



# SAN JOAQUIN HISTORIAN

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Fall 1989

Number 3

## A Prominent San Joaquin Farmer Dead



**J.R.W. Hitchcock**

*(Reproduced by the Mail Artist from a Photograph by McCullagh.)*

*The "Stockton Mail" ran this picture and story about January 14, 1901. The "Stockton Mail" was established 2/10/1880 and was published daily except on Sunday.*

J.R.W. Hitchcock, one of the best known and most successful farmers of this county, died at the Yosemite house at 12 o'clock last

night of fatty degeneration of the heart. The deceased had been ill for three days, and was under the care of Drs. Beede and Taggart.

Mr. Hitchcock was one of the earliest settlers in San Joaquin, commencing agriculture here when farming was in its infancy. He continued ranching uninterruptedly, purchasing land from time to time, and his estate embraces 1498 acres divided into four tracts in this county, and a very large tract of land in Tulare.

The deceased came to California, crossing the plains, and very soon after his arrival he bought a tract of land twelve miles southeast of Stockton, where he resided up to the time of his death. He was in his seventy-fifth year and left a wife and six children - Harry, Crawford, and George Hitchcock, Mrs. George Liesy, Mrs. Everett Salmon and Mrs. Fannie Liesy, the last named being a resident of San Francisco and a daughter of the deceased by a former wife.

Mr. Hitchcock was a director of the Farmers Union and Milling Company and was more than comfortably well off.

William Harrison Hitchcock (Bill) and James Richmond Hitchcock (Jim) add to the story in an interview for "The Historian." Bill and Jim are grandsons of J.R.W. Hitchcock.

The Hitchcocks first came to this

country in 1628 and 1623; J.R.W. worked for McCormick Farm Equipment in Richmond, Va., before coming to California. He was a good blacksmith.

According to Jim, J.R.W. was one of fifty "guys" who bought a sailing ship in Richmond, sailed it around the Horn, abandoned it in San Francisco and headed for the gold country. J.R.W. filed a farming "claim" in San Joaquin County and one in Tulare.

Documents show that J.R.W. Hitchcock set up farming in San Joaquin County in 1851. The farm was located on the French Camp Road and extended to what is now Highway 120, including nearly 1600 acres. Wheat and rye were the prime crops; J.R.W. had more than 150 horses, including Clydesdales, to work the land. He was the first in the area to work Morgan horses.

After the Civil War, many soldiers were given 160 acres, but not all of them wanted to farm. J.R.W. Hitchcock would buy such land and many deeds of these transactions were left in J.R.W.'s "tin box" when he died. Some of the documents were signed by Abraham Lincoln and by Andrew Johnson.

Other documents in the tin box included tax receipts; the total personal and property taxes for 1863 was \$2715.00 for both State and County. Another receipt shows that J.R.W. worked on the road in lieu of paying a road tax. There are other receipts for paying poll taxes and military taxes in 1865.

In 1892, J.R.W. initiated an agreement with a number of other land owners and the City of Brooklyn (Brooklyn owned the watershed) to irrigate 60,000 acres. The agreement formed a corporation with 20,000 shares of stock and was signed by land owners who agreed to pay \$5.00 per acre to finance the project. The proposal was to dam the Stanislaus River at Knights Ferry and to run canals to a point near Lathrop. The ditches were dug with scrapers, and one of the ditches still exists on the Hitchcock property. The project was a forerunner of the South San Joaquin Irrigation System; however, the corporation failed.

J.R.W. was active in community affairs and in the county fair. According to documents in the tin box, he was an election Alternate in French Camp for two years; there is an 1882 notice of a hearing in Lathrop regarding the railroad right of way as well as a number of similar notices. In 1873 J.R.W. was a delegate to reframe the Constitution for the state; he received \$600.00 in pay but never cashed the checks.

He was a director of the Farmers Milling Flour Co. When the mill was being built, J.R.W. drove to Stockton each day in his buckboard, driving two stud horses, to check the construction. He was called The Virginian, and it took some doing to control the stud horses.

The property was divided among the heirs upon J.R.W.'s death, the smallest portion went to Henry Harrison Hitchcock, the father of Jim and Bill, and three daughters. (The "Mail" listed him as Harry, probably a nickname for Harrison.) Henry was born on the ranch and lived his whole life there. Bill and Jim still own the 233 acres with their nieces and nephews. The other heirs sold their portions. Henry's wife was a Potter, a pioneer family which settled in the Linden area.

Crawford Hitchcock, another of J.R.W.'s sons, served as Chief of Police in Manteca and as Undersheriff under Ansbro. He was appointed Sheriff of San Joaquin County upon Ansbro's death.

Henry's three daughters are now deceased, but Bill lives in Pioneer with his wife Evelyn Long Hitchcock. They have six children to carry on the Hitchcock traditions. Bill attended Stockton High School, catching the traction car daily until he bought a Studebaker touring car in 1932. The school allowed \$3.00 per month for transportation.

Sixty acres of the ranch were in the Manteca High School district, so Jim elected to go to Manteca High. He commuted on the school bus which came within seven miles of his home. Jim married Kathryn Barkley and has lived in Stockton for many years.

# ADMINISTRATRIX SALE

—BY—

## AUCTION

—OF—

# 63 Head of Horses

ALSO

## FARMING UTENSILS

—ON—

# FRIDAY, MAY 24, '01

At 10 o'clock A. M., at the

## HITCHCOCK RANCH

South of Stockton, near Atlanta, San Joaquin Co.

By order of Josephine Hitchcock, Administratrix of the estate of J. R. W. Hitchcock, deceased, I will sell for cash:

3-Two-year-olds.	6 Three-year-olds.	10 Work Horses.
	2 Full Blood Clydesdale Stallions.	
10 Good Driving Horses.	Brood Mares.	1 Saddle Horse.
7 Set of Harness.		1 Mowing Machine.
1 Corbin Harrow.	4 Wagons.	3 Lap Seed Sowers.
1 Harvester.	1 Two-year-old Holstein Bull.	

THE ATWOOD PRINT, STOCKTON.

**C. T. WIGGIN, Auctioneer.**

# AGREEMENT.

The subscribers hereto, being owners of land in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties susceptible of irrigation by a system of water supply and works common to all said lands, do hereby mutually agree that a corporation shall be formed by us the principal purpose of which shall be to acquire by purchase, transfer, statutory claim, appropriation or other lawful ways whatsoever, water, the ownership thereof and the right to appropriate the same to and for any and every useful and beneficial purpose whatsoever, but especially by means of dams, reservoirs, canals, aqueducts and other waterways for the purpose of irrigating our said lands. All other chief uses to which water may be put, including its application as power in manufactories and the production of electricity, and, generally, the sale, rental and distribution thereof for farming and irrigation, and for supplying the people, cities and towns hereafter to be admitted into the system.

## Incorporation.

The name of said corporation shall be FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE WATER COMPANY and the amount of its capital stock \$1,000,000 (one million dollars), divided into 20,000 (twenty thousand) shares.

The subscribers further agree, each with every other of them, as follows:

That he will take and subscribe the said Articles of Incorporation, for a number of the shares of the capital stock of said corporation for which, at said par value, five dollars per acre, reckoned on each and every acre of land susceptible to irrigation under this system, set opposite his name, will pay.

That his said entire tract of land shall, from and after said subscription and until the moneys hereinafter mentioned shall be fully paid, stand, be and remain as security for the payment of the par value of said stock, not exceeding, for the whole, the sum of five dollars per acre of the land; and that he will, on request of the corporation, execute and deliver thereto such instrument, obligation or assurance in writing as shall constitute a first lien on said land for the aforesaid purposes.

This agreement is not to bind any subscriber thereto unless lands to the full quantity of            thousand acres be subscribed for.

Witness

NAMES.	No. OF ACRES.
<i>D. Leitch</i>	400
<i>Wm. Harold</i>	320
<i>Dave Young</i>	320
<i>C. W. Austin</i>	120
<i>Mrs. M. P. Austin</i>	320
<i>B. A. Goodman</i>	100
<i>J. D. Torland</i>	240
<i>G. J. Maggini</i>	140
<i>Dave Reynolds</i>	140
<i>Wm. Weather</i>	80
<i>Wm. Hancock</i>	20
<i>Henry Munger</i>	80
<i>L. S. Lynam</i>	50
<i>Ed. Reynolds</i>	80
<i>Coak Claph</i>	96
<i>Wm. P. Munger</i>	480
<i>Joseph [unclear]</i>	160
<i>Le Junack [unclear]</i>	500
<i>Le M. Cowell</i>	1400
<i>J. A. Phil</i>	320
<i>O. J. Alford</i>	230
	996
	320 2290
	230 5286

<del>Wm</del> Branch	500	Mr D. L. Remington	100
A. G. White	900	E. J. Salomon	80
John Thompson	300	J. Corwell	1130
H. Friedrich	310	J. W. Brown	20
<del>W. A. Thompson</del>	<del>80</del>	<del>Wm. Thompson</del>	<del>100</del>
<hr/>			
G. Eichhoff	220	D. L. Jones	280
J. W. Kincaid	260	Oliver Jones	640
P. J. Chalmers	1670	J. L. Johnson	320
J. R. W. Hallock	1000	J. M. Castle	300
Herlach & Hahn	1000	J. C. Brandt	480
<del>W. A. Thompson</del>	<del>80</del>	<del>Wm. Thompson</del>	<del>100</del>
<hr/>			
E. E. Minger	640	J. L. Evans	140
M. Miller	600	M. D. Howell	70
W. J. Murphy	307	J. W. Cook	80
J. W. Jones	640	L. H. Shupke	300
R. E. Hallock	93	J. B. Lowry	80
J. L. Anderson	500	<del>Wm. Thompson</del>	<del>100</del>
D. C. Castle	220	John D. Brite	180
J. R. Carlson	60	Jacob Myer	80
J. W. Douc	100	Mary Orey	320
H. B. Wright	150	W. B. O'mally	160
		J. H. Owen	60
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# As Ripon Grows

by *Elsie Brown*

The population of Ripon in 1930 was 700, but now the town has grown to 7,100 and is called the ALMOND CAPITAL OF CALIFORNIA.

Ripon dates back to 1857 and was first named Stanislaus Station by William Hiller Hughes, one of the early settlers, who gave the right of way and depot site to the railroad about 1870. The present site of Ripon was a temporary railroad town and was a shipping point for cattle, wheat and barley.

In 1874, A.B. Crooks of Ripon, Wisconsin, started the first store. He wasn't pleased with the name of Stanislaus Station, so after applying to the government for a postoffice, he requested that the name be changed to Ripon after his birthplace in Ripon, Wisconsin. At this time, Mr. Crooks was appointed the first postmaster.

A two-story brick building (which still stands) was a general merchandise store built by Perry Yapple in 1886 on East Main Street. The upstairs became a night meeting place of the Odd Fellows Lodge.

Brick making was an early industry in Ripon; the bricks were used in the construction of barns. But the Yapple building was built with bricks shipped around the Horn.

Land was cheap and the earlier settlers held large acreages for grain and growing livestock. Everything was shipped by riverboat until the railroads were started.

To cross the Stanislaus River south of Ripon, there were two ferries: the Taylor Ferry was located at the south end of Austin Road, and the Clark Ferry was one mile east of Taylor's ferry. They were operated between 1850 and 1870 until a wooden bridge was built. A concrete pier bridge replaced the wooden bridge in 1905.

A small country school was built two miles from town in 1862. It was named for the William Crow family. Between

1910 and 1912, Ripon High School classes were held upstairs in the Yapple brick building. Students from Manteca and Escalon also attended, as those towns had no high schools at that time.

In 1916 the issuance of school bonds was finally approved, and construction of Ripon High School was started. Other schools which followed were Ripon Grammar, Atlanta, Weston, River, San Joaquin and Ripona.

There was only one public high school, so about 1928 the Christian Elementary was started and in 1945 the Christian High School was built. These schools were the result of the influx of Dutch parents who wanted Christian teaching for their children. The Reverend John DeJong was instrumental in getting these projects started.

There are fourteen churches of different denomination around Ripon. Many Scandinavians came to the area in 1912, as plans to build a Swedish Mission Church were organized.

Ripon also had a two story hospital, operated by Doctor N.B. Gould, but it burned to the ground in 1927. The nearest hospital now is in Manteca.

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San Joaquin County  
Historical Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 21, Lodi, California 95241

Robert W. Clottu, Editor

The San Joaquin County Historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets the fourth Monday monthly except July, August and December. Membership includes subscriptions to *The San Joaquin Historian* and the newsletter, *News and Notes*. Non-members may purchase individual copies from the Society. The Society directs the operation of the San Joaquin County Historical Museum.

San Joaquin County  
Historical Museum  
Michael W. Bennett, Director

Micke Grove Park  
11793 N. Micke Grove Road, Lodi  
P.O. Box 21, Lodi, California 95241  
Phone (209) 368-9154 or 463-4119

The first almond orchard near Ripon was planted in 1900 on an experimental basis by Mr. J.P. Watkins. No irrigation was available until the South San Joaquin Irrigation District was organized in 1909. Since that time, California has become the world's largest producer of almonds with Ripon in the center of production. Almonds from Ripon are sent all over the world.

In 1962 the Ripon Almond Blossom Festival was organized by Mrs. Clem Mulholland, and she is still the driving force. It is usually held for three days in late February. All kinds of festivities are arranged for those days. The free tours through the local almond orchards when in full bloom are a beautiful sight.

The Meyenberg brothers were local pioneers in the milk condensing industry beginning in the 1920's. The Meyenberg plant still exists, but it

changed to the production of instant coffee and teas during the 1950's. The Swiss, Portuguese, and Dutch people developed the dairy industry in the area. The small dairies are now slowly disappearing because the larger dairies are more economically feasible. Vineyards are also abundant in the Ripon area.

Other major industries are the Franzia Winery, the third largest producer of California wines, and the Simpson Paper Company, which manufactures printing paper. There are three steel fabricators of equipment for the almond industry, Mid State, Ripon Manufacturing and Guntert Zimmerman.

The "Ripon Record" is the only newspaper; it was established in 1912 and is still published weekly.

A library has been built as a memorial to the Veterans who served their country during World War II.



**The Yapple Building - Before the Turn of the Century**

*Photo Courtesy Jim Spaman, Ripon Historical Society*

The Bethany Home Convalescent Hospital cares for disabled senior citizens and was built on west Main Street in 1963. About 1968 the Bethany Apartments were developed for ambulatory and capable seniors. State-wide attention has been attracted by the excellence of this twenty-four hour skilled nursing care.

Ripon was incorporated in 1945 in order to get police protection, operate the water company and expand the sanitary district.

The Ripon Fire Department was formed in 1921, and the sanitary district in 1944.

During the Great Depression in the 1930's, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) put in curbs and gutters for the city.

The American Legion, Clinton McCausland Post, was founded after the first world war and was named for the first Ripon soldier to die in that war. The Disabled American Veterans also have a post in Ripon.

The two larger parks in the area are Stouffer Park, east of Ripon, and the 258 acre Caswell Memorial State Park located at the south end of Austin Road, five miles west of Ripon.

The new museum is named in honor of Clarence Smit, a former city administrator who is now deceased. It is located east of Ripon in Stouffer Park on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Wes Stouffer. Items of days gone by can be seen there on Wednesdays and Saturdays with Docents in attendance. There are about 70 members of the Ripon Historical Society. Monthly meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month.

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**Mrs. Elsie Brown**  
*is the daughter of the William Cedergren family which settled in Ripon in 1909. Elsie and her husband Ross live on the original Cedergren property. Elsie is a member of the Board of Directors for the Ripon Historical Society.*

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## The Castelanelli Dairy

The dairy industry in California is growing. It is number two in San Joaquin County, producing \$136,000,000 in 1988. It was exceeded only by grapes, which produced \$151,000,000.

The dairy industry, like many others, has become very sophisticated with computers, automatic feeders, nutritionists, milking machines and processing equipment. Modern dairying procedures are a far cry from those exhibited in the Micke Building at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum.

We decided to pay a visit to the Castelanelli Dairy on Armstrong Road near Lodi because the museum exhibit includes a scale model, made of balsa wood, of the dairy. We learned that there have been many changes since the diorama was created in 1967: the size of the herd has gone from 120 to 800 cows, and "free stall" barns have been built. While the general appearance may have changed, the model still attracts a lot of attention and serves a good purpose, particularly among the museums's younger visitors.

The Castelanelli Dairy goes back to 1914, according to Eliso (Lee) Castelanelli, when his mother and father moved to Lodi via Angels Camp where his father worked in the mines. Someone in Angles Camp had told them that Lodi was a lot like Italy in its climate and soil conditions. So they bought 15 acres near the Henderson School and started with 15 cows (they had only one family cow when they lived in Italy). They also planted beans and tomatoes to pay the expenses. The population of Lodi was about 3,000; the water table was about three feet at that time. Lee says that watermelons grown on the ranch had a special flavor because it was not necessary to irrigate them.

Lee was born in Italy in 1906, but in time the family grew to include five girls and three boys. The second move the family made was to a house on Davis Road and Harney Lane which eventually grew to include 13 rooms, all without heat.



The dairy, in those days, was truly a family operation. Lee milked and had to shovel manure. "I hated it because it was so demanding and confining," says Lee. "My mother and father were used to working long hours; they sincerely believed that it was the thing to do. If I suggested a tractor could do the work faster and easier, they would ask why a tractor when we have the horses."

In time the dairy was operated by the three brothers: Lawrence ran the dairy-business operation, Lee ran the machine and mechanical end, and Bert managed the farming of 600 acres. Lawrence and Bert have passed on, but the nephews and heirs of the brothers still own and operate the dairy (third generation).

There was a tremendous development in dairying about 12 to 15 years ago with the building of the "free stall" barns. Castelanelli has two such barns for the cows and one for the heifers. This provides more comfort for the cows because the barns are clean and dry and the automation provides the dairy farmer with more time for a little relaxation.

A good water supply is essential to a large dairy. Water automatically cleans the free stall barns twice each day and runs into a lagoon; the water is recycled after the manure is caught for use on the land. Water is also needed to wash the cows before milking; the Castelanelli's use well water and recycle as much as possible.

The Castelanelli Dairy is now fully mechanized; much of the equipment used on the farm was either made there or modified to fit the needs of the operation. Inventiveness is a worthy asset for any farmer.

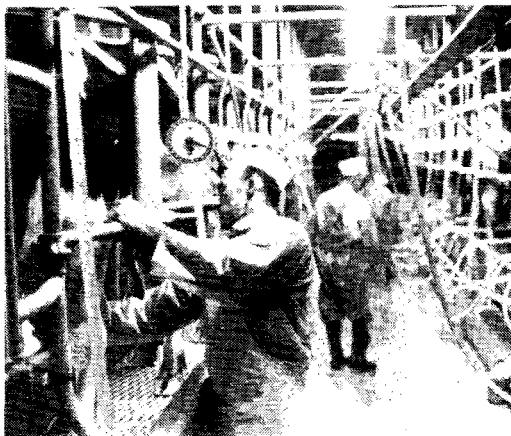
The Castelanelli's raise their own stock of Holsteins, although they do have a few Jerseys. The Jerseys have a greater protein yield which is desirable for making cheese. The first breeding is at 15 months and cows continue to produce for about 10 years. The average yield is 7½ gallons per cow per day. A cow is sold when her production falls below four gallons. The breeding is done artificially; "drop calves" (bulls)

are sold.

The cows are segregated according to age for milking and each cow gets a shower before each milking. The sprinklers are installed in an ell shaped holding corral a short distance from the stanchion type milking barn. The water pressure is amplified by a seven horse pump with about 40 pounds pressure at the nozzles.

The cow is a creature of habit and each goes to its stall without any urging; the food is automatically fed into each stall and the milking machine is hooked up. The pulse is set and it takes about 2½ minutes for each cow. The milk is pumped through pipes into stainless steel tanks for cooling and later into tank trucks for transport to the processing plant. The milk is never touched by human hands. All equipment is sterilized and milkers wear rubber gloves.

It is interesting to compare these modern-day procedures with the milking stool strapped to the dairy farmer's bottom, hand milking into buckets, the milk poured into 10 gallon cans and wheeled out to the road to be picked up by a truck. The cows did not get a shower and the manure was shoveled out of the corral by hand. Lee Castelanelli says, "The tremendous transition made from the 'Horse and Buggy' days in my lifetime is the biggest change that will ever be experienced by the common working man."



*Milkers hook up the milking machine at the Castelanelli Dairy. Ten employees milk 800 cows each day at 11 a.m. and 11 p.m.*

# Those Who Killed Jack the Rabbit

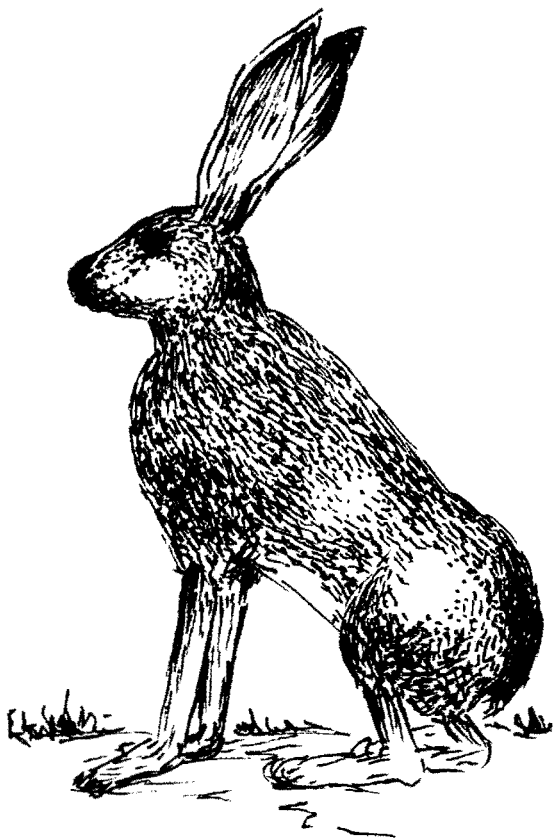
The Jack Rabbit is a large American hare with long hind legs and long ears. The jack rabbits of the Western Plains and valleys have developed an extraordinary cunning and an acute sense of the presence of danger. The name "Jack Rabbit" refers to the outward sign of this acuteness: the long, up-standing, jackass-like ears.

Sudden and excessive increases in the number of jacks in a region is partly due to the destruction of coyotes and other animals whose normal prey is the jack rabbit. Periods of great population growth among jack rabbits will occur if not checked by human or animal means.

Of course, the rabbit played an important part in the life of the Yokuts Indians who lived in this area before the Europeans came. The Indians had rabbit drives very much like those later run by the farmers; but their motives were to obtain food and clothing. Indians killed the rabbits with the arrow, club or stick after they were driven into huge nets by the men and boys. After the drive, the rabbits were taken to the camp where they were skinned. The skins were dried for use in making blankets and the meat was cleaned and dried or smoked for food.

Pioneers in San Joaquin County organized drives resulting in the killing of thousands of rabbits as a necessary salvation for grain and other crops.

We have reviewed reports of these drives in "The Manteca Bulletin." These begin on March 8, 1918 (reporting the second annual drive) and the last was apparently February 14, 1935. One thousand people participated in the 1918 drive, covering a distance of five miles and resulting in a kill of 1500 rabbits. C.L. Hughes was chairman of the committee, and Gus Schmiedt was general superintendent of the line. The committee bought the rabbits for ten cents each and resold them for fifteen cents; there were also buyers from Stockton and some hunters carried their game away, while many were left on the ground.



Chinese and others who bought the rabbits used them for food. G.H. Koster was "head of the grub wagons...the feed, which was abundant and sufficient for the need and cost about \$90.00. About 1000 people were fed."

The Cala Farm Bureau organized a drive on Sunday, March 12, 1922, with A.D. Goodwin in charge of the event. The Bureau solicited funds for expenses, asking for a minimum subscription of \$1.00 and five cents per acre for farmers owning more than 20 acres. "The value in getting the land cleared of the pests will be worth many times the amount of the contributions." The drive started at the San Joaquin River bridge at 8 a.m. sharp and ended at the Jacktone Road east of Cala. The drive ended shortly after noon with a free barbeque. Ammunition wagons followed the drive and ammunition was sold at cost.

Another drive was scheduled for March 9, 1924, with the Farm Bureau taking the lead, but with the assistance of other organizations including the Chamber of Commerce. Planning these events included coverage of a different territory each year. The 1924 drive started at North Ripon Road, marching northwesterly, covering the area between the Southern Pacific tracks and the French Camp Road and ending at East Union Road. This is a strip four miles wide and eight miles long.

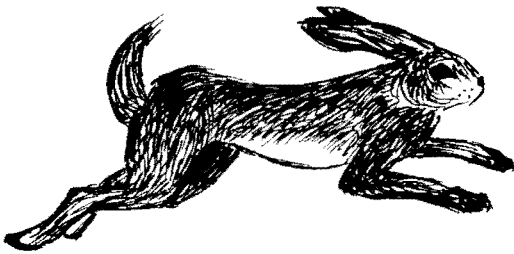
No drive was held in 1924 because of the outbreak of the hoof and mouth epidemic. But the Chamber of Commerce and the Farm Bureau Centers cooperated again in planning a drive for Sunday, February 22, 1925. C.L. Hughes, Gus Schmiedt, and A.D. Goodwin formed the committee to determine the area of coverage and method of financing.

On February 14, 1935, the "Manteca Bulletin" reported that the Nile Garden Farm Bureau Center would join the

Manteca Grange in its rabbit drive on February 22. The committee was composed of Lyle Smith, Phillip Vrieling and E.S. Cozens.

There were other rabbit drives and other sponsors. We talked to Joseph Dubacher, life-time resident of Escalon (nearly 80 years) and discovered that he Sportsman Club was involved. Joe remembers participating in a drive from Lone Tree Road to the Stanislaus River - a line about four miles wide and 5 to 6 miles long. "Several hundred people participated; lined up about 200 yards apart; used shot guns (no clubs), and drove the rabbits into a net strung along the river."

The participants in the drives came from all sections of the state. Jack Williams, currently a resident of Woodbridge, lived in Rodeo during the thirties. He remembers that he and a friend joined a Manteca drive for the sport of the outing - and has a snap shot to prove it.



*Sketches by Elsie Leary*



*Jack Williams and his friend Jim (holding rabbit ears) leaning against his front-wheel drive 1935 Auburn.*

*Funding for the printing of this quarterly issue was provided by...*



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### **Editorial Comment**

*The San Joaquin County Historical Society has a new logo, as you have observed in our masthead. We think that it does a very good job of symbolizing the heritage of our county, and we exhibit it with pride.*

*Readers may have noticed that we published two SPRING editions. The last issue, featuring "Towne Corner," should have been labeled SUMMER 1989. The error is hereby acknowledged and noted for the record.*

**San Joaquin County  
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