

The Coming of the Business District

By LOUIS STOCKLMEIR
City Historian

DURING THE SEVERAL YEARS immediately following the Exposition's date of closing George Hensley accelerated his promotional activities. In 1917 he purchased the Lumbermen's Building, known as the "Hoo Hoo House," from the Fair's liquidating program. This building of unusual appearance was freighted in marked packages to and erected upon a lot in his subdivision known as Inspiration Point. Its actual location was on the west side of Carmen Road about 50 feet south of what is now known as Stevens Creek Boulevard.

The edifice burned completely on Aug. 16, 1928, and what a fire it made. One of Santa Clara Valley's non-historical but nonetheless interesting landmarks became extinct.

It was during the era 1922-1923 that reorganization of the Peninsula Land and Investment Co. occurred. Its new entity became Monta Vista Estates, Inc. Its real estate and other activities had spread from Monta Vista Subdivision A and its extended subdivisions in San Mateo County. Holdings in San Mateo County consisted of four acres and the Babylon Building on one of San Francisco Bay's estuaries just northeast of San Carlos. This \$300,000 Temple Building was used for pleasure resort purposes; it was purchased from the Fair liquidators and barged into its watery location on the estuary. It still occupies its original site. Its financial lauching was considerable; its popularity among certain people was not of the same considerable measure.

MONTA VISTA ESTATES held residential properties also in both South San Francisco and San Bruno.

During the earlier formative and later declining years of the Monta Vista venture the various Monta Vista subdivisions gradually became more populated. Progress, however, was slow and the bond holders became restive. Through legal proceedings in the early 1930-1932 period, the assets were taken over by them and management of the conservation and liquidation was placed in the hands of Thomas K. Gally and Melvin E. Mensor, Trustees of the Bond Holders Protection Committee. The actual liquidation of the properties lasted a number of years.

It was during this period that certain Monta Vista lots were sold by the Bond Holders' conservators for as low as \$50 to \$100.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT and a compliment can be passed on to a present resident of Monta Vista Subdivision A. I refer to Mrs. Anne Anger. I believe her earliest memory of her present home location on Empire Street dates from 1945 when her parents purchased the property.

During her residence in this particular original subdivision area, she has strived to improve many of the errors which were originally made at its founding. Her work has produced results as evi-

denced by better building standards, better street conditions and, as I understand her intent, more is yet to come.

Since those early days other changes have occurred in the area known as Monta Vista Business District.

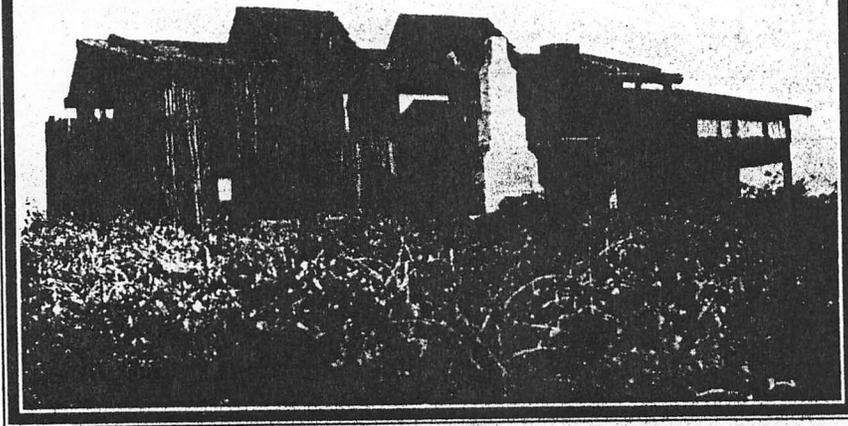
NATHAN J. HALL'S PROPERTY west of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks changed ownership a number of times, first into parcels for orcharding, then into stables and pastures for the raising of race horses.

One of these later owners, David J. Davis, maintained the stables known as "Oak Dell." He, too, was the owner of the



The late D. J. Davis, owner of Monta Vista's Oak Dell horse-breeding ranch, stands beside one of his thoroughbred yearlings in this 1956 photo. At the time, he had about 30 horses on the ranch, part of which today is Oak Dell and Mann Craft subdivisions. Davis' most famous race horse was Phar Lap, which won 14 top races consecutively in Australia and the \$100,000 Agua Caliente handicap here in 1932. The famous horse then suddenly died. He was the idol of Australia. After his death, Phar Lap was stuffed and placed on exhibit in Australia.

*Capt. Courier
Wed. May 1, 1968*



During the Panama - Pacific International Exposition held at San Francisco in 1915, the International Order of Hoo Hoos, a fraternal organization composed exclusively of men engaged in the lumbering industry throughout the world, erected as their club house at the Exposition a large and singular structure composed of immense logs, which was known as the House of Hoo Hoo. At the

close of the Exposition, the building was purchased, taken apart and moved to Monta Vista, where it was re-erected on the top of Inspiration Point (pictured above). Its immense size and its oddity of construction made it a landmark visible for many miles. Many of the logs weigh more than seven tons each. It was used as a dancing pavillion and amusement place until destroyed by fire.

renowned race-horse named Phar Lap. A street in the subdivision bears his name.

The writer of this brief helped the heirs of Nathan J. Hall in 1910 to select the name "Oak-Dell" for the Hall Estate.

TWIN ROCK COLUMNS at two entrance points to the farm buildings carried the name for many years.

Inevitably, the orchards and pastures in the 1950s and 1960s gave way to further subdivisions, namely the Mann tract and the later Oak Dell subdivision.

A great influence in the continued growth of Monta Vista during the decade 1930 to 1940 and thereafter was that provided by the confidence given to the area by the Quinterno and Rifredi families. Their mercantile operations — market, gas station and other activities — afforded a secure financial atmosphere during a period when it was most needed. They are to be complimented for their fortitude and business success, where others had failed.

THE MONTA VISTA Canning Co., established originally in 1914, added early impetus to a growing Monta Vista. Its site was located in the earlier subdivision area of Johnson and Temple on the east side of Imperial Avenue. Its prominence and stability was not actually assured, however, until the earlier interests were purchased by Richard Woëffel in the year of 1927.

The Richard Woëffel Cannery — under the able guidance of Richard Woëffel, now deceased, and presently continued as Richard Woëffel Co., Inc., by Mrs. Blanche Woëffel, an outstanding owner, operator and manager — contributed a needed security and stabilization to Monta Vista.

Under the latter owner's diligence, expansion and modernization of the canning and warehousing facilities has continued through the years.

GEORGE HENSLEY

His mind was geared to monu-
mental things,
His eyes envisioned spires, to
pierce the sky,
His touch to potters' clay gained
small response,
And dreams of grandeur could
only but die.
(He was born 50 years too soon.)

(Editor's Note: This concludes City Historian
Louis Stockmeir's articles on the early history of
Monta Vista. Next Week: Imperial Avenue —
Monta Vista's "Industry Row.")