

## SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated Nov. 12, 1963

BULLETIN NO. 4, VOLUME NO. 1

February 24, 1964

### SOCIETY NEWS

Articles of Incorporation for the San Joaquin County Historical Society were certified in the office of the Secretary of State of California, Frank Jordan on Nov. 12, 1963. A copy of the articles was also filed with the county clerk's office of San Joaquin County.

At our meeting on December 2nd we were entertained by Vickie Hunter of Stockton, co-author with Elizabeth Hamma of the book "Stagecoach Days" and Randy Steffen of Sacramento, who is the illustrator. Miss Hunter described the research necessary to her book. Mr. Steffen showed slides and lectured with delightful humor about his work. During the coffee hour following, they both autographed copies of the book for members.

Mrs. Alice Perry gave a very interesting illustrated talk at the January meeting on the History of Photography. She had on display a collection of cameras and photographs from 1898 to 1935.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

California Historical Foundation Institute will be held at University of Pacific April 3rd and 4th.

The Jedediah Smith breakfast will be April 4th - - - - Open to the public by reservation.

Tours will be scheduled soon. Watch for the dates.

### HISTORIC FACTS

In October 1963 the San Joaquin County Historical Society received a request from Lucien Gerke, secretary of Society de Etudes Historique at Folklorique of Waterloo, Belgium concerning the Waterloo in San Joaquin County. He stated he was making a study of the Waterloo place names on the American continent. He wished to know how Waterloo in our county got its name

The following item is the story of the naming of Waterloo taken from information given us by Miss Theodosia Benjamin, grand daughter of John H. Tone, and from George H. Tinkham's History of San Joaquin County, 1923.

### THE NAMING OF WATERLOO

The first settlers, in what is now San Joaquin County, came here around 1845. The United States gained possession of this part of California from Mexico three years later, and in this same year gold was discovered. The two events gave impetus to an accelerated influx of people. With the hundreds of miners and adventurers answering the call of "gold" were many farmers

seeking land. Aylmer Drullard belonged to the later group. He came to the Calaveras river area east of Stockton in 1851 and bought a tract of land listed as 160 acres. Actually the ranch was much larger. It was common practice in the early days to use the unoccupied ground adjacent to the original piece. The previous owner of Drullard's place had enlarged his holdings in this manner.

In this general vicinity about eight miles east of Stockton and south of the Calaveras river the essentials of a small village appeared. The location was an important junction in the road. One branch took travelers east to the foothill ranches, while the other branch turned north to Lockford and the Mokelumne river crossing. Before 1870 the community boasted two or three hotels, several saloons, a blacksmith shop, barber shop and a Chinese laundry.

In 1861 John <sup>Blackwell</sup> Blackwell, a wheelright moved from French Camp to set up business in this thriving area. Drullard gave the newcomer permission to make his home and cultivate garden on his holdings. When, after several months in this location <sup>Blackwell</sup> Blackwell found out that title to the property was not clear he decided on a bold move. He intended to pre-empt a portion for his own. To protect the plan he built a fort, stocked it with ammunition and provisions and, with his wife to reload his guns the man was prepared to stave off any who might wish to evict him.

The neighboring settlers banded with Drullard to help dislodge the imposter, realizing that ownership of their own property might be challenged the same way. The aroused farmers even brought a small cannon from Stockton, loaded it with scrap iron from the blacksmith shop and rolled it within range of <sup>Blackwell</sup> Blackwell's fort. The cannon was fired several times but failed to hit the target. Meantime <sup>Blackwell</sup> Blackwell returned fire with his rifle. The only injury of record was that of John H. Tone who had lifted up his arm just as the rifle discharged. Actually, it is believed neither side wished to bring about bloodshed.

The sheriff's office had learned of the property dispute and a deputy was dispatched to the scene. The showdown had been scheduled for nine a. m. but when the farmers learned the deputy was at hand they staged the attack at dawn. The officer hurried to the scene when he heard the firing. In the explanations that followed the farmers were persuaded to take the matter to court. A settlement eventually came about by way of a compromise.

Much joking and many good humored stories followed the "great battle" dubbed in fun the Battle of Waterloo. The name stuck and came to be identified with the place itself. According to a statement by John N. Tone, son of John H. Tone the place had no name attached to it before the dispute. Searching the records for some mention of a name gives us this one reference. When speaking of a voting precinct in this area the author tells about "Isabel's ranch, later known as Waterloo."

Waterloo was of sufficient importance to be assigned a United States post office September 14, 1865. It was discontinued February 12, 1875. No doubt improved roads and better transportation lead to the deminishing importance of the little town.

Although the original village is <sup>no</sup> little more than a bend in the road, the name Waterloo, once linked in jest with the site of Napoleon's defeat will continue to live for years. The school district, a main road and many local clubs and business firms carry the name.

by Celia E. Meyers