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May 2014

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OFFICIAL PROGRAM



A.A.A. Sanction No. 2537

SUNDAY, AUG. 16

Program 10c

All Refreshments 10c



33) On Sunday, August 16, 1931, a cloud of blue smoke rose from the starting line at the San Jose Speedway, situated diagonally between Alum Rock and McKee Roads, as the drivers revved-up their engines, and Guest Referee Barney Oldfield — the most famous race car driver in America — signaled the start of the 40-lap Speedway Classic. The highest lap-speed around the high-banked 5/8th mile oval track that afternoon was 86 miles per hour. Oldfield was working as Goodwill Ambassador for the Hudson-Essex Motor Car Company whose San Jose dealer, Normandin-Campen, hosted his visit. How famous was Oldfield? Sufficiently so that police officers, when stopping a speeding motorist, would sometimes ask, "Who do you think you are? Barney Oldfield?" (Caption by Tom Layton with information from Tim Peddy and Dennis Mattish.)

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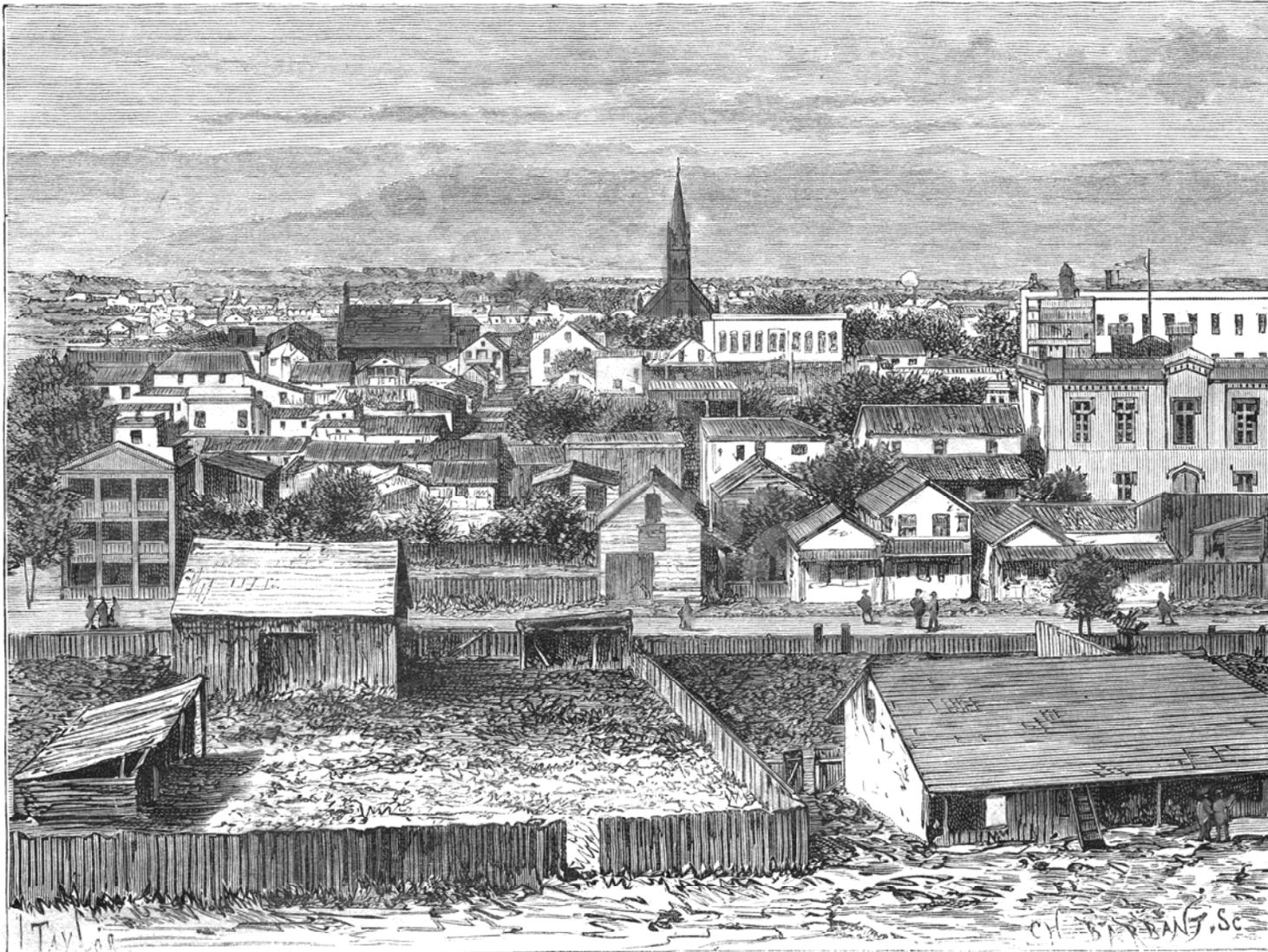
34) 1921: Those of us with a few miles on the odometer may remember Clyde Arbuckle (1903-1998), dressed in his trademark khakis and flat-brimmed Stetson hat, as a long-time member of the Sourisseau Board - to say nothing of his 46-year tenure as San Jose's City Historian, or his musical skills as a banjo-picker. From 1916 to 1925, this modest house at 735 Poplar in Santa Clara was the home of the youthful Clyde and his widowed mother, Mollie Arbuckle. For those who may recall, Mollie Arbuckle was also the stepmother of Roscoe Fatty Arbuckle, one of Hollywood's highest paid actors. In 1918, the Mercury Herald criticized Fatty for never sending a penny to help his stepmother, who was supporting herself by taking in other people's laundry. In 1921, when this photo was taken, Fatty had just been charged with rape and manslaughter in the death of a woman during a wild party at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. The Hearst Newspapers assumed Fatty's guilt and proceeded to vilify him. After three trials, Fatty was exonerated, but the salacious scandal ruined his career as an actor. (Caption by Tom Layton with information from Charlene Duval.)

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35) Circa 1910-15: This live-action view of San Jose's annual Rose Parade captures six flower-bedecked horses pulling the Woodsmen of the World fraternal organization's float east along Santa Clara Street past O'Brien's Candy Shop. Women stand along the curb preserving their complexions against the summer sun beneath raised parasols. Nowadays, you can buy an ice cream cone at a replica of O'Brien's at San Jose's History Park. (Caption by Tom Layton.)

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36) This hand-colored lithograph of San Jose was drawn from a late 1860s photograph that was taken from the three-story water tower on the grounds of Notre Dame Academy. It was published in *Le Tour de Monde*, a French magazine, in an 1876 special edition. The view looks east over San Jose, with the tall spire of First Presbyterian Church in the upper center. The three-story Pavilion/ United States Hotel, a prefabricated building brought from Australia, stands to the left on San Pedro Street, and the 1855 City Hall on Market Street is on the right, with the Auzerais Hotel just beyond. At the lower right stands the Pueblo-period Juan Alvirez adobe, later owned by his son-in-law Peter Davidson. (Caption by Tom Layton with information from Charlene Duval.)

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37) In 1871, the University of the Pacific (founded in 1851) moved from Santa Clara to its new campus east of The Alameda and into a brand new building, shown here, to become known as West Hall. UOP thus preceded by one year the State Normal School at San Jose, which occupied its somewhat larger first building in 1872. In 1923, UOP moved from San Jose to Stockton. A portion of its San Jose campus is now occupied by The Bellarmine College Preparatory School. (Caption by Tom Layton.)

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38) 1901: The Lick Observatory atop Mount Hamilton opened in 1887 and soon became a well-advertised tourist attraction. The Smith Creek Hotel, built that same year by Thomas Snell, was completed at the foot of the mountain to feed and house the stream of visitors. Although “Smith Creek Hotel” is inscribed on the original building, the arched sign beneath the gable reads Hotel Santa Ysabel, the new name given the hotel in 1901. (Caption by Tom Layton with information from Charlene Duval.)

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39) Circa. 1908: The leafless trees signify that it was winter in Morgan Hill when George Besaw (owner of the Western Card Company in Reedley) aimed his camera westward along Third Street past the Monterey Road intersection toward El Toro Mountain in the distance. The Votaw Building (1906) looms on the right and the Mason-Triggs Department Store is on the left, while a hardware store faces the camera from Monterey Road. (Caption by Tom Layton with information from Beth Wyman.)

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40) When the Alisal Theatre opened in East Salinas in April 1947, its marquis — surmounted by a soaring neon crest — glowed with all the confidence of a post-war world. Note the brand new 1947 Jeep station wagon parked in front. Unfortunately, there were already six established theatres, and the Alisal proved unprofitable. Eventually it was converted to a carpet store and then an indoor racetrack for model cars. Its final indignity, as an indoor used goods swap meet, ended on February 1, 2008 when the much-abused building burned to the ground. Today, the site is marked by a stretch of pink sidewalk, leading to a patch of swirling terrazzo, leading in turn to the pale footprint of a box office that now exists only in the fragility of memory. (Caption by Tom Layton with supporting information borrowed from a Salinas theatre web page.)