

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

November 26, 1958

Thanksgiving Day, 1878

Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27, 1878 was clear and very cold in California. The temperature dropped to 28 degrees that night, the precursor of the coldest month on record to date. The day was religiously, sportively and gastronomically observed, according to the desire of the individual.

In San Francisco, with boat and bicycle races, baseball games, pigeon shooting and numerous other sporting events, it was conspicuously a day of pleasure. Turkeys retailed dressed at 20 cents a pound, chickens were 50 cents each, ducks 50 cents a brace; potatoes, carrots, beets, turnips and cabbage each sold at 1 cent a pound; fresh butter was 30 cents and Boston firkin 14 cents a pound; eggs were scarce, at 40 cents a dozen. Everybody was happy and had plenty of good things of the season, except mining stock investors, who were downcast and had to content themselves with corn beef and cabbage.

The mining stock market was the month's absorbing object of interest. At the beginning, speculators were paying \$200 a share for Sierra-Nevada, and other stocks were at buoyant prices.

The new State Constitutional Convention, in session at Sacramento, had numerous strenuous debates this month, the creation of a board of railroad commissioners and the regulation of corporations being subjects of diversified views. The convention lost three delegates during the month; one went insane and was committed to Stockton State Hospital; Col. James M. Storey from Mariposa died Nov. 16, and Bernard K. Kenney from San Francisco died Nov. 21.

Ruins of an old castle six miles from Santa Cruz city upon the Rancho Locke were described in papers of the month. They consisted of a number of stone pillars upon a black hillside; of concentric layers of stone, perforated in the middle, they were about ten feet high. Several had fallen and their stones were strewn around. When and by whom the castle was built, no one of that date, 80 years ago, remembered.

A brilliant meteor passed over California north the night of Nov. 23. It sped from east to west, apparently over Marysville, Yuba county, which was made as light as day, and burst into a shower of green and red light.

Another meteor, almost as brilliant, was observed the night of the 26th.

Fall River, Shasta County, Indians had declared war against the Hat Creek tribe, and a battle in which the former were victorious was fought this month. The Fall Rivers captured four doctors, one squaw and three fighting bucks, all of whom were promptly hanged. Another battle was expected soon.

November was clear and cold but a good month for nimrods. George Stout of Courtland, Sacramento County, killed 208 ducks in one day, Nov. 10th four Placerville, El Dorado County, hunters killed 200 quail along Hangtown Creek, and one afternoon a Marysville, Yuba County, hunter bagged 82 quail along the Yuba's banks. In Lake County, Mrs. Daniel Hansen killed a grizzly bear that dressed 400 lbs. and Miss Emma Wallenford, a Napa City school teacher, dispatched at a distance of 200 yards in Hope Valley a buck that dressed 150 lbs.

George Wood found a deposit of grasshopper eggs, acres in extent, four miles from Sierraville, Sierra County, also 80 years ago. The eggs impervious to fire, water, and frost, were the size of a grain of wheat and were attached to strings that held together a dozen or more. They were deposited in the soil from two to six inches in depth, and hogs were rooting for and feasting upon them.

Maj. Ramon Pico undertook, at Sacramento, to ride 25-miles in one hour, using six horses. He lost by 4 minutes and 26 seconds.

The foregoing were some of the news stories recorded in an early San Francisco newspaper of 1878.