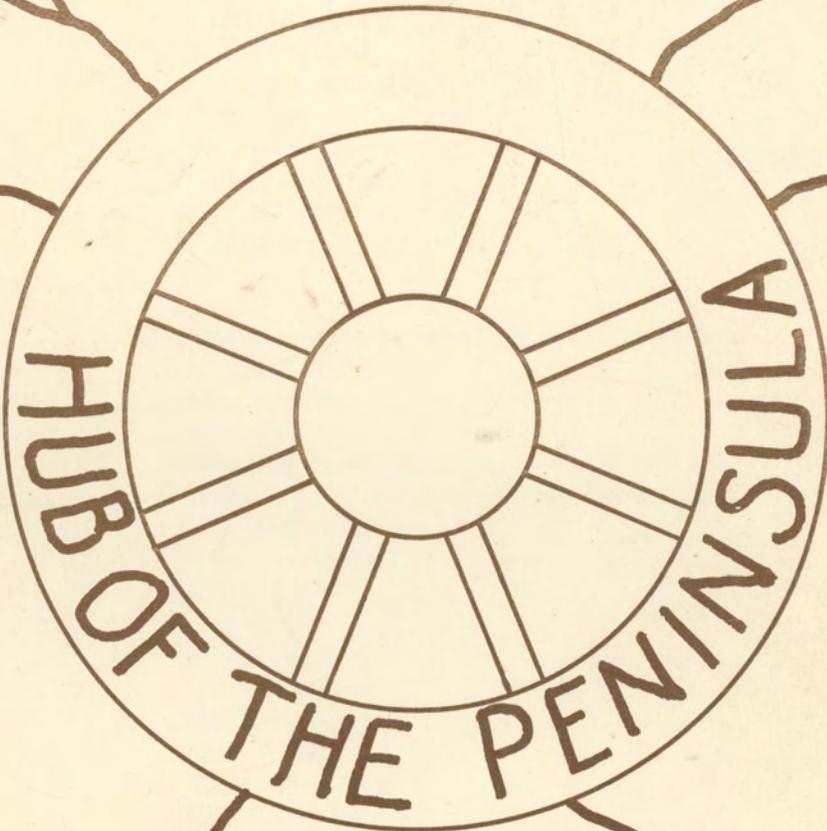


Tours

BELMONT
CALIFORNIA



AS WE REMEMBER IT

Russel A. Estep
Committee Chairman

Enjoy it!
Paris Vannier
1978

BELMONT, CALIFORNIA AS WE REMEMBER IT.

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The Committee. Russel A. Estep, Chairman

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Many of the stories were from personal interviews by Russel A. Estep of "old timers" during 1946-1970. All are "first-person" stories.

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BELMONT, "THE HUB OF THE PENINSULA" AS WE REMEMBER IT.

We dedicate this book to the present and future generations of Belmont.

We, the people who grew up in Belmont and those who came here to raise their families, believe that the memories and experiences we have had will help others to enjoy Belmont as we have known it.

We have tried to share with you the family life that came and went as our town has grown and progressed. We hope you will enjoy it with us.

When Belmont celebrated its 50th Anniversary along with the Bi-Centennial, memories of the past years of growth were renewed.

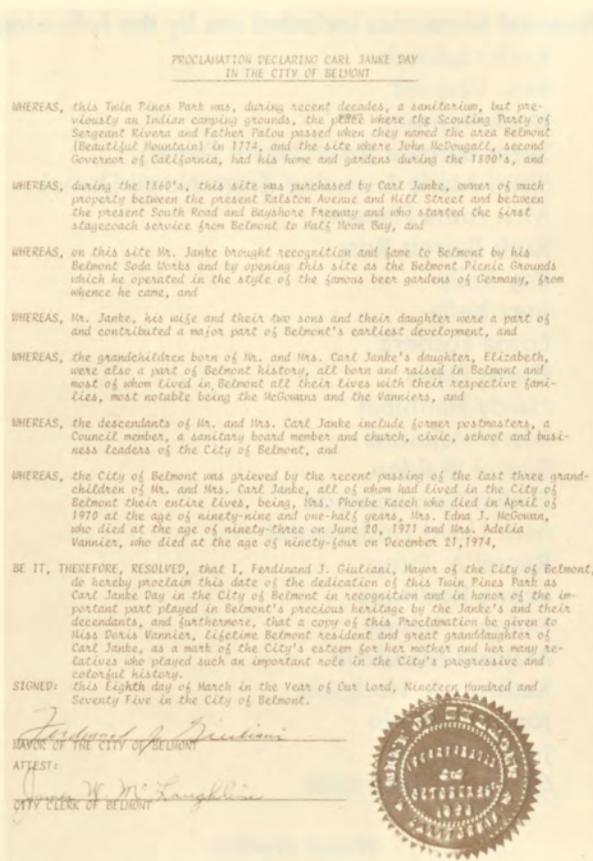
Residents who had spent most of their lives here— and those who reared their families in the growing town enjoyed treasured memories.

From that stimulation came the desire to share those memories with the people of today.

The outgrowth of the idea has been to relate experiences as only those who have lived here could tell from their own experiences, some of which never made newspaper headlines, and some that did, but may have been forgotten. We hope you will enjoy our stories.

We realize that we haven't been able to locate everyone who has lived here during the past fifty or so years, but we have tried. We hope those families from whom we haven't obtained stories will understand.

So that you may know Belmont's old-timers better we herewith present the stories as written, without corrections in language, spelling, or punctuation.



Carl Janke Day proclamation by the mayor during 1976 bi-centennial year.

by Doris Vannier

To relate names places and experiences of all our old time families would be endless.

To start with let's take the families from the north side of Ralston Ave. above El Camino Real. These would be in the "teens" and "twenties" of 1900.

On the N.W. corner had been an open field until a gas station opened there. Next to it was a small building called "Shady Inn," a coffee shop and sandwich shop. It was owned and run by Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald and Mrs. Morser— nothing very elegant but just a place to drop in for a bite and a chat.

Then came the lane, Janke Lane, shaded by many huge trees, mostly cypress and very pretty. It could have been called "Shady Lane".

Across the lane was a neatly fenced-in home with weedless, spotless, beautiful gardens. The fences along the lane and on Ralston Ave. were covered with honeysuckle and roses, which were often picked as people passed by. In that place lived the wife and daughter of Charlie Janke.

For some unknown reason Louisa Janke was known as "Old Fat"—probably from her younger days when she was more plump. Her daughter Dora Craig and she maintained one of the neatest places in town. They could be seen weeding or sweeping walks and spots between plants. The inside of the house was spotless too. They were reported to be excellent cooks. Louisa has helped cook and serve food in the Belmont Picnic Grounds in the earlier days.

Next to the Janke place was a small white cottage. Many families lived there, over many years. One of the early families was the Matt O'Neills: the former Jane Barre, who remarried after the death of her husband and became Mrs. Jane Welde.

Next came the home of Charlie and Emily Rich whose daughter was Dorothy and mostly called "Dolly", her father's favorite name for her. Their home was a large two-story shingled house with a nice porch across the front and some bricks toward the foundation. It had a circular drive in front of the home, a piece of lawn originally in the circle and later the lawn replaced by a mound covered with small plants. Emily Rich spent many hours on that porch, her hands always busy with embroidery or crocheting or any kind of hand work. She was very artistic, as was her daughter. Charlie Rich had worked at the "pump works" between Belmont and San Carlos on the eastern side of El Camino Real.

Next to their home was Emily's sister Kate. They had been the Elms girls. Their family, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Elms, and Bill Elms, had originally owned the large frontage on Ralston Ave. through to Hill St. at the rear. Harry and Bill raised beautiful flowers, which was their business.

Kate Elms was a teacher in San Francisco. She had taken a boat trip and met David Williams, a cellist, on the ship. They were married and he continued his music, becoming well-known for his talent in San Francisco. He commuted by train and was a familiar figure carrying his big instrument with him always.

They had two children, a daughter Joycelyn and a son David. Their home was a grey house set back from Ralston; rather behind a row of trees along Ralston Ave.

Kate and Emily had a brother Alfred, he with his mother, built a stucco home next to Kate's. He worked for the Southern Pacific Co. at the railroad station's main depot in San Francisco.

After his mother's death and his, the place was sold to George and Ruby Lobinger, and later raised to have stores beneath. It still is there.

In those days the next place was the original home of the Marquette Hansens. That was a large white house, with a porch across the front and part of the east side. There was a flight of steps from driveway to porch. It was a very stately home with a large circular driveway with lawn and magnolia trees in the center. It later became the "Nerve Rest Sanitarium", owned by Mrs. Reed, and later, under a different name, was run by Mrs. Campbell, until it was condemned by the fire department. The hallways were narrow and other conditions made it unsafe for elderly patients. It was torn down and 6th Ave. was cut through to Hill St. Some of the original gardens near the Elms property have stores, such as the bakery and others, with offices above.

A portion of the yard, eastern side, had been sold and a grocery store was there for years, then an antique store which moved because of the extension of 6th Avenue.

The Hansen family had several girls and boys. Elise became Mrs. Hines and had a beautiful home over in Bay View. She had a daughter and a son.

Next came Albert and Anna Hansen's home. Albert was one of the M. Hansen family.. Their place was much like the Rich's house. It was elevated above Ralston. After about five or six steps was a lawn edged by the most beautiful brick-red geraniums ever to be seen. Then a walk to the main steps of the house, and a porch like Rich's.

Albert and Anna had two children: a son Howard, and a daughter Muriel.

That just about ended the first block of residences on that side of Ralston.

Going back to the Janke Lane - all that was down town. First Bay-View, where stores and post offices had been for sometime, were removed and the shopping center spread out with the parking lot facing Ralston and Bay View Savings rebuilt on Kate Williams' property, with a driveway around Bay View Savings, coming out to Ralston on what was "Alf Elms" property.

In the second block of Ralston west side there were fewer homes. After "Al Hansens", were empty lots with grape vines, and quince trees through-out. For years the next house was the home of Robert and Edna McGowan, and daughter Ruth. Robert was an attorney in San Francisco and Belmont. He also was a postmaster appointed by Pres. Woodrow Wilson in 1914. His wife was Edna Johnson; grand-daughter of Carl and Dorothea Janke. She followed her husband as postmaster, appointed by Pres. Herbert Hoover.

They later sold the property and moved up to 1801 Ralston near the Carlmont Shopping center. The large pink

building now the Margarite Apts. opposite Twin Pines entrance was built on that property.

At one time earlier there had been a house built and occupied by Willard and Barbara Harry, just before the McGowan home, but it had been removed and put over in Bay View Heights on 6th Ave., once more leaving an empty lot.

In recent years those empty lots had office building built there across from the Wells Fargo bank. That white building with green slanting roof was an eye-sore to the town until townspeople got used to it. The building is presently named "Woodlake".

On the west side of McGowan's home was a large lot. It had a small building, just adequate for weekend picnics in the country. The owners seldom used it. Across the front were locust and pine trees.

The field had grapevines and just grass, plus a few fruit trees that died from lack of care.

The McGowans' goats and chickens sometimes roamed there, and later Ruth's famous old race horse "Heroaca" exercised there. That property remained empty until about WW-2 when Mrs. Peterson, with her two sons and three daughters built their home there. There were no children; just grown-up young people and their mother. After then it was sold several times and finally Rupert Taylor Real Estate offices are using it today.

Then came the home of Lewis and Adelia Vannier and their three children, Doris, Florence and Ernest. Adelia was a sister of Edna McGowan.

The Vannier home was a shingled bungalow type, with a small basement. In the front yard was a miniature of every kind of flowers, anything that would grow in adobe. Also there was an almond tree in center front yard, an apricot tree, which son Ernest said his mother killed by cutting off small branches for "switches". Never-the-less it lived for many years and gave few but delicious fruit. Across from the kitchen was a group of lilac tree bushes, very fragrant. They were especially loved because they came from Adelia's child-hood home, which was where El Camino and Hill Street are now.

The house was on the side of a hill so the back yard was a few feet higher. It had several fig trees that supplied friends and neighbors with plenty of figs. Also there was an almond, another apricot and a plum. Beyond that were the chicken yards that went up to South Road. Lew Vannier had a hobby before WW-1. that was raising prize-winning chickens and sending them all over the United States for show and in competition. They were hatched in incubators in the small basement under the front of the house. When he entered the service at Camp Fremont in WW-1 his wife Adelia decided to end the hobby, which resulted in delicious chicken dinners.

From then on any egg laying and good eating chickens occupied the yards.

During WW-2 while son Ernest was overseas, Bantams, a few large chickens and an attempt at raising turkeys took place. The forty some chickens did fine, but the turkeys were a trial and experience and seldom reached the dinner table.

When the family moved from there in 1957 the house was sold and stood empty for sometime. The property is now a parking lot for the Rupert Taylor real estate company.

The house west of the Vannier's was a larger home built about 1909 by a Mr. Roussell, brother of George Roussell. He was the stepfather of Inez Kelley, who became our Belmont and Bi-Centennial Queen in 1976.

During that year of the new house the Vannier family had moved to San Diego where Mrs. Vannier's brother, Amasa Johnson II and family lived. The Vannier house was rented to a Kelly family with many children.

The Roussell house spread across a large lot and was a two-story place with large glass windows and glass doors. It seemed more elegant than most of the others although plain and practical, long and narrow.

A family by name of Levison lived there. There was one small son. That property extended from Ralston through to South Road, some of it at the foot of the now Holly Road. There were nice plain gardens front and back. Also there was a small building near the middle and on the Vannier side. Behind that, closer to South road, was a stable and a huge water storage tank above on a platform. To reach the water tank there was a ladder leading from the barn—the floor covered with straw with strong odor of horses. On the wall near the ladder were hanging pieces of old harnesses etc. needed for horses. That water tank was high above the ground and a temptation for children to explore.

After the Levi family moved other families had the place; one the Voorhes. Mrs. Voorhes' brother and young daughter lived there for awhile. Later Dr. Gottbraith and his wife bought the place. It was rather large for two people.

Dr. Gottbraith by that time had acquired the George Center home across the street, the present manor building in Twin Pines. It was used as his medical office and business, a forerunner of the Sanitarium, Dr. William Rebec operated.

When Dr. Gottbraith and his wife left, their Ralston hime was acquired as part of Rebec's Sanitarium. The barn vanished with the water tank, and the little house was enlarged to serve as rooms for the nurses. The rooms were very small, just big enough for a single bed, dresser and chair and a little privacy. They all opened onto one larger room used as a living room. Meals were served across the street. When a nurse was ill or not on duty another nurse was often seen bringing over a tray of food.

Beneath the front of the nurses' home was space for the men cooks and helpers. They were the Phillipino boys; a happy bunch usually singing or giggling. Sometimes there were musical instruments to add to the musical

enjoyment. Also their bathroom on the ground floor was usually at any hour being used for showers!

Some of the men or boys enjoyed plants and cultivated a few spaces nearby and had hanging baskets hung from the front stairs leading to the nurses quarters. There was a porch and entrance on the west side. (the slight hillside) which the nurses used.

By that time the original well-designed back yard was only part lawn with various types of gardens, flowers and vegetables. Then came a small tent-like house near South Road and the near neighbor, the Louie Hansen family. Later it was better-built and used by one of the men employed as a driver for a patient at the original sanitarium across the street. Louie Battsinger the driver, was a talented German woodcraftsman. In leisure time he made small pieces of furniture, gift boxes sometimes made of many kinds of wood. He took pride in his work.

The main building had since become part of Rebec's Sanitarium with patients and nurses living there too on Ralston Avenue.

To the west of that property lived the Louie and Mamie Hansen family. As a young man he was said to have lived in Belmont and had been a delivery man, driving the horse and wagon for the Emmett store.

When married and living at the end of Ralston and South Road he was employed by the Union Iron Works in South San Francisco. He, like others, commuted by Southern Pacific trains.

Mr. and Mrs. Hansen had two sons, Leonard and Irwin, not two years apart in age. Mrs. Hansen was a wonderful cook and her bread baking was an art. It was no secret when she baked as the aroma from that bread baked in her wood and coal stove floated to the neighbors.

She was a very conscientious mother and washed and scrubbed everything including her boys. Her boys were always in freshly starched clothes every day. She said when she had headaches and couldn't sleep at night she would do the washing (using a washboard) or iron, or scrub the floor until she was tired.

The house on the side hill had a steep pair of stairs leading up to the front porch. There was a good-sized basement under part of the house. That served as a work shop filled with every kind of tools for Mr. Hansen. The boys never got too acquainted with them.

The back of the house was ground level. A bathroom was entered off the kitchen but the toilet was at one end of the porch, with kitchen door in middle and Mrs. Hansen's ever ready laundry at the other end. Of course the hot water at first was carried from the kitchen stove. Hansen's back yard was narrow near South Road, but there was a small building used for wood storage. Beyond that to the end of the property, where Ralston and South Road met, was originally the chicken yard and tank house. The Hansen's had a well the envy of the early neighbors who had to carry water from various places until water was finally acquired and connected to each piece of property along Ralston Avenue. Between the house and chicken yard was the prize vegetable and flower garden of Belmont.

Mr. Hansen enjoyed working in his yard early morning and late at night. On the side nearer his neighbors were beautiful dahlias especially the yellow orange, and white ones. They were seldom picked, just left to enjoy with bushes of lilacs and other plants.

Along the fence on South Road were blackberry bushes. They were always laden with big black berries, superior to any! Mrs. Hansen preserved the fruits from their gardens. They also always had plenty of fresh vegetables. This house was more cheerful in color than most on Ralston Ave. It was yellow with white trim.

The Vannier girls and Hansen boys played together as the only ones in the neighborhood. Poor Mrs. Hansen was usually looking for her boys. Neighbor, Doris, was adventuresome and would take the boys sightseeing (from the early ages of 4 or 5 years old) to places unfamiliar to them, the well-guarded boys.

One day Mrs. Hansen arrived at Mrs. Vannier's house to say she had her usual terrible headache. Then came the bottle of bromo-selzer which usually calmed her. So the search began headed for downtown, across the tracks on the way to explore the marshes. That was a day not to be forgotten.

Goodness knows what the punishment was, as each mother was so relieved to find the kids safe and sound.

Another time probably earlier, that barn at the back of the place between the homes seemed very inviting, so the lower level, stalls, hay, harnesses were explored and finally a climb up the ladder to the water tank was taken. By that time again Mrs. Hansen was at the kitchen of Mrs. Vannier's with a terrible headache; again in need of Bromo Selzer. "That Doris had led her boys off again!" After each mother calling her off spring, an answer came from above. There was Irwin about four years old, just about to climb the ladder to look in the water tank! Poor Mrs. Hansen, she pleaded "please come down!" Only to get the child's reply, "Don't come up mama, You get all blood!" Again she nearly fainted while the little ones easily came down.

After a while Mrs. Hansen took care of a little girl, Mary McConvey whose mother had passed away. Her father was desperate for a good home for Mary and couldn't have found a better one. For years Mary lived there almost a sister to the two boys.

Later as the children grew up, the back road, as South Road was called, intrigued them to the point that coasters were made. By that time neighbor Ruth joined the group and coaster races flourished down the hillside. Of course they sometimes ended in disaster and Bromo Selzer was needed again.

The park across from the Hansen's was overgrown. There had been five wells there when it was Janke's Picnic Ground. Thus it became a worry to both families. So Louie Vannier and Louie Hansen decided to fill in as many wells as they could find. Thus went the bottles and cans plus anything else until nearly full and then railroad ties were

placed securely across the top so no one could fall in.

It was a beautiful park and enjoyed by some; especially the Vannier family, as an outing. Across the creek and up the hill was the favorite hike to the top of which they called "the hump". That was the best place to fly kites which both fathers had made with pride. The fern-covered banks, rippling water in the creek and the wonderful smell of all those trees especially laurel or bay leaf was enough to reward the group for the long hike and often torn or lost kites.

Later as the boys grew older, the chicken yard was replaced by a garage right on the corner of Ralston and South Road. That ended the second block of Ralston Avenue on the north side.

South Road met at Ralston Avenue as it still does today. Set back about eight feet from that intersection there was a gate. Probably it was the same iron one that was seen for many years. There was some sort of a stone support or fence nearby, all replaced by plants now.

Beyond the gate was a path winding between quarry rock and gardens that led up the hill some distance from the gate to the steep steps on the way to a porch and almost palatial building, which was the home of the Jens family.

Mr. Jens was interested in mines: maybe he even was a mining engineer. He had a son, Hiram, and a daughter Anna, who later became Anna Hansen, wife of Albert Hansen.

Being interested in mining probably inspired Mr. Jens to use the quarry rock abundantly. The land under the house was probably rock as was a huge piece of rock behind the house. That rock had a tunnel dug back; perhaps ten feet or more to appear as if it were part of a mine. There seemed to be splashes of gold here and there; probably some sort of paint.

It was a thrill when neighboring children got the chance to look in. The Jens children were perhaps about 12-15 years older than any others around.

In one part of the garden near South Road and the now Holly Road, was a small building with windows. It probably was those windows that intrigued us to enter, either invited or otherwise.

Inside that little building was the most amazing hobby. On tables or trays were the most beautiful display of all kinds of bird eggs. Each was numbered and labeled. All sorts of sizes and colors. It had been the hobby of Hiram, whom none of us remembered ever seeing. It was said he had been ill and passed away. No longer can these details be checked since the death of his sister Anna.

Not many of the neighbors knew too much about the inside of that house, but it was thought it was beautiful. Later it became the home of several families. One owner was Attorney Bullock. Mr. Bullock was a well-known attorney in Redwood City. While living at Castle Rock neighbors could hear his wife singing and playing the piano. It seems her name was Charlotte, a very attractive dark-haired woman. They had one son, a very small child then.

When he grew up he later remained on the Peninsula. At the end of the property near Holly Road was a good-sized building. It was used as a garage with room or rooms attached for hired help. The place remained much as it was originally. Later that building disappeared and an entrance was made from Holly road and led to garages nearer the back of the house. Another family was Mrs. Rowe, her mother and a child.

Somewhere along the way some of the house was converted into an apartment. Leonard Hansen and wife, the former Helen Thompson of Redwood City lived there when first married. That is probably when some of us saw the inside of "Castle Rock". The floor from the front door to rear, a large area, as remembered, was laid in marble. Beautiful rooms were entered from each side of the huge entrance hall. There still was a beautiful set of stairs that led to bedrooms upstairs. The center between the rooms was open and allowed a view of the floor below. Some of the rooms upstairs toward the rear were small and under a slanting roof. One of the owners used one as a sewing room.

About WW-2 a man and his wife lived there. He was connected with Acme beer and gave neighbors pairs of little Acme beer bottles which were pepper and salt shakers.

Those people; the names since forgotten, worked so hard to restore a huge garden that had been neglected. The wife, a small woman, could be seen anytime of the day working in the garden.

They were friendly people and the man decided our huge fig trees needed to be trimmed. and so they were! He hauled them away. Later all those limbs were seen in the quarry on Middle Road.

The Chief of Police recognized them but what happened after that has been forgotten! Sometime during WW-2 a family, Adrian and Marge Schoal and their children, young teenagers, lived there. There was one pretty blond girl and a brother near her age who were quite playful. There was also another brother, young, and in the service - navy it seems.

The father was a tall thin grey-haired man who seemed to keep to himself. He was interested in plants and had a business concerning such. Eventually he seemed to deal in imported bulbs of daffodils etc. My memory seems to tell me that the girl was married there. It certainly would have been a picturesque place for a wedding. They later moved away.

A family by the name of Tururicci lived there with their small child. One night around midnight the neighbors were aroused by noise of fire trucks. Somehow that beautiful place was terribly burned. The fire seemed to be at the rear of the lower floor. To the dismay of the young mother she realized all the family moving pictures were in a closet near by. She pleaded with the firemen to rescue those pictures, which I believe they did.

The building was badly burned and the family had to leave. Neighbors who had not been friends before got

acquainted during that terrible disaster.

Eventually, apartments were built there as of today with the entrance from Holly Road; a far cry from that lovely original setting, but modern as of today.

From there on there were no homes on the north side of Ralston. The next place was the former Gardner Sanitarium, later and now Notre Dame College.

By Doris Vannier

Continuing down Ralston on the south side going easterly, the next property belonged to the Laguardes. Their house was situated against the hillside. There was a bridge across the creek leading to the house. Not too much was known about the home— or really the family.

There was a mother, Mrs. Laguarde, a rather small woman, and her two sons George, a large man, and Ed, a smaller build, like his mother.

It was said by the few who ever entered the home when the mother was alive, that it was furnished with nice old antique furniture.

Mrs. Laguarde was a pleasant person and sometimes attended local affairs, but not frequently. She was best remembered because her son Ed would take her for rides in the side car of his motorcycle.

Once a little girl ventured across the bridge to sell some tickets to or for a local affair. The child was invited into what she remembers as an old-fashioned, well-furnished home, and was offered some cookies as she sat there, and also told that little girls should not be selling tickets!

One son George, was large and strong. When not cutting wood, he worked as a section hand for the S.P. It was said he was disgusted with some of the Mexican men who didn't put forth much effort in the work. He, George, would show how he could life a railroad tie all by himself, thus showing them how strong he was.

Ed was very friendly, and a part of everything in town, especially interested in the local fire department. He was otherwise employed at the pump works between Belmont and San Carlos, near the railroad tracks.

He and his motorcycly side-car were a very familiar sight in Belmont. His special bow tie added to his individuality.

The boys had a sister, but she had married and lived across the bay.

After the deaths of the mother and George, Ed continued to live there. Later when his health failed he was in a convalescent home where he passed away.

Their property was between the Hutchings (later Alexander) and original Janke picnic grounds, a very beautiful continuation of that area.

The next was a large open area of the remains of the wooded picnic grounds. There was a shingled cottage set back towards the creek which was leased by the Fisher family. (The present recreation building at Twin Pines) The children were a little older than the Hansen and Vannier children. There were two boys, Charles and George, and two girls, Frances and Margaret. They only lived there about a year and later moved to their home on the corner of El Camino and Middle Road; later to San Mateo. George and Margaret are still residents of San Mateo.

According to George, his father and he were in the real estate business in Belmont and took over the office of A.P. Johnson in 1923. That office as mentioned was about across from Janke Lane.

After the Fishers moved from Ralston Ave. there were many families who lived there, maybe not in the order listed here. The Markhams and daughter Janette, Tognazini family with a little girl, and a small boy who was hit and killed by Messner's taxi, the Bekins family, then a mother and grown daughter, both very attractive.

Somewhere along the line a part of the property to the east of Laguarde's was sold, and a wooden building was built for a summer retreat for the Gibbons family. They had almost three acres.

Later there was a very interesting family; the Leo Crystal family. Leo came from a prosperous family in Salinas. He loved horses and had taken part in the rodeos in Salinas. His wife was a talented musician, a very refined person and devoted mother of their two daughters. The children were small but rode those large horses. Leo, the father, was a handsome dark-haired man. Stories were told that at times he would get a little too jubilant for the peace of mind of his family, such as the time he decided to ride his horse across a small bridge over the creek. He and the horse landed in the water below. A part of the brick foundation for the bridge can still be seen across the creek by the hillside near Mrs. Rebec's apartment. There may have been other families I've forgotten.

Years later Dr. Rebec bought that property called "3 Acres" to annex it to the George Center home. Now most of it, Twin Pines, is owned by the city of Belmont.

Mr. and Mrs. George Center had built that home after the earthquake, in 1907. It was and is a stately structure with beautiful woodwork in doors, some walls and floors.

They were quiet, very pleasant people, perhaps at that time, about sixty years old, but to us the neighbor children, they seemed quite old compared to our parents.

That house was quite elegant, the Centers having a charming refined woman for their housekeeper, who also had her young daughter live there with her.

Mr. Center was said to be a director of the Bank of California in San Francisco. His uncle was a prosperous business

man in San Francisco. He was thought of as a wealthy dignified person, an asset to our town.

Later their Center property was taken over by a Dr. Gottbraith, using it as an office and place for a few patients. The doctor and his wife lived across Ralston in the original Roussell home between the Vannier and Hansen families. They lived there in the early twenties.

Then came Dr. William Rebec. He took over the Center home and the "3 Acres" and decided because there were two pine trees at the entrance to "3 Acres" he'd call it all "Twin Pines". Somewhere along our northern coast of California he had seen a place by that name and liked it. So we had "Twin Pines" with many facilities for patients and nurses quarters. The huge barn near the creek in Twin Pines was torn down and a small building put there with a little apartment upstairs, and one downstairs near the creek for Dr. Rebec's mother.

She enjoyed it and fed and watched the racoons there when she wasn't busy doing handwork or reading. Being an active person she had to do something else, so she did a little gardening and finally had the job of head gardener over-seeing all upkeep of beautifying the whole place. As she grew older she used a crutch but didn't slow down. Mrs. Rebec was active in the Episcopal church, and made many donations to it and the town.

After the death of Dr. Rebec in the 1940s that place was left to his mother and several loyal nurses. It later became owned and managed by several doctors, the last of which was Dr. Voorhies, from whom the city of Belmont negotiated the property for our community. Then came the surprise when it was found that there was no entrance to the property which, of course, had been taken for granted! Finally, after that was cleared, the city began to utilize the buildings for civic uses as of now.

With much renovation, a building adjoining the original Center home was taken over by the local police department, a wonderful improvement from their crowded quarters beneath the city hall. This central location adds dignity to the Twin Pines park, but still needs additional parking places.



Fisher Home, at what is now Twin Pines Park. Where Margaret Fisher, Frances Fisher, and their brothers, Charles and George, lived as children.

Before the growth of the sanitariums there, adjoining the Center home was a piece of land, part of Janke property, first owned by Charles Eggers and wife. Later it belonged to the Guilrick family who had two young boys. In time it too belonged to Dr. Rebec, and his mother had a building there she called "Rose Cottage". It was kind of a therapy quarters for hand work, and was used for Red Cross work during WW-2, the local women helping make bandages, etc.

In front of it off Ralston Ave. was the home of the L.A. Barrett family. Mr. Barrett was Chief Forest Ranger of Northern California. Mrs. Barrett was very active in all Belmont Clubs. They had two boys, Billy and Junior, and daughter, Ruth.

Mr. Barrett was a school trustee for many years. A local school bears his name. He was also a Belmont Councilman and Mayor. After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Barrett the property was sold, and the Wells Fargo bank now occupies that land.

During the time the Barretts' lived there, there was a large lot or field, from Ralston and all along 6th Avenue. There was a well-worn path, a short-cut, diagonally across it to Emmett St. Later many buildings were put up there, the one probably most remembered was Plank's Pharmacy, on the corner. That corner as told by the Janke grand-daughters was the entrance to the well-known old Janke Picnic Grounds in the 1870s.

Across 6th Avenue on the corner in the early 1900s was the home of Mrs. Turner, her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Rich, and a grand-daughter, Hazel Turner. They were a lovely family, very dignified and homey. The Rich's

son, Charles, married Emily Elms and lived on Ralston Ave. nearby, as mentioned before.

Mr. Rich, the father, was a small dark-haired man. At one time he was the gate keeper at Southern Pacific track crossing. He was a small friendly person who, between trains, worked in his vegetable garden near his small gate house big enough for him and his chair, and a small stove. With the approach of a train he would emerge holding up the stop sign for the crossing.

After the deaths of the Rich family, the property was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Joy. Mr. Joy, a well-educated man, had a very responsible position, a surveyor for the United States government, that kept him traveling in other states part of the time. Mrs. Joy was a talented musician, as was her daughter Francella, a name coined from names of father and mother. Francella had a brother Glenwood, a few years older than she. Mrs. Joy was a woman who was always well-dressed, just so, prim and proper styles mostly of the past generation. Her hats were pieces of art, decorated with flowers, ribbons, and very fancy and attractive. She usually wore white lace gloves even to cross the street to the stores.

As a talented person she could be heard singing or playing the piano or violin. She was an active member of the Episcopal church, and organist there for awhile. Beside her musical talent she enjoyed her work in the large garden.

Francella became a school teacher locally and in San Carlos. Her brother worked for United Parcel Service in San Mateo.

After Mr. Joy died, and Glenwood had married, the home was sold in 1957 and Francella and her mother moved from here. An oil station is now located on their property on the corner of Ralston Ave. and 6th.

Continuing down Ralston, originally were several other homes, one the original George Neal home, later owned by several other families. Then Hilma Kronquist's home, which was later moved to 6th Avenue. When that family moved to Alaska, the place was rented, and when the Dog Track came to Belmont several of the young men from out-of-state rented rooms there. It was a bungalow-type like Rich's with a porch across the front. Several other homes nearby were rather tall white places. A Florence Tartnell, in the early days, lived in one, as did a Bertha Neal. Bertha was a sister of Mrs. Sophie Hackett.

Next, there were empty lots until Mr. and Mrs. Carr built a small week-end place set way back from Ralston. Mrs. Carr was formerly Lizzie Johnson, a sister of Adelia, Edna, and Phoebe, all living in Belmont. After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. James Carr the property remained in the family and was rented, until it was declared unsafe according to city codes. Many years before, Mr. and Mrs. Carr had owned another home there which had burned down. Mr. Al Fagerberg bought that property in the 1950's.

Next, was a home Mrs. Carr's father, A.P. Johnson had moved from Janke Lane. It was a grey house with small front porch and fancy ginger-bread trimmings above the roof. After the death of Mr. Johnson, a Realtor, Daniel St. George, and his wife bought the house and lived there.

In 1870 when the house was on Janke Lane, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Johnson lived in it and their daughter Phoebe was born there. Their new home was later built on property bounded by Janke Lane, Johnson Street, (now El Camino Real) and Hill Street. Their five younger children were born in the new home. A hardware store with apartment above, and a gas station are now there.



A. P. Johnson in his real estate office on Ralston Ave., 1904.

Next, now nearing Emmetts house, was Mr. Johnson's real estate office with store rooms behind it. Nearby Emmetts' on Ralston was an empty lot and a big old building like a barn. There was a lot of empty property along the

then Johnson Street and up Emmett avenue; most of it owned by Mr. Johnson. He was also known as "Sam Johnson"—and even "the old man"!

A part of the barn-like large building had converted into a store. Mrs. Phoebe Kaech opened it as a candy store. Later the business was taken over by the Messners. It was first a candy store and later sandwiches and coffee, etc. were added.

When the El Camino Real was widened the old store was torn down.

In 1937 when the new stores were completed Mr. Messner continued the business with space saved for the office of Messner's taxi Service, and also for a Greyhound ticket office and collection of water and electric bills.

Columbus J. Messner and his wife and Alfonse (and his dog) and their sister, Mrs. Lorton of San Mateo, operated the place.

On the corner of El Camino and Ralston there was a gas station. Until the highway and the city acquired frontage on both sides it was a good-sized location. It still has a small busy gas station there.

All the mentioned property along Ralston has become business property today. The only remaining home is the old Emmett house, now an antique store. The little removed real estate office has been replaced by Mr. Paul Miller's two stores and barber shop.

The Johnson and St. George property, plus Carr's is the group of small stores including medical offices and jewelry store, and the saving and loan property where the Kronquist home was and later Main's butcher shop and grocery store.

Bertha Neal's property now has stores including a Chinese restaurant. A parking lot is between them and the Santa Barbara Savings and Loan, and on the corner of 6th, a gas station. Homes have been replaced by small businesses along Ralston Ave. down the El Camino Real, now the downtown shopping area.

The store occupied by Messners for many years is now "The Round Table", a pizza parlor.

The other stores have had various tenants including grocery and liquor store, the first city hall, men's clothing store, several shoe repair shops and now two antique stores.

The small population of Belmont was spread out in various locations. A few homes were along South Road, which started at Ralston Ave.

South Road was cut into the hillside, the upper side above the road covered with wild flowers and ferns.

The first house was on the Havard acreage which is now being subdivided and just above Middle Road, overlooking the San Francisco Bay. It was built by Mr. William Havard for his family. He was a contractor and builder in San Francisco, and moved his family to Belmont after the earthquake in 1906. He and his wife Ada, and two sons Fredrick and Harvey—known as Bud—and two daughters Helen and Ada, lived there until the children grew up.

Mr. Havard retired after moving to Belmont but continued buying and selling property in San Francisco where he went each morning on the twenty-to-eight train and returned on the five-twenty train in the evening.

Mrs. Havard was a small energetic person who could be seen running up or down hill to the stores. She was a friendly person. Mr. Havard didn't have much in common with the people here and was really not known by us.

After his death in March 1915 his wife always wore black, usually a middy-type top and skirt and always a black straw hat.

Theirs was a large white home that could and still can be seen from afar. They had just a small garden and yard but didn't raise animals like some neighbors. The rest of the property between South and Middle roads were rented to the Chinese who grew chrysanthemums on that hillside. There was also remains of an old orchard.

After the death of Mrs. Havard in 1941 the home was converted into several apartments and stood as such until recently sold. The old building remains on a small piece of land and owned by a family, while next to it a portion was sold and a new home built almost on the corner of South Road. The rest of the property is being subdivided.

The family background was given to me by the two daughters, Helen and Ada.

Connecting to the Havard property was the large acreage and home of the Thomas Pennington family; the entrance across from the upper Holly Road entrance as of now.

Although very plain people they were considered a prosperous family. They owned several large automobiles with big brass headlights! But the family members could usually be remembered as riding in a horse-drawn carriage which usually sagged with weight of them. They were evidence of a well nourished family. The father was a large -frame man who carried his weight easily. Mrs Pennington was a plump medium-sized friendly person. The weight of the family was in the daughter Betty, a large beautiful girl, who could be seen munching candy as she rode by. She weighed more than any person any of us had ever seen. Today we see many heavy persons but memory says she outweighed them!

There were two young boys, Tom Pennington Jr. and George, a younger boy called "Keeko". Tom seemed to be a perpetual student at Stanford University. He was a tall handsome man who enjoyed the luxury of his father's cars and wealth.

Their home was a large two-story bungalow type with porches extending across the front and around the side, to the back. There were stairs leading up to the front door, but the back door was almost the level of the ground.

The house inside had large spacious rooms, but I don't remember the family using them for entertaining. Mrs. Pennington was basically a home body with a little help for the chores and upkeep of the place.

They actually had a small farm there with cows, horses, and small animals and chickens etc.

Around the corner on South Road was another piece of their property. On a small knoll was a white cottage occupied by their hired man, Mr. Cole, who was almost one of the family. He drove the horse and buggy to take Mr. Pennington to the S.P. station in the morning and met him after work about 5 or 6 P.M. That property was where Miramar Terrace is now; and also several homes, some looking down on Notre Dame College property.

Mr. Pennington was a civic-minded person. He served on Belmont's Sanitary Board, and later was the first Mayor of Belmont. As a business man he was said to have owned the "Pennington Stove and Iron Works". He made his money through government contracts during WW-1.

Warren and Thelma Vance who later owned that acreage along, South Road subdivided it. There are many homes that were built about the 1950s. Two residents were next; then came the 8 and 9/10 acres that during the 1940s and 50s became another subdivision which was between South and Middle Roads. The Middle Road home sites were completed by the early 1970s, some across from Central School.

The adjoining property along South Road where Pennington's lived, were a few homes on larger pieces of property. Some were the Hamilton family, Harringtons, and the Luthers. Mrs. Luther, a small person, was interested in politics, especially the Republican Party. She was known also for her bright red hair and perseverance. As an animal lover she took in every stray cat until she had about one hundred. She had a special wired-in area, a yard with a runway, leading to an upstairs room. She had meat delivered from Benny's Meat Market in San Mateo. There didn't seem to be rules or laws regulating the number of pets!

The Luthers sold and moved to another area. Wealthy Chinese families lived there for some years; and then a lawyer and his family.

In between homes there were empty lots which later were built in.

During the early days, Robert Morris and his wife and niece lived on a large piece of property. Mr. Morris was a furrier in San Francisco. Mrs. Morris drove a yellow Buick sports car, the envy of many. They were considered a well-to-do family. Mrs. Morris found it difficult to walk upstairs so they had a mechanical device on which Mrs. Morris was able to sit and she rode upstairs. An individual elevator in those days was really something!

Later Mr. Korbell of the Korbell Wine Industry owned the home for years. When it was sold later much of the property had been divided into several home sites, especially on a cul-de-sac. New neighbors moved in all around on smaller pieces of land.

About the early 1900s Mrs. A.P. Johnson and her unmarried daughters moved to San Francisco so that the girls could attend schools and later work there. Mr. Johnson kept the Belmont business and residence and went back and forth for many years to San Francisco. After their Belmont home was destroyed by fire the family used a small cottage for vacations. It had been the milk house and room for help previously. The family called it the "shack" and although small, was loved by the family for summer vacations.

Across the Hill Street was a large residence of Mrs. Dugan. She was a small busy person, working in her garden a great deal. She wore a wig which didn't always stay put. She had peacocks with beautiful long colorful feathers, and guinea hens that were very noisy. The gardens were very formal.

Then the large house burned and that left empty property for some time. Then the Rousseau and Miller families had homes there. Rousseau had an office within their house.

The Fisher home was sold and Mr. and Mrs. Will Gardiner and his father, "grandpa," lived there for many years.

There were several old homes, tall old houses with stairs leading up above a basement. The usual color was grey with white trimming. One was the home of Sophie Hacquette and her two sons, John and Ernie.

The homes remained there until crowded out by Perkins apartments, later owned by Dr. Pope and family and the other homes replaced by stores etc. along El Camino Real.

BUILDING AND PEOPLE

By Doris Vannier

One of Belmont's most prominent buildings today has an interesting background. It is the pink building on the north side of Ralston between Old County Road and the railroad tracks.

According to records from the then San Mateo Times and Gazette, in the late 1860s, Edward Waltermire and a Mr. Clark erected the building, and commenced merchandising.

By 1872 after both original owners had passed away it was owned by H. Carstens and C.F. Janke.

By 1873 C.F. Janke and H. Carstens had a flourishing business both wholesale and retail in groceries and general merchandise. In 1876 there was another building added to the store to be used for the manufacture of soda water.

By 1880 Alfred W. Emmett had purchased the merchandise store and also had taken over the Post Office located there.

Mr. Emmett and his family operated the store for many years. It had everything country people could want.

As you walked in from Ralston Ave. on the right side inside the bay window was a counter which contained various

items, especially cigars and daily news papers. Mrs. Emmett spent much time in that area. Behind it on the corner of Old County Road and Ralston Avenue was a small area walled in for the Post Office. Either Mr. or Mrs. Emmett took care of that. There was a door nearby that opened onto Old County Road.

Opposite these two areas was another bay window. Between them was the main entrance from Ralston.

In that area was a miscellaneous collection of many things. Continuing up the west side of the building along the railroad track side were shelves with everything you could think of. Bolts of material with sewing needs were plentiful, and neatly shelved in boxes were ladies corsets—name it—It was there—Some where were shoes and boots. The center of the store had odds and ends of this and that.

The most important part was the grocery store—backed on Old County Road side. There were cans packed on shelves, huge cheeses on the counter ready to be cut the size desired. Finally, cheese cloth covered the cheese because flies came and went! The doors were always open. There was a large door opening on that side. People could come across from the butcher shop where the red barn building is now.

That shop had had many butchers over the years. Probably George Neal or Charlie Lambert being among the first ones: later it was owned by Mr. Main.

Back to Emmett's store: across from the grocery counter were barrels, pickles, pickled fish etc. Behind the main building the coal and coal oil was stored. It was not uncommon for the son, Walter, to come in from there, hands still dirty from that sale. He'd give them a "swipe" on apron or cloth and proceed to cut the cheese or dive into the barrel for fish etc. No one seemed to object! They were nice people to deal with and families charged their purchases. The tags were put on a file on the wall and paid off when convenient. Many never were paid.

Sometime about 1930 Emmett gave up the store. Mr. Main, who had had the butcher shop on Old County Road, took over the store. He had his butcher shop there. Mr. Manzoni had the grocery and vegetable departments. Later, Mr. Main moved to a building on Ralston—(where Santa Barbara Savings is now). He had the butcher shop on one side while the main part was a grocery and vegetable store.

For some time Emmett's store was empty until it was used during WW-2 as a Hospitality House. The soldiers based where Sterling Downs homes are now came up and were served refreshments and talked with the Belmont women who were hostesses.

After the war it was closed, and has since been the furniture store now painted pink, by the railroad tracks.

The Emmett family, Mr. and Mrs. Emmett and daughter Laura lived across the highway. The big house next to the present oil station on the south-west corner of Ralston was their home.

It was considered a real nice home with a neat and pretty garden in front. It had some of the most beautiful hydrangeas grown. With the widening of Ralston most of the garden was taken.

The inside of the house was spacious, especially for such a small family. Both Mr. and Mrs. Emmett were rather small in size and a little on the "plump" side. Both were friendly refined people whom you could see walking back and forth from store to home.

That building has changed hands several times. It had been remodeled for small apartments and rooms upstairs and outside stairs etc. added on the oil-station side. At present it is used for antiques and art objects.

The interests and hobbies of some of our former Belmonters varies—but we had them.

Before autos were used so commonly men traveled to work each day by train. To while away time they met in little groups, played cards, and exchanged ideas in general. One of those ideas was the forming of San Mateo County Poultry Association. Families specialized in certain varieties of chickens.

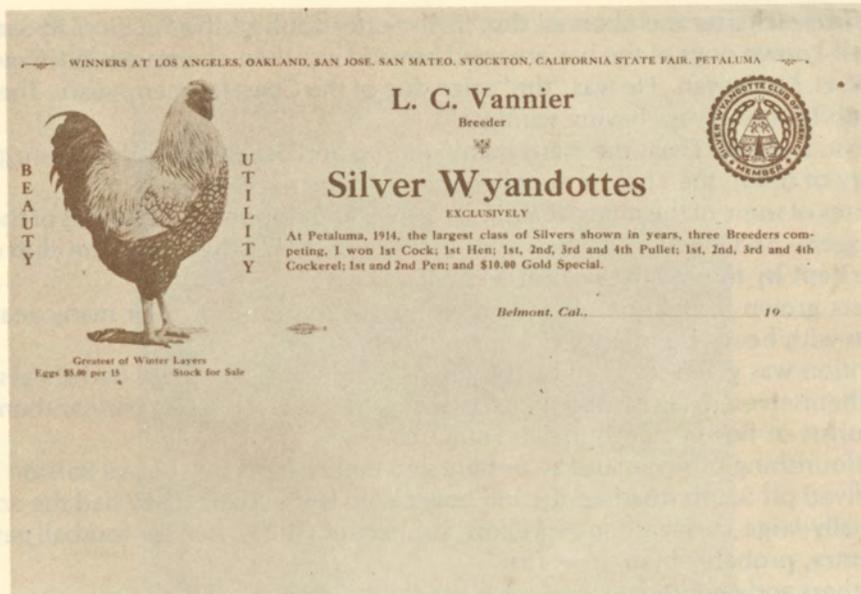
L. C. Vannier was always a good organizer so before the group had raised their choice birds (or chickens) and were showing them not only on the peninsula but all over California and even to the east—"Madison Square Garden" in New York, in competition. It was a serious matter. L. C. Vannier first showed White Rocks—a beautiful large fluffy chicken. Each one was carefully washed and dried and powdered and then each scale on the legs had to be very carefully cleaned with a wooden toothpick. To break a scale or feather would almost disqualify said entry. From there on the hen or rooster was crated with labels of instructions for feeding and watering and to be kept out of a draft on way to destination. While on the train each crate was to be kept a distance from another or the chickens would poke their heads out and fight each other thus becoming a scarred up mess for entry.

After the White Rocks, came the Plymouth Rocks, hens and roosters same preparation, and finally the more beautiful specimen the Silver lace Wyandotte.

The price of eggs for raising was five dollars for fifteen eggs. The Vannier basement became the hatchery, using kerosene incubators at first and later electricity. Of course they were small, holding about one or two dozen eggs that had to be hand turned regularly. Hens were too heavy and clumsy to trust with expensive eggs.

All this enthusiasm took place in the early 1912-1913 times, and continued until the first World War in 1918.

They won ribbons and trophies which were proudly treasured. Even now his family has stationary with pictures of a prize rooster on envelopes and paper. Also there is a trophy cup engraved on one side: "Presented by H. C. Caldwell, Belmont Hotel, For Best Display of Silver Laced Wyandottes, and on the other side, San Mateo County Poultry Assn. Dec. 5-7, 1913." The many ribbons "Specialty", Best of Show, First, Second, or Third prize" have long ago been discarded but at that time were for Prize Winners.



L. C. Vannier letterhead when he was raising prize chickens in Belmont.



Emmett residence on Ralston Ave. before side porch was removed.



Trophy given to Mr. Vannier for raising prize chickens in Belmont.

Belmont had families who were very interested in various breeds of dogs. Mr. and Mrs. Marra who lived on Virginia Ave. off of Middle Road, raised beautiful white Samoyed and Chows. Not too much was known about them other than they were very special dogs and expensive.

Mr. and Mrs. Warren Vance, who lived in the old Pennington home with acreage on South Road, first specialized in black Cocker spaniels. Later Springer Spaniels and later German Shepherds, which they bought from Germany.

They raised, showed and sold, their dogs extensively. They had some of the best in that line on the peninsula. That was during World War Two and a little later. The Vances have since moved away.

The next breed of dogs were the Irish Setters. They were raised by Ruth McGowan Davis and her husband Curtis Davis.

Mr. and Mrs. Davis were charter members of the "Irish Setter Club of the Pacific," in San Francisco.

One of the most well-known dogs of the bay area and beyond was their champion "McGowan's Dugan", owned by Mrs. Davis' father R. H. McGowan. He was "the" prize dog of the Coast for many years. They had raised and sold dogs from their Ralston home, always having winners.

After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Davis the many many ribbons and beautiful trophies were given back to the Irish Setter Club in memory of them, the charter members, from the early 1940s.

The family has pictures of some of the many beautiful trophies and ribbons as memories of those many champions and winners over the years. McGowan's Dugan will always be a special in that club. The club was given pictures of him also. Some were kept by the relatives of Mr and Mrs. Davis.

The beautiful flowers grown in Belmont were something to be proud of. For many years Chinese men had trudged down Ralston with heavy bundles of flowers on their backs.

Not too much attention was given to them by the townspeople because there had always been a few friendly Chinese who kept to themselves. They carried their loads of asters, sweet peas, or chrysanthemms, onto the early S.P. trains to be sold to florists or flower stands in San Francisco.

Finally it became a flourishing business and acres here and there on the hills above Ralston became commercial gardens. One family lived off South Road up the hill now called Holly Road. They had the acres on the east side. They raised the especially-large chrysanthemms—yellow, bronze, or white, used for football games. Also they were shipped over the country, probably by train at first.

The mothers and fathers and children all worked in the fields. They wasted no time. One mother was about to have a baby and Dr. Rebec went to see her. One day he was called in the morning in time to deliver the child. He gave the mother instructions probably to rest, but when he climbed the hill later that day, low and behold, the woman was picking flowers!

The Chinese were generous people and on special holidays would surprise favorite neighbors with a bouquet of choice flowers. Their children were raised with other Belmont children with every equal right.

There were other families, but not as close by to get acquainted with.

Below the Railroad tracks before WW-2 there were extensive gardens owned by the Japanese. They were on property known as Newhall property - down where "Homeview" is now, especially below Furlong Street. There were many families there in small neat wooden shacks they called home.



Looking toward the bay showing Redrock Hill, a.k.a. Newhall's Hill, which was at Quarry Rd.

Their neighbors found them friendly as we did the Chinese, but during the WW-2 war some people got suspicious of them. Many houses had wires and aerals, and music from their radios was questioned. To most of Belmont they were good Japanese Americans. Before long they were watched and questioned, and soon they were sent away to concentration camps which meant they were very upset, probably angry, and no longer had trust and their freedom. They lost everything except the little they could take with them. The gardens were a total loss—that industry gone from Belmont. Whether they were ever proven to be in touch with Japan was left a question. The school children of Belmont missed their Japanese friends, and probably couldn't believe what happened.

The land down there was finally cleared and developed for housing.

The Chinese continued on the hills until after WW-2, and then that land was divided into lots of homes, with only a dirt road - Holly Road now.

It was believed those Chinese families re-located in empty acres around 37th and 38th Avenues in San Mateo—so Belmont lost the flower industry too.



Old Country Store, formerly Emmetts Store, etc.

Across from Emmetts' store was the Rowells Hotel—built in 1883 by Hamilton Rowell. The original owners were Myra and Hamilton Rowell, parents of Jack (Jonnie) and his sister Lizzie.

Their mother Myra was sister of John Mosher. Mosher's were also a pioneer family.

Neither Johnnie nor his sister ever were married. They remained there and rented the front part to Loui Tognolie who used it as a restaurant and saloon. Mr. Tognoli had a beautiful voice and was supposed to have been an opera singer in Italy, previous to coming to America.

At the back of the hotel, also called "American House" Rowells had a small yellow house, backed into the Railroad tracks. There Lizzie, and presumably Johnnie, lived while the old place was rented. The rooms are up stairs.

The hotel was originally white- with board floors in the saloon part, and swinging doors diagonally on the corner of Ralston and Old County Road. Around the lower part was a board walk and posts supporting a small balcony surrounding upstairs rooms.

Lizzie Rowell had a beautiful flower garden, admired by all who looked over her gate. Especially beautiful were the blue delphiniums, mingled with yellow and all-colored flowers. She spent much of her time there.

As a pet, she had a racoon she kept on a chain near the gate. It was a treat to all the school children to get that near a wild animal.

Both Lizzie and her brother were well liked and respected by the town's people.

Since Tognoli left, there have been several types of shops or businesses including a laundry where people came and used the washers and dryers.

It has been remodeled, sidewalk cut back, balcony and posts gone, outside stairs added on railroad side and small apartments upstairs. At present it has been painted a mustard color, and used as an antique shop, called "The Opportunity Shop", owned by Marjorie Mandanis.

For many years there were no homes past Ralston and South Road on the north side. "Castle Rock" at the intersection dominated that special space.

Some years later the property west of "Castle Rock" was sold by the A.P. Johnson family, and a large home was built there above Ralston. Beyond that for years remained just open fields until Mrs. Annette Alexander needed sleeping quarters for the nurses of her sanitarium. She had two small but adequate buildings put up above the Ralston Road level on the side of the hill. Later they were removed. There was nothing beyond that but empty fields until the entrance of Notre Dame, the same as had been the lane to Gardner's Sanitarium years before. Later the first Catholic Church was placed at that entrance.

To the left of that lane was the old "gas house" remains from previous years. That was about opposite Chula Vista Drive. From there on there were only a few homes built later.

On the south side of Ralston starting about where Chula Vista now is a street, was a piece of property granted to Adolph Buchtenkerchen by deed from W. A. Janke and others May 1895. It contained six and nine-tenths acres of land.

Josephus Hutchings and wife Cynthia purchased it from the above and lived there, maintaining a small family farm.

Mrs. Hutchings was a very hospitable person who always seemed to have young people, Ray Hutchings, and nieces and nephews visiting there.

In the early 1900s the large social hall on the ground level was often used for small family gatherings.

One niece, Jessie Coons, later Mrs. Harold Hansen, started a small dancing school there. Local young children took lessons from her. Of course there was a familiar friendly atmosphere of country farm; small animals and beautiful gardens and usually a smiling plump person Cynthia Hutchings somewhere to greet a visitor. One small animal, a shetland pony, seemed to roam at will. One day, according to one of those promising dancers, that pony decided to turn around and kick a youngster on the forehead! Perhaps it had a good reason.

After the death of Josephus Hutchings in 1912, his wife managed to keep the place for awhile.

Later the property was acquired by Annette Alexander. She was an ambitious woman who desired the property for a sanitarium. Her two sisters lived there with her, helping in different capacities. Two nephews, Seymour and Arthur Davidson, sons of one sister, lived there also.

Aside from operating the sanitarium Annette and her family became a well-known part of Belmont. Mrs. Alexander was very active in Belmont politics and gave many donations to worthy causes. She gave Belmont council members their first furniture; a large table and set of chairs for City Council meetings. That was when the City Council met in a store on El Camino Real near Ralston Avenue, next to the present Pizza Parlor.

The possession of a beautiful table and chair set in a place of their own (rented for \$35.00 a month) was a wonderful step forward for Belmont.

Mrs. Alexander was a persevering person not to be forgotten, not only for her sanitarium but for her generosity and political activities. She was also a Director of the Belmont Chamber of Commerce for many years and attended most of their meetings. After her death the sanitarium, which had become a corporation, continued as Belmont Hills as it is now.

The old original building had served long past fire safety rules and was torn down and replaced by more modern facilities.



Jens home on Ralston. Corner of Holly St. Now Castlerock Apts. location.

Now for something different. Although the personal memory of "Castle Rock" has been given, there are more interesting facts found in a booklet of 1904. It was called "Souvenir Magazine of San Mateo County", published by the San Mateo Leader, a forerunner of the San Mateo Times. Below the picture of the home was "Villa Jens", the country home of John C. Jens Esq., and family. The article reads—

"San Mateo county has many larger and more pretentious masions than the one shown in the picture, but there are very few we think that are more picturesque and more romantic than the home of Professor John C. Jens on Ralston Avenue in Belmont. It is situated on a bold ledge some sixty feet above the avenue, and the view is grand from its battle tower overlooking the bay and hills on both sides. Even Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton can be seen from its heights. The grounds are very beautifully laid out and admired by all beholders. Professor Jens is head administrator at the Western School of Mines.

"Western School of Mines", Belmont. That was the title connecting two pictures, one an entrance to a cave in the side of a hill, a tunnel like the one described in the memory of "Castle Rock", a small car being shoved along a track. The other picture, a typical mining scene, rustic wooden building, sloping roof, huge slide or water-way leading down to equipment below. Very interesting, but so far no one remembers it. Where was it? Behind the Jens home?

The story below the picture reads: "On this page we present two minature scenes of the Western School of

Mines at Belmont, one shows an actual mining scene in the tunnel of the mine, located right in the school; the other scene pictures a modern gold mill now being installed at the grounds, located in the romantic and rugged hills of Belmont."

It is indeed an ideal location for a school of practical mining, actual mining in tunnel and shafts, stopes, rinses and winges is taught here, as well as underground surveying, mine black smithing, timbering assaying, milling and cyaniding etc. It is the only school of mines in America devoted exclusively to the teaching of practical mining and is meeting with great success. All those contemplating a mining course should send for the catalogue of the Western School of Mines, Belmont."

BY DORIS VANNIER

Essay for Belmont's 50th Birthday 1976

Pollution and ecology probably were not even words when I was raised in Belmont. We had Nature's pure clean air and good fertile soil.

The air was so clean and clear that at night as we sat on our family front porch, we could hear the trains "chug-chug-chug" across the Dumbarton trestle across the lower part of the bay east of Palo Alto.

There were no planes to distract the peace and quiet of the night, just people's voices in the distance or some one walking up Ralston Ave. for an evening stroll. The little birds would give their last "tweet-tweets" to each other and quail call their mates and families. Later as the real dark of night came - then the last warning from the owls usually in the olive trees along South Road, calling "Who-who" sometimes way into the night.

Perhaps a dog would bark across town, only to be answered by another somewhere.

It was not uncommon to hear one friend or neighbor give a long call to someone, as, Anna Hansen whose home was across from 6th Ave., would call her sister-in-law Jessie Hansen who lived down on El Camino and O'Neill Ave. near our present fire station. Annas' and Alberts' house was on Ralston Ave., elevated up above—about 20 feet from the street—so her voice call carried.

My mother would call down to her sister, beyond Anna Hansen's, the Elm's family - the Rich's home to the corner of now El Camino and Hill St.

The air was balmy or refreshing with no loud noises except a rail road train several times a day, or the crowing of roosters, or mooing of cows. Every family had chickens and some had cows. Also nearly every family had pet cats and dogs. That was family life, including a few goats here and there. Rabbits also were raised as pets and for food.

Families who did not have cows bought their milk from neighbors. Everyone was helpful in either buying or selling generously.

We the children walked to school which in my day was located on Old County Road, as it is known today. It was south of Ralston Ave. on the east side and almost to Harbor Blvd. (as of today) The school was two stories with squeaky old wooden stairs, well worn. It had been there when Anna Hansen was a pupil, and she gave me a picture of the whole school and one teacher, I believe. I think there may have been two teachers when I was there, or, why two stories? In my room there were several grades; even some children from San Carlos.

There were no modern conveniences. Drinking water was pumped up and we used a common dipper—until my mother and Charlie Rich decided their daughters should be more sanitary! So—Dolly Rich and I proudly walked to school each carrying a treasured **new cup**—which being the envy of many, we generously **shared** and defeated the sanitary purpose intended.



Miss Ruth McGowan's class 4th grade. Old County Road, Belmont.



Miss Thorpe's class at Central School.

For recess pleasures, we made outlines of rooms in houses— on the ground with caps (seeds) from eucalyptus trees which bounded school grounds. We enjoyed little pieces of broken china to ornament our “rooms”. We readily amused ourselves,— such a contrast as to the expensive equipment needed today plus required supervision! We were happy and contented!

But, because health rules weren't as strict in those days, and Betty Pennington came back to school with a decided “rash”— Probably chicken pox or worse— my mother wasn't going to let her darling continue there— so— I was sent to stay with my grandmother in San Francisco to go to school during the week, and return home week-ends.

By the time my sister, Florence, and cousin Ruth were in school— a new one was built on the present Safeway site. It was the original Central School.

Then came high school days and I returned home to attend and graduate from Sequoia Hi in Redwood City.

Later when I attended college in San Jose, I sometimes came home on a late train, nine or ten o'clock at night. Everything was quiet and dark. Really, nobody ever bothered anyone, but, we did have “tramps” who stopped and slept wherever they pleased. There was a ditch on the north side of Ralston Avenue about two feet deep— just the right size for a cosy bed if it didn't have water in it. It ran full length to the lane known as Janke Lane - because my great-grandfather Carl Janke had given it to separate the three pieces of property he's given to his three children. (It is now called Flasner Lane).

Sometimes when I'd cross the road and start up— I would see the flicker of light from the cigarettes the men were smoking. They never spoke nor disturbed themselves as I trotted by, but, my father was at our gate waiting for me and my footsteps, and, soon I would hear him whistle to let me know he was there! Perhaps the men heard it also.

The land in Belmont was fertile and everyone had gardens. There were beautiful glower gardens that helped the aroma of fresh air. Bill and Henry Elms grew flowers to sell in San Francisco— But, the vegetable gardens were plentiful, each family raising its' choice for the family table and generously sharing with the neighbors.

Louis Hansen who owned a home and garden— on Ralston Ave. through to South Road had “the” prize garden with rich black soil, while our yard about 150 feet east of his on Ralston had rich sticky abode. He also had a well there with a huge tank above and windmill.

We both were across from the present “Twin Pines Park”.

We knew that land well. as my mother and father used to walk with us children thru the crunching leaves, inhaling the wonderful smell from all those trees, then, across the fern-banked creek and up the other side to the “big rock” cave - somewhere above Sunnyslope Ave, and - on to the top - “the hump”, as we called it, just to fly our kites. What fun!

Our home at 1130 Ralston was a modest cottage on a slight hillside between South Road and Ralston. The field (east) between us and our relatives the McGowan family, had remains of grapevines-plenty grass(a few snakes) and a few fruit trees. At one time there was a small building— a few rooms almost like a shed. People from S.F. owned it and came to look it over about once a year or less.

Our chickens loved to scratch among the grapes. Sometimes in the early morning we would see wild coyotes surveying the place. We often heard them howl— an uncanny experience for sure! Coyotes roamed the hills and creek across from us much to the dislike of the families living nearby.

My father once shot and killed Mr. Pennington's precious Alaskan dog— early one dark morning, thinking it was a coyote after our chickens. But, in those days friends could forgive and our two families remained friends.

My father was a duck hunter so if you happened to be awake early some Saturday or Sunday about dawn you could hear him wheeling his wheel-barrow filled with hunting gear, whistling as his footsteps crunched the gravel on Ralston on the way down to the marsh land. He usually stopped for his friend Joe Botto, whose family lived in the little house on the north side of Ralston across from the present Furlong Street. It is still there today. Then at dusk those same footsteps, a louder whistle drowned by the squeaking heavily laden wheel barrow full of ducks. The limit on ducks in those days was liberal so we usually had plenty for food for us and our friends.

At the end of Ralston there was much marsh land with long narrow walks built several feet above that led to the slough; which flowed into San Francisco bay.

My mother got a brilliant idea that **that** water, muddy as it was, would make a good outing for families. So— she contracted someone, a Mr. Morgan, I believe and got permission to have erected several buildings for both houses. Families could then go swimming after trudging all the way down that hot dusty road. Each family rented a very small room to use for a dressing room at \$10.00 a year, I believe. Men donated their time to build steps down into the salty, muddy, but very refreshing water.

Most of the Belmont children learned to swim there.

I remember my father trying to teach me to dive in about four feet of water. I went down head first only to contact soft mud, and each time I came up my father was standing on the steps laughing until someone suggested he rescue me. That ended my diving then and there!

We had to carefully watch the tides, incoming, full, and out going, an education in itself. Those were the days when families created their own entertainment and enjoyed it.

Among some of the better swimmers, were the children of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Johnson who lived about where Furlong St. is now— about opposite the Botto home.

Among those was our “Belmont Anniversary and Bicentennial King” Bertrand, and his sister and two brothers.

Beyond the Bath Houses— just north along the slough were many shacks owned or rented by duck hunters, mostly from San Francisco.

At first they were used only as weekend resorts, but later when the depression came in the thirties, families occupied them permanently raising their children there. Of course there was no fresh water, all of which was carried in in huge milk cans. The out houses emptied into the slough, kerosene lamps and small heaters were used; plus wood and coal stoves. It was a form of pioneering, necessary during that time.

Then later came the sanitation laws plus the need for Bayshore Highway, so tenants moved. Shacks were destroyed and burned. They called it progress! Good bye to “Shanty Town”.



Shantytown, 1940

And so, Belmont started having growing pains! Some streets were paved, and we had become a city; with Councilmen! We had a fire department, which my father really started. Transportation, a luxury, was a bus called the “Grey Goose” which connected San Mateo and Belmont to Redwood City, our County seat.

In the thirties came the “Dog Track” with nightly dog races which attracted thousands of people who usually came by busses or private cars from all around the bay. That afforded many jobs for local residents.

Later came World War 2 with many barracks where the race track had been. (It is now the Sterling Downs area, near Bayshore) Hundreds of soldiers were based there. Hospitality House was near the railroad tracks where the pink “Country Store” is now. The men could not go across the tracks. That was “out of bounds”. The women of the town served as hostesses for those lonely boys from mostly the eastern states.

We also had barracks up on the Alameda where the Congregational Church is now. Those were the under privileged boys the "hill billies" as they were called. They couldn't read nor write, and didn't wear shoes! Their leader a 42 year old school teacher brought a few selected boys down to Hospitality House after they had been taught many social manners and would wear shoes. They loved to dance.

The boys, loved Belmont and California, and said "when they got out of this man's army they were coming back." By our increased population they probably did!

Ralston Ave. had become the practice grounds for marching. The bands played and boys drilled up and down, not distrubed by many autos or traffic, probably only Messner's Taxi that usually connected between the Calif. Sanitarium and area around the present Carlmont Shopping Center and to the S.P. Depot.

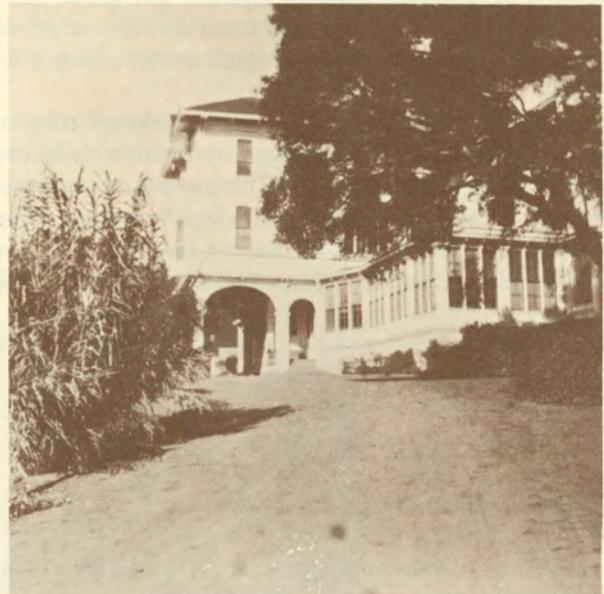
My cousin Ruth McGowan Davis loved horses so she had one, "Heroca", a former Bay Meadows race horse.

When the boys marched and the bands played, "Heroca" couldn't resist getting into the show! He would race from the top of the field (South Road) full pace down to the fence across Ralston to just stand as if he had won the race. Many a time he came full speed diagonally across the field and stopped short just before entering our yard and kitchen. That field is now the Rupert Taylor real estate office, across from Twin Pines and the parking lot is where our home was.

And so Belmont grew until now we have many churches, schools, business districts enlarged fire and police departments and much increased population with many ideas for the future, and, last but not least, our much desired park— the original "Carl Janke Picnic Grounds" of the seventies and eighties, and later the George Center and Twin Pines sites: the property with natural beauty and the envy of all the peninsula!



Dr. Alden Monroe Gardner. Grandfather of Lorna Fosberg. He owned Gardner Sanitarium, formerly Ralston's home.



Dr. Gardner Sanitarium, 1920.



Anna Hansen, Richard Schellens, A. Vannier, (Adelia), 93 years

BELMONT RELATIVES OF CARL AND DOROTHEA JANKE

By Doris Vannier

Of the eight grand-children of Carl and Dorothea Janke born to their daughter Elizabeth Janke Johnson, and her husband Amasa Parker Johnson, three of their daughters made their homes in Belmont. The others owned summer and weekend homes.

Adelia married Lewis Vannier and they raised their three children here. (Doris, Florence, and Ernest).

Adelia Vannier was active in all civic and local organizations. She was a pioneer member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Church Guild. She was president of the American Legion Auxiliary, and a charter member of the Women's Club and the Belmont P.T.A. Consistently served at the Hospitality House during WW-2 (while her son was in service with the 8th Air Force in England).

Her husband, Lewis Vannier, was on the Sanitary Board, and was a city councilman for many years. He also was instrumental in forming our local volunteer fire department and also served as Police Commissioner.

Edna, with her husband Robert McGowan, an attorney, lived and raised their only child, Ruth, in Belmont. Mrs. McGowan was Belmont Postmaster from 1922 to 1934, and before her, her husband was Postmaster from 1915 to her term in 1922.

The two sisters, Adelia and Edna had homes on Ralston Ave. across from the present Twin Pines of today.

Edna McGowan also was a member of many of the local organizations.

Phoebe Kaech--their older sister had the original candy store on her father's property at the south-west corner of Ralston and El Camino. It later was owned and operated by C.F. Messner for many years. He also had a taxi service there.

Mrs. Kaech then opened a sandwich shop in her father's real estate office, a small pioneer building, opposite Janke Lane.

She lived on 6th Ave., near the creek, then on Emmett Ave., and then on Ralston in another sister's home where the Medical Bldg. and small shops are now, across from the Plaza, and then back onto 6th Ave., across from the little grocery store. She was well-known to all the old-timers.

All Janke grand-children of the A.P. Johnson family were born in Belmont on the property given by Carl Janke--bounded by Janke Lane, off Ralston, El Camino and Hill Street, part of which is our new Plaza today.

"THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD" EPISCOPAL

By Doris Vannier

According to historical memories Belmont was a midway station between San Francisco and San Jose before it was a town.

Many families were farmers who took their products by wagon to San Francisco or shipped the hay by sailing schooners from the Belmont wharf to San Francisco.

Gradually as other families with other businesses settled here, Belmont began to feel the need for community gatherings. It was decided that a church was needed so in 1865 a group of men got together to pool their finances and labor to start one.

The first one was given the name "The Church of the Good Shepherd". It was at first attached to St. Peter's Church in Redwood City. During the 80s and 90s students from the theological seminary in San Mateo were sent to conduct the services. The Student ministers became leaders in the community.

That little church was built on Old County Road, just south of Ralston Ave., and within a few feet of the railroad tracks. (The noise from the trains never helped the sermons.)

Later the Bishop gave the church to the San Mateo Parish, and Rev. Alfred Brewer was one of the first ministers.

Before him in 1894 the pastor was a Mr. deWolfe Cowie who conducted the first Confirmation class in Belmont.

Quote: "In 1910 a vestibule entrance was added, and Mr. Thomas Pennington gave the yellow-green glass windows in memory of his mother."

"The beautiful window above the Alter was designed and executed by Tom Hammerson. He was a glazier and son of Alfred Hammerson--a blacksmith, and pioneer of the 1870s in Belmont".

Although a new larger church was built, August 1963, the beautiful stained glass windows are still in the original church.

The land upon which the original church was built had been given with the understanding that if ever the church was to be moved, the land would revert back to the original owners, or family of Mr. Schmoll.

By the time the Southern Pacific laid two tracks (1885) the noise during the sermons was getting worse, especially when freight trains passed slowly by.

With continued disturbances it became evident that the little church should be moved--but where--as now the price of land was much higher!



Church of the Good Shepherd-Episcopal Church, 5th Ave., Belmont.

The population had grown and more than half were Catholics who went to church in a neighboring town.

The interest no longer was just Protestant but mixed. The town being small it must be recognized that Catholics and Protestants were friends and worked well together. So, about the time of World War One the little Church was closed.

In 1922, Ruby Hastings, (later Mrs. Lobinger) got permission from the Bishop to open the church and start a Sunday school. At times church services were revived and led by Rev. Maloney from Redwood City and also by Rev. William Brewer of San Mateo.

About 1925 the church was again closed for lack of leadership as then Mrs. Lobingier moved to San Francisco.

From then on, the end of the 20s, lay readers, such as Mr. Overton, conducted services. The Bishop had again given permission to re-open the church.

After the sudden death of Mr. Overton, the church was once more in need. In 1935 the Rev. Schuyler Pratt was given the ministry of "The Church of the Good Shepherd", the Episcopal Church of Belmont.

He immediately realized the need of a new location for the church. Mrs. Vannier was appointed to visit the heirs of the Schmoll estate to see what could be done about the property. Mrs. Hannah Schayberg, daughter of Mr. Schmoll, gave permission to sell the land, the price obtained she would donate toward a new lot and the removal of the building.

She gave twenty five hundred dollars in memory of her brother, and also three thousand dollars after the church was moved, plus five thousand provided for in her will. (Hannah Schmoll Schaberg--as a young girl had been the first organist.)

Under Mrs. Albert Lane's guidance the present piece of land near the creek on Fifth Ave., was selected.

The little Episcopal Church was then journeyed across the railroad tracks to the present location, on 5th Ave.

It was soon evident again that room was needed for group meetings so, community spirits rose again when Episcopalians, Catholics, Baptists, Congregationalists all were willing to help on the building of a large hall.

For awhile it became known as the Community Church of the Good Shepherd. In 1937 the community hall was completed to the delight of all local groups and organizations. As usual, true to form, Belmonters had worked together.

The only other large place, large enough for local gatherings was the public school auditorium.

Since then many ministers have been the church's leaders and inspiration.

Rev. John E. Daley came to the parish in Aug. 1948. Father Daley as he is called now, was still minister in 1974.

In 1960, Belmont's population had grown to 17,000 and four new churches had been added to the town.

The congregation of the Church of the Good Shepherd had also grown. November 21, 1960, the Church of the Good Shepherd became an incorporated Parish.

In August 1963 Bishop Pike dedicated and conducted the first services in the new and larger Church of the Good Shepherd.

As for the little church, it is still being used for communion on Friday mornings, for small services and weddings. Both churches are used regularly.

As for the other addition "Rebec House" is used for offices for the minister and clerk, Sunday School rooms and meeting places for special groups from out of town.

The old auditorium, or community hall, is also used for Sunday School and Social activities.

Below there are two large rooms which are the Church's thrift--"This and That" shop, the money derived from it

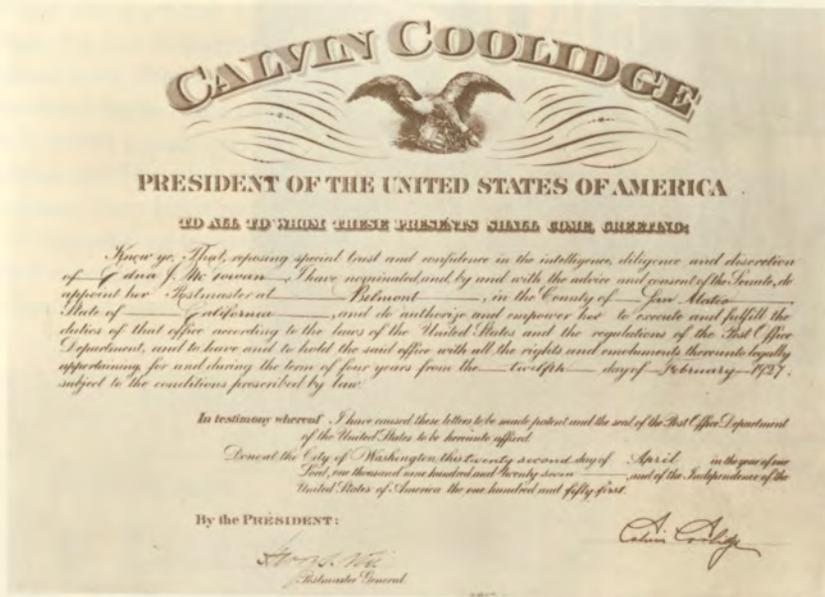
being used exclusively for church and missionary funds.

There is much more detailed interesting history too long to try to cover. Much of the information as to dates was taken from a "Historical Narrative" written by Kate Williams in 1960.

Mr. and Mrs. David Horn have also filled in from 1937 to the present 1974. They are dependable sources, and have also provided pictures of the church.

My sister Florence, who was ten years old, says she climbed into the belfry on Armistice Day of World War One to get the rope to pull the bell. Every one else was making noises!

Mrs. E.A. Henwood says a temporary door was cut through from the new hall into the church so her sister's bridegroom could enter for their wedding November 1937.



Appointment of Edna McGowan as Belmont postmistress.

BY CATHERINE HEARSTNER

The first time I laid eyes on Belmont was on a rainy cloudy day in August of 1921. My sister and her four children and I had traveled by train from New York City to San Francisco to see her husband off to Australia. We were to find a place to live in San Francisco until his return, but a friend suggested we look at Belmont, a pleasant quiet village of five hundred people. It was about twenty-five miles down the railroad track. My sister bought round-trip tickets for us, deciding that we would, at least, enjoy the day's journey into the country.

As we stepped down from the train coach, I remember noticing a store across the El Camino. There were only two buildings along the highway, looking west. But behind us, on the east side of the railroad tracks, was a busy cluster of shops, and one hotel, all at the intersection of Ralston and Old County Road. On the north-east corner was a hotel and Emmet's old store was next to the tracks.

The building on the southwest corner housed a hotel. There was nothing east of the Old County Road except a few, homes, all the way to the marshes by the bay.

The most prominent building on the west side of the El Camino was apparently occupied. The inquiries we made there resulted in our finding a house to rent on Sixth Ave., across from the Belmont Creek.

In that year of 1921 downtown Belmont was just a village. On Ralston Ave., between El Camino and South Road I can remember the Hanson home.

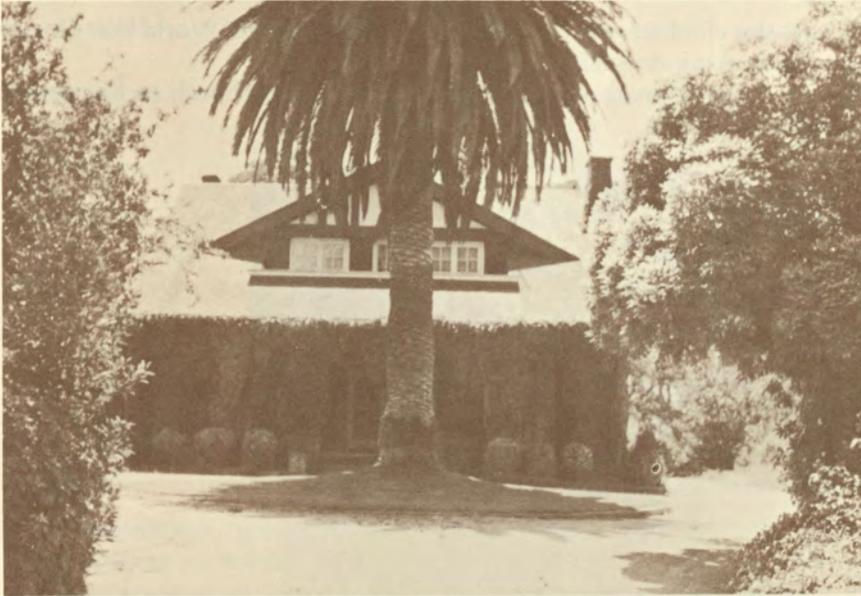
Between Emmet St. and Waltermire St. on the present site of Safeway, I remember a very large home and grounds. That old house was torn down a few years later.

Middle Road was a dirt road that turned and twisted, as it does today, up into the quiet hills. Only a few people lived up there in the vicinity of the intersection of Middle Road, North Road, and Notre Dame Avenue. The Military Academy was still in operation, and south of that, on the Alameda de las Pulgas, was the Molitor estate, where the high school is now. On the northwest corner of Ralston and Alameda was the Pullman Estate, and a beautiful and sophisticated log cabin. West on Ralston was the old Splivalo home, which became the California Sanitorium. Ralston Avenue continued out as far as Canada Road where it joined the old mountain road to Half Moon Bay.

In those days the roads were traveled by horse-drawn buggies, and wagons and early motor cars. There were no sidewalks, at least none of concrete. Boardwalks and hitching rails were at the very end of their era.

One of the young men in town owned a sidecar motorcycle. He would fill the sidecar with girls and take us all

down to the slough to swim. The slough came all the way up to the present Bayshore. There were dressing rooms and tables and boardwalks. It was a public swimming place. I remember Dr. Warren, even in 1921, telling us we were foolish to go into that water because it was polluted!



Bourdette Ranch house, Taken in 1941. Where Carlmont High School now stands.



Bourdette Ranch and orchard, looking north, Alameda far right. Present location Carlmont High School.

There were many many more Eucalyptus trees in downtown Belmont then and the hills were clustered in Oak. The Chinese and Japanese, in 1921 were growing flowers on the hillsides, and between Old County Road and the marshes. Mr. Hannibal shipped their flowers all over the country in iced freight cars.

We bought fresh vegetables from a Chinaman who came to town each week to sell from his truck. We bought our meat from Emmett, at the corner of Ralston and Old County Road. The nearest movie theatre was in Redwood City. The local school was located on Old County Road where a new building had been built. Before that, children went to class in two rooms east of Old County Road, and south of Ralston. The Post Office was in Emmet's store and the first telephone switchboard was in downtown Belmont. There were no doctors in town, except one at a sanitarium. There was a barber shop on Old County Road. We didn't have a fire department or a fire truck until 1929, and lots of people were still drawing their water from wells in 1921. We had no policemen until 1929.

For some reason, the business section of Old County Road began to decline. The cock fights at the old tavern were forced out of town. Some of the businesses that depended on supplying some things for horses and wagons and animals, and coal and wood to burn for heat, began fading away. Then, in 1924, the real estate boom came to the hills. Roads were paved. The Belle Monte Country Club was built and a nine-hole golf course laid out beside it. You

could buy a lot for \$800. in 1924. The Country Club was very active. People bought or built summer places, and by 1930 the population was almost 1,000.

The Belmont Chamber of Commerce put on two big events each year. One was the summer picnic at Memorial Park. In 1924 people would drive their cars downtown and make a long caravan, lining up bumper-to-bumper around the grammar school. When everyone was there, and it was time to go, the Chief of Police would lead the caravan all the way to Woodside Road. It took a good two hours to get to Memorial Park where the kids raced for prizes and parents joined in gunnysack races and three-legged races, and carried raw eggs on tablespoons as fast as they could walk or run, and then went swimming in the dammed-up creek. Everyone brought loads of food.

The other big event was the annual Minstral Show. The men put burnt cork on their faces and sang songs and told jokes on the stage of the old grammar school.

Each year at Christmas, the Fire Department, which finally got organized with a real tank truck in 1931, would buy a hugh forty-foot Christmas tree. The city bored a sixteen-inch hole in the middle of Waltermire street in front of the old school, somehow raised these huge trees, then decorated them with colored lights and ornaments. Then, close to Christmas Eve, the firemen would pass out candy to all the kids in town.

Then the depression came. The real estate boom collapsed. In 1931 some men who couldn't find work began walking from town to town. They became known as tramps. Some would knock on our back door asking for a little yard work in return for something to eat. They lived in so-called camps in various places. One camp was located under the trees beside the creek at the present corner of Old County Road and Harbor Blvd. From time to time the local residents would become worried about them and ask the one-man police department to send them on their way.



August 29, 1931. Seagrave Fire Engine. Florence Vannier, at wheel. Mary Rogers, standing with her. Miss Yount, Vivian Botto, Miss Morrison.



Alameda de las Pulgas 1945, in front of what is now Carlmont High School.

Not many people realize that just east of that old hobo town was a great rocky mountain, between Old County Road and the present Freeway or Bayshore Highway. Sheep and cattle used to graze on that mountain until it was shoveled away to lay the bed for the first Bayshore Highway. All that remains to remind us of its location is the street named "Quarry Road".



Russel A. Estep Pres. Belmont Chamber of Commerce, 1956 Charles H. Cook, Mayor of Belmont, 1956. Two contestants in Powder Puff Derby ready to start from San Carlos airport.

BY RUSSEL A. ESTEP BELMONT OFFICIAL HISTORIAN

My grandparents on my father's side were pioneers in Shasta County, but my mother's parents lived down here. I was raised mostly by my maternal grandparents. I have been familiar with Belmont almost since I was born in 1903.

My memory is good and I can remember coming here with my grandparents in 1906, right after the earthquake. I remember the buildings that were damaged along Broadway in Redwood City but I don't recall any earthquake damage in Belmont. Probably that is because there is solid rock base under much of what was then Belmont. Later, I remember us coming along Old County Road, and going to San Francisco to attend the Panama Pacific International Exposition many times in 1915. Three years later I watched the work going on as the El Camino Real was moved west of the railroad tracks--but by then I was fifteen years old.

Then, in 1925 I owned a Model T Ford. Often a cousin, Margaret (Ellsworth) Hersom and I traveled the Belmont streets and unpaved roads. The road to the coast wasn't paved in its entirety but the ride across the hills to a picnic on the beach was fun.

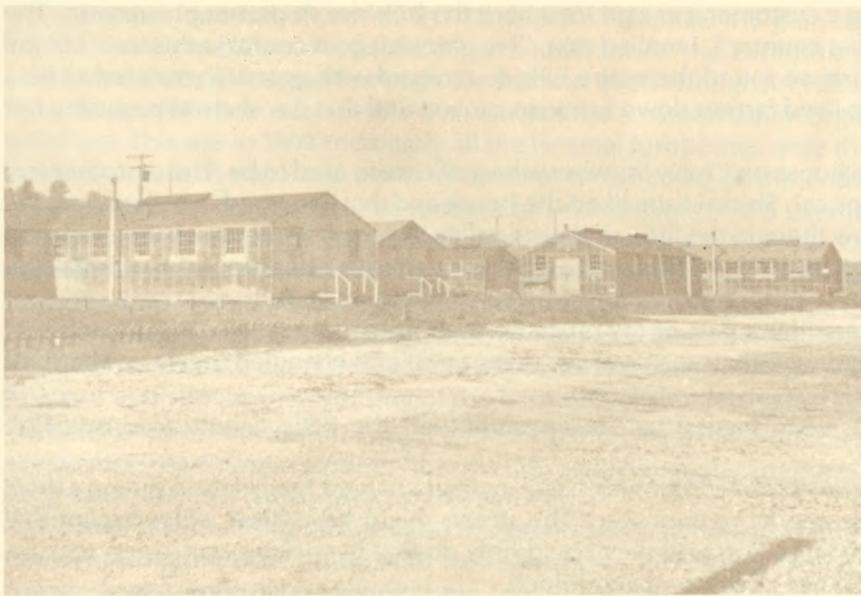
Although I never played golf at the Belle Monte Country Club I saw it often.

In driving around I bought gasoline at "Sarge's" service station at the south west corner of Bayshore and Ralston Ave. The building was built with a rock exterior.

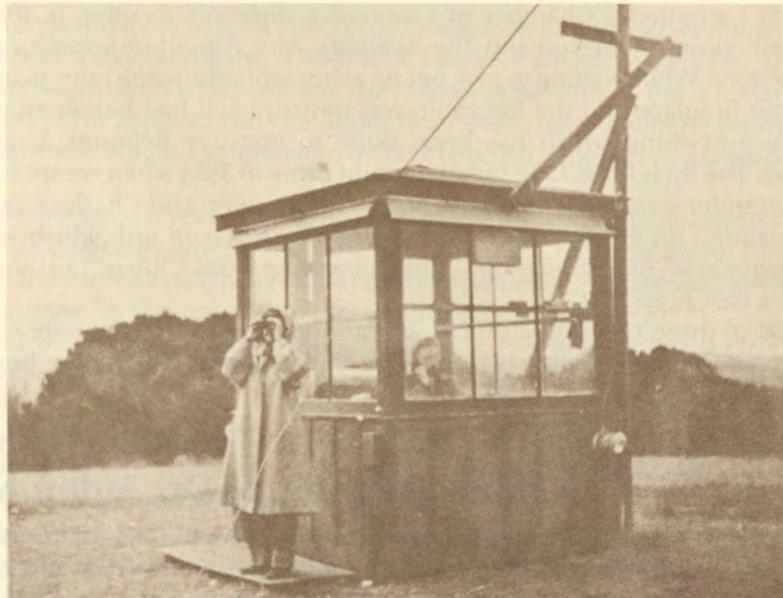
A Japanese family whom I got acquainted with lived on the north side of redrock hill between the railroad track and Bayshore highway--although he always referred to it as "Belmont Mountain". Perhaps he was right for later I found a newspaper clipping of the early 1900s which called it that. Our present Quarry Road ended there.

In 1940 I quit the Shell Oil Co. and worked for a time as a carpenter, then became foreman, and in this capacity built many projects. One was the first seaplane base for Pan American Airways north of the present airport. Another was all the two-story frame buildings at Park Merced in San Francisco. Another the personnel building for Moore Shipyard in Oakland. And still another was a dog training center on top of Club Drive in San Carlos, for the military. Tom Culligan was the contractor for that particular job.

Since my principal hobby has always been electronics I used to visit with the soldiers stationed in the old Belle Monte Club house--which presently is our Congratonal Church. They, and the other soldiers stationed down on the flat ground where the Mae Nesbit School is located, were working on very secret projects during the war. The men stationed in the club house were being instructed in these new secret gadgets. To keep local people from knowing what was going on they made up the story that they were all hillbillies. The men on the flat ground said the hillbillies "never wore shoes". Those I met were all highschool graduates, several had M.A. degrees, two had PhD. degrees, and a couple had EE degrees. They were very well educated, and they thought it terrifically amusing that



1941 Military camp where Mae Nesbit School is now.



Doris Vannier and Florence Underwood, on Newlands Ave., 1942 watching for enemy aircraft.

they were able to cause any local people to think them otherwise. So they played it up big. They were fine men and I hope all survived the war.

Finally, in 1945 I got a general building contractor license and started building houses. I built some myself, and dozens for Baker and Morton, mostly where the golf course had been.

Then, in June 1946 I got a real estate license and sold two houses the first morning. How, I wondered, had I overlooked so lucrative a business for so long? I took over the office where I am still located on El Camino Real.

Tom Culligan stopped in for a chat soon after that and showed me blue prints of a subdivision he proposed building way out on Ralston Avenue. I commented that, "he might just as well build houses in Yosemite, Mt. Lassen, or Tioga Pass. The subdivision would be so far out from Belmont that nobody would want to live there." He laughed and left my office. Later he built his subdivision and named the streets Lassen Drive, Tioga Way, Yosemite Drive, etc. and he soon sold all the houses.

When I took the real estate examination in 1946 Daniel St. George signed as my sponsor. When I went to his home on the south side of Ralston Ave., several doors west of the El Camino, his wife came to the door. When I told her what I wanted she said, "Oh, I'm sorry for you! My husband has been in real estate here in Belmont for forty years and there have been times when I couldn't afford to buy stockings. Then, a few days later he would get a large transaction and we would go around the world." Daniel St. George told me he had been the man in charge of Bay View Heights sales and that had been the only part of Belmont with restrictions. Houses there all had tile roofs and all had been 1200 feet or more in floor space. He said he had found Belmont to be more interesting and exciting than any place in the world for selling real estate. I too, have found it so.

On San Juan Blvd. in 1947 I was showing a customer a vacant lot where the hillsides slope steeply upward. The customer remarked that "this looks like goat country". I replied that, "No, this isn't goat country: this is within the city of Belmont!" As we drove around a turn we found the entire hillside covered with goats! There used to be a woman they called the "goat woman" who lived farther down San Juan canyon and that day she was pasturing her goats!

Another time I was showing a customer a house on Chevy St., where the golf course used to be. The customer and I came out of the house and stood beside my car. She said she liked the house and that it seemed to be just what she wanted. Then I told her the wind didn't blow there in the little sheltered valley like it did farther out in Belmont and she might really enjoy the location. Just then my straw hat blew off and I had to chase it half a block down to Ralston Avenue. I haven't worn a straw hat since.

After the railroad gave up Railway Express I let a part of my office be used for packages. Also the Chamber of Commerce needed office space so they made me their manager for seven years and I handled that in addition. At Christmastime I was very busy.

The streets, Monroe, Miller, and Lyon, were named by the developers of the Belle Monte Country Club Properties, for themselves.

For many years our streets were narrow gravel roads. However, a city manager named Fred Nelson put on a drive for pavement and during his regime the streets were improved. The streets might have been wider except that Monroe, Miller, and Lyon preferred to sell larger lots and they could only do that by making our streets narrow. Their activity was between 1924 and 1927, when their company folded.

In mentioning street names I should say that Robin Whipple Way was named for the first boy from Belmont who was killed in WW-2.

In 1951 I attended a Chamber of Commerce directors meeting in the old log cabin which used to be at the northwest corner of Ralston and The Alameda. Mrs. Annette Alexander owned the property and sold it later for a Safeway store. While waiting to pick her up at her sanitarium one rainy evening her chauffeur fell asleep. A log rolled out of the fireplace and the log cabin was destroyed. It had belonged previously to the Pullman Estate.

Nearly everything which has been done to improve Belmont really originated at Chamber of Commerce meetings. The list is long. One publicity stunt came in 1954 when we sponsored two fliers in the Powder Puff Derby. Mrs. Alexander donated a thousand dollars for gasoline and Charles Cook (who was Mayor) and I had "Belmont, Calif." painted on the sides of their airplane. They placed fifth which we thought pretty good.

Belmont has several service clubs but I joined the Lions Club in 1950 and have had perfect attendance since then, and am a past president.

Instead of three real estate offices, Belmont now has ten, and there is more competition. Yet, just as Daniel St. George said, Belmont is always interesting and exciting. I like being here.

By Lorna (Gardner) Fosberg (Grand-daughter of Dr. Alden M. Gardner)

Mr grandfather was Dr. Alden Monroe Gardner, who purchased the William C. Ralston home from Miss Alpheus Bull in 1900. I was born in the old mansion March 20, 1906 and lived there until my twelfth birthday, when my mother and I moved to Oakland. I attended kindergarten in Belmont, in the public school, until I had surgery for appendicitis. Following my recovery my mother enrolled me in a convent in Redwood City, until the first public school was built in San Carlos. I visited the George Center home (now Twin Pines) when I was a child. Mr. Center was a director of the Bank of California and president of the California Cotton, or California Woolen Mills. The Centers were a darling Scottish couple and their geese wandered around and they fascinated me.

My grandfather was a large man. My grandmother was a tiny woman whom he adored. Her word was law with him.

Dr. Gardner was a physician and surgeon and general practitioner in Calistoga for many years until he was appointed by the governor as superintendent of Napa State Hospital.

When my grandfather bought the old Ralston home it had been a seminary for young ladies; run by Miss Bull. Prior to that the Sharons owned the Ralston property, following Mr. Ralston's demise.

Mrs. Annette Alexander operated another "nerve" center which is presently known as Belmont Hills. She would steal our patients. We would meet the trains but she tried to get there first, but she was a charming person and I learned to love her.

Mrs. Gardner passed away July 18, 1922 after grandfather had sold the former Ralston property.

Most of the Peninsula from Beresford south to Redwood City was dairy land.

The old Ralston home never stood vacant except those few months before the Nuns took over. My grandfather had gardeners and the grounds and all the property were always kept very neat and clean.

We had a choice of movie houses--San Mateo or Redwood City. The road wasn't paved yet, although it had been graveled. Sometimes we traveled by steam train and other times by horse and buggy or automobile on the Old County Road, which was El Camino Real then.

My mother and father met at the Napa State Hospital. My grandfather was a neurologist and when he first explored the possibility of establishing a sanitarium on the Peninsula and found a tubercular sanitarium here he concluded that a place good enough for that was good enough for him. The seminary for young ladies was looking for a buyer for their school--the Ralston mansion. Grandfather organized a corporation so as to finance the purchase. This was in 1900 and nearly all the original furnishings were there. I can remember the two large Chinese vases each side of the stand under the mirror in the foyer of the entrance hall.

I gave birthday parties and can remember Lena Baskette, who later married Jack Warner, Hollywood producer. Miss Baskette entertained us with beautiful ballet dancing in the ballroom. As a small child we children often skated in bare feet in the ballroom. During WW-1 we often entertained soldiers from Camp Fremont where Menlo Park is today, and we invited all the available young women on the Peninsula to help us. We had dances and one day there was a box lunch picnic on the front lawn. Mother practiced on the piano in the living room adjoining the ballroom five hours or so each day. Once when a child, the son of one of mother's friends visited, and we went out with a bee-gun and shot at the windows of the barn on the side facing the lane. Mother gave her teas in the art gallery.

There at Christmas time I would gather up the gifts from around the Christmas tree to deliver to the various employees: the Chinese gardner, the Swedish stable man, the English coachman, the Irish head waiter, the German head chef, and our Welsh-American engineer.

We manufactured our own gas and the gas house was where the high-school auditorium is located today. We had gas jets throughout the house with frosted mantles. Our steam heat was generated in the steam room under the house. A wash room was located there too.

I used to love to visit with our engineer, Mr. Hughes, and to watch him work. He and his wife lived in the tank house adjoining the terrace.

We had a gently sloping lawn from the terrace just made for a child's joy. In my early childhood we owned horses and a pony: Queenie, a black mare; and Bob, a bay; and Baby, a Shetland. I believe we had others too, but these stand out. We owned a team for the station wagon with which we met the incoming patients at the S.P. station. We hired a blacksmith whom I remember vividly. His shop was on the upper floor of the barn where he pounded the shoes on his anvil. I think his name was Hammerstein, or Hammersen. In 1959 I met his daughter or grand-daughter while on a trip to Hawaii.

Mr. Hammersen did his blacksmithing on the same level of the barn where our hay loft was located and where rats scurried around and bats flew wildly about especially when it as dark. It terrified me to enter there.

At the house the heavy front door of the mansion was too heavy for a child to open easily but I remember greeting visitors there to announce "this is the Gardner Sanitarium and my father is the superintendent".

Our garden contained many varieties of plants, shrubs, and flowers. On the terrace side and along the second floor the paved walk provided a fine roller skating run. There, Florence Vannier, my friend and schoolmate, patiently attempted to teach me to skate.

When I was very young earthquakes frequently occurred. One time, while we were waiting in the dining room Grandma Gardner grabbed me and started for the front door. Of course her anxiety stemmed from the big earthquake of April 18, 1906. She was ready for the next big one!

Also, so many fires started in the eucalyptus groves along the upper walks aways north of the mansion in the dry summer seasons. Great excitement ensued, and the volunteer fire department consisting of neighbors and townsmen was called to fight them.

My mother's brother Roy, became a mining engineer, no doubt influenced by the Western School of Mines which was located in Belmont in 1904.

We had our reservoir built by Mr. Ralston for his water supply and I remember my mother would take me in the Apperson "jack-rabbit" car and drive up to the site west of Belmont to see when we might be obliged to hook into the Crystal Springs Water Co. and in the meantime pump our water into buckets from our spring under the lawn just north of the front of the house.

I remember when a small girl that I would wind my way up the house staircase off the vestibule to sit and imagine that was where Mr. Ralston disposed of the dancing girls he brought down from San Francisco to entertain as there was a cistern underneath, confusing him of course, with the stories of Bluebeard in my early imagination.

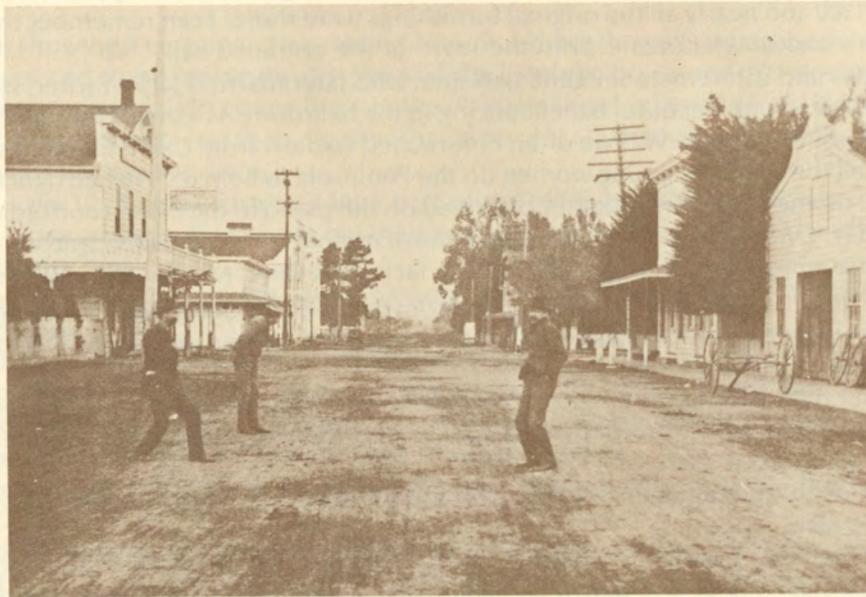
I remember attending commencement exercises at Reid School, the former retreat home of Mrs. Ralston for peace and quiet when Mr. Ralston gave his frequent parties. My aunt, Ruby Gardner, met her future husband Carsten Lynch while he was a student there. My grandfather put him through medical school. They were married in the Ralston mansion.

The garden today at the Ralston mansion is but a remnant of its former self, for flowers, shrubs, trees, hedges, etc. abounded then and fragrance permeated the air as heavily as beauty filled the sight.

When the mansion and grounds were sold in 1921 to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who were moving into it from their San Jose holdings, we had Butterfield Auctioneers look at the furnishings. They bought all the furnishings for \$2,000.00, except the revolving statue in the art gallery, the piano in the living room adjoining the ballroom, and the two paintings on the landing. One painting was of the Duke of Wellington, and the other Minnehaha Falls, which is similar to Yosemite Falls, and perhaps one or two items which were overlooked were not bought.

Silver sets were later found in secret cabinets in the dining room.

How I loved the old Ralston mansion and how appreciative I am that I was privileged to have lived there as a child!
"Backwards, turn backwards, Oh time in its flights; make me a child again just for tonight."



Intersection Old County Road and Ralston Ave. American Hotel to left.



Formerly Belmont Hotel. Old County Road, Belmont.



Old barn, behind Belmont Hotel; Masonic Way, Belmont, CA.

BY MRS. RUTH HULSTEDE

In 1936 we were looking for a place that was within reasonable commuting distance from San Francisco, with a reasonably good climate where we could find a rural atmosphere, without too many people.

We wanted to buy enough land so we would be more or less isolated from our neighbors, and preferably where we would have a view.

Belmont, with a population of less than a thousand, was the only place we could find between San Bruno and Palo Alto that met all of our requirements. In 1936 Belmont had one small grocery of the Mom and Pop type, located on the El Camino about where the Belmont Hardware now is. In the same building was the post office. There was no mail delivery service.

On the corner of El Camino and Ralston Ave. there was a combination bus depot and soda fountain. El Camino consisted of two lanes of pavement, with dirt on each side.

We lived on the Alameda just north of the Congregational Church, which in those days was the Belmont Country Club. Just below the club house was a golf course.

During the late forties several members of the Belmont Women's Club formed a small art group. We devoted a considerable amount of time to painting those outdoor scenes that struck our fancy. While we didn't think about it at the time, many of our subjects were doomed to annihilation, to make way for progress for the expanding population. Some of the vanishing landmarks were the subject of an exhibition in the Belmont Library in July of 1972. A list of these paintings, with comments, is as follows:

No. 1 Belmont Hotel: This Hotel which still stands on Old County Road just north of Ralston was occupied for many years by Miss Elizabeth Rowell, herself an early Belmont pioneer. Since her demise it was occupied by various people as a restaurant and bar, with rooms on the top floor where it is said that ladies of the evening might entertain guests. It was a speak-easy during prohibition and at one time cockfights were held until the authorities put a stop to it. The age of the building is attested by the huge trunk of the ancient wisteria which still covers much of the front of the building.

No. 2, Hayfields: These fields were across the Alameda from where the Carlmont Highschool now stands. The Carlmont site had been a pear orchard. The broken space was a picnic site, for fog weary San Franciscans.

No. 3, Hayfields: Another view close-up, of the haycocks done about the same time in water color.

No. 4, American Hotel: This old building still stands on the south side of Ralston Ave. between the Old County Road and the Southern Pacific tracks. Much of its charm was lost when it was remodeled and a balustrade and the old trees were removed.

No. 5, Pennington House: The house just off Holly Road was the home of Thomas Pennington, first mayor of Belmont. Pennington was the owner of an iron works in San Francisco. The painting was made in 1950 and the house still remains, but the windmill is long gone.

No. 6, Ralston Mansion: Originally owned by Count Cipriani who returned to his native Italy in 1859. It soon passed into the hands of William C. Ralston whom it is said to have spent nearly a million dollars by 1867 in developing his summer villa. Ralston was acknowledged as California's first citizen and he entertained many distinguished travelers who were flocking to California.

Thus this mansion became the White House of the West.

No. 7, Carriage House: Built by Ralston for his favorite horses. It was made of stone quarried on the property, in the style of a Swedish barn, with round windows, and walls three feet thick. It could accommodate sixty horses.

No. 8, Shantytown: Shantytown was located on a slough between the Bayshore Highway and the Bay. It was condemned and burned in the early fifties. These shanties and some other buildings in Belmont were probably built as week-end retreats for people from San Francisco. Some of the shanties were charmingly furnished with cast-off furniture.

No. 9, Caldwell Tavern: Originally an old stage station and bar. When it was torn down in the 1950s several old Spanish coins were found beneath the barroom floor. The old County Road was the original El Camino Real.

No. 10, Abandoned Dairy Farm: Located where now would be the intersection of the Alameda and 37th Ave. in San Mateo. It was also known as the Reese Dairy Farm. Later destroyed by fire.

No. 11, The Alameda: A section of the old road between Belmont and San Carlos in 1948 before the Carlmont High school was built.

No. 12 The Alexander Residence: This was the home of an early Belmont pioneer, Ida Alexander. Still standing on Old County Road in Belmont.

No. 13, Belmont Hills with Acacia Tree, On Ruth Ave. in Belmont: At that time the hills were bare of buildings and there were many acacia, oak and eucalyptus trees.

No. 14, Caldwell Tavern: Just before being torn down.

BY KATHRUN A. HODGSON

I arrived in Belmont in February 1926. We had bought a house on Frances Avenue, newly built-5 rooms and lot for \$5,000.00. It stood alone, with nothing but vacant lots bright with California poppies and lupin. It faced the nine hole golf course. Up the hill to the west they were putting the finishing touches to the Belle Monte Country Club clubhouse with its beautiful slate roof.

I decided to walk to Belmont, so turned down Daisy Lane which had just been renamed Notre Dame Avenue; dark branches met overhead from the avenue of large cypress trees. There were meadows on either side where horses grazed. On Ralston Avenue there were more fields. Eucalyptus, oak and bay trees grew along the creek and a few old apple trees remained from a long forgotten orchard.

Passing Alexander Sanitarium, a two-story ivy-clad house in a large well-kept garden, and next door to it a wooden house hidden in the trees where Mrs. LeGarde lived with her two sons George and Ed. The hillside on the north side was a joy to behold. Japanese families cultivated many Belmont hillsides, growing chrysanthemums and asters to perfection. In 1926 many flowers shipped east came from this lovely little town of Belmont.

From the South Road to El Camino were comfortable homes, each in its own garden. There was a gravel foot path each side of the road. Between the path and the road was a row of tall locust trees. I thought of the folder that I had received about Belmont "Where Main Street is a Country Lane!" Under a group of these trees was a little refreshment hut which proudly announced "Macdonough's Shady Inn." There were no stop and go lights on El Camino, and very little traffic, an occasional Ford or Pierce Arrow.

I crossed El Camino to the S.P. Depot. The station master, Mr. Hardy Hannibal, just returned from the Post Office pushing a small hand cart on which were the mail sacks to be put on the next train. The Post Office was only about a block away on El Camino, a small wooden building with a staff of one, Mrs. McGowan the postmistress. There was no delivery and everyone called there for his own mail.

The grade school was on Waltermire Street, quite an imposing one-story building with a bell tower, four classrooms and an assembly hall with stage. Whist parties were occasionally held in this hall, such as friendly gatherings to raise money when needed, such as the Volunteer Fire Department. The young men of Belmont worked eagerly for the Fire Department. They had re-built an old fire engine and now were busy building a garage on O'Neill Street to house it.

As I crossed the railroad tracks there were no warning gates, but a man sat in a shelter and at the approach of a train he walked into the center of the road and waved a STOP sign.

On the corner of Ralston and the Old County Road was Belmont's only store, Emmett's General Store. It was a real old country store right out of the movies. Besides groceries I could see hats and sun-bonnets, buckets and tools, boots and socks, a plow and hurricane lamps, mops and brooms, vegetables and wheelbarrows, hams hanging from the ceiling and cheese in a rat-proof cage. It was all there and most of it had been there for a long, long time. Mr. Emmett gave me a warm welcome and wrote down my shopping order. "It will all be delivered this afternoon." Oh happy days, everything delivered with a smile! And that's how it was in Belmont fifty years and more ago.

BY MARJORIE G. MANDANIS (RESEARCHER)

In 1856, the City of Belmont served briefly as the county seat. The site was the "Angelo House"--a luxury tourist hotel beautifully furnished in Victorian style. It was located right in the middle of what is now Ralston Avenue on the property that is now known as the Opportunity Shop, an antique store, next to the railroad tracks and on the corner of Old County Road and Ralston Avenue. At that time, dignitaries, such as President Grant, stayed at the hotel. It overlooked the Belmont Harbor and the bay. This intersection was known as Angelo's Corners.

Angelo House, however, burned to the ground and the Rowells built the American Hotel, with completion of the second floor on November 1, 1884, on the site where the Opportunity Shop now stands.

Recently, the owner of the Opportunity Shop site was disputing the chopping off of her sidewalk for widening of Ralston Avenue when a survey was done and it was discovered that 14 feet of Ralston Avenue belonged to the property. This explains how Angelo House was built in the middle of the street!

The Rowells built a beautiful pillared Victorian hotel and local citizens describe it as having magnificent chandeliers and the hotel desk was where the Opportunity Shop desk now stands. The bar was called "Charley's Place" and was angled near the French doors and was the local bookie joint where San Francisco commuters put their bets in in the morning before taking the train to work, and returned to pick up their winnings. (or cry over a beer).

Pet racoons were kept in the beautiful gardens in back, and a stairway in the center took you to the top floor where hotel rooms had adjoining sitting room hallways.

A larger banquet room was downstairs toward the Old County Road entrance.

Most of Rowell's hotel burned down and was re-built. In 1942, the main building was rolled back and two stores

built on front. All the pillars were removed, and some of the ornate bannisters were saved by a local artist. She has them available to copy for restoration purposes. She also made a painting of the Opportunity Shop and it is hung on the back wall behind the desk.

A restoration of the balcony and pillars is planned in the near future, and with the display of Victorian antique and reproduction furniture, it is hoped the shop can be arranged as the hotel once was. An antique bar is being prepared now.

The historic significance of the site of the first Court House of San Mateo County is of particular interest. When the first election was held to decide about splitting off from San Francisco County and forming a new county the ballot boxes were stuffed. There were more votes than voters! The result was that the county seat went to Redwood City from Belmont. The year was 1856. This corner in Belmont is where this happened.



Rowell Hotel a.k.a. American Hotel, S.W. corner Old County Road and Ralston Ave.



American Hotel Bar. Corner Old County Rd. and Ralston Ave. Taken after repeal of prohibition.

SPLIVALO HOUSE **By Joseph Splivalo**

The first Tubercular Sanitarium in Belmont was in the old Splivalo house which we four brothers visited when it was deserted.

The house belonged to Cesar Splivalo, our second cousin, and the son of Captain Stephen Splivalo who later lived in San Jose.

The San Jose home of Captain Splivalo, our grand uncle, was recently restored by its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Bruzzone. The house is now a landmark of the city of San Jose at 766 Lincoln Avenue, which was named Splivalo Street when Captian Splivalo owned it.

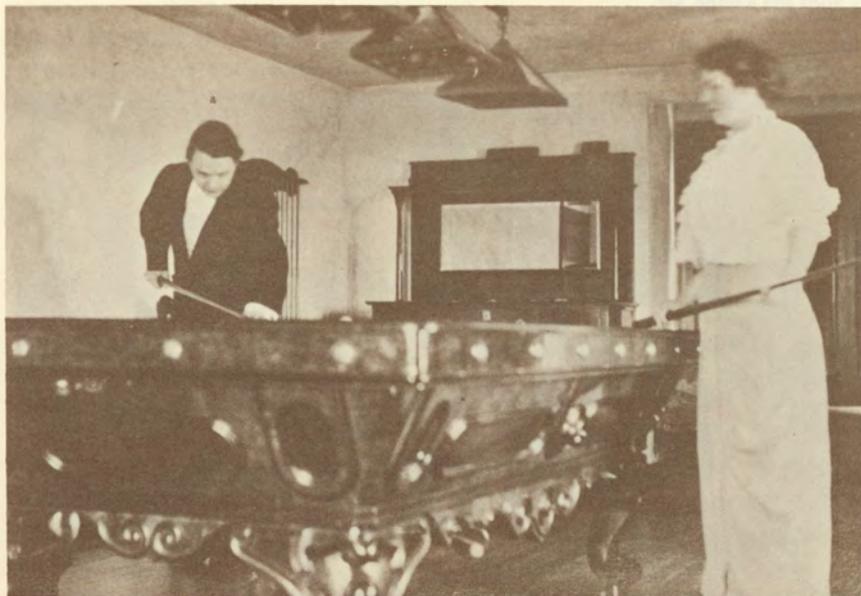
Cesar's Belmont house was built on great acreage. It was the center of social affairs, with horse stables.

The doctor of the Sanitarium suggested that we take some of the articles from the house as souvenirs. By that time the people were just taking the house apart. Several years ago it burned to the ground.

I will provide a photo of the Belmont Splivalo house.



Splivalo Home; later California Sanitarium.

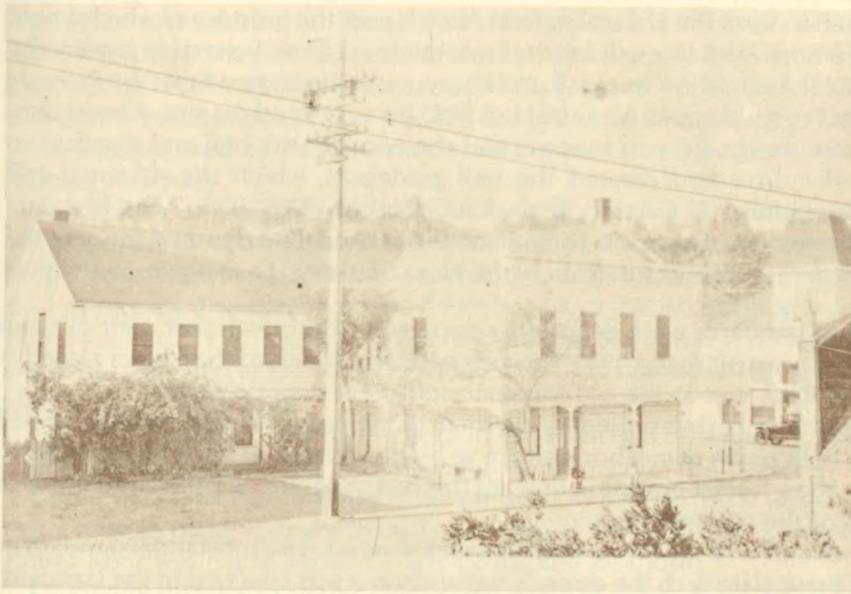


Elizabeth Rowell at billiard table in Rowell Hotel, a.k.a. American Hotel, corner Old County Rd. and Ralston Ave.

By Juanita Doyle

As one drives the "El Camino Real Highway" also known as (The Kings Highway and The Path of the Padres) many times attention is called to the sight of the "El Camino Real Bells" stretching the length of the El Camino Real. The City of Belmont is proud to have two of these bells. Driving South from San Francisco the first bell denotes something historical is connected with its placement. This is correct, Van's Restaurant is situated on a hill with a panoramic view of the bay and hills, including beautiful Mt. Diablo in what we call the East Bay, above the El Camino Real Bell, down below, near the El Camino Real Highway.

The building housing Van's Restaurant was built around the beautiful Chinese Pavillion in the Exhibition Building of the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition of 1915 held in San Francisco. This pavilion was brought down to the site on the panoramic view hill. It has remained the same until a few years ago. Due to its situation and fine foods, since 1915, it has been added onto making it larger to accomodate many patrons.



Rowell Hotel a.k.a. American Hotel. S.W. corner Old County Rd. and Ralston Ave.



Elizabeth Rowell. 1937.

The second El Camino Real Bell was a gift of the Belmont Women's Club to the City of Belmont. It was stolen, having stood on property owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad dedicated to the memory of Belmont's Depot, which had been demolished. The Southern Pacific Railroad leased this large piece of property to owners to be, of a restaurant called "The Whistlestop", its sign in the shape of an old-time railroad engine. The El Camino Real Bell replacement joined the many projects of the City of Belmont, honored as a Bi-centennial City to celebrate our Country's Bicentennial in 1976. The first bell being dedicated November 19th, 1966. The present El Camino Real Bell as situated alongside of a brick marker on which in redwood is the name Belmont, was a replacement of the original bell of 1966.

Belmont being proud of its two El Camino Real Bells cannot help but look back in retrospect on their beginnings. El Camino Real changed as each Mission was founded. Californians, in the first decade of this century, became very conscious of their history, and the great need of restoring California's first historic landmarks, its twenty-one missions, established by Padre Junipero Serra who first set foot on California soil at the age of fifty-six, in San Diego in

1769. Father Serra came from Majorca, Spain. In May of 1902, in Los Angeles, a plan for the preservation of the route of El Camino Real was formally presented before a meeting of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and a month later, at the Grand Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, held that year in San Francisco, the plan was endorsed by that organization.

Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes, then California History and Landmarks Chairman of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, led the crusade, and in 1904, in Santa Barbara, a convention of delegates from San Diego to Sonoma, representing civic, fraternal, and historical associations, met to form the El Camino Real Association, the purpose of which would be to re-establish the road leading to the missions, and to work for the restoration of these venerable landmarks.

In 1906, when the work of the El Camino Real Association was well underway, it was determined that the Pathway of the Padres should be marked with a distinctive guide post. A contest was held for suggested designs. Almost one-hundred fifty designs were submitted. Whose design do you suppose was the winner--the bell and standard so familiar to all of us today. Mrs. Forbes, of course had created the bell guidepost, which she patented and copyrighted, and each bell carried the inscription, "El Camino Real--A.S.C. Forbes--1769-1906." The first date denoted the date of the establishment of the first Mission at San Diego, and the second date denoted the year the dedication of the first El Camino Real Bell, in great ceremony in front of the Plaza Church in Los Angeles, on August 15, 1906.

The program for placement of the bells and standards were generously donated by historical, civic, patriotic and governmental bodies, with the result that between 1906 and 1913 450 such bells and standards had been placed at approximate mile intervals along El Camino Real, and at the old Missions and other historical sites.

The bells in those days cost \$25.00 each, and Mrs. Forbes served as chairman of the finance committee for the bell program. Her husband erected most of the bells by his own labor, using one helper, a team of horses and a wagon.

The two organizations which have made the greatest contributions to the bell program, are the Federation of Women's Clubs and the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

Each bell weighs over two hundred pounds and is raised eleven feet from the ground, on a substantial standard of iron tubing set in a concrete base. A small brass plate with the donor's name upon it was attached to the standard, until vandals started taking these brass plates off and stealing the bells. The plates also had in the beginning a sign which directed the traveler to the missions, where

**"Those bells of the past, whose long-forgotten music
still fills the wide expanse,
Tingling the sober twilight of the present with
the color of Romance,"**

was engraved on the brass plate always to remind us of a never-to-be-forgotten part of California History.

Note: Bells that are replaced now are not of iron, but aluminum and very few if any brass plates are seen on the original bells.

Aug. 5, 1974

BY FATHER KENNY (PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY)

Mr Ralston died in 1875 and Mr. Sharon died in 1885, and when Sharon died soon after that they decided to sell some of the property. This part of the property on which was built the house and cottage for me was sold to Reed and it was under the auspices of the Congregational Church. They had a Board and it was always the minister who was Chairman of the Board, at the beginning of contact with Mr. Reed. So he then continued the school beginning August 15, 1885. Then later on there was another school; which I think was the Hawkins school. Later they sold their school and I think came in together with Reed. One of the buildings that was on the corner was called the Hawkins building. Later on it seemed that Reed became the comptroller of the whole properties, and it was known as the Reed School, or the Belmont School.

In 1886 they put up the first building, which I think was the gymnasium with classrooms attached. That was next to where the swimming pool is now, and also where that apartment house is. That building was torn down.

The swimming pool was built in 1913 and opened in March 1914, as well as I can remember. Then the original building burned down. There were plans for another building to be built in 1900 but that never went through. It was to have been a big auditorium with plaster on the sides. Instead of that they built another building and that was for high school students. That later became the convent. That's where the sisters lived from 1933 to 1952. That was torn down in 1954.

From 1885 to 1918 the place was run by Mr. Reed. The bell in front was given by Hattie Reed who was a sister of Mr. Reed. That name was spelled Reed. In 1910 she gave the bell. She was known to students as Aunt Hattie. So the ringing of the bell is known to students as Aunt Hattie's bell.

Originally it was in this building over here and then it was put in St. Michael's Chapel when it was built. We moved it just a few months ago to the front. Little Belmont was a good sized house and they ran the school the first year in that house. They quartered the boys and everything right in that.

What we have standing at the present time is what we call the Sierra Building, a two-story building, and it was built in 1890. What is now the hall was the dining room which Mr. Ralston used as a chapel. That is as far as I can make out.

In 1893 at the same time the pink building was built, the Hoffman's owned the two buildings with a dining room between. The Science building was built in 1910. It is the one with the tile roof. It had three rooms. One for chemistry, one physics, and the lecture room. We later added two classrooms. The three old buildings were left from Reed's time.

In 1918 Reed sold the buildings to Archbishop Hanna. It continued to be a school for boys under the auspices of the Archbishop. The first headmaster was Father Michael Muslin and it was called Belmont School for Boys. He was Irish, but he received some of his education in England. He built the Chapel we call St. Michael's. This was 1920. I was told that it cost \$39,000.00. He was ill a long time and he went back and died in Ireland.

He was followed by Father James McHuth in 1932. He had been Supt. of Schools. Then it became St. Joseph's Military Academy.

The Sister's of Mercy had a place in Rio Vista on the river on the way to Sacramento. The buildings up there weren't in good repair so the sisters were looking for a place to move to. The brothers had looked over the property in Rio Vista and the Archbishop wanted to get something out of the property since it had cost the diocese a great deal of money. The sisters moved down here and the Archbishop sold the property at Rio Vista. The sisters came here in August 1932. They ran the school here as St. Joseph's Military Academy. They charged \$50.00 per month to students. They had at the time they took over, 120 boarders. This place began building up and our first graduation class we had 32 students.

They had opened a new high school in San Francisco on 19th Ave. and the Archbishop wanted to use the sisters at that new high school. The sisters left Belmont in 1952. The parish took over the buildings.

Going back, the Notre Dame sisters moved in here in 1923. They bought the property that was Gardner's. The priest used to come for mass from Redwood City from 1922 to 1928. In 1928 the parish of San Carlos was formed, and Father Kent was made pastor of San Carlos and Belmont.

Originally they had a mass in some hall on Old County Road and it leaked. Father used to have an umbrella held over him. In 1930 they built a church at the entrance to Notre Dame and just now it is used by the Art Department of the College of Notre Dame.

Father Pampton left here in 1943 and then it was Father Dory, who was appointed pastor of San Carlos. In September 1947 Belmont became a separate parish. In 1947 Father Danny Reardon became the first pastor. He was here from 1947 to 1950. Then I came from the Immaculate Heart Church in Brentwood.

First I lived in San Carlos. During the following year I got a house on Ralston Avenue and lived in that for seven years.

We used the old buildings for the school until we built the new school in 1962. It was dedicated in May 1963. We moved in in October 1962.

We had remodeled the old buildings in 1952 and took out some of the partitions and put the hallway on one side, so we had six rooms in one of the buildings. That cost around \$30,000.00 to remodel.

We used the church for masses on Sunday. Then when the thirty-two eucalyptus trees got cleaned away we made a parking space. Then we moved principally up here and we had the one mass and this church will seat approximately two hundred and fifty.

The Alameda used to turn into the area south of Ralston about where the Bank of America is, and then it curved around to the present location again just south of the shopping center. It was a dirt road. It wasn't straightened until the shopping center had been built. However, originally it might have been straight. There was a bridge over Belmont creek just east of where the present Bank of America is now.

The land was in two sections. The football field was where the shopping center is now. There was a total of approximately twenty-eight acres. Our buildings were scattered so much that we had to retain approximately ten acres. We didn't need that many but had to retain it anyway.

We sold the other property to Mr. Roth and they paid \$11,000.00 per acre for approximately twenty six acres. The time they bought it was 1954. Originally there were only sixty or seventy students, but the sisters got them up to one hundred and twenty four.

The first church would be St. Michaels. That would be in 1920, and sisters came back in 1923 and the parish church was in 1930 and that was called Church of the Immaculate Heart. The new church was built in 1958. The present school was opened in October 1962.

BY SISTER BARBARA ENGS

I came to Belmont in 1924, then went back to San Jose and returned forty years ago. I have been here forty years. Ten years before I was born a little girl at a picnic at Twin Pines Park disappeared, and for twenty years after that every little girl around the Bay Area was told before she went out don't ever let go of your mother's hand when you are in a crowd, for little Annie Rooney let go her mother's hand and was never heard of again.

When I first came to Belmont there were three stores: a beauty parlor, a butcher shop and a fortune teller. The butcher shop was the only one that really had any value for us. After we had established our college here visitors began to come to Belmont. I missed the station that was really our main help in going places because the trains didn't stop. If you wanted to go anyplace in the neighborhood you had to flag a train. One of the Sisters inadvertently flagged the Lark one time to go to Redwood City and it was rather amusing but the engineer wasn't so happy.

Mr. Hannibal was a great help to me. I was Dean of the college and he would keep me notified as to the girls getting out and going home and so forth. So far as the rest of the place goes I have been here forty years and have seen our own campus expand.

BY SISTER MARIE ERNESTINE

I came to Belmont in 1928 to teach here and I organized the Notre Dame Music assn. and that group was responsible for the beginning and the building of the auditorium in Belmont. I taught piano and also violin until 1965, when I retired.

The Notre Dame high school was completed in 1928 and I moved into that new building on Ralston Avenue. Across from us was just a cow pasture. There were no homes there. I think the first home was built in the early thirties. I remember them cutting down the eucalyptus trees that lined all of Ralston Ave. There were only about a thousand people in Belmont, until 1945.

I came to visit Belmont in 1919, after the Sisters purchased the property. There was scarcely anything here. I didn't see any stores around. This was whole countryside. I remember the Belmont Country Club building here and the golf course. There were no homes built here by the Country Club until 1945.

I liked Belmont better in those days. I could take walks around the hills. It was all country. I remember the outdoor kitchen at Ralson Hall and next to the terrace were some Turkish baths. Of course now they have built a laundry there and they have built a new kitchen.

BY MRS. LEONA RODRIQUE

I came to Belmont in 1928, and Belmont was always beautiful just as it is now. There was only one house on our street. We lived near the Country Club. There was a swimming pool at the Country Club. We had some beautiful times here.

I think Twin Pines is wonderful and that it is something we have needed for years. We had some wonderful times there years ago. The whole town closed up for Memorial Day, and we always had a BBQ where Twin Pines in now.

BY MRS. MARY (VALLADEO) MALASTINA

I came here in 1925 and I have seen many changes since then. I have a son and daughter. Both are married and have children. My husband was one of the first to work for the street department. He used a wheel barrow at first; then worked up to be street Supt.



Belmont's new firehouse. 1936.



Heavy (?) traffic going north on El Camino Real 1931.

BY MRS. BETHEL WALDEN

I came to Belmont in November 1936. We built our home on Gordon Ave. in 1938 and I still live there. My husband was Harry Walden and he was Mayor of Belmont in 1946, the year our son was born. My son is now with the Belmont Fire Dept. I remember the army camp. I had been in Belmont about one week when they moved the Episcopal Church from Old County Road across the railroad tracks to its present location on Fifth Ave. I recall the little airport that was located north of Ralston Ave. where Sterling Downs is now. When they put the army camp in they took the airport out. The Nesbit School is presently on the approximate site.

BY MRS. EVELYN COMBATALADE

I came to the Peninsula to Thirty Ninth Avenue in San Mateo in 1927. We left a large school where George taught and had sixty kids in one grade. Belmont had fifty-eight children in all eight grades. We obtained permission to send our children to Belmont and one was school age at the time. Mr. Messner came in his taxi and taxied our children to Belmont. I came and got them. Since then I have joined all the organizations in Belmont. We used to have ten acres and ran our cows there. Belmont was a little tiny place. My daughter graduated with a graduating class of eight--four boys and four girls, out of the eight grade. My maiden name was Porter but I didn't live here at that time. I had previously lived across the Bay. My youngster was very sick and we came to this area so we could get milk right from the cows so he could live. I moved from 39th Ave. to Belmont about 1937, and lived on Sunnyslope Ave., then moved to San Carlos in 1939 and have lived in San Carlos ever since.

BY MRS. RUTH (BARRETT) ROSS

I was brought to Belmont by my parents when I was ten month old in 1914. I lived in Belmont until 1963. Then the family home was taken down and in its place is the Wells Fargo Bank and the big Sequoia tree that is out in front was planted by my dad in the year he came to Belmont.

I have a picture of the first school that was on the Old County Road. My brother went to school in the new school that was built in 1918. My father was on the school board and because he served on the school board so many years they named the second school for him--**The Louis Barrett School**. My father found the records under the first school house in Belmont and they went back to 1861. I think Belmont probably had one of the first schools on the Peninsula.

BY MRS. LLOYD UNDERWOOD

I came to Belmont in March 1943. There was 1,200 people here then. Belmont was really a dream come true as far as I was concerned. We had come to California so that I could study music with Doria Smeal who was a famous French composer at Mills College. Through my interest in music and a perfectly marvelous woman named Beckwith I became interested in the College of Notre Dame and helped them form a group that Sister Ernestine had been working on and had been saving dimes in a little tin can and she had 3,000.00. She wanted to have enough money to

build an auditorium. We formed an auditorium committee and I worked with the Sisters in public relations. Mr. Kyne, at Bay Meadows, helped us with a Day at the Races. Anyway, they had their lovely auditorium. We had a business in Belmont which is known as the Belmont Lapidary. It is still in existence.

During WW-2 I was an airplane spotter. Doris Vannier and I used to watch for enemy planes from a little building up on Newlands Ave. Also Mrs. Barbara Harry and I worked there. We all deserved pins because we had been such good kids. My husband and I have been married for forty-seven years. He was a charter member of the Belmont Lions Club and he served as their second president.

BY MR. HARDY HANNIBAL

I arrived in Belmont June 1, 1926. I worked for the Southern Pacific Co. I retired August 3, 1960. I was station agent for thirty-four years. Later I worked as a police dept. crossing guard for four years. For six months I was school garage supervisor. Then I was manager of the Chamber of Commerce for three and one-half years. On December 4, 1929 I was appointed city judge, which only lasted for a month or two. I have been director of the Belmont County Water District for thirty-one years, from 1937 to 1968.

I will furnish a little information on what happened here. My first experience when I went to work at the S.P. station, Mr. Morrison came in and I said, "good morning." He said, "that's the first "good morning" we have had out of this office for a long time."

It has been a pleasure to work and live here in Belmont. I've enjoyed living and working here very much. I wouldn't live in any other place. Mrs. Hannibal passed away last year. I live at 1250 5th Ave., where I have lived for forty-eight years.

BY MISS MARGARET FISHER

I came to Belmont in 1910. We lived on Ralston Ave. right next to Twin Pines and had three acres. Our home is now the office for the Park Commission. There were two acres in front and one acre in the back on the hillside.

The population of Belmont was about a thousand. Ralston wasn't paved. The big event each day was to meet the five o'clock train. There were crossing attendants at every crossing along the train track.

Dr. Harry Wine often stopped by (from his office in San Mateo) on his way up to the Calif. Sanitarium and gave us a ride in his new automobile. The happiest years of my life have been in Belmont.

I remember seeing the Liberty Bell when they had the 1915 Fair in San Francisco. The train carrying the Bell stopped in Belmont.

I went to school in Belmont. It was a two-room school but it had an auditorium above where they had dances and other entertainment for Belmont. It was located on the Old County Road and O'Neill St.

The Christopherson Bros. gave me my first ride in an airplane from the Belmont airport. It was where the Mae Nesbit School is now. About ten years ago I met one of Christopherson's daughters and she was living in San Francisco.

I remember when Ralston Ave. was paved. It was first paved from the depot to Gardner's Sanitarium. We went to dancing school at what was the old Hutchings Farm, and what was afterward the Alexander Sanitarium. Those were really Happy Days.

BY MR. CURTIS DAVIS

I came to Belmont in 1931. The whole town has been made over since I arrived. I came here with the Greyhound Races. Mr. Tom Keene and Pete O'Connor were the operators. I worked for the International Racing Assn. for 14 years, building and operating tracks in the east. Through the legislature in California we were able to get in here and at that time they had the \$5.00 option paramutuals and we came in and produced the \$2.00 option, which was an evening race. The \$2.00 option was an immediate success. The Belmont dog race track was one of the most successful race tracks in Calif. with the exception of the horses.

I came to California from Oklahoma City where we had been building a race track, but my home was in Staunton, Illinois.

After coming to California in August I met the lady who was to become my wife. However we weren't married until several years later. I married Ruth McGowan. The McGowan family was one of the oldtimers in Belmont. Mr. McGowan at the time I arrived in Belmont, was the postmaster, and the post office was where the Pantano real estate office is now. The building is still there. I have pictures of it.

I left the races about 1939 to work for the Joshua Hendy Iron Works in Sunnyvale. Later they were taken over by the Westinghouse Corp. and I worked for them for twenty-two years. During the war we produced engines for propulsion of ships which transported our troops.

I lived at 1090 Ralston Ave. at the time. The house is torn down now. In 1953 we moved back to 1801 Ralston Ave. and I have lived there ever since.



Formerly Elizabeth Janke, Mrs. Elizabeth D. Johnson, at 72 years.
Grandmother of Doris Vannier.

BY MRS. VANNIER

I was born and raised in Belmont. My parent's name was Johnson, I guess the oldest family here.

Cattle were driven through Belmont from Mexico to the slaughter houses in South San Francisco in my day. Men on horseback drove them and they wore chaps on their legs so they wouldn't get hooked. I was a little fatty and they would lift me over the fence until the cattle got past, so I wouldn't get hurt.

I was one of eight children. I attended school in Belmont on the Old County Road. Carl Janke was my grandfather. He had the picnic ground in what is now Twin Pines Park. He was my mother's father. The picnic grounds were all terraced off and people would bring their lunches and sit. There were summer houses where some would go and there were tables that would sit four or five at a table. Bands would come off the train and they would march up the street playing music. They were just wonderful, and they had some good musicians.

The picnics were sometimes held on Wednesdays but generally were on Saturday and Sunday. Most were family picnics. They patterned the picnic grounds after the German Beer Gardens in Hamburg, Germany. There were dances and some of the people came from San Francisco, and some from San Jose, or from that direction.

BY MRS. ANNA HANSON

I don't live in Belmont now but I came her in 1895. I lived in one house on Ralston Ave. for forty-four years. I was married here, and I am the widow of Albert Hanson. He came here in 1887, and died here ten years ago.

When I came to Belmont the Ralston place was vacant. A Mr. Bishop was the caretaker. After that it was rented to a Mrs. Bull who had a finishing school for three daughters. That evidently didn't pay and the girls married, and after that Dr. Gardner, the head psychiatrist for Napa, an insane asylum, opened a sanitarium there. He ran it until Notre Dame bought it. He died and his family died off. When I was eighteen, he had a daughter just my age, and we used to go to parties there. Right after Dr. Gardner left, Notre Dame sisters bought it. That was years and years later.

Shanty Town was a hunting place out in the marsh. My husband had a shack there at one time, although he lived in Belmont all his life. Hunters would come from San Francisco and they would have shanties and they would go hunting. They'd come and go hunting on Saturday night. There used to be a bathing house down there. My husband would have been ninety-one had he lived (1973) and when he was a young boy he used to go and dig clams when he was about ten, eleven, or twelve years old. He would sell clams to people around town.

The Episcopal church on 5th Ave. used to be on the Old County Road and we all went there. There was the railroad

track nearby and the trains made much noise, and my husband's mother used to say when the church was moved they would go to church. I don't think they ever went to the new church.

There used to be a college in San Mateo where ministers could go to be educated. A Dr. Gardner was our first Sunday school minister and he later became chaplain at Stanford.

There was a school on the Old County Road it was just in a house. I have a picture of the first school that I went to. I came in 1895, and I was in the 4th grade. That school was torn down when the Central School was built. I was married where the Castle Rock Apts. are, at South Road and Ralston Ave. The house burned down and they built the apartments. My husband's home was downtown Belmont where the Buena Campbell Sanitarium is now. That home was built in 1904. There was a house there before that burned down. I wasn't born here but lived here since 1895. I was eight years old when I came here. I'm 86 now. (1973). I had a house right opposite the Lock Drug Store, on the north side of Ralston at Sixth Ave. My children were born there. My house was torn down.

BY MRS. INEZ KELLY

I recall the early school house in Belmont. It was a two-room school and two stories high. The first four grades were in one room and the last four in another room. The building had a big bell and a belfry. There was a stage with a curtain. The school was at Old County Road and O'Neill Sts. The teacher used to ride her bicycle from San Mateo.

Shantytown was down at the marsh. That's where everybody went to learn how to swim. Some people in Belmont got together and built two bath houses and they paid \$5.00 per year for their own little room. They put up a diving board. They were never locked. We could use any room we wanted. We used to all go down there and go swimming. The bath houses were there for a long time. Finally the firemen in Belmont had to have a place to practice on so they burned down Shantytown. When they built Bayshore Highway they had to get rid of Shantytown. There used to be a boardwalk to walk out to Shantytown. There was an old road but at high tide you couldn't drive out to Shantytown because the road was under water. So you parked way up on the Old County Road and walked down. Some people lived out there all the time.

I came to Belmont before the 1906 fire. I was in San Francisco right at the time of the earthquake. I had gone up there for awhile, then came back to Belmont. I was a little kid. I remember that my grandfather, who was a doctor, had a drug store and all the drugs fell off the shelves. He strung wire across all the shelves preparing for the next earthquake, which never came. I remember the old school in Belmont, on the Old County Road and O'Neill Ave. In those days the Old County Road was the highway. Soldiers would march by during WW-1. In those days they marched. As soon as we heard the soldiers coming along the Old County Road the kids would all run out of the room and stand alongside and watch. After the soldiers passed we all went back into our classrooms. The El Camino Real was not moved west of the tracks until 1918.

BY MR. RAY KELLY

What started the politics in Belmont was that the California Sanitarium had a sewer line from their place that went down to the Bay. All the places along Ralston Ave. were connected to this sewer. It got so bad that the State ordered Belmont to condemn the sewer. We had an election in town and formed a Sanitary District. That was the first political effort. Then the people got together and thought that if we got this sewer thing in the picture maybe we ought to incorporate. We got together and we had an election and incorporated. Then Mr. Bourdette took the case to court and claimed we couldn't take in his acreage. The case took two years to settle--until 1928. Then the officers who had first been elected retained their offices, but the City Clerk resigned. I was appointed City Clerk in 1928. Mrs. Kelly's maiden name was Rouselle. Her father was married a couple of times. Her original name was Madison. Her mother married again and married a man by the name of Rouselle. He was the fellow who built the court house in Redwood City. The Rouselles were here before 1900 and they had a big home on what is now El Camino Real. Their orchard was where the Safeway store is. That house was moved over next to ours and it is made of redwood and still looks as good as new.

The only telephone in town was in a little store on the Old County Road. Sometimes at night we'd want to get a call in or out and it would depend on the operator's mood whether he would get up and answer the phone or not. We never knew ahead of time. Or whether he had picked up a message for us. That was before 1910. Even in 1920 there was only one telephone in Belmont.

Bert Johnson lived here
all his life. He was born
January 29, 1904

By Bert Johnson

For me life in Belmont started in a house on the hill at the San Carlos border above what used to be the Spring

Valley Pumping Station, at the south end of Belmont and west of the railroad tracks.

There were three houses in the area then known as Sunnyslope. The Johnsons, Boulwares, and a house owned by Mr. Lermon of the Milwaukee Brewery who used to come down from San Francisco every week-end. This is the only house left in the area from the early days. It was always painted red and still is, on the corner of 5th Avenue and E. Street. Our former house later was remodeled and became "Chartier's Restaurant", until the new building was built in San Mateo. Then it was taken over as Herndon's Restaurant. The former Boulware home was later moved to make room for widening of El Camino.

My first memories were of cows over our back fence. We also had a cow and horse as did all our neighbors. We had kerosene lamps in the house since there wasn't any electricity in this area at this time.

At night we were surrounded by the howling of coyotes. I liked listening to them from the safety of my bed. We had to lock our chickens in the chicken house every night so the coyotes couldn't catch them. Some refused to go into the house and instead flew up into a cypress tree nearby and slept there. Once in a while a coyote would scare a chicken out of the tree and run off with it. We had a two-seat outhouse in back of our house with a frame covered with gunny sacks to hide it. At night we kids would light a lantern to look out to see if any coyotes were around, then run for the outhouse and lock the door. Then the same back to the house.

The Spring Valley Water Co. property ran up to the top of the hill where there was a tall standpipe. The water was pumped up there which gave it enough pressure to send it to San Francisco. Water came into the Belmont pumps from Calaveras Reservoir in back of Niles Canyon and under the Bay at Dumbarton to another reservoir next to the Belmont pumps. On the hillside directly to the west of the pumps was the chief engineer's house (Mr. Hines) and to the side a long bunkhouse for men who came off or on shift at midnight.

The Hull ranch property ran up to the second hill and the fields were always full of cattle. The little valley where Molitar Road runs through to San Carlos used to be full of mushrooms every time the sun would come out after a rain.

Our father used to take us there when we were quite young and taught us to pick only pasture mushrooms and not touch the big ones growing near or in the woods. With all the kids of Belmont and grownups as well there wasn't any case of poisoning I can remember in Belmont.

The butcher used to come around with a wagon full of meat. The butcher shop was in the red building on Old County Road, across from Emmett's store. (Now Country Store) Behind on the north side were barns for horses and wagons.

The grocery man, Walter Emmett, used to come around in the morning with a fast horse and buggy. Later in the afternoon a wagon would come to deliver groceries. When we were all small kids we had our own cow and our mother would put all the extra milk in pans and wait for cream to form on top, then skim off all the cream and when enough was on hand put it in the churn, we all cranked until it turned to butter. Then we would open a tap on the bottom of the churn and drink fresh buttermilk. The butter was pressed into a square wooden box until full. Then it opened on hinges and out came two pounds of butter. When we were older papa sold our cow and milk was delivered by the milkman from Hull's ranch. He would come to the door with a large can of milk, pour it into a quart measure and into your pan.

There was a small Chinese laundry just north of the old butcher shop. The laundryman also had a boat and net. He would row out to the bay and catch shrimp which he would cook, then go around town in a two-wheel cart selling them in bags like peanuts for 5 or 10¢. You pulled the shells off yourself and ate the meat.

The hill behind our house used to be colored orange with so many poppies. In other areas blue lupines and owl plants. At the edge of the woods were shooting stars and baby blue eyes. There were other flowers also.

The cows made trails through the woods which we would follow. Cows evidently don't get poison oak so they cleared the way for us. There were tunnels in the hill and an excavation of a former house that had burned down. The ground was covered with periwinkle where the old house had been in the woods. No one knew who had lived in the old house or who dug the tunnels, even when I was a small boy. One tunnel had a padlocked door on it and we were not able to get in. After many years the door rotted and could be opened. We brought up our flashlights and a rifle and slowly went in until we came to a cave-in and couldn't go any farther. There was a small side room also, where we decided to roast some hot dogs one day. But the fire soon used up the air in the room and smoked us out. Another tunnel entrance was hidden by poison oak for many years, until the cows cleared a trail right by the entrance. So in we went until we came to a cave-in. There was room to go up over the cave-in and down the other side. There the tunnel was full of water and ended at a "T" with a branch in each direction. We went home, put on rubber hip boots, and went to both ends. There was nothing but bare walls and dead ends but we thought we were explorers.

The old school as it is known to us was located on Old County Road and O'Neill on the south-east side. It was a two-story building with two classrooms downstairs and an auditorium on the second floor. The front door was on the O'Neill side as also was the stairway to the second floor. There were two teachers, one for grades 1-2-3-4 and one for 5-6-7-8. Mrs. Thomas taught 1-2-3-4 and Miss Hammerson, daughter of our village blacksmith, was principal and taught grades 5-6-7-8. In front of each room was a long blackboard and a raised platform about one foot high so the pupils in the back could see and the teacher could see them. In the center of the room was a wood stove. The janitor

would start a fire in it before school on cold days. The teacher or one of the older boys would add a log when necessary. Often the teacher would cook her lunch on top of the stove. There was a room next to the upper class room which housed the library. Every Friday you could take out a book for two weeks. They seemed such wonderful books at the time since most of our books at home were really fairy tales. Also there were record books with the names of students way back whom to us were old people. Upstairs was the auditorium with a stage and roller curtain with a picture painted on it. All school plays and graduations were held there as well as town dances and parties. Once in a while a traveling movie with lecture would be held there and all the town would turn out. The bell was hung outside in a balcony on the west side of the building. Just under the eaves was the bar on which the bell swung, extending into the top of the auditorium, with a rope through a hole in the floor, and down into the back of the classroom. A ladder went up the wall to the belfry. The bell was rung at 9:00 A.M., also to come in for recess, at noon and at 1:00 P.M. Since each class was dismissed at a different time, the bell was not rung for dismissal. One noon one of the boys had a bright idea for having a longer lunch hour and sneaked up to the belfry and disconnected the clapper and threw it down. Of course after pulling the rope the teacher had to go out and round up the kids who couldn't hear very well. Then one of the boys discovered the clapper on the ground and told the teacher she must have pulled the rope too hard. He offered to go up and put it back in the bell. The teacher gladly accepted his offer and the bell rang again. There were doors and a stair down the back of the school which ended at a roofed-over platform open at the sides and partitioned down the center. In the rear were the toilets. The south side was for girls and the north side for boys. This is where we played when it rained.

There was a see-saw on each side. There were also swings in one corner of the yard. Mrs. Thomas lived in San Mateo and used to ride her bicycle to school every day. During mushroom season we would pick a bag of mushrooms for our teacher and she would fry them on the stove for lunch. For pointers at the blackboard our teacher used an old horsewhip, which was sometimes used to whack a kid who got too fresh. When a kid was punished at school they rarely told their parents because then they would get it again at home. The first drinking fountain I had ever seen was installed in the school hall by the Jens family with a plate on it "In memory of Hiram Jens."

When one of the boys had to go to the toilet and received permission he would run up one side of the see-saw and down the other with a bang so everyone knew where he went. Also there was continuous parade to the new drinking fountain until the teacher began to ask, "where are you going?" A few too embarrassed to say "to the toilet" would say "to get a drink of water." Teacher would say "no". Soon someone would start to cry and run out of the room leaving a wet seat. After a while teacher would ask, "is it necessary?" The answer only had to be "Yes" or "No". Marbles were the most popular game for the lower grades and you could get a good bag full at the store for ten cents. Baseball was popular and also hockey. Since money was scarce in those days we would go up into the woods and look for a limb about the size of a baseball bat and cut it. Also we would find a small limb coming off a larger one and cut out a suitable hockey stick. A fairly good baseball could be had for 25¢. We rarely had enough kids to have two full teams so we often played with five or six on each side. In later years we began to get bats and gloves for Christmas and games became more popular. Finally the school purchased a basketball and put up hoops and we had enough boys for a team. Kids used to come from San Carlos and Beresford (now Hillsdale) to our school since there weren't any schools in either place until later. Everyone walked to school with their bag lunch, rain or shine, except one family back in the hills of San Carlos whose mother drove them to school in a horse and buggy. There was also a family living on the Rowell ranch at the top of the hill above Ralston Lake (now Waterdog Lake). They drove down to



Miss Alice Thomas's class 1912. Old County Road, Belmont.

school over the then narrow road, rain or shine. They were all so big it seemed to us kids that they were men. They were all serious and would not stand for any foolishness or fresh kids on the playground. The Edsburg family also drove from way out in the reclaimed marsh, where their farm was located.

There were three ranches on the reclaimed marsh land that is now Redwood Shores; the Edsburg's, Frite Balkie and Joe Belatti. Cattle were raised and also lots of hay. All hay not used for their cows was hauled up to freight cars behind Belmont's depot and loaded into them.

It used to be fun riding on the hay wagons. The road was narrow and the loaded wagon had the right of way, so the empty wagon going back would have to pull off to the side of the road. Even though the ground was dry, even dusty, it would be soft down away as the ground was below high tide level. Once in awhile if a wagon was loaded too heavy a wheel would break through the crust and another wagon would be driven alongside and half the load transferred to it. Joe Belatti used to sing as he drove his wagons. He had a good voice and it carried a long distance. Mrs. Belatti used to drive up town every morning in her buggy to shop and get the mail. If my mother wanted some cream she would wait for Mrs. Beletti to go by in her buggy and ask her to bring some cream by on her next trip. Mrs. Belatti was always busy and had no time for gossip so she never stopped but turned in her seat and kept talking to my mother until they couldn't hear each other any more. (By now we had moved from down near the pumping station to our new home where the Dairy Bell is now located.)

Joe Belatti was the last of the farmers on the marshland to give up farming. He then bought the property which is now Christensen's Nursery which included the postoffice property and also the red building just north of the Shell Station. (The old butcher shop) He and Mrs. Belatti lived in this red building for a few years and then the first Mrs. Belatti died. For many years Joe rented his property to Japanese flower growers. He put a short street through from Ralston to his other property and named it Belatti Avenue. Then he built a new home on this street. About this time he remarried. Joe sold a large portion of his property to Christensen nursery, who later built the new post office building, then leased it back to the government.

The Belmont creek used to flow under Old County Road as it now does and then parallel to Old County Road and gradually eastward until it dumped into Steinberger slough behind the old Phelps home in San Carlos. The reason being that a hill was located between Old County Road and Bayshore Highway. The hill started about where Harbor Boulevard now is and extended down to approximately where Bragato Road is located. It was covered with oak and buckeye trees, also a quarry on the north side. The hill was used for fill when Bayshore Freeway was built. At the south end of this hill was an old estate, originally Newhalls, with a long driveway from Old County Road to the house. There was an orchard in front of the house and they kept peacocks which we could hear calling from our house on the hill near what is now Fifth and E Street. Later DeNivernay or DeNivernash took over the old home from Newhalls. He was a writer for one of the San Francisco papers and had changed his name at some early date. They used to have an old Pierce Arrow car which was kept painted and polished at all times. The car was always driven by a Japanese man with a uniform. Outside of shopping they were hardly ever seen. They lived quietly by themselves. In later years when we had a volunteer fire department the kitchen caught fire in the middle of the night. The first thing we looked for was water for our pumper. We found a square wooden-covered box in the back yard which we assumed was the well. All the time we were fighting the fire the old couple sat in the living room and would not leave the house. All this time the Japanese man kept checking with us and going in to comfort them. When we were through and picking up our hose it was just beginning to get a little light as it was near daylight. Then we discovered



Belmont Public School. (Old County Road).

we were pumping from the septic tank!

While we were still young the old County Road was "El Camino Real" and the only highway through Belmont. Just south of the old school there was a sign which read; "All automobiles, motorcycles and other vehicles 10 miles per hour through town." At that time we saw very few autos. Everyone drove a horse and buggy. In front of Emmett's Store on the El Camino corner was the "El Camino Bell" with a sign on it telling a little of its history. Jack Rowell used to watch over it and if some boys would climb up and ring the bell he would come over and scold them.

As we walked north up Old County Road from the old school, on the west side of the road was Harold Hansen's Belmont Garage, a favorite stopping place for us kids who were fascinated by cars which were just becoming popular. Also a favorite stop was a Mike Brown's to see his Flying Merkel motorcycle; our first highway patrol. Harold later married Jessie Coon who was living at Hutchings Home. (Later Alexander Sanitarium) There was a great party but I was still too young to think much about it.



First automobiles passing through Belmont.

Later when the new highway was built, the Belmont garage was moved across the railroad track and relocated on the corner of Highway 101 and O'Neill. The Oasis saloon was very popular when it was harvest time and the hay press was working. It was run in early days by DeRoche. Later by the Baradatte family. Next a home, which later became Baradatt's home. Then a small house where Anchors lived. Mr. Anchor, an old man at that time, was the janitor of the old school. A few years before the old school was abandoned Mr. Anchor died and for the first time I learned that the flag should be flown at half-mast. Mrs. Staugus was then hired as the new school janitor and soon all the windows were shining, which made our teachers happy.

Eranosians lived in the next house. Mr. Eranosian was our Barber. He also had a peanut roasting machine in a glass case mounted in brass, with bicycle wheels and a steam whistle. If you had a spare nickel you could shell peanuts on the way home from school. Next was the Chanticleer Ice Cream and Candy Store with a big rooster painted above the entrance. It was run by Mrs. Barrett who lived in the rooms behind the store with her daughter Winnifred who went to school with us. There were three tables and chairs with heavy twisted wire legs and rows of candy in glass jars on the shelves. You could smell the pure vanilla flavoring used in the ice cream. Cones were .05¢. If you sat at a table and were served in a dish it cost a little more. This store was a favorite with the boys from Reid's school who used to come down whenever they were free to do so. Next on the north was the Church of the Good Shepherd. It was later rolled over the tracks and highway and under electric and telephone wires to its new home on Fifth Avenue. Then came Rowell's barn. Jack and his sister Elizabeth (always called Lizzie) always used a horse and buggy. I can't remember them ever driving a car. Jack Rowell was always dressed in a suit and necktie and took long walks every day. He was always around when something new was being built, or new pipes being laid. He was jokingly called Belmont's sidewalk superintendent and could tell you where every pipe was located. Elizabeth (Lizzie) Rowell kept a nice garden and loved to have people stop by and look at it. She was always friendly to everyone. Lizzie and Anney Yount (formerly Mrs. Schmoll) used to take walks in the evening. One evening Anney Yount was hit by a car and died.

Next came Rowell's home with a hedge around the garden and a gate through the hedge from the street. On the street side of the house were two shops. The first, Eranosian's barber shop. Next a shoemaker. Then came the American Hotel owned by the Rowell family. It was later run by the Tognoli family as a hotel and restaurant. I believe that our volunteer fire department's first banquet was held there. Louis Tognoli had a beautiful voice and had studied for grand opera but decided to stay at home with his family. My mother played the organ in St. Mathews church in San Mateo and asked Mr. Tognoli to sing for Christmas. He consented and when he sang "Holy Night" everyone in church turned around and looked up to the choir loft to see who was singing.

At that time we had a Victrola with a crank. I bought a blank record which was supposed to record it you spoke into

the Victrola while it went around, so Louis sang through a megaphone as my mother played the piano and we recorded it. When we played it back, to our disappointment, it sounded awful. If only we had tape recorders at that time!

Across Ralston Ave. was Emmett's General Merchandise which carried: clothing, shoes, groceries, paints, hardware, coal, kerosene, grain, hay, medicines, lamps and lanterns. They took orders and delivered from Beresford (now Hillsdale) to San Carlos. Most people had charge accounts and if you paid your bill on time you received a box of chocolates. For many years the post office was located in the store.

On the north side of the store were barns where horse and wagons were kept as well as hay and grain and coal. There was another house a distance north of the barns which was the home of Mrs. Favor. She looked very old to we kids. She walked down to the store and post office each morning.

Just about two hundred feet north of the depot there was an ice house. The walls were about two feet thick and filled with sawdust. Ice would be cut from high mountain lakes in the winter, brought down in freight cars and stored in the ice house until warm weather and blocks taken out by the store or ice wagon and sold around town.

Going north from the old school which was the last building on Old County Road in town, there was a white house at the south-east corner of Old County Road and Earnst Street. On the north side was Yount's house and farmyard, with a two story barn in the back. The lower floor for animals. (cows and horses). The upper for hay and the hired mans room. For many years we walked over in the morning with a gallon can to fill with fresh milk. Younts farmed the fields on each side of Ralston, which extended down to the Bayshore highway. They raised hay some years and barley other years. When the hay had been cut the cattle were turned into the fields to graze. Just north of Younts there was an old house which was not occupied at that time.

Then Gene O'Neills house and next to it O'Neill store and the telephone office. I can remember the first candy machine I ever had seen in the front of O'Neill's store. You put in a penny and out came a piece of candy. Next came Hammersons house and a driveway that ran to the back of the lot to a small cottage which they rented out. Then the blacksmith shop. Mr. Hammerson looked like the blacksmith we had to learn about in school; "The Village Blacksmith". The only thing missing was the spreading chestnut tree. The kids all went by the blacksmith shop after school to watch him pull down on a rope to pump the bellows. The coals would glow and the horseshoe would get red. The he would hammer it to shape and put it on the horse's hoof while still hot and hammer in the nails. We wondered why it didn't hurt the horse. Mr. Hammerson liked kids and didn't mind us watching him. He used to make us rings out of horseshoe nails.

The next house I believe belonged to the Thompsons and is still standing. On the corner of Old County Road and Ralston was a building that had served as the post office at an early date and later became Miller's barber shop and home. On the north side of Ralston Caldwell ran the old Belmont hotel as a saloon only. It had a half circular driveway and a roofed deck around the west and south side. Cars would drive in on Sundays and people were served drinks in their cars since ladies did not enter saloons in those days. When prohibition came in it became a speakeasy. On up the Old County Road about four blocks was the Belmont Casino, a rustic building surrounded by trees. As I remember, it was run by Joe Costa and his wife known as Big Annie and she was as strong as any big man. They ran a restaurant with dancing. At that time Belmont had so many speakeasys that in other towns it was called Rattlesnake Junction!

Going down Ralston toward the Bay on the south side after the house on the corner was a barn, an empty lot, and a small house where the Berry's lived until they later moved to the house across the street from Dairy Bell. Going east another empty lot and on the north-east corner of Ralston and Elmer Street there originally stood a brewery building which was not being used as far back as I can remember. It was later torn down and a home built on this corner. The corner was first occupied by the Almquest family and later by George Cross who was section foreman of the Southern Pacific Railroad track in this area. On the east side of Elmer and Ralston there was a home at one time occupied by Roussell's. (Belmont's Queen, Ynez's family) then Hobsons, later McDonnough's, then Perita's, whose daughter became Mrs. Masters.

Next and for many years, the last house on the south side was our house. There were hay fields or cattle down to the marsh where Bayshore freeway would be built at a later date.

On the north side of Ralston going east from Old County Road was Caldwell's Saloon and old Belmont Hotel, a lot extending down to the last two houses on the north side of Ralston. The first house occupied by the Berry's and the next by the Botto's. (Both houses still standing)

The rear of this lot was filled with long rows of fighting cocks raised by Caldwell. He grew potatoes in the field. For many years the fields below were used to raise hay or barley and to graze cattle. At the end of Ralston an old wharf extended into the center of the slough. We always referred to this wharf as the short pier. Belmont slough forked about two blocks out with one branch swinging south and ending at the road on to the farms. The other branch swung north and became O'Neill slough. A long boardwalk ran out to a location just inside the point, to a dock owned by Morgan Oyster Co. Mr. Morgan came in every morning in his launch, tied up, walked up to the depot and caught a train for San Francisco and returned in the evening. This was known as the long pier.

A short road ran north from Ralston and around to the east to the slough. This was the starting point of what was first called Belmont shacks and later Shanty Town. The ground was owned by Eugene O'Neill and leased to those

who wished to build a cabin for weekends while duck hunting. Some built summer homes and had motor boats. All were joined together by board walks since flood tides would cover the ground for some distance. Each shack had a dock and room under the house for a boat. We first tried learning to swim at the short pier. The water was shallow except at high tide and full of sting rays which we were always afraid of stepping on although none of us ever did. Then we moved over to the shacks where some of the older folks went to swim. No one objected to our using their docks and one man "Ed Fleming" tied a rope across from his dock to the next and told me to try swimming next to the rope where I couldn't touch bottom. That's where I learned to swim. Later we moved to Morgan's dock where the water was deeper and I learned to dive. Mr. Morgan was kind to us and allowed us to dress and swim from his boat as long as we kept it clean. Swimming became popular as more Belmont people came down to the slough. Later the Vannier family arranged with Mr. Morgan to have a surplus building from the oyster house to be towed in on a barge. Some piling was driven in and the new bath house set on top. A number of people rented rooms by the year and bathing becoming so popular that Mr. Charley Rich ordered another building to be installed next to the first. He also built a diving board.

A board walk was built from the two bath houses to Morgan's boardwalk so you could get out to the bath houses and not get wet at high tide. Belmont slough became so popular that people would come from other towns to swim.

A favorite question in Belmont was, "what time is high tide?" Many days we would fish for sharks and sting rays as the tide came in and dive in when it was deep enough. They never bothered us although we caught many. Some of the patients from Gardner's Sanitarium and an attendant would come down and swim with us. One man was a powerful swimmer and would dive in and keep swimming without stopping until the others were ready to go home.

It was about this time that a scow schooner named Grace & Amy came in with the first caterpillar tractor, to plow the fields for the ranches on the reclaimed marshland. The scow missed the channel and stuck on the mud bank. This drew a crowd of onlookers, but the crew rowed ashore, drove a stake into the ground, fastened a rope to the stake and to the winch on deck and soon were back in the channel again at high tide. The Holt caterpillar tractor was run ashore and out to the farms.

Many years ago when the Morgan Oyster Co. was harvesting oysters the oyster beds were surrounded by grape stakes driven into the ground close enough to keep the sting rays from entering and eating the oysters. The native California oysters were small and did not sell very well. Oyster spawn was shipped out in barrels from the east and spread on the oyster beds which consisted of eighteen foot deep ground oyster shell. The spawn would attach itself to existing shells and grow into fat blue-point oysters which went to San Francisco restaurants and markets.

Finally the oyster company closed down. Mr. Morgan blamed it on the dams built on local streams. Oysters grow best where fresh water streams empty into salt water. Also pollution came from oil burning ships which were allowed to dump their waste oil in the bay. This pollution was killing the young oysters. Mr. Morgan also told that Jack London (when he was young) used to come out at night, fill his boat with oysters and beat Mr. Morgan to San Francisco. One day when we were going down to the bath-house for a swim, Jack London, who was now famous, sailed into Belmont in his yacht, anchored and walked up Ralston Avenue to Belmont. We never did find out where he went and probably no one knew him. We only knew, after his Japanese cook told us who he was.

After the closing of the oyster company we were free to go out on the oyster beds and fill a gunny sack with oysters. There were many places both along the slough and along the bayshore where we could easily fill a bucket with soft shell clams at low tide.

Shell schooners used to come down and anchor over the shell bar. At low tide they would be sitting on solid beds of ground oyster shells. Put down a gang plank, shovel a wheelbarrow full of shells, back up the gang plank and dump them on deck. When they had a full deck load they would hoist their sails at high tide and go up Petaluma slough to Petaluma and sell the shells to chicken ranches where they were ground up and mixed with chicken feed.

When we were young the marsh was a fascinating place to explore, searching for new clam beds, fishing and watching the great variety of birds that would visit the marsh at different seasons. Ducks used to form huge flocks on the bay, especially after hunting season and on calm days. As we rowed our boat near them they would rise with their wings beating the water and sound like a steam train going by in the distance. The marsh was full of clapper rail and when the whistle blew at Frank's Tannery (which could be heard for miles) all the rail would start their clapper-like noise. At flood tide the rail could not hide because the water was up to the top of the tules and they were easily seen. They were curious and would walk right up to you, if you sat still while fishing. The marsh used to be inhabited by thousands of little mud crabs who would line up at the edge of the water feeding as the tide came in. They would rush up to their holes in the bank when you came too close. I believe the crabs were an important food for the rail. With the increase of sewerage in the sloughs the little crabs began to disappear and so did the rail. Now you are lucky if you see one.

When Ralston Avenue was first paved with hot asphalt and rolled very smooth, a celebration with decorations and dancing was held between Emmett's store and the American Hotel. Soon everyone learned to roller skate, young and old. The only auto traffic on Ralston were the few taxi cabs from the depot to Reed's school and the California Sanitarium. Most of us could skate as fast as the early cars went so it was safe at that time.

The football and baseball field for Reed's school was located where Carlmont shopping center now stands and the gymnasium was in front of the swimming pool. (now Belmeda pool) There was never a charge for attending games

and all the Belmont people would skate up to the school, cheer for Belmont, and skate back down the hill as fast as we could go, with an occasional spill.

The Hackett ranch ran from Reed's school to about opposite Notre Dame Avenue. Most was in apples with cherries, prunes and other fruit trees. A path from the football field went through the apple orchard and down to the main gate. It was used by all the kids as a short cut home from the games and no one objected. However when apples were ripe Mr. Tesser who was in charge would be watching and if someone picked apples without permission he would suddenly appear and order those who picked apples out. However if you first asked him he would always say go home and get a gummy sack and come back. We would go home where we had a two wheel cart made from the rear axel and wheels of an old buggy and come back, each with a sack, and he would show us where to pick. On the north side of the creek we picked green or yellow apples. Our favorite was the Bellflower which was delicious and has just about disappeared now. On the south side of the creek were the red varieties. The ranch was later taken over by the Jordan's. (later to become our Mayor.) We hated to give up our favorite orchard and one day decided to visit Mrs. Jordan and ask for apples. She first asked if we raised pigs since that's where the apples were now going as they fell off the trees. We assured her that we were the pigs who were going to eat the apples and she consented to our filling our sacks. We became good friends from then on.

Jobs were scarce for kids when we were young and we earned most of our spending money cleaning the yard at home or sawing firewood, until prune season came around.

Bourdette's ranch located where the present Carlmont High School stands raised prunes as well as other kinds of fruit. The foreman drove down to the school each afternoon and picked up all who wanted to pick prunes and delivered us home at dusk. The prunes were best for drying when they fell to the ground. We picked them from the ground and filled as many boxes as we could. When we had finished for the day our name would be written on the box and the number of boxes credited to our name would be written in the foreman's book. The boxes of prunes would then be poured into the dipper, a large bin filled with hot water and lye. Then a large screened dipper would lift the prunes out and spill them onto the shaker table which first consisted of a flat table filled with small sharp spikes. The table sloped down to the grading screen which first had openings for small prunes to go through, then medium, and last large. The whole table was shaking so the prunes bounced over the spikes which punched small holes to let moisture out during drying. As the prunes went over the grading screen they fell through to trays which were set out in the sun to dry. We had lots of fun and earned spending money. We ate all the prunes we wanted and they sure were good. The foreman would send some of us into the barn, lock the door and let his goat in. The goat would try to butt us and we would grab his horns and hold them until someone let us out again. Every year we would have some wise guy up to pick prunes who would fill the bottom half of the box with dirt and fill the rest with prunes. When they were dumped into the dipper there was a muddy mess that had to be cleaned up which meant an hour wasted. Needless to say the name on the box was checked and Mr. Smarty ordered to go home and never come back.

The land that would become Brookhaven Subdivision was formerly known as Herman's. You entered at the then end of O'Neill Street at the corner of Sixth Avenue, crossed the existing bridge. (which I believe was made from eucalyptus logs across the creek covered with gravel.) A road made a slight loop south and then west to a home at the base of the hill. There was also a windmill and a well covered with heavy boards which you could lift up and see water a few feet below. Most of the property which ran west to the base of the hill and south almost to Broadway consisted of a variety of fruit trees. As I remember there were some hothouses on the property which were later removed. All the old estates had a border of eucalyptus trees around them. They probably served as fence posts when young, but later became quite large and messy. Needless to say we all had our fill of fruit from this orchard and were never chased out.

Mr. O'Hern, an old man with a white beard who walked straight and looked very dignified, lived in the old house with his son Tim. Mr. O'Hern was a devout Catholic and disappointed that Tim had lost interest. Tim was grown up while we were still kids but we saw him quite often. He had grown up in Belmont and hiked all the hills and waterways. He knew that when a storm broke off a large limb from an oak tree that it often left a basin that filled with rain water. Tim later became a county mosquito exterminator and that's when he put his knowledge of the woods to work. When he had finished putting mosquito poison in the creek he headed for the hills and put oil in every tree or stump that held water and on every small pond filled with rain water. He had so much oil on his work clothes that people used to say, "don't light a match when Tim is around or he might blow up". One day he developed pains in his stomach and went to the old Redwood City Hospital, which was a large old home made into a hospital. He spent his last days there with his old father by his side.

The old Jewell estate ran from the railroad on the east up to the Herman property on O'Neill Street then south to about where Harbor Blvd. crosses the railroad and back up the hill on the south side of what is now Brookhaven. The front on O'Neill St. was enclosed by a beautiful picket fence. Each picket was round and ornamental having been turned out on a lathe. The fence went up high at the posts and lower in between posts to make a wave effect. The entrance gate was located about where the Ross Lamp Store now stands, with a driveway that circled in front of the old house. There was a tankhouse with water tank on top. This building was filled with honey bee hives which were between the rustic walls. When the old buildings were being torn down I went in one night with Smokey Nelson

who had a smoke pump. The bees had swarmed and he carefully scooped them up with a shingle and put them in a hive he had brought along. Fortunately we weren't stung.

We used to be fascinated by a certain tree in the front yard which was full of hummingbird nests. When the new highway was being built on the west side of the railroad the apple orchard next to the railroad was destroyed, much to our dismay. The usual row of eucalyptus trees ran along the fence line of the railroad and all had to be cut down and stumps blasted out. The large oak logs were split by drilling a hole in them and filling it with black powder. We were still in the old school on Old County Road and listened to a lot of noise. We were forbidden to leave the school yard since some of the split logs sailed one hundred feet up. One evening one of the workmen hid a can of blasting powder in some shrubs inside the school fence. The next morning it was soon found by the kids who reported it to our teacher. Our teacher at that time was Amey Lopeman who later became Mrs. Walter Emmett. One of the kids was sent to Emmett's store to notify Walter who had a deputy Sheriff's badge and who came and took the powder away. Soon the man in charge of blasting came for his can of powder and wanted to know who stole his powder. Miss Lopeman soon informed him that he could be in trouble for leaving the powder in a school yard and he quietly left.

When I was quite young and living near the Spring Valley Pumping Station a freight train jumped the track in front of the pumping station which was about ten feet below the track. Some of the box cars tumbled down into the garden and others fell over and broke open. One car was full of shoes and people passing by on Old County Road were picking them up and putting them in their buggys. Soon a railroad detective came and made them put the shoes back. Then the big railroad crane arrived and began hoisting the cars back on the track. While lifting one car up from the yard the chain broke and the car crashed down again. I had a close view but became so scared I ran home and watched from there.

At one time the Old County Road was lined with eucalyptus trees as also was the railroad. As the trees became larger they also became more dangerous since they could fall across the track and the Southern Pacific Co. decided to have them removed. George and Ed LaGarde cut all the trees down and into firewood. Everyone burned wood at that time. Ed and George always came to work on their bicycles, one with a long saw on his shoulder and the other with an axe on his shoulder. We were young and did not own a bicycle at that time and used to admire the LaGarde brothers fine bicycle and how they rode around with all their tools on their shoulders and steering with only one hand. Bikes did not come easily to kids in those days and the only ones we ever owned were used bikes my father bought for us in San Jose when we were much older. Ed and George seemed so much older then. Little did we realize that when we were older we would be going swimming together and later fighting fires together.

About the time the bathhouses were opened Ed bought a motorcycle with sidecar and as many as could piled in and went down for a swim at high tide.

Around this same time Gus Dumatsen started a chicken ranch where Notre Dame now fronts on Ralston. He lived there with his wife and little son Fred. He had a small truck and at high tide drove down to the foot of Ralston Avenue, picking up those who were walking and everyone in town had a wonderful swim in our mud slough until one day a notice appeared on the bath house saying it was unsafe to swim due to increased sewerage. Fewer people went down and finally vandalism ruined the bath houses. Fred Dumatsen later met a tragic death when he was working on the Golden Gate bridge and a wheel broke on the car full of boards that were being stripped from the underside of the bridge floor falling on and breaking the safety net and plunging to the bay.

Halloween in earlier days before trick or treat was thought of, consisted mainly of taking people's gates and hanging them up on a telephone pole or trading with someone else's if it would fit. Most gates lifted up and off two pins which made it easy until a few men began to reverse one pin which then required a wrench to remove the gate.

Emmett's home had a porch on the front and along the west side of the house which was furnished with wicker furniture. Every Halloween we would quietly sneak up on the porch and remove all the furniture and place it on some other porch nearby. When we were all finished Mrs. Emmett would come out pretending not to notice the missing furniture and invite us in for cookies. After we had finished we would hold a conference then bring back all the furniture and be on our way. This would happen every year.

Mrs. Emmett was born in the little mining town of Allegheny in Sierra County. My father was also born there. Mrs. Emmett was always happy and kind to the kids. There was quite a full candy counter in the store and she would always put a few extra pieces in the bag.

The first circus to come to Belmont put up their tent in Caldwell's field east of the old Belmont hotel. It was a one-elephant circus and the elephant pushed the wagons around and lifted tent poles. The circus train was parked on the side track that used to run behind the depot and end about opposite Middle Road. We found a boy our age with the circus and soon became friends. We showed him the town and he demonstrated some of the stunts he would perform, such as stand on the fence and turn a somersault before reaching the ground. The town turned out for the one-night show and the circus picked up and left for the next town. A few years later another one-elephant circus came to town and pitched their tent in the field between Old County Road and the railroad, just north of O'Neill Street, which then crossed the railroad tracks. I heard that while the kids were feeding peanuts to the elephant one of the local men cut off a piece of chewing tobacco and gave it to the elephant who filled his trunk at the water trough and gave him a bath. When they brought in a zebra one of the local men asked who painted that white horse?

Years ago all the fields were filled with burrows of the ground squirrel. They would nest in the fields after the hay

or grain was harvested and along fences when the ground was plowed. There were thousands and they would sit up on their hind legs at their burrow and look around to see if it was safe to explore for food, sometimes giving a whistling sound. They were cute but destructive. Then there was a bubonic plague scare and poison barley was put by each burrow. We followed the fence around the field next to the old school and counted hundreds of dead squirrels, a few rabbits and birds. There were more in the nest we couldn't see. You can hardly find a ground squirrel now.

There used to be a large barn in the field on the south side of Ralston opposite Notre Dame. Inside were two beautiful carriages that had belonged to Mr. Ralston. There were springs over the front to rear axels which formed a part of a circle, from the springs front to rear were layers of leather straps. The coach body was set on top of the leather straps and fastened so it was floating on the leathers which in turn pulled on the springs for a very soft ride. When the door was opened steps folded down. Inside seats were facing each other and the interiors were upholstered in silk, each coach a different color. Up front was the drivers seat and up on the rear another seat for the footman. Then one day the barn was torn down and the coaches disappeared.

There was an old orchard back of the barn but it had been neglected and the squirrels had ruined most of the trees. Later Joe Belatti grew corn in this field. Then it was a Chinese flower garden filled with asters and chrysanthemums.

At one time every vacant lot and orchard in Belmont was used to grow flowers, sweet peas in spring, asters in summer and chrysanthemums in autumn. The Chinese gardeners would all come to the Southern Pacific depot in the evening with giant bundles of flowers hanging from poles on their backs. Some bundles were so heavy I couldn't lift them, yet they would carry them on their backs from one-half mile or more. Later Japanese gardeners moved into Belmont, mostly on the east side of Old County Road. They specialized in giant size chrysanthemums with stems four to five feet long, which were grown under cheese-cloth-covered-frames to keep out bugs and prevent sunburn. The evening trains would all have at least three baggage cars to load flowers into. They were brought to the wholesale flower market in San Francisco. Most of their children couldn't speak any English when starting to school and of course the teachers couldn't speak Chinese or Japanese but in a short time by playing with the other kids they soon mastered English and were delighted to be in school plays which all their relatives attended.

The school which was located where Safeway now stands was to we older kids, the new school, which when first built had only two class rooms and two teachers, Miss Thorpe and Miss Eastwood. Four of us were in the first class to graduate in June 1918. At that time we had to go to Redwood City to take county exams in order to enter Sequoia High School, which was kind of scary. Roy Cloud the County superintendant of schools came to Belmont and we had to recite our poetry to him. He was a very interesting talker and kind of reassuring with us. The school yard was not very large at first since Otto's home was on the west side and Hofmann's on the east side. Every time our baseball or football went over either fence we had to get in and out of the yards before Mrs. Otto or Mrs. Hofmann picked up our ball and kept it for a day. Jim Otto, the son, began to build a boat in his back yard just inside the fence and we were all interested in boats and spent lots of time at the fence. Soon Miss Eastwood became interested and was at the fence watching also and sometimes the bell rang a few minutes late much to our pleasure. We soon knew that another teacher would be Mrs. instead of Miss. When the boat was finished the Ottos moved away and later their property was added to the school yard giving more room to play ball. Two tennis courts were built on the corner of Sixth and Waltermire Avenue at a later date. Soon Belmont began to grow and more rooms were added. Many good times were had in this school auditorium. Everybody in Belmont knew each other and came out to all the card parties, dances, dinners, and meetings.

Sometime in the "twenties" Paul Gershwin Movie Co. came to Belmont and made ten comedys called "Plum Center Comedys." The main characters being Pop Tuttle and a very heavy girl. The sign on the depot was changed to "Plum Center". The old man "Pop Tuttle" originally had an old horse-drawn coach which met the train and after driving all over Belmont finally arrived at the resort where the old folks were playing horse shoes. This was the old Belmont Hotel. Later he bought a model "T" Ford and put the coach body on it. He started out but forgot how to stop it. All the town folks were trying to stop him by piling boxes on the road holding a rope across the road etc. Finally he drove in the front door of Hammerson's former blacksmith shop and out the back door which was cut so as to splinter and look like it had been hit at a great speed.

The glass in windows of the old coach and Ford windshield had been removed and reinforced with 2 x 4" boards. We all enjoyed the ride and also had been told to fall down and let go the rope. We intended to hold on to the rope and stop the car but it didn't stop and we had to let go of the rope. A block and tackle with a strong wire was attached to the front of the Ford and as it met the train and the heavy girl stepped on the back step the front would be lifted up until the girl was inside and seated.

The pictures were shown to the people of Belmont as they were finished in the then only school located where Safeway store now stands.

We had a boy's club called "The Comets" and we asked if we might charge ten cents admission to the next picture to buy baseball suits for our team. They consented and we sold tickets. Then asked the coach at Sequoia High to give us an order to buy the equipment through the school at a discount rate. We were carried away and purchased more than we could pay for. So again we went to the movie people and asked if we could charge ten cents again for the next picture. They asked how much is the bill and how much do you have? Then said we will pay the rest of the bill

and you will act for us without pay as we need you. This we readily agreed to since we would see ourselves in the pictures. The ten pictures were finally finished, the "Plum Center" signs taken down, and our friends departed.

One interesting character in old Belmont was called "Boo". His name was Henry Everts, but he had such a deep voice that he was called "Boo" and that's the only name he was known by for the rest of his life.

He was a carpenter, blacksmith, and all-around handy man, but would only take a job where he worked alone and did things his way. When Harold Hansen built living quarters in back of his garage and above the shop he hired "Boo" to do the building. Heavy timbers had to be lifted up to ceiling for the hoist to lift engines out of cars. "Boo" put them all up by himself, jacking one end up and putting blocks under it then the other until they were up under the ceiling. Later he started a little shop on Earnst St., (now an extension of Waltermire St.) a small blacksmith and machine shop.

About this time someone gave him an old Cadillac with a one cylinder engine. It looked like half buggy and half car. He fixed it so it ran but couldn't get tires for it. That didn't stop "Boo". He forged some circular steel bands and ran his car on wooden wheels. Every morning he would crank it up and drive to the butcher shop with as many of us as would fit riding on the seat or on the box in back. He was very proud of his car and enjoyed kids who behaved and did not mind if we watched him work in his shop. Later he built himself a galvanized steel boat with steel ribs and it never leaked. Later when the dog racing track was being built he got an old house on wagon wheels, probably a portable cook house used to feed the men of the hay press. This he had towed to a lot between the old Bayshore Highway and the Dog Track. He fixed it up as his home and worked on the construction of the track. He made his own beer in a barrel which he enjoyed but most of his friends were afraid to drink it. After the track closed he lived in his house on wheels until one day he died.

Back in the days when Younts had their farm, the hired man who took care of the cattle and had a room in the hay loft of the barn, was rather small, getting old, French, and didn't speak English very well. So not knowing his name or bothering to ask we simply called him, "the little Frenchman" and that's how he was known for the rest of his life. When the hay or grain was harvested then the cows or horses were put out in the field between Elmer St. and what is now Bayshore Highway. Since our house was the last house on the south side of Ralston Ave. at that time we had cattle on two sides most of the time. It was the little Frenchman's job to put the cows in the field after milking and bringing them back to the barn in the evening for milking again. One day a husky big bull was put in the field with the cows. We didn't like that very much since it was also our ball field and we didn't trust the looks of this bull. One day when the bull was near the fence we decided to play bull fighter. We would jump over the back fence and wave a gunny sack until the bull started for us and jump back over the back fence again. Finally when the bull decided to stay close to the fence we kept out of sight. In the evening when the little Frenchman came to round up the cows he got out to the middle of the field when the bull spotted him and started running toward him. Since there was no place to run to or tree to climb he stood still and pointed his cane which he always carried, toward the bulls eyes. The bull ran up to him stopped, snorted, kicked up some dust with his front hoofs and finally turned and walked away. We all breathed a sigh of relief and decided bull fighting was not for us. But it wasn't over yet. A few evenings later he had driven the cows almost to the gate when for some reason the bull came running in. This time he tried to beat the bull to the gate, which probably saved his life. Not long after that the bull was sold and towed to the Belmont slaughter house behind a pickup truck. The truck would start with a jerk. The bull would go a few steps and set his legs and stall the truck. Then with the truck pulling, another man got behind and twisted the bulls tail, that made him move. We weren't a bit sorry to see the bull go because now we could play ball in the field again. We would get away from the houses so as not to make too much noise, but one day my father told me that some of the language he heard was enough to set the grass afire. Soon the little Frenchman was let go and a new and younger man hired to tend the cows and horses. He had evidently become friendly with Boo when he had his shop on Earnst St. opposite Younts barn. Boo now lived in a little cabin in Hacketts back yard. Hacketts now lived in a house facing El Camino Real and the back yard facing Middle Road. So Boo took the little Frenchman to live with him and cared for him till he died.

Haying time was always interesting in Belmont's past. In the spring the plowing, which turned under acres of California poppies and lupins, then the disc harrow and finally the board drag to break up lumps and then the sowing of oats for hay or barley to be threshed. When the hay was ripe it was cut and left on the ground for awhile to dry, then the rake would rake it into long windrows. Then the buck rake would come along the rows and when full, flip over leaving a small pile of hay to be neatly stacked by men with pitchforks into haystacks. After allowing some more time to dry, the large buck rakes would come along and pick up several haystacks and bring them to the center of the field to a hoist and soon a large haystack would be built and ready for the haypress.

Haypress time was exciting to watch when you are a kid. The press is set up next to the big haystack with a platform holding two men with pitch forks who load hay into a box under the press. When it is full they shout, "bale away". There is a man, with two horses attached to a long pole, which is in turn fastened to a drum, and he drives his horses in a circle. A cable fastened to the floor of the box under the press, winds up on the drum and lifts the hay up into the press then is released for another load. When the press is tightly filled the pressure is kept on the hay until the ropes or wires are inserted around the hay and tied. The bottom of the press is released, the front door opened, and the bale of hay rolled over to the pile which soon is a large pile and a wonderful place to play. We always wanted to sleep in the hay and our folks always said no. However one day a cousin was visiting from San Francisco and our

mother gave in to us. So with our blankets we climbed to the top of the big haystack and spent most of the night watching shooting stars. It was amazing how many there were. Finally we went to sleep only to wake about 4:30 in the morning because it was so much brighter than in the house. We were up early and went home to get breakfast but had a long wait for the rest of the family to wake up.

When barley was harvested instead of oats it was sacked instead of pressed. A different mower was used. The grain fell on a belt when cut, was rolled up in a bunch and machine-tied in bundles which were stacked in piles to dry. The early thrashing machine was run from a long belt on a pulley of a steam tractor. The fire for the boiler was fueled with straw from the threshing machine. The grain would come out of a nozzle and into sacks to be sewn on top by the workmen. The men worked long hours and the work was tiring, but they were paid by the ton for hay or the sack for grain, so the longer the day the more money they earned. The cook wagon was always on the job to feed hungry men. The press went around from one ranch to another all summer. Now if you see a hay press it's driven by a tractor, cuts the hay and bales it as it goes along, dropping the bales in rows on the ground.

At one time long ago the section of Belmont east of the railroad was called "Tin Can Alley", because the town dump was at the end of Ralston where the road forked off to Shantytown. The section from Ralston to O'Neill and 6th Ave. to the railroad was called "Tar Flat", since the county kept up the roads in Belmont before incorporation and all the roads in this area had been paved with tar. Two ball clubs were formed; the "Hot Dogs" in Tin Can Alley and "The Buckeyes" in Tar Flat. Neither side had a football so a gunney sack was rolled up, tied with bailing wire and made a satisfactory football. It wasn't good to kick, but fine for forward passing and easy to catch and quite inexpensive. When we started each side had only five members, but it was lots of fun. We played wherever there was a vacant lot or field. As time went on the boys from other parts of town and from Beresford joined one side or the other. Then one day we decided to join forces and form a new club. It was named "Belmont Comets". Now we had enough players for a full team and some to spare. We would give card parties or dances in the only school at that time located where Safeway now stands. Our mothers all made cakes for these occasions and almost everyone in Belmont would attend. The music was supplied for us by some of Belmont's own musicians. George Fisher banjo, Rubie Gardner piano, and Ted Pepin saxophone. Later when the movie people came to town we were able to have suits, bats, balls and a catchers mitt. The rest belonged to each individual. Our teams could now play San Carlos, Redwood City and San Mateo. One of our members, Cecil Ridges, whose father ran a dairy farm near where Chope Hospital now stands, had use of the milk truck between morning and evening deliveries. We would all pile in and off to a game on Saturday. We even drove as far as San Francisco to visit playgrounds, talk to the kids playing ball, and make a date for the next Saturday. We had a lot of fun and made new friends. It was impossible to find a vacant building for a clubhouse so we put up a large tent in Botto's back yard and held our meetings there. One day an older man who watched one of our games asked if he might attend one of our meetings, so we invited him. We usually roasted hot dogs after the meetings. Our new friend was very pleased with our meeting and said he wished grown-ups could conduct theirs as pleasantly and asked if he could come again. Of course we said yes and when the next meeting came he arrived with an arm full of pies and we had a great time. He told us his name which I have long forgotten. He was visiting Belmont for a rest and had come from the east for the summer. Belmont had treated us so good that when Halloween came around we decided to have a hot dog roast and leave Halloween to others. People waited for their gates to disappear and it never happened.

Thomas Pennington Sr. and Tom Jr. used to attend many lodge conventions and usually brought some souvenir home. In the early twenties they brought home a bear cub. It was quite cute when young but continued to grow. Finally a cable was stretched across the back yard so the bear could walk across the yard from his house, attached to a chain, which in turn was fastened to a ring on the cable. All of the family except Tommy used to wrestle with the bear and turn the hose on it, which it seemed to enjoy. About that time Mr. Pennington gave his younger son George, who was always called, "Keko", a set of roller bearing wheels to make a coaster. He asked me to help him since I had made a coaster with a steering wheel and brake. When I saw those wheels, the first I had ever seen with roller bearings, I was full of enthusiasm and suggested we copy Jimmy Murphy's Dusenberg which was racing at the old San Carlos speedway. So I drew a sketch of a coaster with a pointed tail which we could get in. Being wider than the usual coasters and heavier we went to the garage where there was a pile of broken auto axles to fit the wheels and we started building our coaster in Pennington's swimming pool, which was empty due to a leak. The frame was covered with sheet metal.

When it was time to paint our coaster we had to bring it inside so the wind wouldn't blow dust on it. Mrs. Pennington suggested we use the shop next to the bear's house. So when the bear was asleep we wheeled the coaster in the shop and started painting it. White with a blue "8" the same as Jimmy Murphy's racer. The bear became curious and came and stood in the doorway since the chain would not allow it to come inside. This was all right until we wanted to come out again and we were afraid to. So we waited for Tommy to get home and play with the bear, then ran out. We kept this up until the coaster was finished. Then came the try out. We pushed it up Ralston Ave. to a spot above the California Sanitarium. Auto traffic on Ralston at that time was only occasional and it was pretty safe but to be sure we stationed someone at Alameda de las Pulgas to ask any cars which would cross the street to wait, if we were in sight coming down the hill. They did without a fuss when asked. We came down the hill so fast we didn't stop until we reached the highway. We all took turns and didn't mind pushing the coaster all the way up

the hill again. One day Jimmy Dalzel who was the motorcycle cop for the highway in this area decided to come up and clock us to see how fast we came down the hill. We were going forty M.P.H. and felt like we were flying. Now back to the bear.

Jean O'Neill had closed his grocery store and the building now housed the Belmont telephone exchange, and a couple of phone booths. Paul Miller was the night operator and since the switchboard was not too busy we used to sit in and keep him company. One night Mrs. Pennington called for help. Mr. Pennington and Tommy were away and the bear had broken the chain and was wandering around the yard. Mrs. Pennington was afraid the bear might wander away and hurt or scare someone and asked Paul to send some of Belmont's hunters up with guns. They were quickly rounded up and drove up the hill where they met Mrs. Pennington and were quietly escorted in the house so as not to excite the bear. The bear finally went into the basement and the door was shut. The zoo and the nearest circus were phoned and asked to come get the bear, but were not interested. In the meantime the bear decided to leave the basement and since the side walls were made of lattice work, the bear found that he could push his way through. Then he started up the front steps to the house. Our hunters now had their guns ready and as he approached Mrs. Pennington gave the order to fire. They all fired together and the bear dropped dead. It was a sad Tommy who came home later to find his bear dead. The bear was skinned and his hide tanned.

In the middle or late twenties when Belmont was deciding to incorporate some promoters came to town with the idea of building a great harbor in our marshland farms and change the name of Belmont to "Port San Francisco". Streets were cut to form Bayview Heights. A garden was planted along El Camino and filled with trees and shrubs, which were dug up and stolen almost as fast as they were planted. Then the biggest clamshell dredge I've ever seen started to dig a channel through the fields. We were told that if Belmont would vote to change its name to "Port San Francisco" we would soon have all the ships docking here instead of San Francisco, since shippers were tired of San Francisco politics. Elaborate maps were shown at our school auditorium and many an argument was heard. When some people showed displeasure at changing the name, the representative of the harbor said, "Who ever heard of Belmont in another state? Anyone would probably register from San Francisco." Mrs. LaGarde stepped up and said, "Sir, I registered from Belmont in Paris." Then Mr. McGowan, who was postmaster, gave a talk about the difficulty of everyone changing their address at once. The vote was called and "Belmont" won easily.

Houses were being built in Bayview Heights which now refused to be incorporated into Belmont and the dredge continued to dig a channel. Later a hydraulic dredge was brought in to deepen the port. At last the dredge turned the former marsh farmland into a turning basin. Most of the fill from the hydraulic dredge was spread just east of the Bayshore Highway (not yet a freeway) in anticipation of Western Pacific coming up the Peninsula. Southern Pacific of course fought against this. However there was not a deep water channel from the bay channel to the harbor entrance through the shell bar. So one day an old World War One destroyer with its engines and guns removed was towed over the shell bar at a flood tide and anchored in the harbor for all to see. Then along came our great depression and the harbor company went broke and Standard Dredging took over to pay their dredging bills. That was the end of Port San Francisco.

Belmont's first Chamber of Commerce was more of a men's club than a Chamber since anyone could join. All of the businessmen did not join. Meetings were held at the Belle Monte Country Clubhouse once a month and members could enjoy fine dinners and good speakers. Everything was inexpensive at that time. At one time they put on a show in the school house, and it was well attended. The Chamber will be remembered mostly for the wonderful picnic held each year in "Memorial Park" on Pescadero Creek. When the first picnic was held, nobody in Belmont knew where Memorial Park was except myself, and only because I was scout master and had camped there. I made a map and most everyone in Belmont lined up behind me and off we went. Part of the road was not paved and the cars in the rear were covered with dust but when they entered the park and saw its beauty the dust was soon forgotten. Elwood Curtis was picnic chairman and had contacted the Belmont merchants who donated ice cream, beer, and prizes for the races. Mr. Ralston was park superintendent at that time and welcomed us and had our tables ready. He said he was lonely since few people knew about the park and was happy to have us over. So everyone ate lunch, took hikes, went swimming, and ran races. The picnic was such a success that it was held for many years and the town would be almost empty each picnic day.

Belmont's first volunteer fire department has an interesting history. Gus Bayruther, a plumber, had just moved to Belmont from San Carlos. San Carlos had recently started a volunteer fire department, and he talked to Louie Vannier and Chris Jordan about starting a volunteer fire department in Belmont. Soon they had contacted others and a meeting was held in the school house. Some suggested waiting for the city of Belmont, newly incorporated, to start a fire department, but most wanted a volunteer fire department right now. Elwood Curtis was elected Chief since he now ran the Belmont garage and was one of the few men to be in town all day. Dances were held and card parties to raise money for the fire department. We bought buckets for water, gunny sacks to fight grass fires, and also shovels. Then had an old hardwood truck to take us to fires which thankfully were mostly grass fires. Later we purchased an old Seagrave with an air cooled motor which had formerly belonged to San Leandro. It had pictures of cherry trees and cherries painted all over it. We were real proud of it and it didn't cost the taxpayers one cent. We also had water tanks with a hand pump which were strapped on our backs which were all we had before getting a truck with a pump at a later date. A barn was going to be torn down; when some members of the fire department

heard about it they tore it down in exchange for the lumber and our first fire house was built on a lot owned by Dave Burrige across the street from the fire house on O'Neill. Ed and George LaGarde, Smokey Neilson, Jack Marston, and John Staugus did most of the work. The state sent a fire instructor around to put on classes in fire fighting. He first taught all the laws pertaining to fire departments. We found out that we were only a fire department sponsored by a club called "Belmont Volunteer Fire Dept.", since neither city nor county had voted for our forming. Also a good many of the members were under age and we were not eligible for any group insurance. So everyone campaigned for a fire district since many buildings including all of Bayview Heights were outside of the Belmont city limits at that time. The new fire district was formed and a board of fire commissioners elected. Now we could be insured against accidents, but had to be hired so were given one dollar each fire even if it lasted all day. Our uniforms were black jeans and blue shirts and later firemen's caps. Each Christmas the fire department put on a party with songs and small gifts for the kids. The parties were held outside if the weather was clear or in the school auditorium if not. Our volunteer fire department later was rated very high with the Board of Fire Underwriters. They asked Chief Smokey Neilson to take over as Chief of Yosemite Valley and put that fire department on their feet. Our next Chief was Jack Marsten. Later he went to Stanford as fire Chief, and then Roussel Smith left to become Chief of Pan American Airways.

Old Belmont when everyone knew everyone else, when there was no police department, and little need for one, is now gone forever, but not forgotten by the old timers.

March 1974

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Belmont was incorporated on October 18, 1926. On November 26, 1926, the Town Council elected H.C. Caldwell as the City Marshall. Exactly one year later on November 26, 1927, Marshall Caldwell resigned and the City did not have a law officer until December 4, 1929, when the City Council elected W.E. Curtis as Chief of Police at a salary of \$75.00 a month. As the City was growing to the 1,000 mark, the City Council on April 2, 1930, appointed a Deputy Police Officer to serve under Chief Curtis without pay. On April 21, 1930, the City Council fired Chief Curtis and elected Irwin ^{Hanson} Neilson as Chief of Police. The Council also hired William Neilson as his officer. On July 2, 1930, the City Council appointed a second officer and on November 18, 1931, a third officer was appointed to the force.

On December 7, 1932, the City Council appointed Fred Johnson, Jr., as the new Chief of Police. In 1940, Belmont enjoyed a population of 1,228 and in 1942 Wiley Nugent was appointed as police officer to take the place of one of the older officers who went into World War II. The Police Department also obtained a new tool--a two-way radio in its car, loaned to Belmont by San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

On June 10, 1947, Officer Stan Botto was named the new Chief of Police and was fired on July 26, 1948, when the City Council appointed Walter Lindholm as the new Chief of Police. On December 15, the City Council accepted the resignation of Lindholm and appointed James W. Lyall as Chief of Police. The city at this time had a population of 5,567.

The City grew under Lyall with a population of 15,996 in 1960 and 20,900 in 1964. In 1969 Chief Lyall passed away and the senior Lieutenant, George "Bud" Trenam was appointed the new Chief. In 1972, Chief Trenam passed away and Deputy Chief William R. Singer was appointed Chief of Police.

Currently, the Police Department consists of 10 reserve Patrolmen, 21 Patrolmen, five Sergeants, two Lieutenants, one Captain and the Chief of Police. The station staff of eight full-time employees includes five Dispatchers, two Clerk-Typists, a Secretary and one Parking Enforcement Officer. The Department has nine patrol cars.

The current population of the City of Belmont is 25,500 and there are 1.12 total sworn personnel for each 1,000 population. The total Police personnel for each 1,000 population is 1.43.

POSTMASTERS OF BELMONT

By Doris Vannier

1. --- Flashner July 18, 1854
2. John Ellet Feb. 18, 1856
3. Marshall Palmer March 18, 1856
4. Adam D. Castor April 15, 1857
5. Edward Waltermire April 19, 1861
6. Chas. Janke (C.F.) Dec. 18, 1871
7. W.H. Emmett June 8, 1880
8. Harvey H. Bishop July 9, 1886
9. Wm. C. Stevenson June 26, 1887
10. Walter A. Emmett Nov. 25, 1891
11. Eugene O'Neill July 26, 1893
12. Walter H. Emmett Oct. 4, 1897
13. Robert H. McGowan March 4, 1915
14. Edna McGowan Dec. 21, 1922
15. Edna McGowan Feb. 12, 1927
16. Edna McGowan Feb. 19, 1931
17. Kathleen Rousseau Feb. 4, 1934
18. Frank O'Brien Nov. 1, 1941
19. Clair O'Brien Jan. 12, 1947
20. James Furlong Aug. 1, 1947
21. Harold Crandall Nov. 1, 1947
22. Earl Tiernan Mar. 15, 1955
23. Allen Miller Mar. 23, 1956
24. Mr. Lamb ---

BELMONT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENTS

- | | |
|------|---------------------|
| 1950 | Embert Brown |
| 1951 | Alvin L. Penna |
| 1952 | Juel Christensen |
| 1953 | Milton Adamson |
| 1954 | Howard Scott |
| 1955 | Lloyd Malech |
| 1956 | Russel A. Estep |
| 1957 | Charles Cook |
| 1958 | Geo Batis |
| 1958 | John G. Mast |
| 1959 | George Tiegel |
| 1960 | Edward D. Vallerga |
| 1961 | George Williams III |
| 1962 | Dr. Gillogley |
| 1962 | David C. Davis |
| 1963 | William Roth |
| 1964 | Dr. Ernest Nelson |
| 1965 | Rupert Taylor |
| 1966 | Warren McClure |
| 1967 | Edward Morey |
| 1968 | James Rosetti |
| 1969 | Richard Ettinger |
| 1970 | James McGovern |
| 1971 | Chon Gutterrez |
| 1972 | Douglas Warnken |
| 1973 | Claude Turner |
| 1974 | James Greenhaw |
| 1975 | Kenneth Garrett |

DID YOU KNOW, OR DO YOU REMEMBER?

The old Haquette ranch along the south side of Ralston between the present Chula Vista and Alameda? Portions of it later owned by Chris Jordan and parents; now divided into many family homes.

The big reception for Dr. Fairbairn at the Belmont Casino: the place crowded from elbow to elbow, the largest civic affair ever given?

Belmont school auditorium walls decorated with landscape scenes by Victoria Roussell?

The big card parties put on by any and all civic organizations and attended by any and all Belmonters and neighboring towns?

The beautiful American Legion Hall located on lower Ralston about or near the present fire station?

The thousands of cars and people who daily attended the night greyhound races?

The O'Brien family on Middle road: Christine, Frank, Cernel, Paul, and Gerald?

The Fred Johnson family, their neighbors--Fred, Roy, Clarence, Amelia, and Meb?

The Tom Morans?

Mr. and Mrs. Sherman and daughters Alberta, and Carol? Mr. Sherman was a station master here and they lived on 6th Avenue.

The Heineke family on Virginia Avenue, and their children Harold and Madeline?

The Bayreuther family on Middle road; the three girls and two boys?

The Pullens family?



Mr. Irwin (Slim) Hansen - First Chief of Police of Belmont--1930
S.P. railroad station behind him.



1950's Ruth and Curtis Davis, with one of their prize winning Irish Setters.

Belmont
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Minstrel Show
&
Dance



PROGRAM



Schoolhouse Auditorium

BELMONT, CALIFORNIA

Friday, March 13th, 1931

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BELMONT

WHERE
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BELMONT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BELMONT, CALIFORNIA

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City*
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1937