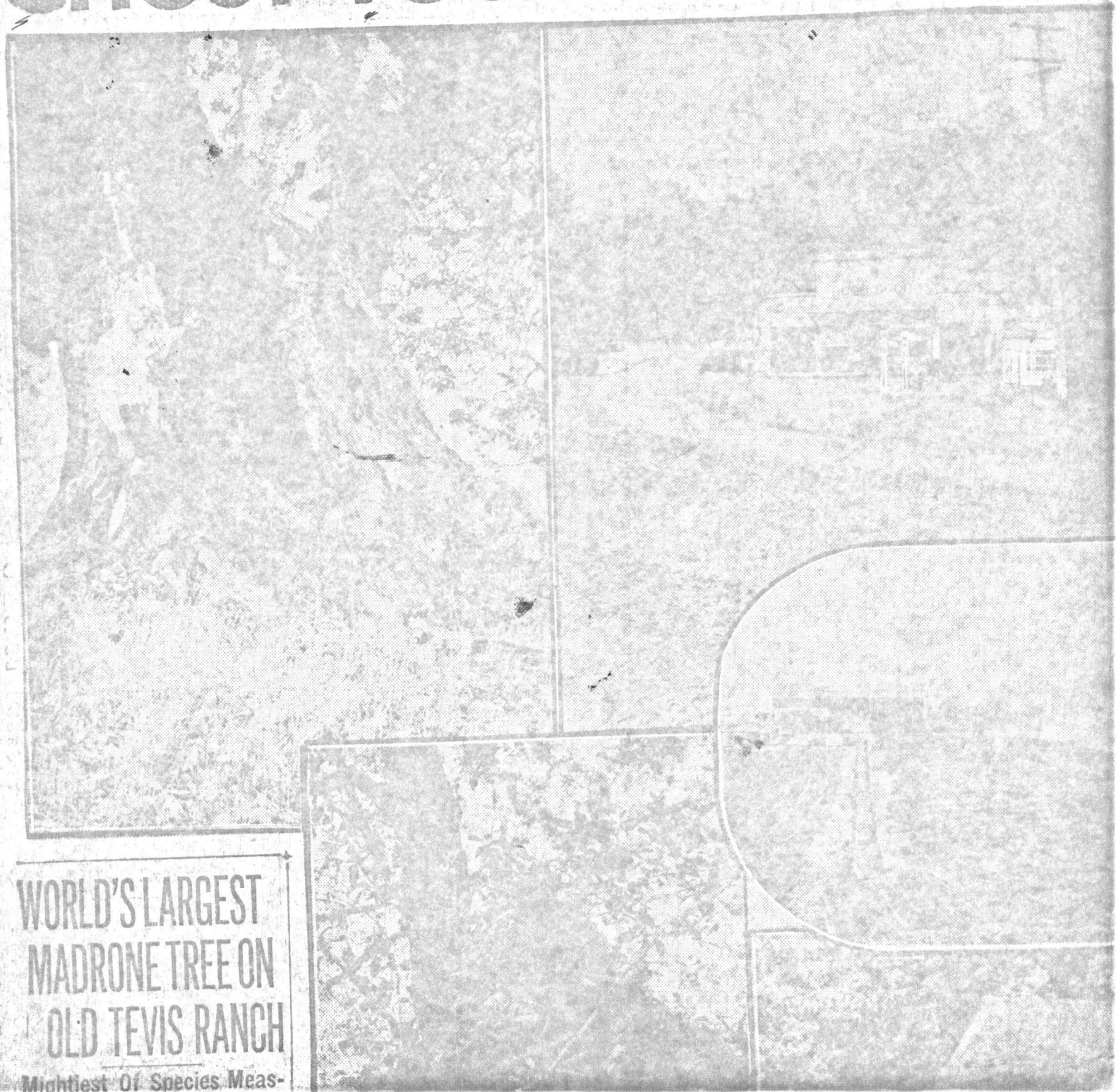


Third Section

San Jose Mer

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY

GHOST TOWNS OF THE SA



WORLD'S LARGEST
MADRONE TREE ON
OLD TEVIS RANCH

Highest Of Species Meas-

SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 22, 1934.

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS



**ALMA IS ELEVATED
TO METROPOLIS BY
MAYOR BEAL'S PEN**

Imaginative Mountain Writer
Clothes Little Village With
Vast Dignity.

Mightiest Of Species Measures 32 Feet 10 Inches At "Waist" Of Trunk.

Chapter XX.

ALMA.

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By JOHN V. YOUNG.

Thirty mills operated for 70 years in the region on the eastern slopes of the Santa Cruz mountains back of Los Gatos, changing the landscape from a verdant parkland of towering redwoods to dense chaparral-covered slopes with rocky gullies carved by erosion.

What the timber crews missed, the raging forest fires that swept the mountains at long intervals completed in destruction, leaving today but an occasional example of the mighty trees that at one time made this region the heaviest-timbered south of Humboldt.

Here and there, however, is to be found occasionally a lone relic—a gigantic redwood such as the well-known Mountain Charley tree near Glenwood, or the less-known madrone giant on the Tevis ranch.

WORLD'S LARGEST MADRONE.

Here stands the world's largest madrone tree, a madrone that so greatly exceeds in dimension anything else to be found in the mountains that there exists little doubt in the minds of those who know it that its claim to world supremacy will ever be challenged successfully.

A mighty tree for its species when Captain John C. Fremont and his party passed near it, or perhaps tarried under its shade for a while, in 1846, it stands today a breath-taking sight, reminiscent of a day when it was but one of an apparently endless forest of its kind, filling the glades where the soaring redwoods had failed to find foothold.

Spreading close to 100 feet of shade, the tree measures 32 feet, 10 inches at the "waist," the narrowest portion of its trunk above the swelling roots and below the branching forks eight feet above. Perfectly symmetrical in shape, over 10 feet in diameter, the tree branches into two main stems, either of which would put to shame almost any other madrone now to be found in the Santa Cruz mountains.

NEAR BEAR CREEK ROAD.

The tree stands in plain sight from Bear Creek road, just back of the horse barns below the main house on the old Tevis ranch, but because of its immense size and shape it appears at a distance even to a careful observer to be an oak.

Not until it is approached closely, so that its shiny, flat green leaves and peeling red-and-yellow bark are discerned, does it become possible for one to believe that this is a madrone. Out of its side has sprung an oak, since cut off to preserve the parent stock, itself 18 inches in diameter.

A botanically-inclined professor once came from Los Angeles to view the tree at the request of his friend, Dr. Harry Tevis. The professor was skeptical; besides, he had a pet madrone tree of his own down Santa Barbara way which he regarded

certainly as the largest in the world—but a glance at this specimen, and some measurements with a steel tape, soon dispelled any lingering trace of southern California loyalty, and the crown became officially transferred to Alma.

Less aged, less impressive for their size and grandeur, but none the less reminiscent of the days of departed glory in the mountain region are the hidden cemeteries, forgotten and forlorn, that stand near by, one within a mile of the big madrone.

RECORDS OF PAST.

In them may be found the whole picture of the lives and tragedies of the pioneer settlers. Death in child-birth, in illness and in violence are recorded on the picturesque stones that still stand, with their curious sentiments and crude verses that represented a last attempt to pay homage to one loved and grieved.

Graveyards are to be found all through the mountain region, wherever death occurred in midwinter when storm-bound roads prevented transportation to formal grounds; when services were brief and often without clerical assistance. Where one was buried another would follow, until the custom was established and another burial ground instituted beneath a secluded grove.

Such is the Rundell cemetery, the one nearest the big madrone, so named because in it are to be found the graves of many of the Rundell family and their neighbors—early settlers in the Bear Creek road (Dougherty Mill road) region above Lexington and Alma.

Few of the stones still stand, and all bear the marks of the vicissitudes of time and weather, overgrown with ivy, while tangled poison oak, scrub oak and madrone and gloomy cypress spring from the graves themselves.

Here is the grave of Isaac Paddock (1827-1873), one-time hotel keeper at Lexington in the early period, his named spelled Paddock everywhere but on his gravestone. Here are the graves of John Cavanaugh (spelled Cavanaugh), of the

gulch bearing his misspelled name and his wife, Eliza, and of others less well-known in the present day. Of the 50 graves in the plot, less than half a dozen are now marked and recognizable, although wooden headpieces, their lettering completely obliterated, lie half-concealed in the intruding bush. The graves of Joseph Foster (1822-1902) and Eliza Foster (1819-1908), and Mary E., wife of William A. Bayne, can be identified.

HEBARD CEMETERY.

Not far away across canyons, on the Murdock-Hebard property near Idylwild Inn, is the Hebard cemetery, partly buried in a slide that followed the 1906 earthquake, another plot of 50 graves now almost entirely lost.

Like the Rundell cemetery, the place took its name from the family buried there—part of the family of Louis Hebard, pioneer of the Alma region.

The little flat had been the playground of Hebard's daughter, Eva, who died when she was but four years old from diphtheria. She was followed by her brother, Francis, aged two; by Bert Hebard, who shot himself in a hunting accident, and by George Hebard, 19, who died of typhoid.

William D. Van Lone, a nephew of Hebard's wife and a member of the widely-known Van Lone family from Van Lone summit on Castle Rock ridge, and others connected with the family, are buried here, but Van Lone's grave is the only one of the group still recognizable, and less than six in all the graves in the plot are still marked. Rats' nests desecrate those carefully fenced; trees occupy the entire space of some of the tragic children's graves; others are buried beneath half a hillside. Stones remain standing over the graves of "M. Eliza, wife of W. W. Dull, died 1833; Jemima A., wife of E. H. Evans, died November 18, 1862, aged 19 years," and "Charlotte, wife of E. Armour, died January 3, 1887."

Almost nothing is left of a burial ground established by a Dutchman named Arens, between Lexington and Alma.

Two views of what is believed madrone tree, standing near Alma left and upper right, with Charley comparison with the gigantic tree of Alma today, showing George (view of the large Caldwell dry-ware Lexington and Alma.

Lower left and right are scene graveyards of the region; the foreground occupied by a colony of ran place of Isaac Paddock, early-day Lower center is the old Lexington situated across from the Forest

MAYOR BEAL.

All recollections of the region are not tragic, however—comedy at its best was to be found in the '90s, when Gabriel Beal, self-styled mayor, prophet and news gatherer for Alma, came to town.

Beal wrote for the Los Gatos Mail under that name; wrote outlandish stories; homey little personal items and matter-of-fact accident yarns all in the same column and all under that name—his nom de plume.

In a town that then consisted of a store, a blacksmith shop, a shoe shop, a hotel and two saloons, Beal nonchalantly organized an incorporated city that would have done credit to a modern metropolis—on paper, of course.

Himself he elected mayor in his stories, and other well-known residents of the region he named to the following city offices:

Aubrey Miller, poundmaster; Rudolph Muender, chief of police; C. R. Nutt, judge of the police courts; John Meyers, superintendent of public instruction; Louis Landresse, city clerk; W. D. McElheran, superintendent of streets; Frank Rundell, city attorney; Paul Switzer, license inspector; C. E. Sheffer, city engineer; W. F. Feehan, councilman, first ward; S. E. Guldice, second ward; O. E. Rouse, third ward; Eugene Bissell, fourth ward, and John Herlinger, fifth ward.

A comprehensive program of street paving, school and other public building, an exhibit for the

world applied to the region of Lexington and Alma.

Beal was a humorist, a Cal den stuc abo and 1897. He min his tak istr Oal A pre der wife rive B tuc ish con two bec ing anc

Imaginative Mountain Writer Clothes Little Village With Vast Dignity.

brother-in-law, George Osmer, the present proprietor, who has been in business there 40 years.

John Floyd built and operated the village blacksmith, succeeding Davis and Tice of an earlier date, and in turn succeeded by Charles Pierce. John Herlinger was a shoemaker of this period.

A contemporary history of the Santa Clara valley (1895) lists Alma as a freight station noted for agriculture, the flowering chaparral on the hillsides all about providing the much-desired, fragrant chaparral honey. Roads branching from the town, a freight station and postoffice, summer homes and the soda springs on the eastern side of the canyon are briefly mentioned in the description included in the account.

Miss M. S. Whitehurst was the school teacher in that year, the Rev. Wythe, pastor of the Methodist church, and C. A. Stice, Southern Pacific agent. Freight shipped in 1894 totaled 800 tons, it is noted.

This concludes the first part of the series, "Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains." Subsequent installments will appear at a later date.

believed to be the world's largest ar Alma, are shown at the upper Charles Murdock dwarfed by titic tree. Upper center is a view George Osmer's store. Inset is a dry-yard of the nineties, between

the scenes from the two abandoned the former an unidentified tomb of rats; the latter the resting day-day hotel keeper at Lexington. Lexington school when it was Forest House at Alma.

world's fair at Chicago, and all the appurtenances of a thriving city were thus given to Alma at the turn of a pen, much to the amusement of Los Gatos and neighboring towns to whose residents Alma was but a place one went through en route to somewhere else.

Gabriel Beal died last Saturday, July 14. He was William Nat Friend, former postmaster of Oakland and one of the best known political figures of his time in the east bay region.

LAWYER, MINISTER, UNDERTAKER.

Born in 1870, Nat Friend, as he was commonly known, became an honor student at the University of California, and president of the student body at that institution. He studied for the bar while living above Alma, on Soda Spring road, and was admitted to practice in 1898.

In 1906 he was ordained to the ministry, but in 1913 again shifted his vocation to that of an undertaker. Under the Coolidge administration he became postmaster of Oakland in 1928.

At the time of his death he was president of the Albert Brown undertaking company in Oakland. His wife, two sons and a daughter survive.

Booming for a time in the spectacular summer trade that flourished in the mountains after the coming of the railroad in the last two decades of the century, Alma became a popular picnic spot, rivaling at times even Wright's station and Sunset park.

A brisk trade was also realized in this period from passing teams, although the hey-day of the stage coach had passed, the lumber industry and its accompanying prosperity had waned into insignificance. Teamsters, hearty men with a great love for the kind of refreshment that in the nineties was legally unobtainable in Los Gatos because of a local option law, provided patronage for the notorious "mile of saloons" that lined the road from Lexington to Alma.

TWELVE SALOONS.

Here in a declining community of a half-dozen families were at one time TWELVE saloons, thicker than filling stations today! But this was not for long; the competition was too heavy, and most of them soon faded from sight.

The automobile spelled the doom of Alma's prosperity as a summer resort—it was too close to civilization even for the laborious travel of those first old high-wheelers and the puffing "one-lunged" motors, which provided a lucrative trade only for the mountain ranchers with stout teams and tackle to yank stalled gas-buggies from mud holes, sand holes, dust holes and ruts that neatly engaged transmission housings.

Rules of the road at that time were not encouraging to mountain travel in autos when they first started to frighten horses and natives about 1900.

AUTOIST ON DEFENSIVE.

If a horse-and-buggy encountered an autoist on the road, the latter was required to stop if the buggy pilot simply raised his hand. The venturesome autoist was then required by road courtesy to alight and stand in front of his roaring vehicle to calm the passing horses.

Autos also had to take the outside of the road whenever meeting a horse-drawn conveyance, so that if there was not sufficient room to pass, or if the horse reared in fright, it was the auto that piled into junk at the bottom of the gulch, never the horse-and-buggy.

A far cry from the bustling scene about the Forest House at the peak of the mill days in the sixties, Alma

then was, as described, a town of few inhabitants. Stephen Chase's early-day store was now John Stewart's mercantile establishment. Stewart was succeeded by L. T. Dolder; Dolder by his brother-in-law, Bohme, and Bohme by his

Letter Tells of Gus Dryden, Settler In Red- wood Estates Region

A letter received from Miss Frances Rupp of Dos Palos gives interesting additional information about an early settler in the Summit region; her great-grandfather, Johnathan Augustus Dryden. An excerpt follows:

"Johnathan Augustus Dryden, better known as Gus Dryden, with his wife and six children crossed the plains in a covered wagon in 1861, and, after two years in San Jose, settled in the Santa Cruz mountains. At that time Henry Dryden (grandfather of Miss Frances Rupp and narrator of this account) was but six years old.

"Shortly later the building of the Summit school was begun and Gus Dryden helped to build it. He was one of the trustees of the school for the full amount of time he was there, seven years in all, as he moved his family to Paicines in 1870.

Henry Dryden received his first schooling at the Summit school, where he went with the children of John Martin Schultheis and those of Mountain Charley.

Gus Dryden bought the old Gommer place, which was situated one-half mile above where Holy City now is. Where he used to have his cowpasture and hay field there is now a very modern summer resort (Note: Apparently this was the present site of Redwood Estates). Gus Dryden also tended the toll gate which was then at his place (the junction of the Santa Cruz Gap turnpike with Mountain Charley road).

The stump on which the bear now stands was then used as a playhouse for the Dryden children. The old Dutch windmill is where the public watering trough for teams formerly was. (Note: The windmill stands at the entrance to Redwood Estates, but the bear has been removed).