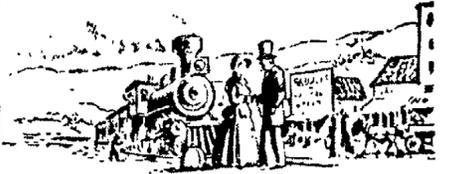




# THE KNAVE



2-FL Oakland Tribune Sunday, Sept. 16, 1962

**M**ANY A GAY coterie gathered at Tepper's Garden in Oakland's Dimond District during the 1890s and early 1900s to enjoy German food and drink, then wind up the afternoon or evening with singing and dancing. Genial host of Tepper's Gardens was Charles Tepper whose military-like bearing was brought direct from his native Posen, Germany, where he had worn the uniform of the German army under Bismarck. Captain Tepper was born in Posen in 1856. He was 43 years of age when he came to the United States in 1890 and selected California for his home. For five years he operated a pair of restaurants in San Francisco, one at 626 Washington St and another at 614 Clay St. They were popular spots where a full meal could be had for as little as 10 cents. He prospered enough during those five years to turn his eyes toward more fashionable quarters. Those were the years of San Francisco's famed Heidelberg Inn, the Rathskeller and the Hof Brau. Captain Tepper likewise aspired to entertain the elite. He came to Oakland in 1895 and bought land from Hugh Dimond that fronted along Hopkins St (now MacArthur Blvd) just west of Fruitvale Ave. The property extended deep along Hopkins St. at what is now Dimond Ave. Next he had a two-story home built which he later converted into a hotel. Behind the house was another structure that became a dance hall. Around these buildings he developed Tepper's Garden, a tree-sheltered area where native and tropical plants thrived to make a perfect setting for colorful tables, both individual and of great length, for parties large or small. It was spic and span, and from the very start it was immensely popular among such German lodges and societies as the Turnverein, the Sons of Hermann, the William Tell Society and scores of others. Guests flocked in from San Francisco, Marin County, San Jose and from as far away as Sacramento.

**J**OYIAL Charles Tepper was not alone in the neighborhood entertaining merrymakers who enjoyed good food and drink. Nearby was the Neckhaus Gardens. Up the street was Bauerhofer's Gardens, and at Hopkins and Fruitvale stood the Hermitage where Leon Faure featured French dinners and dancing girls. These were the days of the gay '90s. There was entertainment of every variety and it didn't take a map for anyone to go out and find it. There was music every Sunday at Tepper's Gardens. Most of the time a German band was featured and it wasn't uncommon for passersby to hear the martial strains of "De Wacht am Rhein" drifting streetward from the tree-shaded garden, or a tinkling piano thumping out "Ach du Lieber Augustin" or "Die Lorelei." There was many a night when the weary Frau Augusta Tepper, wife of the genial host, raised her hands in protest when the captain insisted his guests stay for one more song—possibly a rendition of "Heinzelmännchens Wachtparade." Today the dance hall at Tepper's Gardens is the home of the Teppers only surviving daughter, Mrs. Charles W. Cumbers. It is a delightful cottage with a beamed ceiling livingroom and kitchen, bedrooms and bath as modern as modern can be. There isn't even an echo of heavy German feet tripping the light fantastic, or the thump of pewter beer mugs against the wooden tables in rhythm with the orchestra. There isn't even a beer keg labeled Pilsner, Schlitz or Pabst, and you have to stretch the imagination to see a pompadoured lady in leghorn hat wearing a blouse with those leg-o-mutton sleeves of yesteryear.

**T**EPPEER'S Gardens remained popular until as late as 1918. The Gardens were still listed that year in the Oakland City Directory. That was a year after Prohibition was adopted by Congress, but two years before constitutional prohibition was enforced in 1920. California said its farewell to John Barleycorn that year on Jan. 16. There were tears as well as cheers. Shortly after that Charles Tepper closed his garden and hotel and interested himself in mining property in Calaveras County, although he maintained his residence here. He died at his Oakland home on April 28, 1931. Today the renowned Tepper's Gardens are all but forgotten. Just west of Dimond Ave. on MacArthur Blvd. there's an arch over a walkway with the words "Teppers, 1890-1923." That alone reminds of the horse-drawn hacks and coaches that once upon a time unloaded guests at the gates of Teppers Garden. Other guests arrived via the double-decked streetcars of the Highland Park & Fruit Vale line. The double-deckers were ornate with plush, tufted seats of mohair. End of the line was at Hopkins and Fruitvale where a loop took the cars up Hopkins to Champion St., on Champion to Nicol Ave., and on Nicol Ave. back to Fruitvale and Hopkins. These were single-end cars and that was their means of turning around for the trip back to the Southern Pacific Station at the foot of 13th Ave. Mrs. Cumbers can recall many occasions when the Tepper family returned by last



Listen close and you'll hear the 'oompha' of a gay '90s German band coming from Tepper's Gardens in the Dimond district

ferry from San Francisco and found the last streetcar tucked away in the car barn. "Father would telephone motorman Robinson and for a 25-cent fee plus five cents fare for each passenger, he would come and get us at the East Oakland Station and take us to Hopkins and Fruitvale—practically a front door delivery." To reach Hopkins and Fruitvale in those days the double-deck cars took a route that carried them up 13th Avenue to East 22nd Street, over East 22nd Street to 14th Avenue where the rails cut diagonally across to East 23rd Street then up 14th Avenue to Hopkins Street and out Hopkins to Fruitvale Avenue. The return route to the East Oakland depot at foot of 13th Avenue was down 14th Avenue to East 12th Street.

## The Good Die Young

**I**T WAS while Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt was a young college student studying the history of England that he first heard the saying, "The good die young." "The expression was then applied to one of the early kings of England, not Henry VIII, not George III, but," he quickly adds, "I don't have to be a real iconoclast when I say I attach very slight significance and no real importance to any such maxim—if it be a maxim. To me it savors more of superstition. There are many good people who do not die young, as there are at least some not-so-good who also die young. In glancing through California history I have been impressed by the number of prominent men whose careers were cut short at an age when their important life work should be scarcely more than well begun. I would like to mention some such leaders, identifying each in a single paragraph. This list might be considerably extended. Jedediah Strong Smith, the Knight in Buckskin and Bible-toter, reached California in 1826 as head of the first American

party of immigrants to come overland across the great Sierra Nevada barrier into California. His remarkable explorations along the Pacific and their far-reaching significance have been the subject of countless pens. He was young, tall and muscular; physically and morally fit, full of promise for a great future. Yet when he was only 32 he was treacherously set upon by hostile Indians and done to death. At Carthay Center in Los Angeles there stands a granite boulder inscribed: "Dedicated to Jedediah Strong Smith, Pathfinder of the Sierras."

**D**R HUNT next turns to James King of William. "He also had a violent death while a young man," he continues. "He was under 35. But he had made his mark. From his assassination, as from the blood of a martyr, wrote Oscar Shuck, 'sprang a great political and social movement, or revolution . . . in San Francisco.' After various experiences during the early 1850s he had founded the San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin—which proved to be decisive in his life. He fearlessly exposed the criminal record of Supervisor James Casey, who then treacherously shot him down on the street, thus ending the brief career of James King of William. Edward Dickinson Baker's brilliant career was cut short in the Battle of Ball's Bluff in the Civil War, while as commander he was valiantly leading his regiment in defense of the American Union. His ardent loyalty had impelled him to relinquish his important seat in the United States Senate to head the 'California Regiment' at the battlefield with the rank of colonel. Thus it was that the peerless 'Silver-tongued Patriot-Orator' led the supreme sacrifice when he was 50. . . Theodore Dehone Judah, eminent patriot-preacher of San Francisco, who with Padre Junipero Serra was selected from all California for per-

petual memorializing in Statuary Hall at Washington, D.C., completed his earthly mission in his 40th year. But he had lived long enough to make a contribution to his state second to none in the saving of California to the Union, as well as using his eloquent tongue and devoted spirit as a heaven-sent blessing to his city."

**N**EXT Dr. Hunt points to J Theodore Dehone Judah, the engineering wizard of the West "He proved by his extraordinary skill, indomitable toil and the imagination of a genius that a railroad could be built across the barrier of the Sierra Nevada into California, and thus render possible a transcontinental steam-powered highway. While crossing the Isthmus of Panama he contracted yellow fever which caused his death in November of 1863 before he had reached the age of 38. His admirable work, as Hittell has declared, will forever be his monument . . . Stephen Mallory White, father of Los Angeles Harbor, died Feb. 21, 1901, at the age of 48. He was the man, who, as United States senator, did more than any other to make possible the transformation of the City of Los Angeles, far removed from the coastline, into America's greatest man-made free harbor. In Congress he headed the stubborn fight that was truly memorable with rare statesmanship, consummate skill and utter sincerity. After he had won, his chief vanquished foe, Collis P. Huntington, was led to say: 'You have a steadfast principle and you fight like a man, in the open with clean weapons.' White's true monument is the magnificent harbor . . . Frank Norris had earned a more than local reputation as a writer by the time he was only 21. His romantic poem 'Yvernelle' yields descriptive passages that would do credit to one of any age. But he will always be best known as a novelist. On 'The Octopus,' intended as the first volume of his projected trilogy, rests his

chief claim to distinction. But following the appearance of 'The Pit' (Part II), death took him. He had not yet reached 33. Nevertheless, he had won an enduring place in the literary history of California. . . I must content myself with having mentioned these seven Californians who averaged less than 40 years at the time of their deaths. Each had achieved real distinction. . . If all had been spared for three or four additional decades of active life, who is competent to judge what might have been? Certainly not the historian."

## Mrs. Minnie Milias

**O**NE HUNDRED years is a long span of time, but it's no excuse for confusing family genealogy. For that reason we turn back to Sunday, Aug. 19, when the Knave printed a story entitled "A Gilroy Phenomenon" that touched on the Milias family and the Hotel Milias of Gilroy. From information since forwarded the Knave by Mrs. Evelyn Oviatt of San Jose the Aug. 19 account appears to be in error. Mrs. Oviatt's explanation should tend to straighten out, once and for all, the genealogy of Mrs. Minnie Milias which seems to have been confused by previous historians. "To begin with," Mrs. Oviatt says, "I am a half sister of Mrs. Minnie Milias, a dear sweet soul. . . She is the second oldest in the family, and not a waif as referred to in the Aug. 19 article. Our mother, Sarah Josephine Rhoades did not accompany the Donner Party to California. However, she accompanied her parents and several other caravans across the plains to California. She was born in Carrol County, Mo., Nov. 15, 1862. Her father was J. Rhoades who was drowned in the Platte River while hunting ducks. His body was recovered the following day and he was buried on the banks of the stream. Each team of the caravan provided a board for the casket. My mother and her mother, Mary Rhoades, continued on to Sacramento where they were met by Judge Rhoades, my mother's uncle. After a few days rest in Sacramento the caravan continued on to San Ysidro (old Gilroy) where they located. Soon my grandmother, Mary Rhoades, met and married Dorson Wilson and lived the remainder of their lives in San Ysidro. My mother, Sarah Josephine Rhoades, was also married in San Ysidro to Michael Cavanaugh, but the marriage was not lasting. . . They had one child, Nettie, at the time of the divorce. Five months later Minnie Cavanaugh was born. My mother soon met and later married my father, John Edwin White, a cheesemaker for Miller & Lux. My father adopted Minnie and Nettie, and when we came along we did not know the difference. All we children were treated the same. Even at the time of my parents passing each child shared and shared alike. All six of we children were born and married in Gilroy and have the respect of the entire valley. . . Also please take notice. The Milias Hotel stands exactly where the older one stood, except my brother-in-law, George Milias Sr., purchased an extra lot. Every foot of the lumber used was new and the very best. . . When we children were old enough to attend high school my father, John Edwin White, was elected Constable of Gilroy Township on the Republican ticket, an office he had the honor of holding for 36 years when he passed away. Many years in public service earned him warm admiration. My mother had died nine years previous."

## CALIFORNIA CAVALCADE

By Mike Parks

**JAMES B. HUME.** ONCE SHERIFF OF PLACERVILLE, WHO BECAME CHIEF DETECTIVE OF THE FAR FLUNG WELLS FARGO COMPANY HAD A BIG JOB, TRACKING DOWN STAGE COACH ROBBERS. IN ONE MONTH ALONE IN 1887 THE COMPANY LISTED MORE THAN 200 SUCH BANDITS.

**WHALES** AT ONE TIME WERE SO NUMEROUS IN MONTREY BAY THAT THE LARGE WHALING SHIPS WERE DISCARDED AND WHALES WERE HUNTED FROM LAND BASED ROWBOATS AND TOWED TO SHORE FOR REMOVING AND PROCESSING THE BLUBBER!

**FIRST ELECTION TO CHOOSE A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATURE FROM THE OAKLAND AREA SHOWED 965 VOTES CAST WHEN THERE WERE ONLY 130 REGISTERED VOTERS IN THE COUNTY!**

## Last Minute Call

**T**HIS is the third consecutive year that arrangements have been made for a reunion of all students who attended school classes in old Colton Hall at Monterey before 1897. This third all-day reunion is slated for tomorrow (Monday, Sept. 17) in California's Constitution Hall at Monterey. The museum has a mailing list of 130 who attended classes here before 1897," writes Pauline McCleary, curator of Colton Hall. "Most were born in Monterey County, and all are past 70 years of age. Since the recent death of Louis Sanchez in Oakland there have been many who have asked whether the reunions will continue. Mr. Sanchez devoted much effort toward making the reunion a continuing event, and the Monterey Museum Board hopes it shall continue. A school lunch will be served at 12 noon. Those who wish to bring family members may do so, but in order that those in charge may know how many lunches to prepare we suggest a telephone call to the museum immediately." The Museum Board includes Chairman James Tolagson, Myron A. Oliver, Harriet Weill, Nava Young, Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, Ann Martin, Alice Reinhold, Marie Gragg and Rollo Peters. "We in Monterey look forward to your return to the old school with delight and deep affection," Chairman Tolagson says in his message from the entire board.

—THE KNAVE