

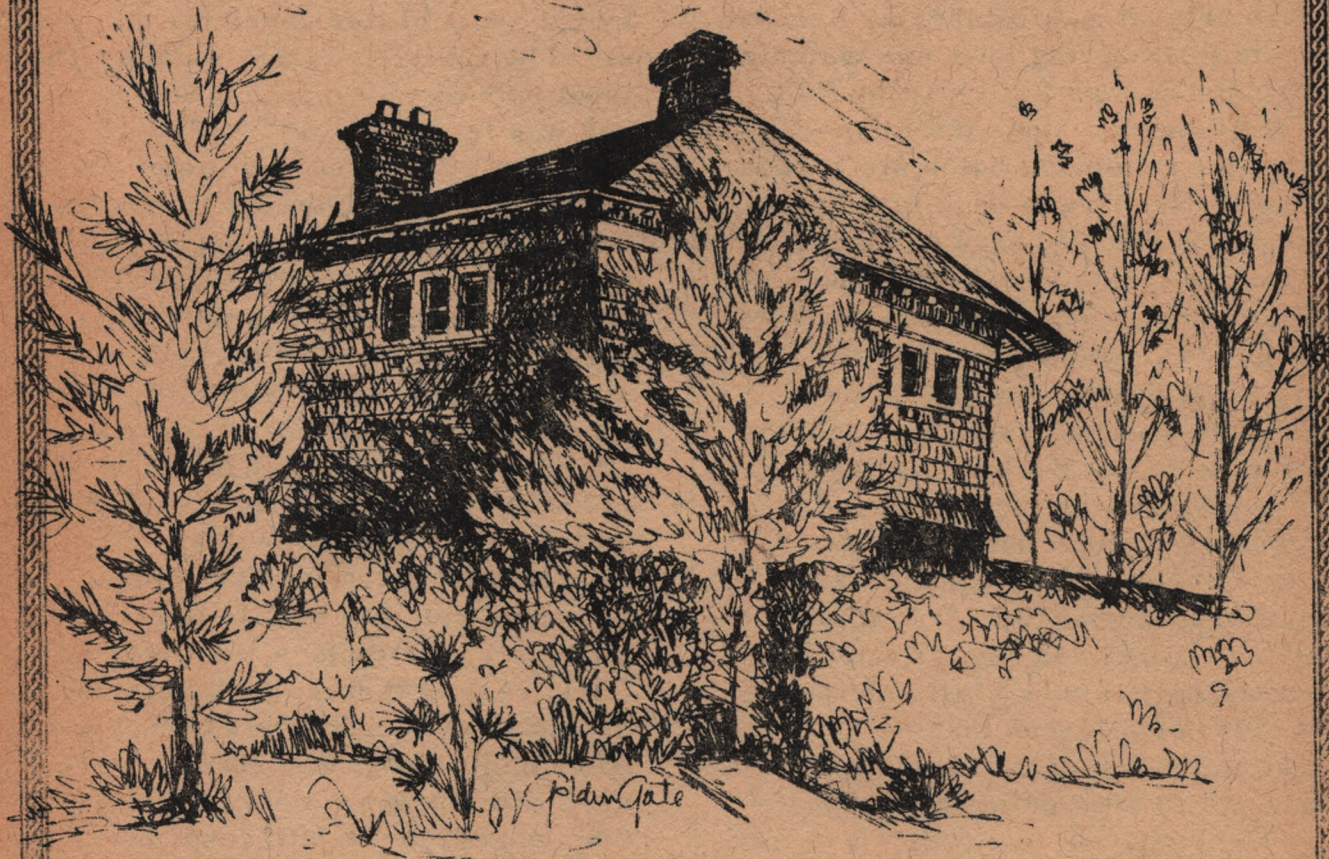
POINT COUNTERPOINT

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POINT RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

WEEK OF SEPT. 13 TO 20, 1968



•INDEX•

CIVIC CALENDAR	19	POETIC CYNIC: WORK ...	13
CIVIC AFFAIRS	16, 17	REMINISCING	4, 5
CURRENT EVENTS	2, 3, 7	TRIVIA	10
THE GREAT FLEA		UNCLE HAROLD	9
EPIDEMIC	6, 7	VIEWS OF SHIMADA	1
HERE & THERE	14, 15		
LETTER TO THE		WANT ADS	18
EDITOR	11		
THE OLD PROF	8		



Views of Shimada

BY GEORGE HAGEN

To an English speaking Westerner, there are many things in Japan that are strange and unusual. One such thing that we were briefed on at Katherine Branson School in Ross during language training and orientation was the Japanese Bath.

Unfortunately, since the American occupation, communal baths are rare. Bathing is now usually done singularly-- which means that you have no cues to follow; you are left to your own devices. One of my first baths was very hot, but I was determined to submerge. I did for a short period of time, and found the water at the bottom of the tub much cooler than that at the top. I thought I had found a secret, but the next day I discovered that the bath water should be stirred before entering, so that it is a uniform temperature throughout. The trick, if there is any, is to plunge in quickly and sit very still. Movement causes the discomfort.

The following night, the bath was even hotter. I stepped in and had to jump right out. My feet couldn't stand the pain. I worked out a little gymnastic exercise, of hanging my legs and arms over the edges of the tub, and dunked my trunk. I emerged red as a lobster, and realized that it was perhaps possible to get the bath water too hot.

Luckily, the first family I lived with had a thermometer on their stirring stick, as well as a cold water faucet and a heater under the tub, which could be controlled from the tub. The ideal bath temperature marked on the rod was from 39 to 43° Centigrade (102-109°F.). The bath water measured 41° C., but felt cool compared with my previous experiences, so I fired up the heater until I was sitting comfortably in 43° C. water. This hot bath when the weather outside is over 80° F. and 80% humidity required a cool shower afterwards, or half an hour in front of a fan. Without either of these, you feel the need of another bath in about thirty minutes.

I haven't mentioned the bathing technique yet. It's best to linger while taking off your clothes, until you're fairly certain that the bath water has been checked, and towels brought in. After undressing, you sit on a little stool and dip warm water from the tub, and scrub off with soap and water. Cold water from the tap is available. Next, you rinse off all soap (the whole family will be using the same tub water after you). Now you are ready to step into the hot bath water for a soaking-- sit still, as long as you like (or can take it). Better do your contemplating in the tub--because ther ain't no throne. That can be a real shock!

-- Hagen-san.

This is Mr. Hagen's second article in a series on Richmond's sister city, which he recently visited, under the auspices of the Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission.



REMINISCING

with DON CHURCH

Excerpts from Early History of Richmond, by Evan Griffins in December, 1938.

PART IV

When the first transcontinental railroad known as the Central Pacific, between Oakland and Ogden was being built, labor was impossible to obtain. To get sufficient help, builders adopted the expedient of importing Chinese. This class of labor continued for what is now known as the Southern Pacific Lines, so that soon we had a sizeable Chinese population, which, upon completion of the railroad, entered other lines of business, mainly as cooks in restaurants and hotels and homes, and as laborers in the manufacture of bricks and explosives.

By 1874 the Portuguese population began to increase. As far back as I can remember there were quite a number of these people here, but they were land owners, who originally left whaling ships in the U. S. Whaling was a very profitable industry in those days, the crew working on a percentage basis of the season's haul. The oil of the sperm whale was the most valuable, as it was used for lighting purposes. Whale bone was used in many ways, the most common usage being for ladies' corsets and hoops for their skirts.

I recall the introduction of kerosene to replace the whale oil in lighting. It was considered more dangerous than dynamite is today. If a lamp was lighted it must not in any case be moved, and to use it in lanterns was certain suicide. Tallow candles were used in our bed-

rooms and kitchens.

Crews on the whalers received handsome commissions, generally, and when discharged in the United States at either New Bedford or San Francisco, they started some most prosperous ranches.

One peculiarity of these ex-whalers was that many wore small gold earrings. The first thing a new crewman did was have his ears pierced. The gold rings which were inserted were to protect them from snow-blindness, according to an old superstition.

I was brought up to believe this class of people were penurious, but that was another grave mistake of the early settlers. These ex-whalers were very thrifty, never lived beyond their means and improved their living conditions as their finances improved. A great many of the early hardships gradually disappeared with improved transportation facilities. The heavy immigration of Portuguese families was a blessing to farmers in the area; They were thrifty and industrious, and filled a long felt need during hay making and hay baling time.

Descendents of the early Spanish settlers were also past masters in the art of binding the reaped grain; however, hayfields didn't tempt them and winter work did not interest them. They also could not be depended upon to show up for work on Mondays.

I was born on December 4, 1863. My old home is still in use after 82 years of service. It formerly stood at what is now 14th and Ohio Streets. It was



moved to 15th and Florida Streets two years ago, and remodeled. My most cherished memory is of the noble women of those early days, who under such adverse conditions, by determination and force of character overcame those obstacles and built better than they knew, and succeeded in producing a very different environment. This community as it is today is a living monument to their courage and devotion.

There was one happening in October 1868 that will ever be fresh in my memory. That was the great earthquake. I was very young, but the excitement was so intense that it left a very lasting impression. People were panic stricken, running in every direction, but mostly to the hills, while stock ran bellowing toward the bay and I got a spanking for standing too near a chimney. This earthquake was not as severe as that of 1906, but of longer duration. The property damage was small, as compared to 1906, and I do not recall any fatalities, while in 1906 the financial loss was estimated at \$300,000 in San Francisco and the number of deaths was not and never will be known.

I recall an incident related by my father, which happened in New York when he was returning to San Francisco from England. He went into the Drexell, Church and Sather Bank, where he was entrusted with a letter to be delivered to an attorney for the Sather Bank in San Francisco at the earliest moment of his arrival. So precarious were the mails at that time that they preferred to entrust this important letter to a stranger. The letter, as it turned out, gave warning to the S.F. Bank that the New York Bank was about to fail; and gave them time to arrange their affairs so that they escaped a suspension. The Sather estate are the donors of Sather Gate and the Campanille at the University of California.

Another incident which I remember was in 1873, when my father returned from a trip to San Francisco and told us that he had met W. C. Ralston who was then president of the Bank of California, who told him that he was intending to build a

seven-story building at the corner of Montgomery and Market Streets. My father asked him if he had lost his mind as the first big earthquake would level it to the ground. Mr. Ralston replied that perhaps it would, but he would have the satisfaction of giving an opportunity to men to earn enough to buy food. This happened during the panic of 1873. These men worked for \$1.00 per day. Ralston did not live to see the completion of the Palace hotel, and neither did my father live to see those walls still standing after the earthquake of 1906. It cost \$150,000 to tear down those walls. One of the finest sights on a Saturday afternoon used to be when Mr. Ralston started down to his home on the Peninsula, driving his carriage and four. This home is known as the Belmont Sanatorium now.

We have lived in a great age. I can recall the ox-teams, faintly remember the first transcontinental trains, the wonderful trek of the lightning express which ran from Philadelphia to San Francisco in seven days in 1876, arriving July 4th, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Independence of the United States.

My parents were three months en route from England to Australia, and then three months from Australia to San Francisco--compare that with the present day transportation systems.

My first trip to San Francisco was from what is now 13th Street--then called Brooklyn, the steamer terminal of the East Bay. This was afterward moved to 1st and Broadway, and in 1868 the long wharf was built, and trains ran on the present 7th Street tracks. The Oakland mole replaced the long wharf in 1878 when trains began running to Richmond. We had one overland, one Los Angeles, and one Sacramento local train. Those who couldn't afford the high price of transportation traveled in "emigrant trains" attached to the rear of freight trains--which took about 21 days to New York. Railroad transportation did not function to Portland until the middle of the 1880's.

TRIVIA

by Mid Dornan

Friends congratulated Joe and Elsie Spinola Thursday, on their Thirty-fourth Wedding Anniversary.

+++++

Reba Slagle recently received a three-hundred dollar Spencer scholarship, from the Mechanics Bank. She plans to attend UCLA.

Larry Slagle is a professional football player, with the Canadian Blue Bombers.

+++++

Sharon Holladay will return home Tuesday, after a six-week visit with her sister, Dorothy McCuan, in Michigan. She will be busy preparing for her wedding in November.

+++++

The highest party of the season was given at the Gordon Campbells last Sunday. They had a brunch party, and one of the guests rented a helicopter, and everyone had a short ride over the bay. The helicopter aroused a great deal of curiosity, and the audience had almost as good a time as the riders.

+++++

Becky Horn will return from Europe September 18. She traveled through England, France and Germany during the summer, and will return to attend the tenth grade at Kennedy High School.

+++++

2 + 3 = 3?????

The Rev. Sam Hendrix of the Point Baptist Church visited their third daughter in Louisiana, when she gave birth to their second grandchild. Recently their second daughter, who resides in Novato, gave birth to their third grand child.

+++++

TOYS!

Larry Stephens and Gary Wilcox, the Richmond manufacturers of charming children's toys, were finally able to fill their order at Pablo Fanques Fair in the Old Firehouse. The oiled walnut pull-toys are now available! Besides the other little animals, they now have a camel, and are working on prehistoric creatures, as the Mastodon and the Brontosaurus. Besides these, there will be a kangaroo and an all-leather armadillo. All toys come in colorful felt purses!



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

In regard to Gertrude Berry's comment on the "American Flag as a Patch," (September 6 to 13 issue), besides apple pies and blood stained feet of Washington's volunteers, the American flag also represents genocide, and I use this term advisedly, committed on the American Indians; wars of expansion against Mexico; economic exploitation of Latin America as well as outright overthrow of established governments such as in the Dominican Republic which parallels Russia's own invasion of Czechoslovakia. Within our own territorial boundaries the American flag has meant the brutalization of more than one minority and the dehumanization of the remaining majority; a system of government which disfranchises the American voter by electing a President through a system of party-appointed electors; a president nominated by a system of party-appointed delegates, a president who runs for election mouthing platitudes about freedom and democracy while we drift closer to the police state we are supposedly saving the world from.

Newsmen bludgeoned in the streets of Chicago and beat to the floor of the Democratic convention hall were not caught in the crossfire of any externally created disturbance, but caught in the act of exposing a lie which a very sick nation fears to face.

The propriety which prevented you from approaching the young girl and expressing your feelings about her flag is a sad comment on the degree to which our society has shut us off from ourselves and from each other. The American flag also represents that same propriety.

++++++ Gary D. Cox

Did you hear about the draftee who asked for an exemption because of extremely poor eyesight? He brought his wife along to prove it.