San Carlos accommodated them and took the hilltop into their city. It is still a part of San Carlos.

Then there was the Belmont Casino — a good eating place. It was on the Old County Road, north of the Ice Skating rink, and was demolished a few years ago to make room for office and apartment buildings. The Belmont Lions Club met there for many years.

Let's not forget the famous dog racing track that used to be in Belmont. It was east of the railroad tracks and in the area of the Homeview Subdivision. Hundreds attended their evening races, before Belmont citizens voted that it must close. Mr. Tom Keene and Mr. Pete O'Connor were the operators. Mr. Curtis Davis came here from Oklahoma City to manage the track. He had overseen construction of other dog tracks and was familiar with what must be done. His earlier home had been Staunton, Ill. Soon after coming here he married a local girl, Miss Ruth McGowan, daughter of the postmaster.

Then let's not neglect our wonderful golf course. It used to be just west of the Ralston mansion, and was planned for an eighteen hole course but ended up being nine holes. It was spread out over the flat ground in the little valley. The club house is presently the Congregational Church. The large swimming pool has been filled with gravel.

The football field for St. Joseph's Military Academy is now the Belmont Shopping Center.

The Mae Nesbit School and the Belmont Ice Rink occupy the location of the earlier Belmont Airport.

There are many apartment houses where the Chinese had their nursery on the hillside at the north end of Belmont at Irene Court.

Belmont's hills are mostly covered with houses. Instead of coyotes howling at night and cows bawling, the loudest sounds are young persons racing four-wheel-drive pick-up trucks.

If European people could see the many changes in Belmont they would surely agree that historical things have happened here. There have been many more changes than those I have listed and many others will likely occur. Belmonters not only have history, they make it.

# Belmont History

By RUSSEL ESTEP

Belmont has had several theatres, and presently has three. All have provided entertainment for our citizens, but the drive-in theatre which was located on the north side of Harbor Boulevard, where the large Coca Cola plant is located, was probably enjoyed most by our young people.

That parking lot was filled nearly every evening. A few young people actually seemed to be watching the movies. When well advertised bookings were provided, many adults also drove there to see the show.

Then there is the double Belmont theatre at the north end of Belmont, on El Camino Real. When people don't like a picture they can go out, then re-enter through another door and see a different show. Like changing channels on a television.

Years ago the stone carriage house near the Ralston mansion, was converted into a theatre. The entrance is on the upper level, near one of the college buildings. Excellent plays have been produced there. Some new, some old.

Interest in a play may be magnified by what someone has experienced. More than 60 years ago when radio was called wireless, I was living

alone in the mountains at a cattle ranch in Shasta County. Being isolated, and needing entertainment, I built up a crystal set. Two minerals were being used to detect signals by rectifying the incoming waves. One mineral was silicon and the other was galena. I sent a mail order for some galena and a pair of ear-phones. I put up a two-hundred foot length of copper antenna wire between some tall trees. My detector was a two-inch square of wood, with a little container to hold the galena, and I fashioned a tiny copper wire by twisting it around a nail, then making the other end touch the small piece of galena. The tiny piece of wire was referred to as a "cat whisker." I wound a coil around a Quaker Oats box, then made a condenser by placing tin foil between two pieces of broken window glass. The crude thing worked.

When sitting with my feet in the oven trying to keep warm on a cold, snowy night, I tuned in KPO on my wireless. They were presenting a play called "Seven Keys to Bald Pate." I became fascinated. When the play reached the fifth key, my radio quit. Try as I might, I just couldn't find a sensitive spot on that darn

galena. The result was that for more than 60 years I tried to see "Seven Keys to Bald Pate," but the play never seemed to appear anywhere again until the Notre Dame Players put on the play!

With radio and television working so efficiently as they do now, we no longer need to miss the end of an exciting "Soap Opera" when the cat whisker slips off the galena. I shall be forever grateful to the Notre Dame Players.

# Belmont History

By RUSSELL ESTEP

California is famous for its two kinds of redwood trees. The Sequoia sempervirens grow best along our coast, where it is occasionally foggy, and the Sequoia gigantea grows best in the Sierra where there is seldom fog; where the air is thin at high altitudes, such as in Sequoia National Park. Yet Belmont has a Sequoia gigantea tree!

The Belmont tree was brought here from Sequoia National Park by Mr. Louis A. Barrett. He planted it in 1914 at his property on Ralston Avenue, where the Wells Fargo Bank is now located. It was a small tree then, and has grown considerably, and it will continue to grow until it becomes a giant.

Mr. Louis Barrett had purchased the old Levy home and moved into it with his family in 1914.

Mr. Barrett had been with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but when the U.S. Forest Service came into being in 1905 he became their first supervisor of the Plumas National Forest. He also did other work for the government.

Mr. Barrett had been born in Bloomington, Ill., April 27, 1874, the son of Lewis C. and Mattie E. (Richards) Barrett. He had served in the Philippines during the Spanish American War in 1898.

Now-a-days it is hard to imagine

anyone riding a horse for two thousand miles — yet this was done by Mr. Barrett. He obtained the horse from "Buffalo Bill" Cody, and was requested by the U.S. government to inspect the boundaries of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve. We hope he had a comfortable saddle.

Before his retirement in 1936 he had been promoted to Supervisor of Land and Recreation for the U.S. Forest Service, District 5, for all of California and portions of Oregon and Nevada.

In 1910 he was transferred from Quincy to San Francisco, and after four years there, he moved to Belmont and planted the Sequoia gigantea tree.

Mr. Barrett served as chairman of the California Conservation Council, and also chairman of the Forests and Recreation Section of the Commonwealth Club. He was the California representative on the National Council of the Wilderness Society of America. He also was a member of the Society of Foresters, and he was an early member of the San Mateo County Historical Society. He was a Mason for more than forty years.

Our population was only six hundred when he came to Belmont. He and Mrs. Barrett helped a little by raising a daughter and two sons.

The daughter, Ruth (Barrett) Parish resides with her husband in nearby San Carlos. One son died, and the other lives in Calistoga.

Following his retirement in 1936 Mr. Barrett found more time to help Belmont — a town he loved.

He served for twenty nine years as clerk of the Belmont school board. He was a city councilman, and mayor of Belmont.

Mr. Louis Barrett died here in 1945. When a school was built on Belburn Avenue it was named in his honor. This week the school celebrates its 36th anniversary and students held contests honoring Mr. Barrett.

The Sequoia gigantea tree planted by Mr. Barrett is healthy and should survive two thousand years. Belmont is fortunate indeed to have this sturdy and unusual redwood tree and to have had this man. The tree will grow to become a giant. The man was one.

# Belmont History

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

## The Roots of Medical Care

Belmont is really a very healthy place in which to live, but if anyone is in need of medical help it is available. In fact, it has been available here for a long time.

The first sanitarium here was the Gardner Sanitarium, which had been the Ralston home. Following Mr. Ralston's death in 1875, Senator Sharon owned the mansion until his own death in 1885. Then, in 1901, under the ownership of Dr. Alden Gardner, the large house became the Gardner Sanitarium.

In 1918 a second sanitarium was established here, in the former Hansen home which was on the north side of Ralston Avenue. The large house was demolished a few years ago to make room for the extension of Sixth Avenue toward the north, into Hill Street. Although the sanitarium had carried the name "Nerve Rest Sanitarium" the name was changed to "Buena Campbell Sanitarium" and the institution was moved into a new building on Hill Street, a little higher up the hillside. Presently it is mainly used for a convalescent hospital.

In 1924 the California Sanitarium was established in the former large home of C.R. Splivalo, San Francisco's macaroni king. The building is gone now to make room for condominiums, but it had been on the west side of Lake Street, about a half block north of Carlmont Drive. The sanitarium was supported by the Charles Howard Foundation to help children who had tuberculosis.

In 1924 Mrs. Annett Alexander established her Alexander Sanitarium in Belmont. It was on Ralston Avenue and treated persons with nervous disorders. Following Mrs. Alexander's death in 1959, others acquired the property and re-named it Belmont Hills Sanitarium, and it is still known by that name.

Then, of course, there was the former George Center home in Twin Pines Park. We refer to it now as The Mansion. George Center was cashier of the Bank of California.

An old newspaper clipping in my files states that the house was completed in October 1906, and the Center family moved there from San Francisco in that month. Starting in 1925 the house was used for a nervous disorder sanitarium. The owners gave it the name "Twin Pines Sanitarium."

You might think this would be enough sanitariums for Belmont, but Mr. Edward Drotleff later had the Carlmont Convalescent Hospital built. It is located on Carlmont Drive, one-half block west of the Alameda de las Pulgas.

Ed's father was a builder in Belmont. Ed lost both hands while working for him. Mr. Drotleff had placed dynamite under a stump to clear a lot for a new house. The explosion failed to materialize and Ed ran up to see what was the reason. At that instant the explosion came and Ed's two hands were gone.

When he recovered, he had mechanical hands fitted, and he learned to manipulate them expertly. Following his recovery he became a successful Belmont businessman. He arranged for his father to build the Carlmont Convalescent Hospital, probably remembering the many months he had spent convalescing.

Unfortunately, both Ed Drotleff and his father died after the hospital was completed, and placed in operation.

Although Belmont has adequate hospitals and sanitariums, good climate, a comparatively easy life, and just about everything anyone could ask for, even good Belmont people seem not to live forever.

More next week.

Wednesday, April 14, 1982

## Estep's History

### From 60 to 34,000 Books

BY RUSSEL ESTEP

Probably everyone in Belmont has read about the origin of communicating by writing, and how it passed through stages of pictorial symbols first, of things, then of sounds and words.

Probably everyone has also read that writing was likely introduced to the western nations by the Phoenicians, and that their system was likely based on the Egyptian.

The study of the origin of writing is interesting. It is difficult to think what our world might be like if writing hadn't been developed and improved upon over many thousands of years.

Here in Belmont many of us hardly give this a second thought when we borrow a book from our library.

Belmont's first library had less than 60 books, yet all of them were read many times by our early citizens. The books were available at the Central School until 1936, when they were moved to Mr. Messner's store on El Camino Real. Our library moved to other locations several times before 1962, when it was moved to its present location at 1110 Alameda de Las Pulgas.

There has been so much activity in our library that it has had to be expanded. The new construction will bring the square footage up to 6,000 square feet.

The enlarged space contains 34,000 books, and 125 periodicals. Belmonterers may borrow a book for three weeks—not just two weeks as in some other libraries. Over 10,000 books are out on loan at all times.

The library contains children's books as well as fiction, and technical books for adults. One tiny child, too young to read, enjoyed looking at picture books several years ago, and when her mother had left with

her other children, the librarian became a baby-sitter for the small "book worm" until the child's mother found her missing and returned for her.

The Belmont library is a branch of the San Mateo County library: their main building being at 25 Tower Road.

Many citizens assist our librarian with her large work load. One is Mrs. Christine Scott, who continually clips items from newspapers when Belmonterers are mentioned. She pastes these into a scrap book which she donates to the library once each year at the years end. Her work is much appreciated.

The librarian at our Belmont library is Mrs. Catherine Wynn, a friendly, helpful lady, who always seems to know right where to look for any rare book.

The remodeled library has facilities for the handicapped. They can easily roll wheel chairs into the building.

The entrance is on the patio side—not in front where it used to be. This allows an easier way for people to enter the building, and also provides the person at the desk a better way to monitor those leaving.

On May 16, there will be an "open house" at the remodeled library. Belmonterers will be welcomed between 2 and 4 p.m. Come and look over the facilities. Perhaps you will want to apply for a library card, if you don't already have one.

The Belmont library has grown from less than 60 books up to 34,000, which surely does indicate that Belmont people do appreciate the development of communicating by writing over the past thousands of years. Many take advantage of what the Belmont library has to offer. Are you one of them.

## San Carlos & Belmont History

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By RUSSEL ESTEP

My first contact with anyone from Notre Dame came in San Jose in 1912, when I was nine years old. I was walking along west Santa Clara Street with my devout Methodist grandmother, when I saw two of the Sisters from Notre Dame approaching us. I was feeling pretty low that day, and recall that I believed I must be the most lonesome boy in the world, having to live with my grandmother, when wanting to be with my parents who had a large cattle ranch in Shasta County.

The two Sisters wore those long dark color dresses, and the large white head covers. They were from Notre Dame, which was one block north of Santa Clara Street, back of where the DeAnza Hotel was built later.

Notre Dame had a high fence which you couldn't see through, an I guessed it to be seven feet in height. The boys all wondered what was behind that impenetrable fence.

Soon the Sisters were near to us and one smiled at me. How that brightened my day! "Why, I told my grandmother, "you see Catholics are good people. They don't eat little boys."

She turned like she was going to slap me, as I ducked, but she seemed to feel better of it, and we walked on.

That Sister, I learned later, could have been Sister Barbara Eng, for she was at Notre Dame in San Jose at that time. I kenw her later here in Belmont. She was friendly, and I wished that I had told her about my boyhood experience.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a Belgium Order, sold their San Jose property in 1921, then bought their Belmont property from Dr. Gardner.

Dr. Gardner had come here from Napa, where he had been superintendant of a nerve hospital. He was a qualified neurologist. The price he paid for the former Ralston property was \$30,000.00, which was a lot of money in those days.

Since buying the Ralston property from Dr. Gardner, the Sisters have added many buildings, until now they have one of the finest educational institutions in the world, from first grade up through college, and beyond.

When Notre Dame had completed their fine new auditorium a few years ago many local people donated money for seats.

Mrs. Annette Alexander, who owned the Alexander Sanitarium, told me that she had donated money for a seat, and that her name was on it. Soon I attended a concert there, and wished that I kenw where the Annette Alexander chair was. Turning, I glanced at the name plate on the chair I occupied, and would you

believe, I was sitting in that very chair!

Notre Dame is a great asset to our Belmont Community, providing a nearby place for local people to obtain a good education. When the Sister moved from San Jose that city immediately felt their loss. Belmont gained from the move, and if you chance to meet the college's P.R. lady, Mrs. Mary Bosque, you will always find her smiling pleasantly. We appreciate her smile here in Belmont. The Notre Dame people have much to smile about.