

INTEREST in control of California's delegations to the National party conventions next Spring is warming up already in spite of the war news which now occupies everybody's attention, and in spite of the fact that no definite action will be taken before next January or February. This is particularly so in the Democratic ranks, where it is apparent there will be a struggle between liberal and conservative forces. Governor Olson has already exposed his position as being hook, line and sinker for a third term for President Roosevelt or for any candidate the President will name to carry on the New Deal program. He has not only signified his position, but also is working to perfect a machine which will deliver the California delegation's vote, according to the information which drifts up from the South, where most of the Democratic party wheel horses hail from. At the Mavflower Hotel in Los Angeles last week there was held a caucus of most of the Southern Democratic Assemblymen, and I am told that this was the first move in the battle to get the members into line for the fight to come. It appears that the relief situation in California will be the keynote of the contest, and the shifting of the relief headquarters from San Francisco to Los Angeles is counted upon to provide most of the patronage which is necessary to swing the tide of battle in favor of the Governor's stand. Southern Assemblymen will get their proportionate share of appointments to the jobs which it is expected will be provided by the shift of relief headquarters. Naturally they will be expected to support the Olson delegation when the Governor gets ready to announce the personnel. Opposition is expected, however, from the conservative elements in the party, and in addition to that there is the battle between the two factions of the Young Democrats to reckon with. The left-wing group was defeated at the recent National convention when its delegates were refused seats, but the final test will come at a convention to be held in Sacramento in December.

### Special Session Troubles

The special session of the State Legislature to be called by Governor Olson in December or January may have some bearing on the convention battle, because that session will determine how much control the Governor exerts over the Democratic members and how much strength he has lost since the regular session which ended in June. The prediction is being freely made in the South that Olson will call the special session before the year is out. The need for additional relief funds will be the political hook upon which the Governor will hang his call for the special session, I am informed. But in the background will be the issues upon which the administration was defeated at the regular session, but which the Governor is persistent in advancing once more in an effort to cram it through. He has not given up the idea of new and increased taxes in order to provide more revenue for spending, and the entire revenue program which was defeated earlier in the year is expected to be included in the call for a special session. There is also the issue of the Central Valleys power project which was defeated in the closing minutes of the session after a terrific battle. Those defeats were hard for Olson to take, and information from various Democratic leaders is to the effect that he will try once more to effect their passage. He will face a different Legislature than he did this Spring, however, and most observers agree that his difficulties will be increased rather than diminished. In the Senate he has lost three Democratic wheel horses through appointments he has made, and he has split with Senator Robert Kenny from Los Angeles County over the Thirty Thursday pension issue. Kenny is out to oppose the plan, while Olson is trying to maintain his favorable standing with the pensioners. In the Assembly, where he suffered his bitterest defeats last Spring, the Governor is reported to have lost the support of Northern Democrats who resent his transfer of the relief headquarters to the South.

### Legislative Changes

While there are no vacancies at the present time in the Alameda County delegation to the State Legislature, stories are already making the rounds of possible changes to be effected at the election next year. Most frequent rumors are to the effect that Assemblyman George P. Miller, representing the Fourteenth District, comprising Alameda and portions of East Oakland, will not be a candidate for re-election, but will make the race for the County Board of Supervisors against Harry Bartell. George Irvine, Railroad Brotherhoods representative, is reported to be making a bid for the Fifteenth District, and is reported to be sending out feelers for support already. Republicans, however, will have a strong candidate in that race and feel confident of beating Irvine, who failed to win his party's nomination for the State

Senate last year. Another interesting situation might develop in the Nineteenth Assembly District, where Gardiner Johnson has represented Berkeley and Albany for the past six years. Johnson is reported to be interested in making the race for Congress from the Seventh District, the seat now occupied by Congressman John H. Tolan. Johnson is a Republican, but he has secured the nomination of both Republican and Democratic parties. During the past Legislative session his program included a number of labor bills and liberal measures which many observers believed were forerunners to his campaign for support for the Congressional post. In the Thirteenth District, Assemblyman James M. Cassidy is reported to be in bad repute with his Democratic followers because of frequent absence from the Legislative sessions and because of the large number of important roll calls missed. The Republicans now hold four of the seven Assembly seats from Alameda County, and the party may be counted upon to make a drive to increase the Republican representation.

### The Widow on The Hights

Most of us in Oakland who visited "The Hights" where Joaquin Miller lived knew the late Abbie Leland Miller as a gentle old woman interested almost solely in showing visitors those things which her poet husband left behind and reciting some of the incidents of his career. There was a time when New York and Washington society knew her as a leading figure. Abbie Leland, sister to the Leland's of hotel fame, was born and reared in luxury. She was slow in becoming accustomed to the rough and all but primitive ways of Joaquin. In his story of Joaquin Miller, Harri Wagner wrote that Joaquin met and married her in the early eighties. "Accustomed to all the comforts and social distinction of high-class hotel life, she was not enthusiastic about his log cabin in Washington, nor his unfinished houses on The Hights, so she did not make her home with him until his fatal illness made him helpless." Allen Benson, in the *Dearborn Independent*, gave the following comments of the family life in Washington in 1906: "When Joaquin came to Washington, he found a home awaiting him, also a wife and daughter whom he had not seen for years. The home was one belonging to Mrs. Miller's sister. I was often a guest at this house and never saw a happier home. Joaquin's wife, daughter and sister-in-law treated him as if he were a king, and he treated each of them as if she were a queen. Joaquin would sit at the head of the table with a dull reddish skull cap on his noble head (he had a fine forehead, splendid blue eyes, and a strong nose) and a loose housecoat flowing from his shoulders. He looked something like an ancient king. After dinner he would ask his daughter, Juanita, a very lovely girl then in her twenties, to play on the harp, which she did well. It was wonderful to witness the kindness and courtesy with which this old man treated his daughter. He was gentleness itself. All of this courtesy would not have been so remarkable if the fact had not been that Joaquin and his family never lived together and seldom saw each other. They were friends but they did not mind a continent between them. Joaquin never had stayed much with any of his wives, and he had had three; the first a squaw, by whom he had a daughter; the second, Minnie Myrtle, an Oregon newspaper woman, whom he met on a Thursday and married on a Sunday, by whom he also had a daughter, both of whom he left in a few years; and lastly, Abbie Leland, mother of Juanita." Joaquin was especially devoted to Juanita. He would read her letters to his intimate friends—and they were worth reading. To her he dedicated "The Voice of the Dove" and "Juanitas."

### Sidney Coe Howard

The tragic death of Sidney Coe Howard last week wrote finis to a successful career that seemed determined from the first to follow its own bent and defy direction. Howard's was not a colorful life, in a journalistic sense, but it was a most diverting one. It began here in Oakland in 1891 and carried on uneventfully to the University of California where young Howard was being aimed at the law but interested in dramaturgy. He and Sam Hume found much in common and Leonard Bacon, the poet, provided impetus. It was at Bacon's insistence that Howard first tried his hand at playwriting, dashing off a medieval play about the period of the Black Death. It was eventually produced in Carmel with the locale and characters changed to fit an early California scene in which the amateurs were interested. Meantime Howard's health, never robust, caused a change to the University of California at Berkeley. He did eventually reach Cambridge only to find that he wasn't eligible for his master's degree because of some oversight in German during his prep school days. He wasn't particularly annoyed because Professor Baker's

47 Workshop had already attracted his attention. His first professional job of work was to do a masque for Constance Binney to dedicate a Greek theater in Detroit. The assignment carried a fee of \$500 and a demand that he do the leading male role. He escaped the acting chore by scampering off to Europe to drive an ambulance on the French and Balkan fronts, transferring to the American forces later as an aviator.

### Problems of Plays

After the war, Howard returned to New York and again met Hume who was frantically searching for a vehicle to be used by Alla Nazimova. Howard obligingly turned out something but Nazimova would have none of it. He tried Margaret Anglin next and she too paid advance royalty but on a scenario of her own which was eventually called "Swords." She didn't produce it but Brock Pemberton eventually did, much to his regret. Meantime Howard, again in Europe, had undertaken an adaptation of Vildrac's "The S. S. Tenacity." This was successful as were his adaptations of "Casanova" for Lowell Sherman and "Sancho Panza" for Otis Skinner. At last Howard, who was making a living as a syndicate writer for news services and magazines, began to get into his stride. He hit it with "They Knew What They Wanted," and before long he was taking Pulitzer Prizes, winning Academy Awards for work in Hollywood and, latterly, functioning both as playwright and manager in the Playwright Producing Company. The record of Howard's work will last much longer than his years of toil.

### Another Old Hotel

One old hotel story begets another and soon we may have enough to fill a book. Rich in their associations these historic places have an appeal beyond most others; they were known to the many and their virtues and sins have been fixed in memories. From Santa Cruz, Luther Parker tells me this: "Back in the early '30's down into the '60's when the old California-Oregon stageline was in its heyday there was a stopping place or eating house about a half mile south of Pine Creek, in Butte County. It was kept by the Hecox (or Heacocks), man and wife, after two of their daughters were massacred by the Mill Creek Indians at Roney Flat in Rock Creek. Will Swift, now living at Chico, tells me that 'Uncle' Billy Rose kept this place after the Hecox couple left. Incidentally, I am endeavoring to interest organizations in marking historic sites in the various counties while there are still some of us old-timers still living who have heard from our fathers or grandfathers where certain incidents occurred, especially the sites of massacres by Indians. In this connection the site has been located and marked where Hi Good, the famous Tehama County Indian fighter was killed by an Indian in Acorn Hollow, Tehama County." My correspondent is undoubtedly aware that a great many markers have been placed in recent years and that the work is going on. Probably he believes that the field is so broad and rich that more recruits are needed in its cultivation.

### Wheelbarrow John

Up in Hangtown—Placerville, if you please—they are celebrating today the name and memory of a man who gave the old mining camp two-handed and one-wheel transportation, the wheelbarrow. It is a celebration which will echo in many cities because this man who grasped a chance to afford means to meet needs was one of the founders of a nationally known industry. John Mohler Studebaker was ahead of his family perhaps when he designed a prairie schooner, and in it journeyed across the plains in 1853. He was 19, and it is said that when he landed in Hangtown he had but 50 cents in his pocket. Other men grubbed for gold. John Studebaker surveyed the astounding picture of a new world, and figured out the practical needs. He made wheelbarrows, and wheelbarrows were all important. That Studebaker wheelbarrow, not the first of course, blossomed into graceful vehicles of the horse and buggy days, put its sturdiness into heavy wagons capable to encounter the hazards and obstacles of the trails and slopes, and met another age with the gas engine and streamlined chassis. Hangtown is having its home-coming week. Old-timers from near and far are there this week-end to celebrate the virtues of "Wheelbarrow John" and cement a fellowship which, unless I am mistaken, will be perpetuated through the years. E. Clampus Vitus, order of the foothills, is unveiling a bronze plaque designed by the sculptor, William Gordon Huff. With Mrs. Dana De Claster, I came to the University of California, Scotty Allen, Dr. Ergo Majors and Ergo Alexander Majors Jr., grandson and great-grandson of Alexander Majors, a founder of the Pony Express, present, Hangtown is having a big day. If that city wishes, it may

celebrate any number of anniversaries and acclaim scores of California heroes as former citizens. In Placerville today the *Pony Express Courier*, with Herb S. Hamlin as editor and manager, is giving to an increasingly wide audience the stories of old California. He may yet give us yarns of Coleman, Beckwourth, Fremont, and the many others who put in their daily accounts of adventure and work, chronicles upon which historians have depended for the color and life of the foothills. Hangtown, a first and greatest stop in a highest adventure, may have more stories than any other camp.

### Sailing Toward Gold

Dr. Lewis Gunn made the voyage from Mazatlan to San Francisco in 1849 and wrote in his diary some brief comments which have aided many a story teller in building up the scenes and incidents of the time. His youngest daughter, Mrs. George W. Marston, who was born in Sonora, drew upon this record for her "Records of a California Family" published some 10 or 11 years ago. I am quoting some of the simple words of this pioneer for what they reveal of the sea journey to the gold lands: "The voyage up the Mexican coast was made in a Brig Packet, a vessel without staterooms, owned by the Captain, a Frenchman. Sleeping on deck was the accepted method. Each passenger had his luggage, mostly food supplies, flour, beans, etc., piled near his head, but often in the night one man's mess would be transported to another man's pile. When the sea was rough, boxes tumbled about at night and sleepers were ducked by seas breaking over the deck. Pigs and livestock were brought aboard as the only means of carrying fresh meat." Here are a few of the items: "July 6, 1849—First allowance of water since leaving Mazatlan, June 27. July 8—Mate Gill caught carrying off one of my bags of flour. July 9—Ox killed. Formed in line to receive rations. July 20—Good breeze after calm of several days. Cook baking short cakes. Men gambling. Water half out. July 21—Mate washing boys. One overboard. July 22—French cook baking flapjacks, 12 cents each. July 29—Two pigs to be killed every two days, puddings twice a week. August 4—Color of ocean is green and things from land are floating on it. Birds! August 5—All in expectation of land. At noon Captain said, 'Only 21 miles to Farallone Islands.' Soon in sight. Pelicans and gulls. August 6—Mouth of harbor in sight. Seals on rocks. Strong current. Bold walls; narrow, admirable entrance. Number of vessels, one sloop, black with passengers. August 7—San Francisco."

### Oregon Trail Reunion

Sacramento is honored today as host city for the annual convention of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association, an organization which has explored, glorified, and helped to perpetuate all of the chronicles of a westward movement in America. Each year it selects a historic city in a Western State ("Western" sometimes meaning West of the Mississippi) for its meeting. This year, beginning today and continuing through Tuesday, the delegates will be in Sacramento which is celebrating, back to Sutter's arrival, its centennial. The Knave is told, for he is an honorary member of the association, that Utah pioneers have observed preliminaries as they moved toward the convention; that the Salt Lake caravan traveled the route of the Pony Express and that the experience of tracing old trails to the Mother Lode, down from the hills to the old trading post, Sacramento was a big part of the program for many. The visitors stopped at Virginia City, Carson, Placerville, were regaled with legends by old-timers and stuffed with facts by historians. The convention is reminded that this year 1939 is significant, mathematically, in the story of the West. It marks the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington; the centennial of Sutter; and the hundredth anniversary of the founding of Nauvoo on the Mississippi. Nauvoo, place of refuge for the Mormons on the river lowlands in Illinois, had its big days and decline. It is now "a shrine for the sons and daughters of the pioneers who left the eastern end of the Mormon trail to journey into the Great Basin." So is this year the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of express service in the United States. That story goes back to the enterprising William Herndon who, in 1839, started carrying packages from Boston to New York and charging a fee for his services. Wells, Fargo, Adams and the rest came after to make the package and mail carrying a big business. Russell and Majors gave us the Pony Express—and then we had the railroad! At Sacramento today, tomorrow and Tuesday, the Oregon Trail Memorial Association delegates will be reviewing history, arguing over details and having a good time. They will hear what California, through its Native Sons of the Golden West, has done to mark historic spots, Joseph R. Knowland, speaking, Herbert E. Bolton, pro-

fessor of History of the University of California; Julian Dana, author of "Sutter of California," "The Man Who Built San Francisco," etc.; Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, president of Stanford University and Harry Noyes Pratt, director of the Crocker Art Gallery, will give California messages to the wide group.

### Another John Brown

Before the famous John Brown made his raid at Harper's Ferry there was in California a "John Brown" to become a celebrity on this coast. Edna Bryan Buckbee of Calaveras County, historian and author, in an article for *National Motorist*, has given us some of this man's story which while known to other Californians has been largely neglected. John Brown of California was known also as Juan Flaco (Lean John) to the native Californians of the forties. His successful bid for fame was a spectacular ride from Los Angeles to San Francisco. The story says it was in 1846 when the Americans took California from the Mexicans. Captain Gillespie's band of gringos at the Pueblo of Los Angeles, outnumbered by beleaguering Mexicans, desperately needed help from Commodore Stockton who was in the North. Brown volunteered to make the dangerous dash through enemy country. He got the "message to Garcia" in a hair-raising ride. Mrs. Buckbee says it was in four days. Others have claimed it was in a shorter period. It was an epic dash that makes the Paul Revere classic seem like a pleasant little canter. Brown was a middle-aged man at the time. Swedish born, he had served as a cabin boy in the British navy, had fought with Bolivar in South America and had served in the armies of Micheltorena and other Californians. The concluding paragraph of Mrs. Buckbee's narrative of this soldier of fortune links John Brown, or Juan Flaco, with Stockton and reads: "A hero of generous impulses, strictest integrity, magnificent courage, and kindly, genial disposition, Juan Flaco died, unhonored and unsung, in Stockton, San Joaquin County, California, in 1859. The body of this adventurer, who began his career as a British sailor, lies in an unknown grave somewhere near the Port of Stockton." Adds the *Stockton Record*: "There's one for our historically minded societies to figure out."

### County's Most Famous Bell

The Knave: As is well known, Don Luis Peralta was the first white settler to locate in the Eastbay, in 1820, and for meritorious military services rendered the Spanish crown was given one of the largest land grants in California, which comprised all the land now occupied by the cities of Oakland, San Leandro, Alameda and Berkeley. The name of his rancho was "Rancho San Antonio," and the dividing line of his eastern domain was San Leandro Creek, which divided his rancho and that of his neighbor, Jose Joaquin Estudillo, whose rancho was called "Rancho de San Leandro." Senor Luis Peralta raised a large family, and at his death his huge domain was divided among his four sons. Peralta senior never resided in Alameda County, but built himself an adobe home in San Jose, which is still standing, being now used as a plumber's shop. One son, Don Ygnacio Peralta, had a brick home built for himself in San Leandro, in 1860, and it is considered to be the first brick house built in Alameda County, while another son, Vicente Peralta, built his adobe home in what is today known as Fruitvale. The first holy mass to be celebrated in Oakland was about the year 1831, in a private oratory in the home of Vicente Peralta. Ground on which the Catholic church now stands, where we recently celebrated our St. Leander's diamond jubilee, was donated by the widow, Mrs. Juana Estudillo, wife of the father of San Leandro. At the present time, a grandson and granddaughter of Ygnacio Peralta still reside in this city, at 1691 Hayes Street. The old historical bell still in use at St. Mary's School was a direct gift from the Peralta family. The bell in question was presented by Mrs. Ygnacio Peralta to the Catholic Church and was consecrated by the Archbishop at the dedication ceremonies of the old church on August 7, 1864. The old bell was imported from Spain by Vicente Peralta, in 1846, and prior to its presentation, had been used by him in the private chapel referred to above, the only church in Oakland at that time. This bell is still in use, and will soon clang its annual welcome to the students who will enroll this Fall at St. Mary's School. The first pastor of the Catholic Church was Rev. James Callan from Newark, N.J., and Ygnacio Peralta's grandson is Alonzo L. Peralta, local real estate operator. It is thought this is Alameda County's oldest and most historical bell, which has called the faithful to these many years.—Leslie Freeman.