

QUICKSILVER COUNTY PARK NEWS

Newsletter of the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association

FALL 2001

ISSUE 65

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Pioneer Day, Oct. 13 was a huge success. The weather was perfect and the Day Tunnel gave us wonderful shade shelter. John Slenter conducted the events with his usual mining expertise, Mike Cox enlightened us with stories of the underground workings of the Day Tunnel and Larry Comstock added terrific information on Sherman Day. With beautiful music provided by John Goldworthy and a computer slide show of Sherman Day and the tunnel, the atmosphere was set for enjoyment and increased knowledge of the mining in New Almaden.

A new interpretive sign is now in place at the Day Tunnel. It reflects the history and workings of the site. We dedicated this sign to Kay Carmody as it was her idea to have a sign and a Pioneer Day at this place. Of course, the most important part of the day was the food. These bar-b-que steak sandwiches prepared by Nancy, Becky and Dutch Mapes were outstanding. Who could go wrong with homemade apple crisps and ice cream? With a salute to the flag by the Santa Clara County Park Ranger Equestrian Unit and a prayer by our minister, Art Boudreault, the lunch served as a good beginning to a wonderful event.

Signing off with Dennis Moran's improvisations on the song "Daayo", the hike, ride and saunter down the hill was more than memorable. From this event we have received much more information on the F.P. Faulk, the Martinez and Espinosa families, all former residents of Mine Hill.. All this adds to our archives and gives us great stories for our newsletters.

Kitty



THE REVEREND HENRY BENSON, D.D.
PASTOR AT NEW ALMADEN 1888 – 1890

I'm the Reverend Henry Benson. People say that I am the most learned man to live on Mine Hill. I studied Greek, Latin and Hebrew, and taught these subjects at a university while studying for my Doctor of Divinity. As a missionary I have learned the language of the Choctaw in Arkansas. It was just two years ago, in 1888, that I arrived among you in New Almaden. While living here on Mine Hill, I studied medicine. Shortly I will leave here to become president of the College of the Pacific.

I have helped several men who were interested in learning, and especially two miners who became Methodist preachers. I supported the public school and Sunday school.

I came here, not as a learned man, but as a pastor, to share the lives of the mining families, their joys and sorrows.

My wife Matilda, Matilda, can you stand and be recognized? My wife Matilda is committed to the same task and, in addition, to raising our nine children. Our life is hard but fulfilling, and I value my work as a pastor above all my education.

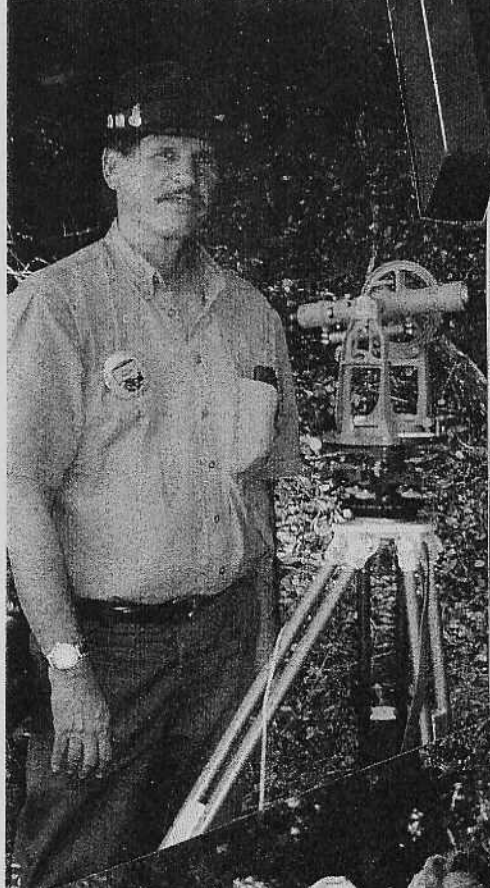
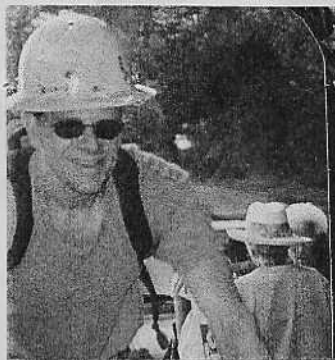
Let us say Grace:

O God, who has given us the rich heritage of the coastal hills and New Almaden, inspire us through the stories of the pioneers to live lives of helpfulness to one another. Bless our food, and bless us in our lives of service.

Amen.

Text prepared by Gage McKinney
Presented on Pioneer Day by Art Boudreault





Pioneer Day
October 13, 2001
Sherman Day Tunnel

Bob Meyer

This was a very special day. The sun was bright. Breezes were balmy. Music drifted across the guests and banners floated above the crowd. Perhaps it was Kay Carmody's Day since her spirit of acceptance and friendliness seemed to pervade our entire group.

We assembled at the Hacienda entrance to the Quicksilver Park about 9:00 AM on a perfect autumn day. Modern vehicles were provided for our quick, smooth transportation to the picnic site at Day Tunnel. Someone was obviously looking after us since there were an abundance of picnic tables, portable folding tables, and bathroom facilities at the site. We decorated the tables with red cloths, several varieties of hats, laminated ink drawing maps and the bowls of M&M's which we expect at such an elegant occasion. When John Goldsworthy began playing his steel guitar it was as if music came from heaven. The acoustics of the area were enhanced by the bluff created when a hillside slid into the three openings of the mine--or so it seemed.

The coffee cake and donuts, by Virginia Hammerness, washed down by the last cups of coffee from Kitty's thermos were nourishing and tasty. John Drew led his annual remembrance trek, this time up the small trail past Mary Hallock Foote's house, past other building sites, and up as far as a pit remaining from an early mine shaft. John did his best to locate foundations of the buildings we could see in John Slentèr's postcard which showed the hillside in that era.

As the visitors began arriving by chauffeured limousine about 11:00 all of the events were in place and fully operating. Art's computer slide show and notebooks "for those of us who are technologically challenged" were continuously popular. The carding and spinning of alpaca wool displayed by Robyn Houts and Lizzy were a refreshing reminder of the innovative means (work) by which our ancestors provided for their livelihood. Robyn had even shaped a felt hat and she didn't resort to the old hatters' artifice of using mercury fumes to stiffen the fibers.

Santa Clara County Parks set up their display table. Also the NAQCPA Company Store which was run by our own docents at tables near the entrance was busy selling books, raffle tickets, calendars, and Gage McKinney's writings. Among those arriving were

Irene and Fred Hauck seen in our slide show photos as small children with their father Fred Hauck who was bookkeeper and secretary in the years following 1910. Both Fred and Irene identified several persons in our pictures and made interesting comments about the Guadalupe School.

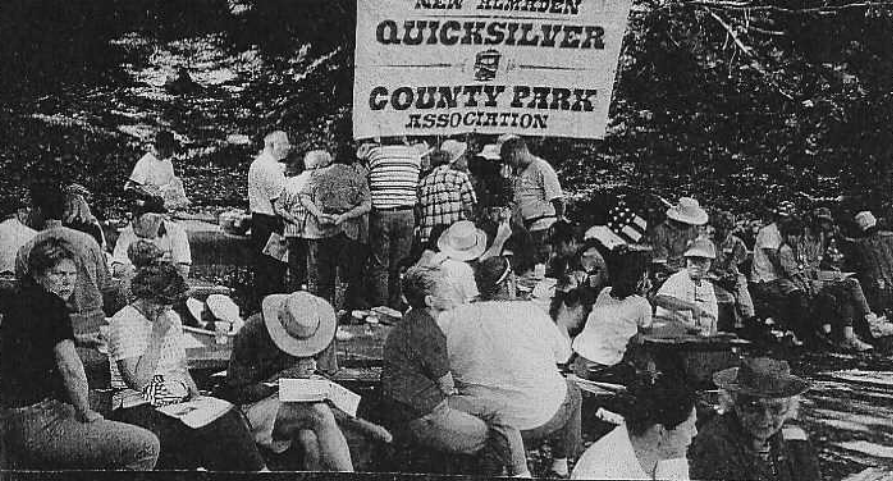
The circuit rider, Reverend Art Boudreault, arrived in time to bless our event and to join us for a delicious lunch. Our noon-time meal was well provided for by Nancy and Dutch Mapes: barbecued beef, cole slaw and fixings and the cobbler dessert were great. We found out from Dutch that grandson Columbus celebrates two birthdays each year--his own and October 12.

Following the meal, John Slenter helped us collect our thoughts and we remembered Kaye Carmody with a moment of silence. Paul Romero spoke on the restoration which is continuing in the park. Kitty Monahan introduced the slide show and also the Haucks.

Among the other events were a biography of Sherman Day by Larry Comstock. Day was skilled in all of the mathematical and engineering accomplishments of the period. At times he was civil engineer, architect, surveyor, map maker, and State Senator; as well as being Superintendent of the Mine in 1863-64.

Mike Cox's description of his explorations of the tunnels when he and his brother were boys, gave many of us the feeling that we were along for the quest. The Day Tunnel was started in 1857 with the purpose of providing level access to the main workings at the Harry Shaft. It could have proven highly successful if it had been completed before the conditions changed. As it was, the workings were 200 feet below the level of the Day Tunnel when it was completed years later. Mike sealed this tunnel and 90 others for Santa Clara County in 1984.

Dennis had used his time well in preparing words to go with the melody to "day-o, day light come and me wanna go home". Dennis somehow put words together which rhymed and told a story about "Monahan in her bikini-o, Romero with his white beard-o and Slenter as a mentor." Fred Hauck Jr. talked about birthplaces he knew of and how the Senator was the important mine during his time. Raffle prizes were arranged for by Marilyn and Pinky. They included the ore cart with a sturdy miner holding a large nugget of cinnabar which had been acquired and completed by John Slenter. This marvelous prize was won by Lewis Pollard but not before many other winners were chosen by the team of Robbie and Columbus.



Sherman Day
Larry Comstock

Sherman Day was born in New Haven, CT on Feb. 11, 1806. His parents were Jeremiah and Martha Sherman Day. His was president of Yale College (now Yale University). Sherman was the grandson (on his mother's side) of Roger Sherman, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a United States senator from Connecticut.

Sherman graduated in 1826 from the Sheffield School of Engineering at Yale College. He specialized in civil engineering and architecture. In 1832, he married Elizabeth Ann King in Westfield, Connecticut. Day's activities in the East are not known to us, but he worked for some time as an engineer in Pennsylvania. While there, he wrote, Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania that related to "history and antiquities, both general and local, with topographical descriptions of every county and all the larger towns in the state". The book contained illustrations of 165 engravings of public and private buildings.

Sherman Day and his family immigrated to California in 1849. He worked as a civil engineer on projects including a survey of the first railroad line between San Jose and Sacramento and one of the first wagon lines over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He assisted in drawing a map of California, emphasizing

mining districts. He prepared a map of the city of San Jose showing city boundaries, rivers, etc. Day was a member of a group that attempted to develop a state college in San Jose. Members of the group included Frederick Billings of Halleck, Peachy and Billings (famous law firm in San Francisco) and for whom Billings, Montana is named. Other members included Mariano Vallejo and John Geary (first mayor of San Francisco and a Major General during the Civil War).

Day was a member of the California State Senate representing Santa Clara and Alameda counties between 1854-1856. He was chairman of the Committee on Internal Improvements. His name appears on several reports:

1. On the use of Camels on the Plains (1855). Co-author was Benjamin Redding for whom Redding, CA is named.
2. Reference to a road across the Sierra Nevada.
3. Report on the Immigrant Wagon Road Exploration.

Sherman Day was hired in 1856 by the New Almaden Company as superintendent and surveyor under the direction of the Director General—Henry Halleck. Day recommended a tunnel be built under Church Hill at the 800 foot level to intercept an ore body from Mine Hill which would also drain and ventilate the works above the tunnel. The tunnel was named "New Tunnel", and subsequently, the Day Tunnel.

In 1858, a federal Injunction closed the mine due to litigation regarding the Castillero title to ownership to the mine. The New Tunnel was at 508 feet. Day left New Almaden in November. In a letter to his father he said: "We packed our trunks and left our beautiful home in New Almaden". He then became a surveyor in Folsom, California. He assisted with a map of the Washoe mines. Later he became chief engineer of the Sacramento, Placer and Nevada railroad. In June 1860, Day gave an address to the freshman class of the College of California. In 1861, the New Almaden mines reopened and Day continued his involvement with the operation.

With the Supreme Court decision in mid 1863 that Castillero's mining claim was fraudulent, the New Almaden Company sold their interest in the property to the Quicksilver Mining Company. The Quicksilver Mining Company operated the property under a lease from the United States government. In December of 1863, Day was appointed Superintendent for the Quicksilver Mining Company and became the government agent reporting to the United States Secretary of the Interior (Secretary Usher). Funding came from the profits of the mine.

In 1864, Day started work on the incline railroad, a series of steep railroads connecting Mine Hill with the Hacienda. By years end, Day left New Almaden because of difficulties working with the Mexican miners and disagreements over his salary with the mine owners. He wrote a final report on the New Almaden mines to the Department of the Interior in November. Later that

year, Day worked on a survey of the Owens Valley. Day became president of the Board of Trustees of the College of California (now the University of California). He was involved with the purchase of land on which the University at Berkeley is located.

Day was appointed United States Surveyor-General in 1868 with offices in San Francisco. He evaluated surveys for correctness and possible fraud. He was appointed United States commissioner to evaluate the Central Pacific railroad. The Central Pacific was the western part of the first transcontinental railroad and was led by the Big Four (Stanford, Huntington, Hopkins and Crocker). There was concern about the quality of the roadwork in Nevada and Day was one of three men selected by the US government to investigate. Their report was favorable to the railroad but failed to uncover the actual poor state of the roadbed in Nevada. He continued his work as the Surveyor-General until 1882. When he was 73, Day conducted a survey of the College Homestead Tract in Berkeley for pig iron. Day died in Berkeley in December 1884 and is buried at the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, California.

