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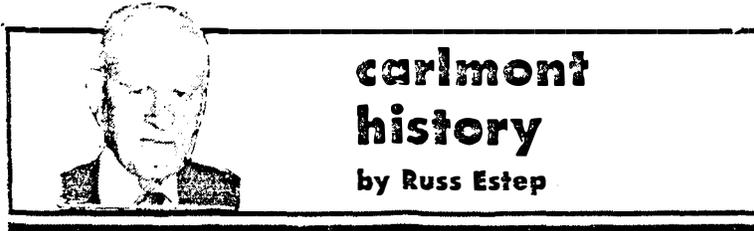
Vol. 11
CARLMONT HISTORY
By
Russel A. Estep
1992-1993

INDEX

1. Early People in Belmont.
2. The Reid School In Belmont.
3. About Some Belmont Subdivisions.
4. Early Club Fundraisers.
5. An early Belmonter Visits Hawaii in 1881.
6. Prohibition Comes to Belmont.
7. When Moffett Field Was Built in 1931.
8. Mrs. Alpheus Bull Purchased the Ralston Estate.
9. Some Large Fires in Belmont.
10. Ham Radio Operators helped Belmont.
11. Medical Help In Early Belmont.
12. Business Licenses in Early Belmont.
13. Constructing Early Homes in Belmont.
14. Fourth of July Parade in Belmont.
15. Belmont was the First County Seat.
16. Goint to Half Moon Bay In Early Days.
17. Ivan F. Phipps came Here and Made Exchanges of Property.
18. Hauling Hay With Rattlesnakes In It..
19. Belmont Was Called Waterview At First.
20. Attorney Mezes Fee For Clearing Titles.
21. Morgan Oyster Company.
22. King Kalakua Stays At The Ralston House.
23. Many Birds in Belmont.
24. Visiting the Hawaii Capitol.
25. When a Large Chicken House Burned.
26. Dr. Lee Gambitz Lived In Belmont.
27. Brewers Island Became Foster City.
28. A Large House on Lake Street Became California Sanitorium.
29. Crystal Springs Lake West of Belmont.
30. Activities at 125 Dale Avenue in San Carlos.
31. Ralston Helped Sharon Become a Director of his Bank.
32. There is Shallow Hardpan Under Belmont.
33. Wagons Were Greased With Bear Grease in Belmont.
34. Coming West in 1854.
35. A baloon Lands in Belmont.
36. When Lions Roared in Belmont.
37. Train Whistles Disturb Belmonters.
38. A Parade in Belmont.

INDEX CONTINUED

39. Arguello lived where San Carlos is now.
40. Annette Alexander helped many Belmont people.
41. Belmont's incorporation was set aside for a few years.
42. A new barn 60x60 blew down in Belmont.
43. A visit to Salton City.
44. A Belmont couple visits Hawaii in 1860.
45. Several small Airports.
46. First School in Belmont.
47. Small Belmont Businesses in Early Days.
48. From Belmont to San Jose in Earlu Days.
49. The Angelo Hotel.
50. Belmont's Picnic Grounds.
51. Belmont Was Once a Governor's Residence.
52. Dirt Roads to the Twentieth Century.
53. Advantages of Living in Belmont.



When Belmont was first settled its first inhabitants built fences — not to keep their animals in, but to keep their neighbors' animals out. Cattle were everywhere.

The first fences built were rail fences. One type was called worm fencing.

A few of the pioneers started businesses making rails. They cut down trees near Woodside, and then split the logs into rails. One type was laid so that it zig-zagged. This was called a "worm fence."

Another type was when rails were set between two points. This type was a straight fence and didn't take up as much ground. It also looked better. The rails were always the same length — 10 feet. Wedges were used to split the logs. An ax simply was not enough. Some rail splitters became experts in the work. They made a meager living, but they subsisted on their small vegetable gardens. However, they needed some money to purchase salt, baking powder, sugar, flour, their boots or shoes occasionally and new jeans or a blue denim shirt now and then.

Some wrote to their families in the East that they were in "business" and expected to send for their families very soon.

Because cattle and hogs ran loose over the countryside, they had to be kept out of vegetable gardens. Some hogs were very persistent and rooted under the

fences.

Old reports state that the Arguello family had 10,000 cattle and 2,000 hogs. Mission Dolores also was reported to have had several thousand head of cattle and hundreds of hogs. All of them ran loose over the countryside.

Doris Vannier's mother passed away many years ago when she was in her 80s. She had been here in the late 1800s and told me that as a child she had to watch for wild cattle. She always kept a tree or fence in sight to climb if chased.

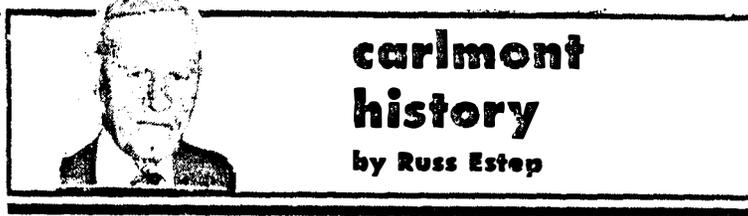
With so many cattle and hogs raised back then, you would have thought the beef and pork would provide an immense income. But they did not.

There was a small local market for both, yet no way to keep the meat if shipped east on sailing ships. Animals hides only brought a few dollars each, according to old records.

Henry Dana's book, "Two Years Before the Mast," tells about sailing around Cape Horn to return to the East Coast with hides. They were used for many things requiring leather, but mainly for shoe leather.

When in Boston, I was interested in its many shoe factories. They still operate there. One factory was so old, it was on

"Milk Street," where, presumably, an early dairy had been located. Milk Street was downtown in the business district.



A College of San Mateo student recently approached me, asking when the Reid School was established in Belmont. He was preparing a paper about it. I suggested he go to the Redwood City Library and look up old Redwood City Tribunes. He came back with an article which states:

"Across the road from the Mezes home, Mr. William R. Reid established in the early 1890s an institution that was known for many years as the Reid School. It was built with money given by Moses Hopkins of Redwood City and operated under the auspices of the Congregational Church as a semi-military boarding school. Boys were sent to this school from all parts of the country and, when graduated, were admitted to the nation's leading universities. After the death of Mr. Reid, the school was operated for some time by his son, and was finally sold about 1919 to the Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco and became St. Joseph Military Academy.

Some of the old Reid buildings are still in use at the corner of Ralston Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas.

In earlier years, there was considerable activity at that location. Now strangers sometimes ask, "Where is the downtown in Belmont? Is it downtown, or way out here?"

In an old Redwood City Tribune, one item states, "By 1919 the town had began to move west of the tracks. At that time a site was purchased for a school on Waltermire Street."

But there was activity in the Carlmont area also. A sanitarium that was established brought many people to Carlmont. It was called the Cali-

fornia Sanitarium. Here is a quote about it from an old Redwood City Tribune:

"The California Sanitarium was first the home of C.R. Splivalo, owner of a macaroni factory in San Francisco. In 1910, after Mr. Splivalo's death, his place was purchased by Dr. Harry C. Warren and Max Rothchild, who established the California Sanitarium. Dr. Warren, a specialist in pulmonary diseases, was the owner and director of the institution. As an adjunct to it, through a gift of Charles S. Howard, a free preventorium for children with tuberculosis tendencies was established. The public school system provided instruction for the young patients."

When the St. Joseph Military Academy was in operation, the boys at the school wore semi-military uniforms. One uniform is on display at the Belmont Museum in Twin Pines Park. It is fitted onto a dummy which makes it quite realistic.

There are also some excellent photos of the school and property surrounding it in the museum. The school's football field was located where we presently find the shopping center.

Belmont continually changes. People who were born here, such as Doris Vannier and Bert Johnson, must wonder what changes Belmont will have in the future. Belmont will continue to grow and there might come a time when San Francisco will become one of our suburbs.

(Editor's note: Russell Estep, a long-time Belmont and San Carlos resident, is the official historian for the city of Belmont. His column is published each week in the Enquirer-Bulletin.)



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Past investors and speculators have helped make Belmont what it is today.

In 1947 the upper portion of the large hill west of El Camino Real came on the market. Louis S. Morton decided to purchase it and he put a \$5,000 deposit to begin his purchase. When the Belmont County Water District couldn't furnish water economically to the hilltop, Morton changed his mind yet forfeited his \$5,000.

Someone else put a deposit of the property and San Carlos agreed to furnish water. Construction on the hilltop commenced, and the new homeowners paid water bills to San Carlos. It seems that a pumping station to bring water from Belmont wasn't feasible at that early time.

When I told Morton that I was sorry he lost so much money, he laughed and said, "I'll make it up on my next deal."

Sometimes developers must take chances. Monroe, Miller and Lyon developed the Belmont Country Club properties. Their project looked good at first, but our country went into a slump. The Union Paving Company, which had paved our streets, took over. It hadn't been paid and was still disposing of Belmont lots as late as the 1950s.

Much of Belmont was built by small builders, one lot at a time. There was Ernest Baker, Ed Cunningham and another Cunningham, many individual homeowners and some others.

Andy Oddstead developed and

homes across from Carlmont High School. He was killed in an accident north of Bakersfield when some Mexican farm workers drove into his car in a dense fog when they were traveling on the highway in the wrong lane.

Another developer built the Homeview subdivision. Those houses were of two plans. Every other house had an upstairs. All had perimeter foundations.

The Sterling Downs' houses all had concrete floors, three bedrooms and two-car garages.

The Bay View Heights subdivision, west of El Camino Real toward the south end of Belmont, was built between 1924 and 1927. All of those houses had tile roofs and 1,200 feet of floor space.

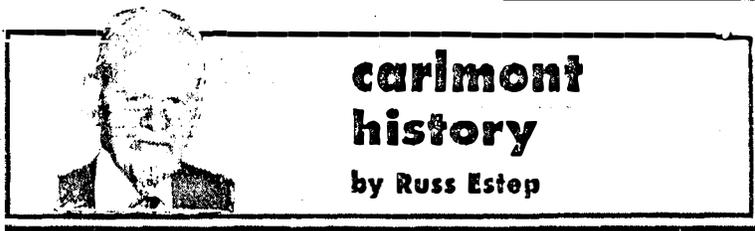
The subdivision near Ralston Middle School was built up by Conway and Culligan of San Mateo. Carpenters working there killed rattlesnakes occasionally. There are some other Belmont subdivisions, but at present land is becoming very scarce. Even single lots are almost gone. Those that are left are pretty steep.

Buyers have a choice of up slope or down slope. Builders usually find the down slope lots less expensive to build on because they don't have to excavate and have the dirt hauled.

There are buyers who prefer both types of lots.

One man who came into my office asked, "Would I need a ladder to see a Belmont up slope lot, or would I have to be a bungee jumper to see a down slope

121



There are civic minded people everywhere who help their towns and communities. In Belmont, the service clubs hold events several times each year and raise money to help the community. The Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs have been very active in such projects.

The Lions Club recently held a spaghetti sale in Twin Pines Park. The club used the money it raised to purchase a special radar for the Police Department. Costing more than \$850 the radar has a large display board with figures a foot high. These are easily seen by drivers so they can slow down if necessary. The speed limit is also displayed and it is usually 35 miles per hour.

Kiwanis and Rotary have also purchased things for our city. There are always things needed in cities which haven't been included in their city budgets.

The service clubs are composed of men and women who want to do do their part. All business men and women are welcome to join and would be able to meet with city leaders.

There have been many different kinds of fund-raisers. One that was tried during the Great Depression down in King City in Monterey County has always amused me. In an area near the town, the elderly Cornwell twin brothers had a cattle ranch. They were rough men, drank a lot and sometimes were loud and noisy when they came into town. Jess, in particular, was a real country character.

The Cornwells had heard about a fund-raiser and wanted to help. Jess had an amazing idea — it concerned the long freight train that passed

through town at midnight, and always whistled and woke him up, which he didn't like. His idea was to hold a raffle.

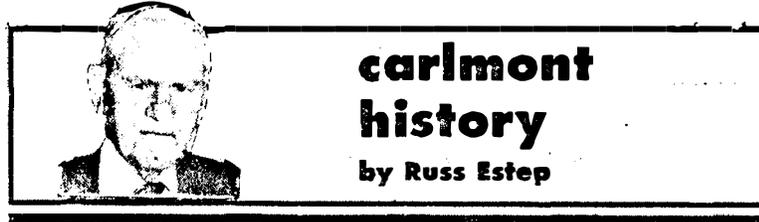
When the date of the event arrived, both Jess, his twin brother and 15-20 other men stood beside the railroad tracks. The townsfolk, including me, stood nearby after paying \$1 to watch. (I had been transferred to King City by the Shell Oil Company in the early 1930s.

Soon the train passed by and everyone cheered the men for urinating on the train. The train crew probably didn't realize what happened, and paid no attention.

Jess won the prize, and a service club benefited. Everyone went home in hysterics as the men zipped up their pants, glad that they could help the community. He had shown that he could do what he claimed he could do — over the train. He became a local hero.

There have been many stunts and ideas for service clubs to raise money to help their communities. Right now, the Lions and Rotary Clubs are planning future events. Both hope you will come to their booths in Twin Pines Park. They raise funds by selling raffle tickets with many prizes.

Russell Estep, a long-time Belmont and San Carlos resident, is the official historian for the city of Belmont. His column is published each week in the Enquirer-Bulletin.



Early inhabitants had some expressions which used to amuse me. When one old-timer met another and mentioned it later, he would comment that he met old so-and-so and they "gassed a while" — meaning they had talked and probably gossiped about him or her.

Nowadays, descendants of these old-timers come into my office, sit down and want to discuss almost everything imaginable.

Last week, one man told me about an ancestor who had visited Belmont before going to Honolulu in 1881. Things, including travel, were different then. The man said he had been told about his ancestor's voyage to Honolulu.

After being entertained for several days in Belmont, the man said his ancestor had someone hitch up a bay horse to a light wagon, and was then taken to the Belmont waterfront over a rough, unpaved road. The man said there was a small pier at the edge of the bay and a sailing ship was tied there.

The man had been told that the ship was a small one, not unlike a yacht, which would transport his ancestor and his two trunks to San Francisco.

The short gangplank was removed, the lines released and the sails hauled up. The ship moved out into the bay waters with a strong wind coming toward them down the bay. How, the man wondered, could the ship reach San Francisco against such a strong wind?

The man said his ancestor be-

came very seasick as the little boat pitched and rolled. The captain seemed to sail eastward, but then turned the boat westward.

The man in my office said he had heard the story over and over when he was a child. He wanted me to listen to all of it. I had been busy, but at his suggestion, I tried to relax and listen. I found his story interesting.

The man said he had been told that the trip against the wind up the bay to San Francisco took six hours. The ship hauled up beside a square-rigger on the San Francisco waterfront. There were several sailing ships tied up nearby. Some of the boats were like the square-rigger while others were rigged similar to the yacht the ancestor had arrived in.

The waterfront was a busy place, with many men scurrying everywhere. The captain of the small ship arranged for the ancestor to board the large ship, and had two men carry up his two trunks. His voyage to Honolulu required three weeks, and the man's ancestor was seasick most of the time.

When the large ship arrived at the Honolulu dock, everyone hurried ashore. A surry, pulled by two bay horses, then transported the ancestor with his two trunks to a small hotel near Waikiki Beach.

The ancestor had arrived safely and spent the following three weeks laying in the sand recovering from his seasickness.



carl mont history

by Russ Estep

According to an old San Mateo Gazette dated July 29, 1881, a man named Mr. A.N. Ranger opened the Belmont Saloon, and was ready to serve his friends. The news item reports that the building had just been completed.

The building, which is currently the little blue building on Old County Road, is north of the pink building. It became known as the "Grand Saloon."

We might think it was too small for very many customers. Yet there weren't so many people here back then.

Since water had not yet been piped to Belmont, Ranger probably had to carry water from the little creek that flowed nearby. But early people didn't usually mix drinks because they drank their whiskey straight. Mixed drinks came much later. So Ranger's chore of carrying drinking water really wasn't difficult.

Soon the owner of the Belmont Hotel began advertising that he had excellent drinkables. Then the owners of the pink building also started advertising liquors. Belmont had seemingly passed a primary level.

Entertainment girls were available upstairs in the Belmont Hotel. It wasn't until much later, however, and after the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, that the Japanese building was floated down the bay and moved to the hillside toward the north end of Belmont, on the west side

of El Camino Real. It became The Van's Restaurant, and girls were reported to be upstairs waiting to entertain customers. It is still a restaurant but the girls are long gone.

There may have been other places selling liquor many years ago. Prohibition came after World War I, but there were several places bootlegging throughout Belmont.

As far as I can find, there were no stills. The closest was in San Carlos, according to old reports. Ship crews arriving in San Francisco usually brought good liquor from elsewhere. The men made a handsome profit, although custom agents watched ships unload their cargo.

It was amusing to see boxes of liquor unloaded with cargo, and swung onto the docks while custom agents stood nearby. Usually, the liquor was sold to a stevedore boss, who later resold it to bootleggers.

When Belmonters went hunting during the hunting season, it wasn't uncommon for them to stumble onto hidden stills. I once found one in 1919 and went back the next day to take a better look, but found the place abandoned and everything gone. Either the bootlegger had seen me or my tracks, and decided to take no chances. Bootleggers were usually punished severely when they were caught. They received fines and imprisonment.

Belmont has always been an exciting place — more so years ago, than now. But our citizens do enjoy themselves.



carl mont history

by Russ Estep

When driving along the new Bayshore Highway in 1931, people drove past large fields of row crops. The land was level and well-suited to its use. But the Navy decided the area of Sunnyvale would be better suited for a large dirigible base.

Two new dirigibles, named Akron and Macon, would be based there. The Akron arrived first and it was moored to a rotatable pole, so it could revolve as wind changed. The Navy had a large hangar constructed to protect this dirigible.

When I went to view it inside the hangar, I was accompanied by my 3-year-old daughter, Barbara. She stood by me looking upward and suddenly said, "I know what that printing on the side says. It says 'Goodyear Tires.'"

Navy officers nearby laughed. She was beginning to read alphabet letters. Of course, the ship's name, "Akron," was what was painted on the big ship's side.

The Navy soon gave contracts to have officers quarters, sailors quarters, a headquarters building, gate house and several other buildings, including the mess hall, constructed. At the time I was a carpenter and applied for a job. I then found myself helping to build the buildings.

It snowed one inch in January 1931. That morning, the foreman told me it would be too slippery and dangerous to work, so he said to just "wait a while."

I took the opportunity to enter the large hangar, climb to the roof and walk the length of it to enjoy the good view. The hangar was 211 feet high and I could see over most of the prune orchards that were everywhere.

When I climbed down, the foreman criticized me for what I had done, saying it was very dangerous. But I'm still glad I made the climb.

During construction, the men had to work very hard and fast. These men were just what was

needed. They were employed waited by a steel drum where they had a warm fire going.

The foremen would hire and fire carpenters several times each day. If anyone slowed down slightly, he was told to go to the office for his check. I was one of three carpenters who worked the entire project for 18 months. The Great Depression was on and work was scarce.

We discovered it would rain inside the big hangar now and then. When certain conditions existed, a cloud would drift inside and soon rain would fall. The large new air base needed a name and only a few days after completion of the hangar, the Akron crashed. Everyone aboard was killed, including Admiral Moffett. The Navy appropriately named the air base Moffett Field in honor of the admiral.

Although the government used blimps during World War II, it gave up on dirigibles because they were too easily destroyed. The deaths of 73 sailors and an admiral had proven that.

Now the government has given up Moffett Field as surplus property. Maybe the area will revert back to row crops when it's abandoned in about two years. But since San Jose has grown larger than San Francisco, Moffett Field would make an excellent airport for that area.

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carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Nearly everyone in Belmont has seen the large Ralston mansion which belongs to College of Notre Dame. But it didn't always belong to CND. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a Belgian order, purchased the large building in 1921 and moved here from San Jose.

Ralston mansion had an earlier history, however. Sen. Sharon acquired the house in 1875 when William C. Ralston died. But Sharon died in 1885 and only lived in the large house for 10 years.

Another owner purchased the property after the Sharon estate was settled. He had a large estate and settlement required 10 years.

The Redwood City Tribune of June 13, 1895 tells us that Mrs. Alpheus Bull of Alameda County had purchased the former Sharon property in Belmont. She established a seminary for girls and called her new house "Radcliff Hall," probably thinking the name would induce good thoughts of her newly purchased building and help her to get high-class students.

Bull had two sons, Charles and Alpheus Jr., and three daughters, Edith, Katie and Marie.

An old newspaper, the Redwood City Democrat of July 11, 1895, states that Mrs. Bull became established in "Radcliff Hall," and another copy of the same newspaper states that she died suddenly of a heart attack

five months later on Nov. 17, 1895.

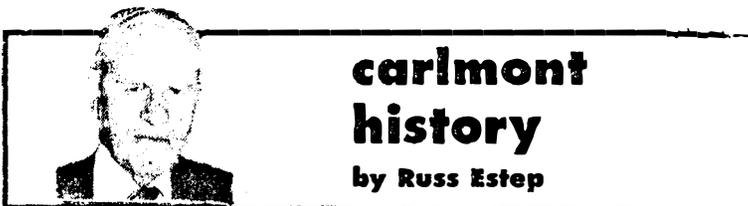
A later copy of the Redwood City Democrat, dated Dec. 22, 1898, tells us that the Bull estate was finally disposed of by the heirs after a court battle to establish title to Dr. Alden M. Gardner.

Settling of the estate took some time, yet brought Lady Hesketh from England as well as several of the Bull children who helped to clear the title to the estate.

One of Mrs. Bull's sons was written up in the History of San Francisco by Bailey Millard in 1924, volume 11, page 36. It states, "Alpheus Bull Jr. was a prominent mechanical engineer, one of the foremost in his profession. His father was a forty-niner. His parents were natives of New York state. His father came overland to California and, after getting established, sent for his mother. His father was a minister of the Universalist Church, but in subsequent years achieved success in financial affairs and at the time of his death was president of a large insurance company."

Ralston mansion has 50 rooms. The only other Peninsula house with as many rooms is the Carolands in Hillsborough, which has 99 rooms.

Recently, a man in Belmont won the state lottery of \$17 million and he gave half of his winnings to his wife. Earlier people might have had a larger house constructed.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

There have been some large fires in Belmont in the past. One was mentioned in an old Redwood City Tribune dated Sept. 9, 1927.

The article reads, "Burned carcasses of several thousand chickens are all that remains of the Albert Moch chicken farm in Belmont today, following a disastrous fire there yesterday. Much of the holiday traffic was halted and the motorists joined with the firemen of Redwood City, Belmont and San Carlos fire departments in halting the blaze. The frightened chickens scurried from one corner of the ranch to the other, and fluttered back into the burning building from which they had been driven. Moch, age 60, and a bachelor, lost his residence, the chicken houses and their occupants, and was himself saved from burning when his clothing caught fire."

There were a number of other fires of dwellings in Belmont. Another item about early fires in the Redwood City Democrat dated April 29, 1909, reads as follows: "Robert Brown has been awarded a contract to rebuild the dormitory at Reid's School. It was destroyed by fire several months ago. The contract price is over \$30,000."

The item goes on to say the fire started in the home of W.T. Reid and spread to the junior hall, which was left in ashes. Reid was 70 years old.

After Mr. Ralston had died and Mr. Sharon had taken over, Mrs. Ralston moved into the "gardener's cottage" at Carlmont. Pictures of the cottage show that it was a rather large dwelling. She only lived there for about two years. Then it burned and she moved to Oak-

land.

Mr. Mezes, the attorney who cleared the land titles for Mrs. Arguello, owned a large house on a hilltop in Belmont. Old newspaper items state that it too burned. The lot remained in his daughter's name until the 1940s.

Then there was the large house on the southern end of the large hill which was across the railroad tracks and between the tracks and the bay. A fire occurred there after Belmont had acquired a fire engine and volunteer fire brigade in the mid-1930s.

The volunteer firemen didn't have time for training, yet did the best they knew how to get the large fire under control. The siren sounded, the men raced to the new firehouse just west of El Camino Real, put on their hats and coats, and drove to the fire. But they couldn't find a hydrant.

Then someone spotted a half-buried tank and dropped in a hose. They pumped and pumped, finally getting the blaze under control. However, one of the men discovered that they had pumped out the septic tank.

The men gathered up their hoses and went back the next day to rinse the interior of the burned house so the odor wouldn't be so strong. They received training later, and soon developed into one of California's best fire departments.

Now they work as South County Fire Authority and we're very proud of them.

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carl mont history

by Russ Estep

-10-

Communication between Belmont people has been possible for a long time. Before white men arrived, the Indians here communicated by smoke signals.

By 1875, however, the Indians were mostly gone. Back then, a wonderful new device was installed in the pink building across the railroad tracks: the first telephone. Toll calls were considered to be expensive. People came to look at it, after carefully tying their horse to the hitching rail.

In 1946, Press Wireless moved its large and powerful radio station from Los Angeles to the mud flats east of Belmont. The company needed a high-speed operator who could not only copy fast code, but who could keep the station on the air. Press Wireless therefore sent one of its best men, Forrest Bartlett, to do the job.

He lived on Cipriani Boulevard for many years and is now retired up in Paradise.

Bartlett had a ham station and his ham call was W60WP.

While Belmont suffered no apparent serious damage during the 7.1 Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, the city is ready. Another quake may come at any time and local ham operators have formed an emergency radio network to handle messages.

These men work for nothing except the satisfaction of helping our community. They are on the air every Monday at 7:30 p.m. for a few minutes. They are appreciated and Belmonters hope they continue to be on standby. They are always ready.

Many years ago, broadcast station KPO had its transmitting station in the mud flats east of the Bayshore Freeway. The damp earth there provided a good ground for the equipment, and their broadcasts were heard all over California and

Nevada. The new KPO radio station went on the air in August 1932.

Communication in Belmont nowadays is far removed from what it used to be. When a Belmont man recently needed hospitalization, one of the local ambulances was reached by radio. The responding driver contacted a doctor at Sequoia Hospital and gave an injection to the patient even before loading him into the ambulance. The driver then transported the man quickly to where he could receive the proper care.

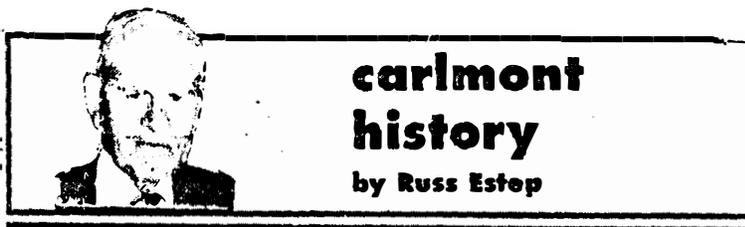
Had something like this happened a century ago, the patient might not have survived. He would have had a much slower ride on a spring wagon to a hospital and there would not have been the modern way to communicate.

Another early ham operator in Belmont had the call letters W6LF. When conditions were poor, his phonetics were W6 "Leaky Faucets." When he was new and learning the code, another operator asked if he was sending code with his "left foot."

But some early people didn't have radio and depended on their voices. It's like when people returned from a convention where they had won a bear cub. They kept the cub chained in their yard and it grew up to a large size. One day, the bear broke loose and a neighbor said a woman yelled so loudly she might have been heard as far away as San Jose. Someone shot the bear, but no one was hurt.

Almost everything happens in Belmont.

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There are some newcomers in Belmont who wonder how Belmont grew so fast when primitive medical help was the only help available. The early people didn't have medicine men as the local Indians did, but citizens treated their illnesses themselves in the best way they could.

If someone had a fever, the cure was to place a pan of warm water under his bed. By morning the fever was usually gone.

When someone acquired chills and a fever, quinine was usually available at Mission San Jose or Mission Dolores.

When someone stepped on a nail and it penetrated the foot, the treatment was to soak the foot in hot water. This, somehow, prevented blood poisoning. The person would then become well.

When a person caught a cold, "assesfetti" in a small bag was hung around the neck. If the awful odor didn't cause one's stomach to quickly empty, the person survived. Such medicine could be obtained at one of the missions; however, reaching a mission required the horseback rider to make an all-day trip — there and back. Sometimes by then, the ill person would have recovered.

Belmont's early people were hardy. They weren't susceptible to many modern illnesses. But, now and then, someone succumbed.

If someone had a stomachache, one was given a bottle of horse liniment to rub onto his/her exterior. If the liniment dripped down too far, a heating sensation might occur and the victim usually ran for a creek. Because there were not many spots in the local creek to pro-

vide relief as they were too shallow, the victim sometimes suffered many minutes when running. Reaching the creek promised immediate relief and prompted a comment of "how good the cold water felt."

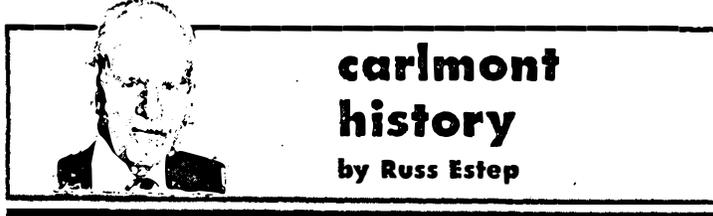
When local people received a scratch or injury to their hands, they placed them in a wash basin containing hot water. By soaking an hour or so the infection was usually prevented. People then would wrap their injured hands in a clean cloth while the injury healed.

Early doctors didn't have the education and training that modern doctors have. For example, most early dentists had nothing to kill pain so some gave whiskey to their patients. A few early Belmonters were reported to have liked going to the dentist. But people generally tried to avoid the dentist because there would be charges they couldn't afford.

Sometimes, teeth were pulled by tying a heavy thread around the aching tooth and tying the other end of the heavy thread to a doorknob. Slamming the door pulled the aching tooth.

Most early settlers in Belmont didn't yet know about Vitamin C and its positive results. When someone caught a cold, one was asked to drink whiskey or take a hot footbath. Some sat for hours with their feet soaking in a bucket or pan of hot water. Perhaps the hot footbath helped, but others claimed they were certain the draft of whiskey did the trick.

Russell Estep, a long-time Belmont and San Carlos resident, is the official historian for the city of Belmont. His column is published each week in the Enquirer Bulletin.



When a new community formally becomes a small town, the new town doesn't have many financial demands on its citizens. There also aren't any city licensing fees.

Belmont didn't need a police department for a while. But the first policeman the city hired was Irwin (Slim) Hansen in 1930. His pay was small yet considered adequate at the time.

Slim was Belmont's only police officer for several years. Before he took over Belmont's protection, a deputy sheriff was provided by San Mateo County.

Because Belmont's operating expenses were so little, only \$10 a year was needed for business licenses. Of course, this amount is up considerably now due to the city's increased expenses. The amount of the license fee depends on the number of employees and type of business.

When A.P. Johnson was operating a small real estate office on Ralston Avenue just west of the Emmett house, he paid very little for a city license. At that time he didn't even need a real estate license to operate. That came later. When he sold Belmont property, the commissions were whatever he wanted to charge. Later they were set by the state Department of Real Estate which set them at 5 percent in the beginning. The commissions are 6 percent now, but are negotiable.

Johnson didn't make much money but managed to buy groceries. Meb Johnson said A.P. had a small vegetable garden to supplement living costs. He passed away many years ago, and Meb also died a few years ago. Meb's real estate office was on El Camino Real in San Carlos.

Over the years, Belmont has grown from a tiny community

to a city of over 28,000. Accordingly, the city has needed to employ many more people to operate it. Business licenses for a small real estate office are up to \$160 now, even if they only have a single employee. Most still need to scratch to make a living.

Belmont's first fire department was composed solely of volunteers. When the horn sounded, they raced to the fire house across from where the Safeway store is presently located. All reached for helmets and jackets, and then joined the others on Belmont's first fire truck. At first they had no training, but that came later.

As Belmont grew and more people came into town, more city departments were necessary. Now we have many of these and all seem necessary. The Parks and Recreation Department helps many people and keeps Belmont looking neat like it should be. Our streets are clean to give our city an excellent appearance to outsiders.

Many Belmonsters are very civic minded. They work in fund-raising groups to purchase things our city cannot afford. The Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Soroptimists and other clubs hold pancake breakfasts, sell food or drinks, and raise money from other sources such as large raffles. Then they turn what they collect over to city officials to purchase needed items.

Belmont's citizens enjoy living here, and they live longer. Belmont takes care of those who need it in a retirement home called Bonnie Brae Terrace on Carlmont Drive.

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carlmont history

by Russ Estep

When we hear people with foreign accents, our ears perk up. We wonder where they are from. A newcomer in Belmont recently loaned me a book about southern New Zealand. It contained many excellent pictures taken in the late 1800s by a photographer named Crawford. One photo shows him as a whiskered old fellow, who used a large old-fashioned box camera. It probably used glass plates because roll film hadn't been invented.

One thing that impressed me was how similar the early settlers in New Zealand were to our first California settlers. Board and batten homes, stores and other buildings looked like some here.

Of course, their lumber might have been scarce. Their trees were probably something other than redwoods. But the boards looked like pine or cedar. Perhaps in early New Zealand the available trees were used for lumber. They also probably had water powered sawmills.

As early as 1850, there were nine sawmills operating in Woodside. Because communication was poor, Count Leonetto Cipriani hadn't heard about the Woodside sawmills. He had a house built in Italy before he came to California. It was then taken apart, shipped around Cape Horn and reassembled here.

It became the south portion of the later large William C. Ralston house. If you look closely at the Ralston house, you will see the difference in it at its southerly right side. It was most likely put together with square nails or bolts. Round nails hadn't been invented.

Early Belmonters and early Californians did the best they could with what was available.

There were many barns built in the early days without even square nails. They were held together with wooden pegs. Pegs were usually made from oak wood, which is considerably harder than pine or cedar. You can still find some of these "pegged together" old barns in the California foothills.

Dwellings and some other buildings in early towns were set on lava rocks, as concrete wasn't always available. Because the rocks were large and flat, those buildings remain as level as when they were constructed.

Early Belmont settlers were generally well-established and better educated than many in outlying areas, so it is doubtful whether any buildings in Belmont were built on a foundation of rocks. The large Ralston house most likely rests on a perimeter concrete foundation. It was built before 1875. Ralston had the money.

Tours are available through a phone arrangement with College of Notre Dame. Everyone in Belmont should visit it.

The Ralston house has 50 rooms. Ralston had a large barn constructed near his house, but it was built of wood. It burned and was replaced with a fire-proof barn built of rocks. He called it his "carriage house." In its loft, hay was stored and on the ground level, his carriages were stored, and there was still room for his several very fine horses.

Occasionally now, the Notre Dame Players put on excellent plays and all are worth seeing. Watch for an announcement of their next event. You'll be glad that you attended. And you will see the old barn. The plays are put on where the haymow was in the historic barn.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Belmont people are patriotic and have held parades and celebrations on Independence Day and Christmas Day.

One parade took place in 1956 when Charles Cook was mayor. He was a jolly man who wanted to help Belmont's citizens.

We purchased a little red wagon and a red Santa suit. Charley wore it and someone pulled him along Ralston Avenue. He tossed wrapped candy to children lining the street. They appreciated this and seemed to think Charley was a great mayor. After the parade, the Santa suit disappeared and it was never found.

Another year, Belmonters drove early automobiles to a park in the redwoods near La Honda. The road was unpaved and dusty. One driver wore a duster, so he arrived cleaner than the others.

Belmont was much smaller then and people enjoyed their neighbor's company. Nowadays, small groups get together occasionally and join in celebrations as Lions, Rotarians, Kiwanis, Soroptimists or with other service clubs to celebrate some holidays. Another quite large Fourth of July parade was held in Belmont about 30 years ago when many organizations participated with floats and cars. A good photographer filmed the parade, but, unfortunately, he cut his film off before the last car arrived.

I was president of SAR (Sons of the American Revolution) and drove their car. SAR expressed disappointment that our car didn't appear in the movie of the parade. The Belmont Historical Society is possi-

bly the owner of the film.

Another Belmont parade occurred some years ago when children marched in Easter costumes. They were cute and their parents waved to them and called their names as they walked along Ralston Avenue. Redwood City has held a Fourth of July parade for many years, in which our town has usually been represented. When I was Citizen of the Year several years ago, Belmont officials had me riding in an old Model A car with its top down. It was fun waving to people I knew from Belmont.

Old items in the Redwood City paper tell of the developers of Belmont Country Club Properties holding a small parade in 1924. Monroe, Miller and Lyon drove Model T Fords up Ralston Avenue with their horns blaring, and hoped they would get attention to signs they placed on the cars. They wanted to sell lots.

Belmont parades always try to show something that will be helpful and educational for the citizens. Even when controversial elections are held, no one sponsors a parade that might be so one-sided that the theme would hurt their neighbors.

Our good neighbors get along with one another. We like living here. There is no place like Belmont anywhere.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

We in Belmont are fortunate that some early news stories have saved. One issue of the old San Mateo Gazette, dated Sept. 19, 1874, tells a little about our city from more than a century ago.

The article starts by stating that our city name, "Belmont," is derived from Belle Mont, meaning beautiful hill, and undoubtedly having allusion to the prominent elevation — about 60 feet in height for a hill that used to be between the railroad tracks and the bay.

The hill was called "Newhall Hill" and "Redrock Hill." According to the article, "the hill was named in 1851 by Steinberger and Beard, owners of considerable acreage here."

Then the article goes on to discuss our early settlement. It tells of a few buildings here at the time such as one boarding house, one brick and one wooden warehouse, one shoe shop, one blacksmith shop, one railroad depot and one express office. "There was a good road

leading to a shipping point at the edge of the bay and there were several residences," the article states.

All of these things were essential for a new town to grow.

The item in the old newspaper tells us that "the pleasure gardens of Mr. Janke, the most valuable in the state, are above the town and at the foot of tree-covered hills, and on either side of a rippling brook. Ascending a most magnificent road another quarter mile you find yourself entering a beautiful valley, where once resided ex-governor John McDougal, Colonel Cipriani, and Mr. Ralston, former president of the Bank of California.

"This valley is named 'Canada Diablo,' rather ineptly, we think. "At the head of the valley is a large reservoir, owned by Mr. Ralston, and nearly completed. Belmont, in a rather peculiar manner, was connected with the early history of this county.

"Here in 1861 was built the Waltermire Hotel, the first county court, S.F. Fox, judge, deceased. At the first election the people were directed by law to choose a county seat, and the commissioners chose Belmont, but the county judge, at the first session of court, decided that three precincts, Crystal Springs, Rock House, and Belmont, were illegal, and those precincts were thrown out, making Redwood City the county seat."

The location of the first county seat was at the corner of Old County Road and Ralston Avenue. The building burned and was replaced with the present building, known as "The Opportunity Shop."

All of this was about Belmont in 1874, more than a century ago. Many things are the same, but Belmont has grown to 26,500 people now. Twin Pines Park is where the Janke Picnic Grounds were. The little valley mentioned in the old newspaper is where hundreds of Belmonthers live. They like the location and wouldn't live anywhere else.

Belmont has much going for it, although it didn't get to keep the first county seat.



carmont hisbry

by Russ Estep

The first county surveyor for San Mateo County was a man named Mr. Garbi. He surveyed much of the Peninsula, using Mount Diablo as his base and meridian. Most land descriptions are still listed as M.D.B.&M. meaning Mt. Diablo Base and Meridian.

Garbi was fortunate enough to see Mt. Diablo from Belmont, so his surveys were accurate. The Mt. Diablo base is used over Northern California, but many of the surveyors cannot see the mountain top. Occasionally, their surveys were found to be slightly inaccurate.

Another county surveyor was Davenport Bromfield. He stopped into my office to visit occasionally and we became good friends. I also became acquainted with his daughter, Grace, who married a man named Mr. Haver. He had two sons who worked for the firm of Levy Brothers. The company had a large general merchandise store in Half Moon Bay and, later on, stores in San Mateo and Redwood City.

After Grace Haver moved to Southern California, I flew down there to get her signature when her portion of the Skyline property was sold.

In addition to his large Hillsborough house, Bromfield left considerable acreage, together with a small house on Skyline. In the early 1900s, Bromfield took his children there in his buggy. Grace told me of some of the trips and of how she had enjoyed them.

The small house had a stone

fireplace with two bedrooms, and the land around it was flat. There were many redwood trees, and the air was clear and cool.

Bromfield once told of how one of his sons climbed a redwood tree, which frightened Bromfield. The redwoods are not safe to climb because their limbs often break easily. The lad came down without incident, however.

I always admired Davenport Bromfield for his ability to survey. While he was a professional, I had been a novice.

When one of my half-brothers had homesteaded in Shasta County, he asked me to run the lines on all four sides so he could fence it. I ran the instrument, while he chopped brush. At the end of each of the 4 miles my lines came within 3 feet of the geological survey corner markers. Then he fenced the land with four barbed wires.

He built the government's required small two-bedroom house and lived there four years. He later improved upon it, then sold it and moved to Escondido, retired and died.

When surveyors cannot see the top of Mt. Diablo, they use charts obtained from the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park to get their starting figure. The view from the top of Mt. Diablo at 4,000 feet is very good and you can see five counties.

If you haven't been there, you might want to take a day off to make the drive. You would surely enjoy it.



carl mont his tory

by Russ Estep

Friends often drop in to visit when things are slow in real estate. It reminds me somewhat of the old country general stores. People would come in, sit on nail kegs and then tell anyone who would listen some things they hadn't heard before.

This happened recently at my office. My ears began flapping while the men visited. One told the other of how his friend developed cancer during Belmont's early days.

But there was something special to the story. He said his elderly friend had married a very young woman — 40 years his junior. To get her to agree to marry him, he had concealed his age. He claimed that he was many years younger. The girl never knew.

The cancer victim had continued to decline in health. Finally, his doctor had told him that he was fortunate to be so young. If he had been older, the doctor said, it might do no good to operate. At his age, he should survive and would have no problem.

His young wife must have wondered why he seemed so serious when he entered the hospital. It took him half an hour just to say "goodbye." Soon after the surgery, the man expired. The doctor's diagnosis had been accurate.

The second man at my office said, "Wasn't that something like the patient getting bitten by his own dog?" The young wife never knew, although she may have found out years later after

she remarried to a younger man.

The following day, another two fellows were sitting in my office visiting and telling of the old days. One told about an ancestor who had to walk part way to Half Moon Bay after riding on the top of a stagecoach.

The man said that the ancestor had asked the driver to stop so he could get off to relieve himself. There had been a female passenger aboard and the driver wouldn't stop his horses until the stage was near a tree.

The driver was trying to maintain his schedule. The ancestor didn't return fast enough to satisfy the impatient driver. He yelled "get up" to his team and they began to roll. The ancestor then came out from behind the tree, holding his trousers while trying to catch up with the rolling stagecoach.

The man telling the story laughed and laughed. He said, "Now stages and trains all have bathrooms." The man riding the old stagecoach toward Half Moon Bay lived in Belmont just too early.

Drivers of long distance buses still try to maintain schedules.

In the mid-1800s there were many interesting happenings in Belmont and on the Peninsula. Travel was mostly by horseback or by horsedrawn vehicles.

Probably, in the next century, people will find the way we live amusing. Everything changes constantly. Belmonters keep up with with modern trends.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

People from other places sometimes come to the Peninsula, and what they do makes impressions and great changes here.

Let's consider Ivan F. Phipps. He came here and what he did impressed many Peninsula people that they seemed not to see the forest for the trees. He owned several hundred acres on the west side of Skyline Boulevard.

Phipps was a middle-aged man who had stature. He was a Portland attorney and also a speculator.

It was Phipps who started the Skylawn Cemetery. He obtained his permit, arranged for a few burials, then sold the land quickly to another speculator and said he needed over \$50,000.

The same opportunity was there for local people, but no one saw the chance for fast profit.

Phipps always seemed to have his "thinking cap" on. He still owned more than 300 acres on the west side of Skyline Boulevard south of the road that goes to Half Moon Bay from Belmont. But what could he do with it?

After considering the various options, he decided to exchange it for the old metal pumping station beside El Camino Real at the north end of San Carlos, adjacent to Belmont. That property was visible to all Belmonsters, yet nobody thought about trying to buy it.

Phipps had said one should always try to grab onto something that is just sitting there and, apparently, what no one else wants. He made the exchange

and then thought again about what to do to gain a profit.

Finally, he exchanged the pumping station and its large lot for 24 four-unit apartment houses in east San Jose. But problems began as renters moved in and out, some without paying. He hired a San Jose company to manage his buildings and it straightened things out. The apartments were soon filled with good tenants who paid their rent and kept the premises clean.

Then one morning he appeared at my office door wanting to discuss a ranch he had just acquired in Oregon, near Mount Hood.

I arranged for him to inspect a nearly new 20-unit apartment house in San Jose. The owner of the apartment house flew to Portland, rented a car, drove to Mount Hood and inspected the ranch. He liked what he found and the trade was made.

The next I heard about Phipps was that he had exchanged some property he had for a large furniture store in Oroville. Maybe he still has it. If so, he would be a very old man.

Perhaps after these many years he has gone to his reward, perhaps making trades with the angels in heaven. At least he might be thinking about exchanging the bed they gave him for a feather bed like he had when he had stayed in Belmont.

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carlmont history

by Russ Estep

People who came here during World War II remember Belmont's bare hills, and the large hay field where White Oaks School in San Carlos is now. The bare hills and much of San Carlos weren't even built upon until World War II.

When the war ended, soldiers returned home and there was a great demand for housing. With the great demand and insufficient housing, prices rose.

The Peninsula was different before the big rush. Almost everyone raised hay back then. People used horses and the hay was in great demand.

An old item in the Times Gazette, dated Feb. 28, 1891, tells that, "Maguire and Turner had pasturage and care for horses as a specialty, at the Belmont Stock Farm, 650 acres. Horses stabled and fed hay \$8 to \$10, and pastured for \$4."

The timing for such pasturage isn't mentioned, but the prices were for a monthly rate, presumably.

Bert Johnson, who has lived nearly all of his life in Belmont, has told of haying in Belmont. He said hay was baled in hay presses while he watched. Baled hay was easier to handle than loose hay.

Bales usually weighed about 108 pounds, and healthy young men loaded and unloaded them quite easily. The bales were tied with baling wire, which was about size 14, and soft wire, which was easy to bend.

Probably the hardest job on a hay baler crew was digging loose hay out of a stack and placing it on the baler's platform. If the stack had been there awhile,

and been rained on, the loose hay usually became settled and very difficult to dig out and pitch onto the baler's platform.

Most hay baler crews were tired at night and hungry for their supper. They usually received \$3 for a 10-hour day.

Belmont's bare hills farther out were mowed for hay, but then someone started a golf course west of Cipriani Boulevard. After that, the cutting of hay ended. The course was referred to as the "rattlesnake course" because golfers regularly killed rattlesnakes during their game.

Soon after Ralston School was built, far out on Ralston Avenue, a schoolboy brought a live rattler into a classroom. The frightened teacher called a janitor to dispatch it. No one was bitten.

Toward the end of World War II, realtors had to use caution when showing Belmont's vacant lots to prospective buyers. Selling real estate in Belmont was hazardous.

Nearly all of Belmont's level lots have been built upon and the lots that are left are steep. Rattlesnakes couldn't stop rolling off, so selling Belmont's real estate has become safe.

When loose hay was being hauled in Belmont, there were some young men who had a rather unusual sense of humor. They pitched bundles of loose hay up onto the hay wagon and live rattlesnakes slid out. These fellows would laugh when the man aboard the wagon frantically slid down to the ground. But he never thought it was funny.



Belmont history

by Russ Estep

One of the first advertisements I can find in any newspaper about anything in Belmont states that the city's name was Waterview at first, and changed later, apparently when William C. Ralston arrived in 1864. He preferred to reside in Belmont

— not Waterview.

Count Leonetto Cipriani lived here when our town was Waterview and apparently he liked that name. He came in 1854 and sold out to Ralston in 1864.

Travelers needed a place to stay and the old advertisement

in the Daily Pacific News dated January 1, 1851 has an advertisement for the first hotel here. Charles Angelo built it at the intersection of Ralston Avenue (called Road To The Coast) and the early El Camino Real, which is our Old County Road.

The old advertisement reads, "Regarding the Country, Angelo House, Waterview, 25 miles from San Francisco). The above house is now open for reception of a few boarders during the winter months. Located midway between San Francisco and San Jose, and possessing a splendid view of the harbor and Mt. Diablo. The situation offers peculiar advantages, and for salubrity of clients cannot be excelled in any part of California.

A private parlor, with sleeping rooms attached, will be set apart for ladies. The table will be supplied with game, poultry, fresh butter, eggs and milk and every exertion will be used in giving satisfaction to those parties who may patronize the

house."

That was the advertisement. He doesn't mention his "out door" toilets, bed pots under the beds, the only heat being the wood-burning stove downstairs, straw-filled mattresses, no sheets, hard pillows. And no running water.

In addition, he doesn't mention that his small hotel had been built in the middle of the road. Horse-drawn vehicles passed by on both sides.

His guests were awakened by his rooster crowing in the mornings. However, just as he advertised, he had "real country living." His hotel was well-patronized, but Mr. Angelo only operated it for two years, then sold it. He moved to Victoria, B.C. and old news items tell of him being jailed for embezzling \$10,000. Perhaps his prices were too low for guests, and he didn't leave Waterview with stuffed pockets.

When he went to Victoria, he would have been aboard a sail-

ing ship because trains didn't yet operate north from San Francisco in that year.

The Angelo hotel burned later and was replaced with a larger building. Later too, the larger building burned and was replaced with the "Opportunity Shop." This location was where the first court was held in 1856.

Then the county seat was moved to Redwood City, because more votes than people were put into the ballot boxes from Waterview and Crystal Springs west of this area.

Citizens apparently learned their lesson. Belmont has been an honest, honorable place ever

since.



When three college students came into my office asking who is buried in one of the first graves in the old cemetery at Half Moon Bay, I had to tell them I didn't know.

The grave has a large stone monument with a cross and it's dated 1820. Surely the person buried there was someone of much prominence — perhaps a priest or maybe a ship captain. Ships had been coming to Half Moon Bay for several years by 1820.

Toward the south end of Half Moon Bay is the old historic Johnson house that was constructed in 1854. Johnson farmed the large field between his house and the ocean. Crops were marketed in San Francisco, which was a small town in 1854 but growing fast due to the gold rush.

The first house on this side of the hills was the Arguello house, built in San Carlos in 1795. Don Jose Dario Arguello was given a land grant by the King of Spain for his good work at the Presidio in San Francisco. His land grant consisted of 34,200 acres and included part of San Mateo, all of Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, Atherton, and Menlo Park, and went down as far as San Francisquito Creek at the north end of Palo Alto.

The Arguello home was located in San Carlos, and San Carlos Avenue was Arguello's driveway to El Camino Real. At first, the house was beside a spring on the south side of San Carlos Avenue, near Cordilleras Avenue.

Later, in 1821, the family had moved to about a block north of San Carlos Avenue, where Cedar street widens. This was the Arguello home for as long as we can find any of the family living in the area.

The elder Arguello died about 1821, and his widow and son continued to operate what was left of the rancho.

When California became a state, there were many squatters on the Arguello land. Sidney M. Mezes, attorney for Mrs. Arguello, straightened out her titles. Then he was given about 15 percent of the 34,200 acres for his fee.

Mezes took Belmont, San Carlos and part of Redwood City, which was first named "Mezesville." The name didn't stick as there was considerable lumbering going on up on Kings Mountain, and the lumber was being transported down to the bay where Redwood City was struggling to survive.

All of the lumber was redwood, which was taken up the bay to San Francisco by small sailing ships. The shallow draft vessels actually sailed into Redwood City through the shallow ship channel. The creek had been named "Redwood Creek."

Mezes was unable to get most squatters to move on, so he sold many of them the land they had settled on at a high rate of interest, according to old records. When they couldn't pay, he foreclosed on them to gain legal title again of his property. The squatters then moved elsewhere, and our Peninsula began to grow.



The Great Register of San Mateo County of October 1888 lists the ages of most settlers in Belmont. The oldest listed at that time was John Bachelder, an attorney, who was 70. Others listed mostly were in their 20s.

Perhaps it took young sturdy men to endure the hardships of the era. They probably were better able to handle the living conditions. They had to chop wood, milk their cows, feed the calves and horses, drive or ride horses wherever they needed to go, and keep their vehicles lubricated — the wagons with mica axle grease.

Most of the young men raised vegetable gardens. The ground had to be prepared and row crops had to be hoed and irrigated. When corn was being raised, the young men had to harvest it and then grind enough in a hand-powered grinder for making corn bread.

These young men had no electricity or telephones, but they survived. In talking with Belmont's elderly men, it turns out most enjoyed the many hardships as they thought they were living in a "modern age." Their parents had been young men in 1888.

Housewives worked hard too. Most canned vegetables and whatever they could lay their hands on to feed their families. Game was plentiful, and venison might be found hanging on a rope down a well so the meat wouldn't spoil during warm weather.

The killing of wild game wasn't so restricted as it is now. Local hotels served venison occasionally from their menus.

Oysters also were available. A company called the Morgan

Oyster Company planted seed oysters at the edge of the bay, selling oysters to local residents and commercially to San Francisco markets. Some of Belmont's young men worked for the Morgan Oyster Company.

By 1888, Belmont's famous men had died Ralston in 1875 and Sharon in 1885. Mezes died only a few years later.

Trains were running through Belmont by 1888 and local people found traveling to San Jose and San Francisco easier. They could make the trip in either direction in about 90 minutes, whereas the small ships they had formerly taken up and down the bay had required several hours.

Although inventors had been working to develop horseless carriages, none were yet produced to be sold. Mr. Haynes and Mr. Olds apparently were among the first successful manufacturers. But in 1888 no horseless carriages were being used in Belmont.

Changes occur in most towns. The Spanish-American War occurred in 1898 and several young men were soon in the U.S. Army. All returned when the war ended. They were dismissed while they were away.

Belmont grew steadily following the war. A new era had started.

Recently, when visiting with an elderly man, I was told that he believed everyone in Belmont was very young. He said they looked that way since he had reached his 89th birthday.

Russell Estep, a long-time Belmont and San Carlos resident, is the official historian for the city of Belmont. His column is published each week in the Enquirer-Bulletin.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

-23-

When entering a strange town, most people expect to find certain street names. They especially look for Market Street, First Street and other common names.

When they see a street that apparently was named for a person, they usually wonder whom that person was or what he/she had done to become prominent. In early Belmont, there were several streets that had been named after people.

One of those was "Schmoll Street," which was later renamed Sixth Avenue. The Schmolls were pioneers here. An old item in the San Mateo Standard, dated Sept. 8, 1921, tells of the death of Mrs. Schmoll.

The old news item reads, "Mrs. Caroline Schmoll, pioneer resident of the state, passed away Tuesday afternoon. She was born in Pittsburgh, Pa. in 1835. She moved with her parents to California in 1852 where her father, Adam Sweigert, became prominent in city affairs, and then the family moved to San Mateo County in 1860.

"They first moved to Canyada, near Byrnes store, and two years later moved to Belmont, where Mrs. Schmoll continued to make her home until the death of her husband, John Schmoll, in 1903. Since that time the deceased has been making her home with her daughter in this city. Mrs. Schmoll was 86 years of age. In addition to Mrs. Schaberg, one son, George Schmoll, survives. Internment in Cypress Lawn Cemetery."

We should all be pleased that our city has maintained some names of some other people such as Mrs. Kitty Hearstner. She was Belmont's city clerk for many years and handled her position well. "Kitty Lane" was named for her. She passed away several years ago.

Then there was a well-known street named "Daisy Lane." When College of Notre Dame moved to Belmont from Notre Dame Avenue in San Jose in 1921, Daisy Lane was renamed for the college. San Jose has retained its college name to a street one block north of Santa Clara Avenue, behind the DeAnza Hotel.

While Belmont was growing fast during the late 1920s, three men were recording subdivisions about as fast as they could draw up the descriptive papers. They named streets after themselves. This was how Monroe, Miller and Lyon streets came about. Their names still remain.

One of Belmont's first residents was Count Leonetto Cipriani, who purchased land from Mr. Mezes in 1854. His name still remains although he sold his land to William C. Ralston in 1864 when he returned to Italy to participate in Garibaldi's war. The Ralston name is well-remembered because of the many things he accomplished while he was here. Our first citizens were all "great" men. Belmont is fortunate to have had such a solid beginning from these "great men" having chosen this location for their homes.

There are others who have come here since. Philip Habib, who was President Reagan's foreign emissary, lived here. Since his death two years ago, his wife remains here and says she "loves to live in Belmont."

Habib would easily qualify as a great man. He met with kings, presidents and many foreign rulers, and settled many problems for our country.

Several years before he passed away, our City Council presented him with an award signifying our appreciation of him for having done so much for our country and for living in Belmont.



carl mont history

by Russ Estep

Many Belmont people have visited the Iolani Palace in Honolulu. They have read about Hawaii's King Kalakaua being entertained here in Belmont by William C. Ralston. The king had never seen such beautifully furnished buildings as he did the when he saw the large Ralston mansion.

The San Francisco Chronicle, dated Jan. 25, 1895, describes the king's visit. It was his first visit to the United States. Ralston appreciated the dusky king as much as the king appreciated Ralston. Socially, however, the two men were worlds apart.

The old article goes on to state, "Kalakaua's visit was made one Sunday night after both he and his host had been to church in ostentatious state. His Kanaka majesty had never seen a palace before, his frugal subjects having given him nothing better than a latticed bungalow to live in, and a service of plain glass and china upon which to spread his fish and poi.

Upon his return to Honolulu the king resolved to have a palace built on his island of Oahu. The result was Iolani Palace."

King Kalakaua raised several daughters, at least one of whom was illegitimate.

About 40 years ago when the Belmont Lions Club was larger, Embert M. Brown. Joined the club. He was a proud man and boasted that his wife in Hawaii had been an illegitimate daughter of King Kalakaua. He showed us her photo and told us he was proud to have had her for his wife, but that she had passed away a few years earlier.

Brown later died in Santa Cruz at age 99. He had started the Belmont Chamber of Commerce while living here.

The old article continued, "To the king the broad white glistening walls and corridors, looking like porcelain touched with gold and crimson, the blaze and glitter of primatic chandeliers; the yield of Turkish rugs under his cautious feet; the invitation of pillowed silken chairs; the glory of the banquet hall, the vision of the human form divine in the calm and unflushed presentment of sculpture — to all this was the splendid realization of things he had long hoped for but never possessed or seen. Then, when noiseless servants brought him champagne frappe, which he could sip with never a thought of the taxpayer and the missionary and delicacies of a

cuisine, which, compared with his own was that of the Parisian cafe to the ship's galley; when all this came to pass poor Kalakaua, a king with the experience of a post office clerk, made up his mind that he too, would have a palace or lose his crown in the attempt. And a palace he finally obtained. Not like at Belmont but an imposing structure.

He bought chairs like Ralston's, a punch bowl like Ralston's and a Venus de Milo more drapeless and enticing than "Psyche" in Ralston's music room. While his exchequer held out he poured champagne into the glasses of his guests with as generous a hand as that of the prodigal financier. Ralston's generosity to the king cost the Hawaii taxpayers all the expense of the Iolani Palace and much of the outlay for the furnishing in its interior."

The king was replaced by Queen Liliuokalani and the palace became Hawaii's capitol for many years. Now the state has a newer, modern capitol and Hawaii has become our 50th state.

Inspiration for the construction of Hawaii's first capitol occurred in Belmont.

Russell Estep, a long-time Belmont and San Carlos resident, is the official historian for the city of Belmont. His column is published each week in the Enquirer-Bulletin.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

-25-

The two men who were talking in a booth next to me at the restaurant where the Belmont train depot used to be amused me.

One told the other that he lived in Belmont, and the other commented that he lived in Atherton, and that he thought Belmont was "for the birds." Of course, he didn't mean it literally, but as I glanced out the window across the railroad tracks to the pink building I became amused.

At that instant, a flock of birds landed on top of the ridge of the pink building. There must have been a slight wind from the north because the birds settled down on the roof, all facing north. They were about 10 inches apart and seemed to be equally spaced. Probably, by facing the wind their feathers wouldn't become ruffled.

The men never noticed the birds and continued talking.

I didn't know what kinds of birds had landed across from me, but I presumed they were sea gulls.

Most people in Belmont 45 years ago may recall how the buzzards circled and circled above Carlmont Drive. They probably thought that a deer or other animal might have been dead there in the brush. As far as I know, nobody investigated, although the buzzards continued circling.

Now that we are on "birds," an old item in the Redwood City Tribune, dated Jan. 22, 1924, tells that several Belmont men had been preparing their duck pond for their annual duck shoot. The location of the pond,

however, isn't given.

On Sept. 6, 1927, an article in the old Redwood City Tribune tells of a huge fire which destroyed several thousand chickens. Albert Moch had been raising chickens for the market in San Francisco when the disastrous fire occurred.

The article goes on to state "Much of the holiday traffic on El Camino Real was halted and the motorists joined with the Belmont firemen to check the blaze. The frightened chickens scurried from one corner to the other before fluttering back into the burning building from which they had been driven. Moch, age 60, and a bachelor, lost his residence, the chicken houses and their occupants, and was himself saved from burning when his clothing caught fire.

Moch did not restock his chicken farm and, apparently, he moved elsewhere to start over again.

In earlier times, other businesses were started in Belmont and some survived, while others moved just as Moch's did.

The man who said Belmont was "for the birds" was making conversation. He probably never knew our city had so many different kinds of birds. While his comment was a slur, it could easily have been taken as a compliment.

Belmont is a fine city and we appreciate everything God has placed here, including the birds.

Russell Estep, a long-time Belmont and San Carlos resident, is the official historian for the city of Belmont. His column is published each week in the Enquirer-Bulletin.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Some people in Belmont wonder what was in the valley west of town before it became flooded. It was farmland before the Spring Valley Water Company completed their project of filling the valley with our drinking water from Yosemite in 1916.

An old item in the San Francisco Examiner, dated Nov. 7, 1912, tells a little about it. The item is in a death notice for David A. Barre.

"David A. Barre, one of San Mateo County's oldest pioneer residents, died in his home at Belmont on October 31st. He was born in Buren County, New York, in 1830 of German-English parentage. In the early '50s he rushed to the gold fields of California, crossing the plains, enduring many hardships and adventures and never tired of relating his experiences of this miserable trip.

"After spending two successful years in the mines, he settled on the Peninsula and had been a highly respected citizen of Belmont for over 60 years. In 1862 he married Katherine Bollinger whose father, Christian Bollinger, one time owned the property which is now the Spring Valley Lakes.

"Mourning his death are five children, Mrs. Jane O'Neill of Belmont, Mrs. Ida Schneider of San Mateo, Mrs. Mary England of Fruitvale, C.C. Barre of Burlingame and C.F. Barre of Belmont."

Bollinger had sold his farm to the water company and moved to San Jose. A street carries his name in San Jose. One of Bollinger's sons established a stage line from San Jose up to Mt. Hamilton. After the Lick Observatory was completed, the Bollinger stage coach was usually full.

It seemed that everyone was interested in looking through the large telescope. Visitors are

still interested but not nearly so many as in 1916. The observatory is usually open to visitors Friday evenings. Several galaxies and stars can be seen that are not visible without the telescope. Since then, many new and formerly invisible stars have been catalogued.

The road winds to the top of Mt. Hamilton, but now it is paved, so a careful driver can make the trip from San Jose to the observatory in about 45 minutes. The view from the mountain top at 4,000 feet is very good. One can see long distances when the weather is clear. But it is wise to take along binoculars to see details.

There were others who owned farms in the Spring Valley west of Belmont. Some settled in Belmont after their farms were flooded. Instead of raising hay, they reverted to vegetable gardens. Everyone had a garden in those days. These people used horse-drawn cultivators, hay mowers and rakes.

In Belmont, they had small yards where small vegetable gardens grew produce. Sons and daughters used hoes and other garden tools. It was harder work, but necessary.

Some planted orchard trees and raised prunes and apples. School children were employed each summer and were glad to earn money to spend. They usually received 10 cents per 25-pound box for picking up prunes and a dollar a day to pick apples.

Many of these sons and daughters developed into successful business men and women. All received their financial start in Belmont.

If the valley west of Belmont hadn't been flooded, the lives of Belmont's young people might have been very different. They learned how to become American capitalists because the valley was flooded.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Old-timers in Belmont probably remember early medical advertisements. It was common to see doctors' signs saying, "Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat" specialist. Later our doctors specialized further and used signs like "Optometrist" and just plain "Doctor."

At first, people were concerned that they may have lost their specialists. This happened in other professions and lawyers later advertised themselves as "Specialist in divorces" or "Specialist in criminal law" and other types of things.

The public preferred to go to professionals who knew what they were talking about. Most specialists prevailed and today we find professional people concentrating on just a single problem. We wouldn't patronize a divorce lawyer for settling a lawsuit wherein a property agreement, fence line or personal injury was on the docket.

Belmont has had several exceptional dentists, who prac-

ticed nothing but dentistry. One old-timer was Dr. Lee Gambitz, who came here from San Francisco and practiced from his house. Gambitz was treasurer of the Belmont Lions Club for many years and was very well-liked by the members.

Now dentistry has broken up into several different phases. Some specialize in making false teeth, while others treat various problems of the mouth. Some only do root canals while others do fillings.

When Gambitz practiced in Belmont he did all of these things and did them well. Belmont was smaller back then and there weren't as many patients. Now the other dentists specialize and all appear to be busy.

We always have had a group of medical doctors. Dr. Fairburn, a general practitioner, was given a retirement party at the old Belmont Casino, and there was standing room only. He was that popular. He passed away many years ago.

Dr. Pope also was a general practitioner and well-patronized.

Dr. Rebec specialized in psychiatry and practiced at Twin Pines Hospital. He came here from Napa, where he had been in charge of the psychiatry department at the state hospital. He worked at one of the Belmont hospitals and just followed his specialty.

There were other medical doctors whose names don't come to mind immediately. All are old-timers.

As for the early specialists advertising "Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat," they too broke down into specialized groups. I cannot locate one who worked on noses, but we do have several eye doctors.

One is Dr. Thomas Ewers, an optometrist. He is popular and one always finds him busy. However, appointments may be made. He is a past president of the Belmont Lions Club and is well-liked. He also was president of our Chamber of Commerce several years ago.

When I asked one man what he thought of dividing the professions in Belmont, he replied, "Well, I'm for it. You see I'm a twin. I have always had to divide up everything." Then he laughed.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Forty-five years ago, when Belmont people drove to the San Mateo Bridge, they crossed Brewer's Island. They noticed many cattle grazing on the right side of the highway.

The cattle were mostly Holstein and a few were Jerseys. All were milk cows, and they belonged to Mr. Therkeldsen. He operated a dairy there and owned a retail outlet on O'Neill Street in Belmont.

Mrs. Stella O'Donnell kept his books and could usually be seen at the office. Her husband, Vincent O'Donnell, worked for me as a part-time real estate salesman. He worked full-time at United Airlines. O'Donnell Park in Belmont was named after him.

People thought the Therkeldsen dairy would be there forever. But that didn't happen. He sold his property, consisting of about 400 acres, to Mr. Jack Foster from Honolulu.

Foster came to one of our Chamber of Commerce luncheons and showed us blueprints of what he intended to do with Brewer's Island. He said he liked it because the land was about 7 feet above high tide, it was always dry land and it would be good for his proposed development.

In Honolulu, he had just completed a multi-story building on Waikiki Beach that he hoped to sell as "condominiums." At the time, his "Foster Towers" building was the tallest on the beach.

Incidentally, he was too early with condominiums. Only one or two were sold. He had to turn his new building into a hotel and apartments. Later the units were easily sold, when customers became accustomed to the condominium concept.

Over here he had canals dredged and then built homes

and condominiums alongside them. His houses and condos were easily and quickly sold. People purchased the buildings and Foster retained title to most of the land. Home owners paid annual rent on hundreds of homes that were sold early after sales began.

By handling property in this way, the buyers found that their monthly payments were much lower. Foster had seen this type of operation in Hawaii, where the descendants of early royal families retained title.

Brewer's Island received a name change and is now identified as Foster City. Foster successfully developed his property, and then he passed away. His son took charge, and later sold what was left of the large development.

I have been told that the concept of withholding land titles in Foster City no longer exists. People now receive titles to land.

The population of Foster City is presently 28,146 and it's still growing. We are glad to have all those people as our neighbors. However, if Foster City hadn't been built it might have been possible all those people would have settled in Belmont or San Mateo.

No one seems to know how the name "Brewer's Island" came about. One man told me there might have been bootleggers there during Prohibition. However, without brush or trees on the island that version is doubtful. The name probably came from an early family named "Brewer."

Now it's appropriately named for Jack Foster, who came here from Hawaii and developed the city. Jack was a fine gentleman. He deserved to have a city carry his name.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Lake Street is a short street that runs north off Carlmont Drive at the start of the 2400 block. Its name probably came from the lake west of it. That's where Water Dog Lake is located.

There is more to Lake Street, though.

Its west end is found farther out where there is a gate at the east side of Hallmark Drive. Beyond the gate there is the unpaved portion of Lake Street. Only Belmont maintenance men use that portion of Lake Street.

Lake Street continues eastward and passes Water Dog Lake. Actually, the lake is located in the gulch behind Wadsworth Publishing Company.

When William C. Ralston had his lake constructed, he used 100 Chinese people with shovels and wheelbarrows to move earth to construct the earth-fill dam. Ralston needed the lake to irrigate his field, which was north of Ralston Avenue on the flat land west of his large house. The water flowed down the gulch and then entered a pipe to take water to the field.

A large spring provides water for the lake. Water from the spring flows eastward from the gulch and onward to the bay. It isn't used anymore for irrigation. Portions of it are buried in a pipe.

As far as I can research, Ralston never used the spring or lake water in his large house. He had a good well out in front that supplied his drinking water and for use in the kitchen.

About half a block north of Carlmont Drive there used to be a very large house on the west side of Lake Street. In the Times Gazette, dated June 2, 1888, an item tells about C.R. Splivalo having a house constructed there.

Splivalo was president of the Yosemite Flour Mill in San Francisco and considered to be wealthy before the 1906 earthquake destroyed much of his holdings in San Francisco. He died in 1913.

This his large home was sold and the new owners established the California Sanitarium. Doctors treated patients there who suffered from tuberculosis. The big house is gone now. It was replaced with apartments.

When Al Sifers was hospitalized there, I called on him. He suggested that I take note of the house's silver doorknobs. He

thought a wealthy person must, at some time, have owned the house.

Apparently, he didn't know of the house's history. He said he liked being there and thought the location was excellent for the hospital, being away from noise and in Belmont where the air was clear and good to breathe.

Others probably agreed with Sifers, for the Peninsula Jewish Community Center is around the corner, a block west on Carlmont Drive. A four-story retirement building called Bonnie Brae was later constructed at 2400 Carlmont Drive. It has 161 residents at present, but has held about 181.

Older people like the location and the facility. It is under the management of Grace Gavis, who is an active, efficient and well-liked woman. Bonnie Brae is the largest building in Belmont and is owned by the Lesley Foundation. People living there are mostly elderly, but all seem to like the place and its location.

They seem to agree with Sifers that the location and accommodations are ideal. They are enjoying their senior years and are glad they live right here

in Belmont. Occupants must provide their own furnishings for their rooms or apartments. Utilities are included in their monthly rent payments.

There are elevators, but when occupants become ill or unable to take care of themselves, they must move into a hospital or rest home. And all appear to be sorry to leave.

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carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Adjacent to Belmont's southern border, but in San Carlos, there used to be a large building covered with corrugated iron. It housed the pumps for the Spring Valley Water Company.

There also was a tall standpipe across El Camino Real, up on the hillside. The water from Yosemite came from a tap into one of the two large pipes that brings water from Yosemite. The water flows down across El Camino Real, then up past Belmont along Old County Road.

The pumping station was used to force the water up the hillside to the large standpipe. From there it flowed by gravity down again and north along Old County Road to San Mateo and Burlingame. The gravity, along with the large pump within the building, kept the flow of clear, cold, water moving.

Belmont's water is said to be pure enough to use for filling storage batteries.

Many early people in Belmont worked in the pumping station. The foreman lived in the large castle-type house on the hillside west of El Camino. He was married to Mr. Howard's daughter, who was a beautiful girl. Some called her Belmont's queen.

Then others had the idea that the man owning the large house should be referred to as the "King." There is a wonderful view from that spectacular house, with its extended roof over an upper room.

Many Belmonters have visited Yosemite, but have they taken time to go to the Hetch Hetchy project? It is at the northern portion of Yosemite and there is a good paved road to get there.

The large lake where water is stored freezes around its edges each winter. The large lake rarely completely freezes —

probably because of the water movement.

The water enters two large pipes each 6 feet in diameter. It flows by gravity down to a lake, then onward to the Peninsula and into the lakes west of Belmont.

The lake along the pipe route, called Don Pedro Lake, is surrounded with summer and weekend cabins. When that small subdivision was opened about 12 years ago, the lots around the lake sold quickly. The country there has many oaks and Digger Pines and is very pretty.

The terminus of the Hetch Hetchy pipes is west of Belmont on the west side of Canada Road at the Pulgas Water Temple. The water flow is closely monitored and allowance is made for snow and winter rainfall.

Watchmen live in houses on the west side of Crystal Springs Lake west of Belmont. Swimming and fishing aren't al-

lowed. It could be used for those purposes, but the water would then need additives to keep it safe for drinking. And everyone's water would cost them more.

There are many deer in the hills around the large lake. Sometimes they wander down into Belmont and San Carlos. Before white men came, the Indians who were here had a ready supply of venison.

Communications were done by smoke signals. No doubt local Indians never publicized what was so plentiful here in Belmont.

Even now we don't see beggars on our streets. Our poor people think they are suffering when they only have one car in their garage.



carlmont history

by Russ Estep

Many years ago — probably in the late 1800s — men from San Francisco came to the Peninsula and had a large house built at 125 Dale Ave. in San Carlos. The purpose of the house was to provide a spot where San Francisco men could get away to have fun on weekends. Many used the facility.

About 20 years ago, the house was for sale by its owner. It was built for only a few thousand dollars, but its resale price was above \$340,000 as I recall.

The house has a number of bedrooms, a large living room and a tower above the roof with an extensive view. No doubt the men who used the house enjoyed themselves, but they seldom took time to climb the steps up to the tower. I'm told that sometimes the men brought their secretaries or girlfriends to the place.

Most of the men belonged to one of the clubs in San Francisco. A descendant of one of the playboys told me that before sitting for dinner everyone stood and sang what was then a very popular song. As he told it, it went like this: "My wife went to the country. Hurray! Hurray! She thought it best I need a rest, so she went away. She took the children with her. Hurray! Hurray! I love my wife, but oh you kid, my wife's gone away."

Then after a good laugh, the men sat down to eat — and drink. Perhaps the song helped dispel any guilt some men possibly had. They all retired to the game room and usually played poker and drank until daylight.

Some large transactions were started at 125 Dale Ave. Buggy or surry rides were provided to take the men from the train station to the house on Dale Avenue. In fact, one large San Francisco club's members provided money for construction of the San Carlos train station, some old newspaper items indicate.

The Peninsula might not have been what it is today, if the house at 125 Dale Ave. hadn't been built.

Nowadays, some businessmen play golf and have time to discuss opportunities with other men.

Two of the prominent men who came down from San Francisco were especially good friends. Old reports tell of these men always "pairing off" from the others upon arrival, and that they always slept in the same bedroom. They probably discussed business.

As far as my research goes, I cannot determine whether men who stayed at the house ever brought their wives. Perhaps wives were kept at home, caring for the children and the house.



carl mont history

by Russ Estep

In an old copy of the San Mateo Times and San Mateo Gazette, dated Nov. 16, 1889, is a news item describing how William C. Ralston had entertained his guests. Entertaining such as this doesn't occur anymore.

"In society, as everywhere else, there was no one like Ralston. He did just what he liked, and what no one else could have done. He built Belmont, that is to say, added to a small cottage, which he bought from an eccentric Italian gentleman named Col. Cipriani, until the house became the magnificent country residence whose fame reached all parts of the world, and which in Ralston's days, with the princely hospitality he extended to everybody, was a veritable place of delight.

"No one entertained like him. To people of quiet ways and tender nerves perhaps there was too much and hurrah for Jackson about it all, for Ralston kept his guests on the jump. He would hardly let you get your dinner swallowed down before it would be 'Now then, all come for a

ride,' and half a dozen four-in-hand char-a-vances would be waiting under the porte-cheere, ready for 50 friends, most eastern tourists (with letters of credit from the banks) whom he had brought down from the city by special train.

"Then he would take the ribbons of the first team and lead the way at a railroad pace down to Fair Oaks and Menlo Park and rouse up the Athertons, Lathams, Gordons, Donohoes and John Doyle, by a flying visit of 5 minutes to each. Then back in the moonlight for a dance in the magnificent music room, Ralston himself supplying the dance music by turning the crank of a mechanical piano, if he hadn't telegraphed for Ellenborg and Andres to come down on an engine: and after that a sumptuous supper, enlivened by Vauvw, Cliquet, Roederer, Chateau Youem and Chateau la Rose. when, 'Now then, just 5 minutes to catch the train,' and in 10 minutes the whole party would be whizzing past San Mateo on their way back to the city. I tell you it

was gay. Belmont was Belmont then."

An old copy of the San Francisco Examiner, dated Sept. 22, 1889, describes Ralston as a dreamer, who tried to live like a king. The article goes on to state, "William C. Ralston was a man of Oriental imagination, ill-assorting with his Saxon descent, his birth and the prosaic surroundings of a small town on the frontier in Ohio and his early life as a carpenter and clerk.

Yes, Ralston had his visions, all of which were great. He built the Palace Hotel, and the first drydock at Hunter's Point, and he owned a large farm in the Central Valley, and a woolen mill in San Francisco. But all of that just wasn't enough.

He had helped Mr. Sharon to become a director of the Bank of California after he founded the bank. The bank directors met in 1875 and listened to an audit. Ralston had diverted \$4.2 million to his own use. The directors told him that it must be replaced immediately, which he was unable to do.

Sharon replaced all the money and Ralston had to sign all his assets to Sharon. Ralston rode his horse to the Marina in San Francisco where the 16-foot high statue is there on the lawn. Ralston's body was pulled from the bay in August 1875.

Carlmont History

By Russell Estep

Belmont has endured some severe storms during the past few months, but probably none so severe as the one described in the old *Times Gazette* on Jan. 3, 1885. The old news item states that "The large barn of Robert Mills, 60 by 50 feet, built by San Francisco carpenters recently, was blown down Saturday afternoon by the heavy gale which prevailed through the day."

It would seem to me that the "quitting" whistle blew before the men had all the bracing done. If it had been properly braced, it shouldn't have happened. Belmont had other structures in 1885 that apparently didn't fall when the strong winds blew. The large Ralston House, which was built prior to William C. Ralston's death in 1875, was not mentioned in the news article. The gardener's cottage at Carlmont, which burned later, apparently withstood the gale winds, also. At the time, it was south of the present shopping center, backed up against the hill.

Belmont has seen some hard storms during the last 20 years.

One year, we had flooding because the opening under the railroad bridge became clogged. Offices along the east side of El Camino found mud on their floors the morning following that flood. Now, our city crews keep the opening under the railroad tracks

clear of debris.

When we had the earlier flooding, one member of the city crew was clearing trash out of the western end of the large pipe that allows the creek water to flow under the El Camino Real when he slipped. He was swept nearly to the east side of El Camino Real where he finally grabbed something extending from the side of the pipe, but was unable to get out because of the strong current. Finally, one of the other men tied a rope around his own waist and allowed his body to float down the pipe to try to help the man. As he grabbed him, other workmen pulled them both upstream and out at Fifth Avenue.

Belmont has installed new storm drains since then, and the street department is confident that we need worry no more. During some early Belmont floods there was a little land sliding. Since then, our Building Department very carefully examines house blueprints before issuing building permits.

Belmont is a fortunate city because hardpan is shallow in many places. Solid rock is a firm base for building, and we are fortunate that much of it is shallow here.

Many years ago, when a study was made on earthquake danger, it was decided that Belmont was the safest place to live on the Peninsula.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

When we read the March National Geographic magazine and study the picture of the 5,000-year-old man who came out of a glacier in the Alps two years ago, the age of our Belmont seems quite insignificant. The

man appears almost exactly like our modern people. The description of him is exciting, and the article one you would enjoy.

While early Belmont people looked about the same as we do, the advancement in things we have is enormous. Indians were here very early, and it has been proven they camped where we have Twin Pines Park. Many items they left are in our Belmont Museum.

Probably the first white settler in Belmont was Count Leonetto Cipriani. He was sent to San Francisco from Italy in 1854. Old newspaper items tell of a house

he built in Italy, then had shipped in "knocked-down fashion" around Cape Horn to San Francisco. Then it was brought down the bay and reassembled in Belmont.

You can easily recognize the south portion of the large Ralston house as being "different." It was one story when first reassembled. Later William C. Ralston had a second story added. Probably the Cipriani portion was nailed together with square nails — much as many California pioneers had to use. The round nails were invented much later. Or perhaps a part of the south section could have been bolted together.

Lumber for Ralston's large house must have come from one

of the sawmills operating in Woodside. The first appears to have been the one by the creek, about where the road turns off to go up to Skyline. What an active area that must have been.

The lumber was hauled by teams of horses. Two horses could pull only about 1,000 board feet, so the teams must have been from four to six horses. Teamsters usually rode the "off" horse and guided the team with a jerk line.

Wagons would have needed axle grease each evening to be ready for the following day. Mica axle grease hadn't been invented yet, so wagons were probably greased with bear grease.

Some of the early wagons were constructed with wide tires, so they wouldn't mire down so

far in the muddy roads. While the wide tires were necessary, the wagons so equipped pulled harder, and those wagons couldn't carry as large a load as the wagons with the ordinary-width steel tires, which were used in the summertime.

During construction of the large Ralston house in Belmont, Ralston and his wife remained in San Francisco.

Belmonters are fortunate in having the very large Ralston House, where President Grant and King Kalakaua were entertained. There is nothing like it anywhere, and a tour of the house with 50 rooms, now owned by the College of Notre Dame, is well worth your time. Tours can be arranged by calling the college.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

Belmont has had a library for many years. It used to be in Kitty Hearstner's house. Then she had her house jacked up, and the library was put on the first floor. Books were available long before that. At first there was a collection of books in the old Belmont school. People could drop in and borrow a book now and then. Belmont youth had books right at their elbows almost since our town began.

Early people everywhere learned to read and wanted to keep track of what was going on. Some pioneers had to struggle. When my own grandparents came west with a covered wagon in 1854, my father was a small boy of 4 years. He had seen signs now and then along the route of the Oregon Trail and wished he could read them. He picked up a small stick in Iowa and grandmother scratched letters in the dust. He said he remembered walking behind the heavily loaded wagon for days and weeks holding his mother's hand. When the wagon stopped another letter would be scratched in the dust for him to try to identify. By the time the wagon train reached Wyoming, he could identify letters up to J.

When the train arrived in Oregon, he could read the entire alphabet — all without a book. However, if he had had books to study from, he could have learned a great deal faster. Books open up the world for readers.

The family lived for a while east of Eugene, then moved to

Northern California. By then, my father had access to books of all kinds and he continued to read and study until he had a genuine "home study" education. All starting from alphabet letters being scratched in dust on the long Oregon Trail.

Presently our Belmont library has more than 50,000 books. The librarian, Teri Titus, is a well-read and educated lady. Teri is always helpful to people who want certain books or want to study subjects of certain natures.

There is no charge when you borrow a library book. If you get one of the "free" cards, you may also obtain books from any other library within San Mateo County.

Our Belmont city library is located on the Alameda de las Pulgas about a block south of Carlmont Shopping Center. It is open each week, and Teri is there to help you.

Presently she has a special program for children, and others for all ages. It may help your children if you take them to visit the library. Then explain to them about the poor child who didn't have a pencil or any paper, who learned to read from his mother scratching alphabet letters in the dust on the Oregon Trail as his family drove oxen west in 1854.

How fortunate our young people are that they can have access to so many books on so many subject in these modern times. The Belmont library helps our citizens keep up with, and perhaps a little ahead of, the rest of the world.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



Most young people in Belmont and San Carlos haven't heard of the effect motorized vehicles had on horses. The horses reared, and some ran away when they saw automobiles approaching. They seemed terrorized when they saw a vehicle approaching that wasn't being pulled by horses. Usually several months, or sometimes years, were required before the animals learned that vehicles could run without them.

When possible, wagon drivers would drive their teams off the road and wait until the automobile had passed.

Some horseback riders were thrown as their mounts struggled to escape roaring motorized vehicles.

When horses saw their first airplanes, all the above was repeated. It took awhile before driving horses could understand that they were safe from something they hadn't seen before.

Drivers of surreys and buggies usually harnessed their teams with bridles that had "blindings" on the bridles. However, when teamsters were hauling large loads of lumber or merchandise, the bridles were open on both sides. Horses could see well, and they often froze with fright when they saw horseless carriages without other horses pulling them.

Before the turn of the century, the first flight over and into Belmont was by a large gas balloon. It had taken off from Woodward's in Golden Gate Park. It carried two men, and it landed in Belmont. The men claimed that they had reached an altitude of about 8,500 feet, and that they had a smooth ride down to Belmont.

The balloon flight received considerable publicity, as this was the first opportunity people on the Peninsula had had to see such an interesting sight. I can find no mention of how horses reacted when the big balloon landed. Perhaps the horses were kept some distance away.

In 1908, an airplane came down, and everyone who could went to see it. My father hitched up a team to the surrey and loaded our family into it and drove within one quarter mile of the aircraft.

He said he was afraid to drive closer, for the horses might panic and run away. He tied the horses to a small tree, and we walked a bit nearer to see the crude aircraft. Dad said, "Don't go closer. That thing might explode."

The early airplane was a pusher-type, with one engine in back of the aviator. The little noisy engine turned a single propeller.

Airplanes had been improved by 1908. This one had a wheel for steering, instead of a straight stick. Newspapers called this plane "very modern."

The plane took off across a hayfield. From that time onward airplanes became more common, and horses became accustomed to them and only shied a little, and didn't run away.

Only a few years after that nearly everyone had an automobile, and buggies and surreys were no longer used — except as riding animals.

Carlmont History

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OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



Changes, changes. Always so many changes in our cities, transportation and people.

It seems only yesterday when some Belmont people watched while the El Camino Real was being moved west of the railroad tracks. This was done during WWI in 1918.

Fresno scrapers were used. They were pulled by teams of horses, and some of the early trucks were also used. Those early trucks frequently broke down, and it was not unusual to see one being repaired along the stretch of new highway.

The new road was two lanes and surfaced with redrock from the large hill, which used to be between the railroad tracks and the bay.

An old photo in my files shows several 1908 automobiles approaching Belmont from the north on County Road. The automobiles were primitive. WWI advanced vehicles greatly.

Many years ago Belmont people had become so accustomed to steam train whistles that some said they couldn't sleep with diesel whistles blowing. A petition was sent to the Southern Pacific asking that train whistles be either toned down or that old steam whistles be used.

Gradually, over several years, the diesel whistles have been adjusted so they don't keep people awake. Their sound is very different from the old steam train whistle, but Belmonters sleep well again.

And there were the lions.

Back while the lions roared across the freeway in the animal park when that sound startled some Belmonters, I was living on Sixth Avenue. Their roar seemed to almost shake the house. That animal park was moved to Vallejo, and now we don't hear the lions.

Another great change in Belmont came when William Roth purchased the field where our Carlmont Shopping Center was constructed later. When St. Joseph Military Academy occupied that site, the students were often seen in school uniforms playing football and baseball on the field.

Carlmont High School property used to be a prune orchard. Some Belmont youths picked up prunes at 10 cents per 25-pound box during their school vacations. Some uninformed strangers never knew that ripe prunes must be picked up from the dust after falling from the prune trees.

During WWII, there was a small army camp in Belmont. It was located north of Ralston Avenue and west of Bayshore Highway. Some soldiers attended classes in the building that is now the Congregational Church.

The flat ground where Avon and Chevy streets are used to be a golf course. The houses were built over that area during WWII.

Of course there have been other major changes. One must wonder what Belmont will be like a century ahead. Probably still a good place in which to live.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



When Belmonters want to go to Half Moon Bay, they get into their cars and scoot there in about 20 minutes. But it hasn't always been so easy. In 1874, according to old records, the people would have gone there by horseback or by driving their buggies.

One girl, especially, who lived where the Opportunity Shop is, drove a buggy around the small town and to Redwood City and San Mateo quite often. Her family kept a horse, and she made good use of it. She could be seen nearly every evening currying and brushing her pet animal. The gentle horse was a bay, and it had long forelocks.

Some other people also kept a horse, and they owned either a surrey or buggy, or both. When a single person needed to go any place they rode horseback. It was improper though for girls to ride as boys rode. Girls had to ride side saddle, with a leg curved around the saddle horn. The girls saddles were constructed differently than saddles we see now. You can see them in museums.

When a lady needed to travel across the hill to Half Moon Bay, she usually rode in a horse-drawn stage coach. Horse-drawn coaches became available in 1874. Mr. Janke and Fred Pruner joined forces and started running stages once a day in each direction. Janke was operating the general merchandise store (pink building) and Fred Pruner owned Belmont's livery stable.

Old reports about this say that Janke had the money and Pruner had the horses. So they combined and were successful from the beginning. Also there was the north and south stage.

A "through" stage passed through Belmont each day in

both directions. It ran from San Jose to San Francisco. Transfers were unacceptable by both lines. It wasn't that they didn't trust one another. Bookkeeping would have been difficult, and neither stage line cared to bother with it.

Once the horses pulling the Half Moon Bay stage ran away. They took the bits into their mouths, and passengers had a wild ride. Old reports on this tell that the stage remained upright, and no one was hurt. The stage didn't roll over as some had done previously. The driver had a new horse that day, and the team spooked when a deer crossed the single-track road ahead of them. Later the driver changed the bridle bits that were used on the unbroken stage horse. Broken horses seldom spook.

Drivers of buggies and stages, as well as Teamsters, rode on the right side of the front seat. The brake was accessible there.

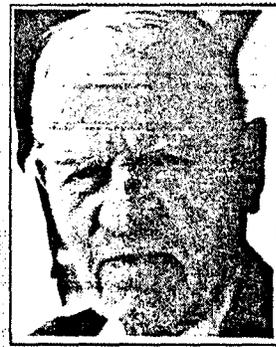
Belmont was a small restful town, and people didn't move quite as fast as in the big cities. This attitude must have carried forward to only 15 years ago. At that time, the City Council had complaints of the Southern Pacific trains repairing through Belmont. They traveled very fast. A motion was made by the city fathers that the trains had to slow down to 35 miles per hour.

The railroad company complied, but began blowing train whistles at the city limits, and engineers held open the whistles all the way as they passed our city.

People couldn't sleep. Soon this order was reversed, and Belmonters managed to catch up with their lost sleep in a few days. Everyone was happy again.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep
*OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT*



People everywhere like parades. They like to stand on a sidewalk to watch them go by, and they like being in them.

We had a large one about 20 years ago, and many people watched from the side of Ralston Avenue. Several floats were in the parade. Some participants rode in cars and some walked. The Palo Alto Chapter of the S.A.R. borrowed a Cadillac and loaded some of their members into it. They were the last vehicle in the parade, and when Rupert Taylor filmed it, he discovered that he had missed filming the last vehicle. Some of their members were annoyed, but Rupert was forgiven.

About 20 years ago, our Chamber of Commerce sponsored a parade at Christmas time. Ed Vallerga and George Tiegel had decorated the large redwood tree which used to stand on the south side and one-half a block west of Ralston Avenue.

That year our Chamber of Commerce had Mayor Charles H. Cook riding in a little red wagon being pulled along Ralston Avenue by a strong man. Charley was heavy, so the pulling must have been rather difficult. But they made it out to the Alameda as Charley tossed wrapped candy to children along the street.

Another year our Chamber of Commerce wanted Belmont to be represented in the larger parade in Redwood City. Max Millard, and his wife, Vera, rode in a buggy pulled by a bay horse down Broadway waving to the watchers on the sidewalks.

They had a slogan on the side of the buggy proclaiming that "Belmont was the first County Seat." When they drove by the Redwood City viewing stand, they noticed some thumbs down. Apparently some citizens in Redwood City didn't realize that Belmont had really been the county seat in 1856.

Since then, Belmont has had several parades here. Some for Belmont children have been held near Easter time, when small children appeared in Easter costumes.

When real estate sales were up several years ago, one ambitious realtor had his salesmen drive cars along Ralston Avenue with signs on the sides proclaiming "good buys" at their establishment. But this wasn't a real parade—just an advertising stunt to get attention.

Something unusual happened in one of the large parades in Redwood City about 15 or 20 years ago. A very small boy, whom people said came from Belmont, forgot to go to the bathroom before the parade started. He was wearing light-colored trousers. What happened showed plainly. Some people laughed at his wet pants, while others were heard to say, "I'll bet that kid came from Belmont."

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



We don't hear very much these days of the Spanish people who were here many years ago. In 1795 the Spanish were the only people in this area. Of course Spain claimed California, and the English would liked to have had it, and the Russians occupied Fort Ross up the coast north of here.

If you haven't visited Fort Ross, you should go there. The original church burned a few years ago, but a new one was constructed. Senor Arguello came here in 1795.

An original photo of Arguello shows him to be a gentlemanly man. He was well educated and had been sent to San Francisco. He represented Spain and its affairs for several years. In fact, he did such a good job, the Spanish king awarded him a land grant, which contained approximately 34,200 acres, including all the land from the creek north of Palo Alto to San Mateo, and from the Bay to the top of the ridge at Skyline Boulevard.

At first, the Arguellos lived where we find the intersection of San Carlos and Cordilleras avenues. There used to be a good spring there. Then, in 1821, the headquarters moved to Cedar Street about a block north of what we call San Carlos Avenue. San Carlos Avenue became their driveway to go down to El Camino Real, which is now the Old County Road. There is a wide place at Cedar Street where their house used to be.

The Arguellos raised livestock, mostly cattle and horses, although old records tell of them owning several hundred hogs. They used horses for riding and pulling their wagons. The trip by surrey to either San Francisco or San Jose Mission required a whole day.

Mexican vaqueros herded the cattle, running loose over the big rancho. Mexican cowboys of the era used saddles with large saddle horns, so the men could twist their braided ropes around them when they caught an animal.

Early drawings of the Arguello Vaqueros show them with spurs, which had very large rowels, large hats with flat brims and tassels hanging down from the outer edge of the brims.

Mexican cowboys were said to have been very efficient. They could catch a calf for marking, as easily as American cowboys could later. Calves were usually caught by their back feet, then the rider jumped off his horse and laid the calf onto its side, as the horse leaned back and held the rope tight.

Marking and branding was done to keep the Arguello livestock separated from those of Mission Dolores, where several thousand cattle ranged over the same territory.

California didn't have many residents in 1795, and there was scarcely any market for beef. However, there were ships arriving occasionally from the east coast, and their captains often purchased hides, which were taken to Boston where leather was needed for making shoes and many other things such as harnesses. The prices quoted for hides was usually two dollars each.

At this low amount, the sailing ships needed to purchase thousands of hides to make a profit. Early sailing ships anchored at Half Moon Bay, and cattle were driven there to be butchered. There was no road yet from Belmont to the coast.

California was occupied mostly by the Spanish. Then east people came. Now the trend is reversing, and a century from now California will probably be occupied once again mostly by Spanish speaking people.

Californians will have to learn the Spanish language, because it will be widely used.

Carlmont History



By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT

More on sanitariums

Although Annette Alexander started her sanitarium here in Belmont in 1928, she soon found competition developing. There were others who believed Belmont would be a desirable location for persons with nervous problems.

The old *Redwood City Tribune* of August 13, 1925, has an article about the beginning of another local sanitarium. The article states, "A certified copy of the articles of incorporation of Twin Pines, Inc. was filed in the office of the county clerk at Redwood City on March 25, last. The original papers having been filed in the office of Secretary of State Frank C. Jordan on April 11. The purpose of the company is to manage and to operate health resorts, buy and sell property, etc. The capital stock is \$75,000, divided into 750 shares of the par value of \$100 each. The original subscribers and directors are Walter F. Schaller, Henry G. Mehrtens and Herbert J. Gottbrath, all of San Francisco."

While the owners of the Twin Pines Sanitarium may have given gifts to Belmont and to our various organizations, I cannot find items expressing this in any old newspapers. Perhaps they wanted new about this kept quiet.

On the otherhand Annette Alexander gave many gifts. When our Sea Scouts needed a new boat, it was Annette Alexander who gave it to them as a gift. Another time the Scouts needed uniforms, and Annette gave money to purchase them. Once when the local scouts wanted to attend a scout meeting in Southern California, she gave them train tickets. She was always doing things for other Belmont people. Older citizens of Belmont miss her.

The local service clubs often present things to help our citizens. Recently the Lions Club presented money for several scholarships to high school graduates. School officials and teachers had recommended the scholarship winners. Students strived for these gifts, and it is probable that better grades for some were a result of the scholarship offerings.

The Belmont Rotary and Kiwanis clubs have been very helpful to our young Belmont people. Some will always remember the help they received while attending schools in our city.

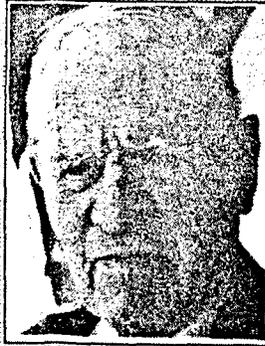
The San Carlos service clubs also donate considerable funds to assist the high school student. The students who have been given these scholarships will remember our service clubs for as long as they live.

Once, when I was seated next to Mrs. Alexander at a Chamber of Commerce meeting she commented, "I do give gifts to students. And would you know, the value of those gifts has always come back to me in one way or another. Belmont people appreciate whatever help is given them. In Belmont it pays to help you neighbors, Belmont people are all good people."

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



The announcement of Sept. 16, 1927, that Belmont's incorporation had been set aside surprised me. I had liked Belmont's hills and the little valley and had often driven my second cousin, Margaret Ellsworth, over to the new town.

The population was about 900 then. Houses were scattered. My 1925 Model-T Ford car could handle all the hills. Margaret and I were young then. She later married Arne Herson, manager of Belmont's water district.

Superior Judge John Hudner, of Hollister, had made the decision to disincorporate Belmont. An old newspaper in my files states that an election was held and that the area's citizens, all but one, wanted Belmont incorporated.

However, John Bourdette objected, and sued to stop the incorporation. He owned land where Carlmont High School was constructed later. He claimed that he had not been contacted about the incorporation of Belmont and had not given his permission. His land was farm land and was planted mostly as a prune orchard.

Superior Court Judge John L. Hudner, of Hollister was the judge who decided not to allow the incorporation to continue. The decision caused some problems, for Belmont couldn't pay bills or collect taxes. The chief of police was owed some back salary.

An attack upon a city's legality can only be made through the permission of the attorney general, but Bourdette had obtained the consent of California's Attorney General U.S. Webb.

The incorporation of Belmont was originally ok'd by only a small number of votes. Yet it had carried. Bourdette's acreage was approximately 230 acres. California law tells us very clearly that signers of a petition for disincorporation of a city must date their signatures. This wasn't done. And Bourdette had

based on leaving out any and all acreage necessary.

About two years later the suit was set aside, and Belmont was again a city in California. Most local people were relieved and pleased. Chief of Police Caldwell was paid his long-due salary.

Bourdette's land was later taken into Belmont, and it is now the location of Carlmont High School, a school which received an award after its construction for being one of

How Belmont's incorporation was set aside...and later restored

not asked for his land to be included within the city. He claimed his 30 acres were ranch that had never been subdivided.

City officials who were put out of office were Harry Warren, Columbus Messner, Lewis Vannier and Tom Pennington. The city clerk had been D.W. Callen, and city treasurer was S.J. Cook.

Judge Hudner was very reluctant to set aside the suit, but he did leave the way open for an amended incorporation

the "best designed high schools in California."

We are proud to have it here.

Blowing in the wind

Belmont has had strong winds in the afternoons nearly every day since our town was first settled. Most people living here like the clean air, and some think this has helped keep

understood Belmont winds and had his crew install what appeared to be more braces than necessary, and the new barn stayed up

Not all the lumber in the first barn could be used, and also the nails had been the old square type. Round nails with heads weren't available in early California. Square nails were just tapered bits of iron, and were used in early construction.

when the winds arrived in the afternoon and blew through the hanging laundry, they found everything ready to take in before supper.

People now call the noon meal lunch, but it used to be big meal, and they called it dinner. Often, housewives couldn't get word to their husbands who might be plowing, because of the northwest wind carrying the sound of their voices. They used a triangle piece of iron for a signal and pounded a straight piece of iron within the triangle.

Carlmont History
By Russ Estep

Belmont's citizens healthy.

Perhaps this was well recognized years ago when the many sanitariums that used to be here were established.

There have been times however, when our Belmont winds did damage. An old news item in the *Times Gazette* of January 3, 1885, describes some of this.

Robert Mills had a barn constructed by carpenters from San Francisco. Apparently, the foreman wasn't accustomed to our strong gusts of wind which happen now and then.

Shortly after completion of the large 50-by-60 foot barn, here the winds came. The foreman then learned that he hadn't had enough braces placed by his crew. The barn blew down.

A local foreman was hired to reconstruct the barn. He

The strong winds here helped drive sailing ships from San Francisco. Our winds usually come from the northwest. Sailing ships and sail boats often made the trip down the Bay from San Francisco in less than an hour.

But their return up the Bay against the prevailing winds required from three to four hours or sometimes longer. When tacking against the strong winds, they had to travel a greater distance.

The strong winds in Belmont usually occur in the afternoon. Mornings are usually calm.

One old-timer told me the Belmont winds used to help local housewives with their weekly washing. They hung clothing and their laundry to get the sun in the forenoon, and

This sound would penetrate the strong wind quite a distance, and men could unhitch their teams and hurry home to eat a large meal.

Communications have improved considerably, and if a housewife needed to reach her husband now, she would simply talk to him on her small portable telephone.

Belmont has had some very hard storms during the past century, but as far as I can learn, no other buildings have blown down.

Local carpenter foremen understand our climate and its occasional gusts of wind in the wintertime. What they build remains standing.

Salton: California's lost city?

Belmont is a growing, healthy city and I'm sure it will continue to be this way. But some other towns have been started, and then for one reason or another, they die on the vine.

Recently, when I flew down to visit Salton City in Imperial County, I was shocked to see

Carlmont History By Russ Estep

that a healthy and vigorous town had died.

The two large motels, two service stations, three restaurants, the beautiful yacht club, a Bank of America and three stores all were closed, and the buildings were trashed.

Windows were broken and had fallen out, and buildings were going to rot. Some houses were vacant, their windows also broken.

I wanted to make a telephone call, but learned there were no telephones that worked.

I asked a fisherman what had happened. He told me that when the businesses left, no one had a

place to work. They all left, and the place was deserted. Left to die there on the hot desert.

Of course, nothing like this will ever happen in Belmont. Our city's businesses do change hands now and then, and new ones are started. Our city fathers work together, and the Chamber of Commerce continues to help new businesses.

Salton City had a Chamber of Commerce, but apparently they weren't able to hold things together.

Salton City had wonderful potential, with good fishing, a very dry, healthy climate and beautiful cool areas in the mountains to the west. It was excellent for summer picnics, but it did not have enough publicity to bring in a population to support the city.

Boating attracted some people, and many boat races were held there. The water was salty, but not enough to support swimmers as Salt Lake, Utah, is said to do. The salt gets into the water as Salton City from salt beds under the huge lake, or sea as it is called.

The Salton Sea is larger than Lake Tahoe and is about 33 miles long and 12 miles wide.

It was formed in 1908 when

the Colorado River overflowed. President "Teddy" Roosevelt ordered every freight car available in the United States to be taken there to bring fill dirt to stop the break in the river bank.

When the flood stopped, the water remained, forming the Salton Sea.

Historians say that millions of years ago the ocean extended there but movement of the land later blocked that input.

Hundreds of Belmont and San Carlos residents purchased vacant lots on Salton Sea many years ago. Maybe someday it will "come alive" again.

Perhaps some future developer will someday recognize the profit possibilities and bring in people who will see the great health benefits for living where the air is dry and where water sports are readily available.

As we drove along, my passenger and I noticed something black far ahead of us. We couldn't make it out as the intense heat was causing our view to be distorted. As we came closer, we could see several buzzards eating a rabbit or rodent beside the Main Street.

The Salton Sea area is dead.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



People often book three-week voyages to Hawaii before steamers were commonly used. They had to travel by sailing ships. Some became sea sick. Not many enjoyed their long voyages.

Those who started from San Jose first had to get to San Francisco. Trains weren't used until 1863. One couple made the trip in 1860. What a time they had — so different from now.

An old news item tells that they had sold their large prune orchard to an eastern buyer at an unexpected profit. So they wanted to celebrate. The ship they were to travel on was scheduled to sail from San Francisco on a Tuesday at high tide.

They hadn't anticipated any problems. Yet one developed even before they boarded the sailing ship. Enroute to San Francisco on the stage, one horse threw a shoe. Then it began to limp, and the driver decided to stop at Belmont's blacksmith shop.

Upon arrival, the driver left the harness on the horse and unhitched it. Then the Belmont blacksmith rasped the horses foot until it was smooth, and he poured a little dip sheep onto the center portion where it had been somewhat bruised.

The driver explained to the blacksmith that he was in a hurry because his passenger had to reach San Francisco as fast as possible to catch a ship to Hawaii.

The blacksmith located a used horseshoe that would fit, and he nailed it on. Within a half hour, the horse was hitched again and the San Jose couple — along with their large trunk — were again on their way.

As they left Belmont, (then called "Waterview") the man commented to his wife that "he wondered whether that stopping place would ever amount to anything."

Their large "tall ship" was wait-

ing at the dock, and they boarded. An employee of the shipping company brought their large trunk to their stateroom. The ship was only two hours late in starting, and soon after that they were out the Golden Gate. Both went up on deck and they watched as the sails filled and they were thrilled to think they were really on their way to Hawaii.

Both were nervous and soon their stomachs reacted, and both were sea sick. When they arrived at Honolulu, there was nothing to greet their ship — no Aloha Tower — nothing.

They were taken to a small hotel near Waikiki Beach, where they enjoyed their two-week stay. They were away for three weeks going over, three weeks returning, and two weeks in Hawaii. They were glad to get home from the tiresome trip.

Recently, one of their grandsons commented to me: "Travel used to require lots of time. Last Thursday, I had to fly to Honolulu — over and back the same day — to get some papers officially signed before a notary public so they could be recorded here. It was necessary because the signature couldn't be faxed. It had to be the original. Grandpa thought he was living in modern times, but I like the modern times we have now, better than what he had."

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



By Russ Estep

When the Panama Pacific International Exposition was opened in San Francisco and Lincoln Beachy "looped the loop" over the Bay near the Marina, many people from Belmont were there. The year was 1915 and the opening of the Panama Canal was being celebrated. Lincoln Beachy's flight wasn't the first airplane I had seen. My first was in 1912.

No one watching Beachy could have possibly predicted the future of airplanes. World War I advanced flight a great deal when some of the war was fought in the air by very brave Americans.

Following World War I, adventurous men took up flying, and many "air strips" began appearing. One was in Belmont, where the Mae Nesbit School was built later.

This little, unpaved gravel strip extended east and west. Operators of the little airport offered a free flight for anyone writing the best manuscript on "why everyone should learn to fly."

There was also a small airport in San Carlos east of the railroad track, and flying lessons were given there for a while.

Down in Redwood City there was a small airport near the Bayshore Highway. Flying lessons were also offered there.

After a few years, all of these small airports disappeared and subdivisions of small houses were built — except in Belmont, where the Mae Nesbit school took over the site.

Before the San Francisco airport was constructed there were people who thought the airport should be in another location. These people couldn't see far ahead and seemed to believe flying wouldn't advance as it has done.

Treasure Island had been planned to be San Francisco's Airport. With our large jets now requiring long runways, that location would have been adequate.

Some other ideas of the time were to build flat roofs on some of San Francisco's tall puddings for planes to land on. How very inadequate that would have been!

J. Ogden Mills lived where we now find Millbrae. His home was a very large house on the hilltop. Down below his house was a hay field which he owned. He also owned tidelands.

After much dickering, San Francisco officials arranged to lease his land down near the Bay for the San Francisco Airport, which would be named Mills Field.

Airplanes were much smaller then, and jets hadn't been invented.

I flew out of the Mills Field several times, and the terminal was north of the present larger terminal.

When WWII started, the San Francisco Airport needed to be larger and the present terminal was constructed.

When it was dedicated, Mayor Robinson gave a speech and told the large crowd that the new terminal was the "terminal of the future," and wouldn't need to be added onto for at least 40 years.

Additions began the following year, and work has not stopped yet.

What they built was impressive, but Vera Millard, who was sitting in the front row beside me at the dedication commented, "I'll bet they will find this all too small within two years."

We were sitting a mere 10 feet from Mayor Robinson. Vera was Belmont's Chamber of Commerce secretary, and I was president. Belmont's people often are more "far sighted" than folks from other places.

Vera was proven to be right.

A History of Good Schools

Wildlife, birds and fish do all they can to train and educate their young. Animals are seen training their off-spring.

People also make every effort to help their children to receive an education. When our country was very new, the early settlers established log schools before lumber was available.

Many young women went to our American wild country to teach. Some dodged arrows shot at them by Indians. But most stayed with their school children, sometimes accompanying them to their homes to protect them when school let out.

One of the first schools here in Belmont was a little one-room building between Old County Road and the railroad tracks. Children from both Belmont and San Carlos attended.

Later, as more people settled in this location, another little school was built across Old County Road, south of Ralston. Later that school was rebuilt into a two-story building with more classrooms to accommodate Belmont's increasing population.

Most students of that time couldn't afford high school. They spent their lives with only a grade school education.

The few who received a higher education advanced into powerful positions. They "ran the country." Many others became successful businessmen. They found competition scarce and had things about the way they wanted them to be. Some

professional men, such as doctors or lawyers turned to politics.

Belmont had one advantage over

CARLMONT HISTORY

by Russell Estep



many western towns. Saw mills cut redwood lumber in Woodside as early as 1850. Actually, there were said to have been nine mills operating then.

Belmont didn't need to cut logs for the first school. They never had a log school house here. It was built of rough lumber and stood between Old County Road and the railroad tracks south of Ralston Avenue.

On short winter days, the teacher lit candles so they could see to read. It was nearly 40 years before Bel-

mont's little school had electric lights.

The first little one-room school became too tiny near the turn of the century, and it was taken down. A larger, two-story school was constructed. The new school was on the east side of Old County Road, about one-half block south of Ralston Avenue.

By that time, San Carlos needed their own school, and they built a small one-room building to accommodate their children.

Seeing a need for schools, Catholics also established a school in Belmont. Many signed up to attend, but this was much later. The school was called the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They also had the St. Joseph Military Academy.

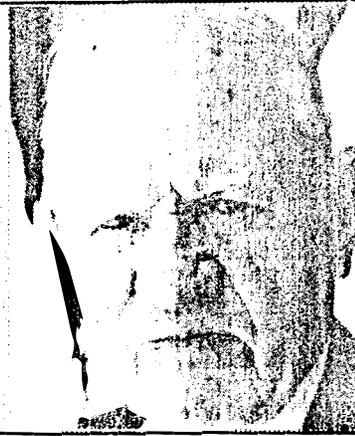
Presently Belmont has many modern schools with good reputations, including Nesbit, McDougall, and Fox schools.

Belmont children are fortunate to have such good schools to attend. When they continue on to college, most discover they keep abreast, perhaps a little ahead of students from other places. They feel fortunate to be from Belmont.

Carlmont History

By Russ Estep

OFFICIAL HISTORIAN
FOR THE CITY OF BELMONT



A century ago, many people wanted to start businesses in Belmont. They thought the small town had possibilities — more than was being provided by big operators.

One small business discussed over dinner tables was selling eyeglasses.

At that time, you did not need to know anything about eyes. You

only needed a little sales ability.

When someone wanted to start such a small business, he had to first acquire a horse and buggy. Often, a horse could be purchased cheaply and was a skinny old fellow and was scroungy.

The buggy was usually ratty looking, and the man usually bought it for \$10 or won it in a poker game.

Then he needed to begin collecting old eye glasses, and when he had a full box, he would harness his horse and start down the road.

He would call at every farm and house, offering to sell the glasses. Since eye doctors were almost nonexistent, people would try on glasses while he waited. When they found a pair they could read with, they purchased them from the man for 25.

Money was hard to come by in Belmont's early years. Some people needed glasses and had no money, but they could usually provide feed for the horse or invite the driver for lunch — which paid for the glasses.

Other small businesses began to appear. Another was a forerunner of the "Hertz Rental Cars." Saddle horses or buggies could be rented by the day from the local blacksmith shop. A saddle horse usually cost \$1 a day, while a buggy or surry cost \$2.50 per day.

Just as now, there were people

who abused their methods of transportation. The Hertz Company now claims that some of their vehicles are returned needing repairs. In the old days, horses were sometimes returned sweaty, out of breath and exhausted. Obviously the drivers had "crowded" them and maybe beaten them while they had the rigs out.

Fortunately, this didn't often happen or rentals of animals would have ceased.

Most people in early Belmont liked their animals and treated them well. Nearly every household on the Peninsula kept at least one horse for transportation.

Presently, Belmont has all sorts of professionals. Belmonters no longer need to patronize a salesman driving an old horse and buggy. And we no longer need to search through a salesman's box of someone else's used eye-glasses to find something we can read by.

In the last century Belmont has kept abreast of progress.

CARLMONT HISTORY

by Russell Estep



The year was 1914, and my grandmother and I were waiting for the south-bound train to take us back to San Jose. We had come up to visit one of my uncles who was working here, but we didn't find him at home. He lived in Belmont.

We had gone into the Country Store to shop then come out and rested ourselves on the plank bench made of wood the store provided while we waited for the train.

The plank had no padding, and I found it to be very tiring just sitting there. My grandmother didn't complain, but she had more natural cushioning than I had.

Belmont's depot was crowded, and some men were smoking in the waiting room, so we sat across the track on that hard uncushioned plank.

Then the train arrived, and before we could make our way around to the west side of it, the train began to move. Passengers boarded from the depot side. We felt like we were stranded in the wilderness — as Belmont was just a tiny place at that time.

Being only 11-years-old in 1914, I was interested in the train's steam engine. But there wasn't time to do much looking.

While we waited for another

train, two automobiles passed. I noticed that one had the steering wheel on the right side. Then a man drove by driving a horse in a buggy, and soon after that, a large freight wagon pulled by four big horses went by going north. There were small bells fastened to the manes so other drivers could hear the "outfit" approaching on narrow roads. Probably, I decided, it had come from the hills near Woodside.

The rough looking driver waved to me as the outfit went by.

Trains didn't pass through here then as often as they do now. However, at last, one arrived, and you may be sure my grandmother and I were on the west side of the tracks at this time.

Soon we were scooting along at about 25 miles an hour returning to San Jose. We passed prune orchards all the way. At times, it seemed we could quite easily have picked prunes from the train window, the trees planted so close to the train tracks. I suppose the farmers wanted to use every inch of their land.

In about an hour we pulled into San Jose and the train stopped at the new depot, which had been opened in 1894. It was on the west side of North First Street and had been painted the typical dark tan Southern Pacific colors.

We boarded a street car and rode down to Santa Clara Street where we got off and boarded another car going east, which we rode out to 17th Street, where the car turned north and delivered us to the 500 block where I lived with my grandmother.

For an 11-year-old boy, it had been an adventurous day.

And I remember it as though it happened yesterday — believe it or not.

Belmont's Roads to the Past

CARLMONT HISTORY

by Russell Estep



Two very important roads have always been in the city of Belmont. One was the road to the coast and the other the north and south road, later named El Camino Real.

But the north-south road wasn't where we find it now. It was east of the tracks. Now we call it Old County Road.

West of the railroad tracks — what is now El Camino — there was a road named for an early settler, a "Mr. Johnson."

During World War I, traffic became heavier, and Johnson Road became inadequate. Something had to be done.

It was decided that a better route for the north and south road would be to eliminate Johnson Road, widen it and name it El Camino Real.

The former narrow, unpaved road east of the tracks was re-named Old County Road. The intersection of the other important road to the coast with the "north/south" road was always an important intersection.

Old news accounts say a man named Angelo came to this location

and couldn't find a place to spread his blankets. He quickly built a tiny hotel in the middle of the road to the coast on the west side of the north and south road. The year was 1850.

Even though trails, which had been used by oxen to pull wagons, weren't well marked and lots hadn't yet been surveyed, the little hotel did well financially. Old reports tell us that a bed for overnight cost 50 cents and each meal 15 cents. Oxen and horses were placed in a small shed, and Angelo also collected 15 cents per animal.

Angelo was an ambitious man, not satisfied with what he had.

Later reports say he went to Canada and was arrested for embezzling \$10,000. Nothing further appears in old records as to what happened to him.

While wagons were being used, it didn't seem important to pave our roads. Streets weren't so important. However, they had to be kept in shape so vehicles wouldn't mire in the mud during heavy rain storms.

Angelo's little hotel eventually burned and was replaced by a larger building close to the wagon road. It had to be moved south several feet later as traffic increased.

The site was used for San Mateo's Court House for a short time after our county split off from San Francisco County.

At that time, many people questioned how 250 votes had come from Crystal Springs west of Belmont instead of the 25, which would represent all registered voters.

We had another election which gave the most votes to Redwood City, and they have been the county seat ever since.

Redwood City has grown faster than Belmont because of this, however, Belmont's growth has been steady and solid.

Ours is a fine city.

computers in the classroom; and creating a system whereby residents and their children will be able to communicate and share information from home with both the city and the school district.

The latter program will enable parents to keep track of a child's homework assignments and progress, enable the children to build communication and computer skills at home and will provide a closer link between the city and the

community.

With 65 percent of San Carlos families already using personal computers, this program will open up a myriad of exciting opportunities.

The committee's meetings continue with great interest and enthusiasm with which they began. Significant progress has been made in their first year, and all hope that continued discussions will result in further joint activities.

Belmont Once a Governor's Town

Many people in Belmont do not realize that a former governor of this state lived here. Old newspapers mention Governor McDougall, who lived where we now find Twin Pines Park.

One of our schools was named for this man.

Although he attained some prominence — and was likely known throughout California — old newspaper items seem to downgrade his ethics.

Yet, Belmonsters should be glad that he showed sensible judgement in choosing our city for his home, when he had the entire state to choose from.

Twin Pines Park is one of our state's cleanest and nicest small places to have picnics.

When Mr. Janke owned it many thousands of persons patronized his picnic grounds.

Other well-known characters have also resided in Belmont. There was a man called the "Macaroni King." His home was on Lake Street, out

CARLMONT HISTORY by Russell Estep



near today's retirement home called Bonnie Brae Terrace.

His home was painted white, and it was located on the west side of the street. When he died, the large building was taken over by some doctors and re-named the "California Sanitarium," specialized in caring for patients having tuberculosis which later it was torn down and apartments now occupy the site.

On the south side of Ralston Avenue near El Camino Real is the old Emmett home, which is listed as one of Belmont's historic struc-

tures.

It is much smaller than other early Belmont houses. Mr. Emmett was a partner with Mr. Waltermire in owning the "pink building" across the tracks.

The house presently is occupied by retail outlets.

Another very large house had been the residence of Mr. Mezes, the attorney who straightened out the titles for Mrs. Arguello after her husband passed away.

Mr. Mezes legal fees for his work allowed him to own much of Belmont, part of San Mateo, all of San Carlos, and a portion of Redwood City. Since Mrs. Mezes had inherited 34,200 acres when her husband passed away, Mezes portion was comparatively rather small.

Old records tell of the huge Mezes house burning. Since Belmont had no piped water, in those early years, it would have been nearly impossible to douse a fire by carrying water from a well. There were several very large houses lost

here in early days.

The large Newhall house across the railroad tracks was a total loss because of no piped water at that time.

Another early home was the Hanson house. It used to stand near the north end of Fifth Avenue, and at one time became a sanitarium temporarily.

There used to be several other large, old houses in Belmont. They have either burned or been torn down.

Presently it seems Belmonsters prefer small or middle-size homes. They require less care, and the occupants don't rattle around in them. Of course the William Ralston house still stands and is owned by the College of Notre Dame. You may arrange to visit the house if you make a phone call to the college first. It is very interesting to visit that house just to see how the early people in Belmont lived. Some were extravagant beyond belief.

From Dirt Roads to the 21st Century

Most towns began as Belmont — situated on narrow, unpaved and often rough roads.

Of course horse-drawn wagons didn't really need pavement. They were better off without it. Horses might slip now and then and sometimes would fall. If a horse happened to break a leg, the owner usually shot it. Broken legs on horses could seldom be repaired — especially if no veterinarian was available.

As people began using automobiles, they wanted smooth rides. They demanded something be done about rough roads and streets.

Early cars didn't have shock absorbers and usually were rough enough to ride in Belmont settlers were among those insisting the City Council take some kind of action.

CARLMONT HISTORY

by Russell Estep



The through-street, now called Old County Road, was the first that was paved. Next was Ralston Avenue, but it was only paved with two lanes.

Of course, the El Camino Real had already been moved west of the railroad tracks in 1918. It was many years after that when the first paving occurred. At that time, An-

nette Alexander, Juel Christensen and I were very active in Belmont's Chamber of Commerce. We held several meetings and decided to try to induce the City Council to help. They were very co-operative, and as soon as they could, they assigned a contract for widening Ralston to four lanes, or to curb lines.

Merchants had been complaining about the dust from the unpaved areas, and when work finally began citizens quieted down.

When the city was successful in getting the side areas along El Camino Real paved, Belmont started to look "more modern."

We citizens were proud to reside there, but in any city, there always seems to be more that should be done.

Many people wanted an overpass at Ralston Avenue and El Camino

Real. A real estate man, who wanted to sell his office — which would have been at the western terminus of the overpass off ramp — used considerable effort and money to defeat the overpass when it was first brought to a vote.

Many years passed. Finally we have decided an underpass must be built. Now it finally appears that Belmont will have one within the next year.

Belmont has already landscaped the middle of El Camino Real, and next will be replacing concrete sidewalks with red bricks.

There have been other improvements over the years. Belmont is looking very modern these days, and when local people tell others they reside here, they really mean it.

Belmont is a great city.

Belmont—Good Students, Successful People

CARL MONT HISTORY by Russell Estep



Early Belmont people and our present citizens believe in getting good educations. They find they are qualified for better employment and can make more money. Our school students study hard and usually get good grades. It has always been this way in Belmont.

An old newspaper item dated Sept. 2, 1902, tells about an early settler here reaching the top of the ladder. He was Sidney M. Mezes, son of S.M. Mezes, the attorney who helped Mrs. Arguello get her

very satisfactory settlement from the Arguello family.

The Arguellos, you will remember, were the people who had received the 42, 200-acre land grant from the King of Spain for work done for the Spanish government when our state was first settled.

Sidney M. Mezes was an attorney who came here from Puerto Rico at the request of Mrs. Arguello. He had been born in Belmont. He had graduated from Brewer's academy in San Mateo, graduated from the state university, completed his studies at Harvard and in Germany.

In 1895 he was elected to the position of head professor of philosophy at Texas University.

There have been other prominent people from Belmont. Some became financially "above-board" very fast and moved to Atherton and Hillsborough.

Also there were several manufacturers who started their businesses in Belmont, then moved their oper-

ations to nearby cities.

As long as they had a connection with Belmont they were successful.

Educational opportunities have always been available either right here or close by. The College of Notre Dame is an excellent school. The College of San Mateo and Canada are likewise considered good.

Of course it hasn't always been this way. When Belmont was very new, only a single, one-room grade school was here. It was located east of the railroad, then moved a bit farther east from its first location, across Old County Road and south of Ralston Avenue.

Both Belmont and San Carlos children attended. Later this little school was replaced with a two-story school building in the same location.

There are still at least two citizens alive who attended that school. They Doris Vannier and Bert Johnson. At this time, Bert's health ap-

pears good, but Doris' health is apparently declining, for she is in the Hill Street Sanitarium. Both are good people and a credit to our city. Doris attended college, became a teacher, and taught school until she retired.

A very successful manufacturing company in Belmont is the Tiegel Manufacturing Co. The founder, George Tiegel, has passed away, but the company is being operated by his two sons. I sold George his first commercial lot on Old County Road when he moved down here from Alaska, in January, 1951.

George told me he had looked for places to establish his factory, and after looking all over the Peninsula, he decided Belmont would be the best place. He was right, for his company has been successful beyond his expectations.

George said, "Good old Belmont," when he was in my office shortly before he died.