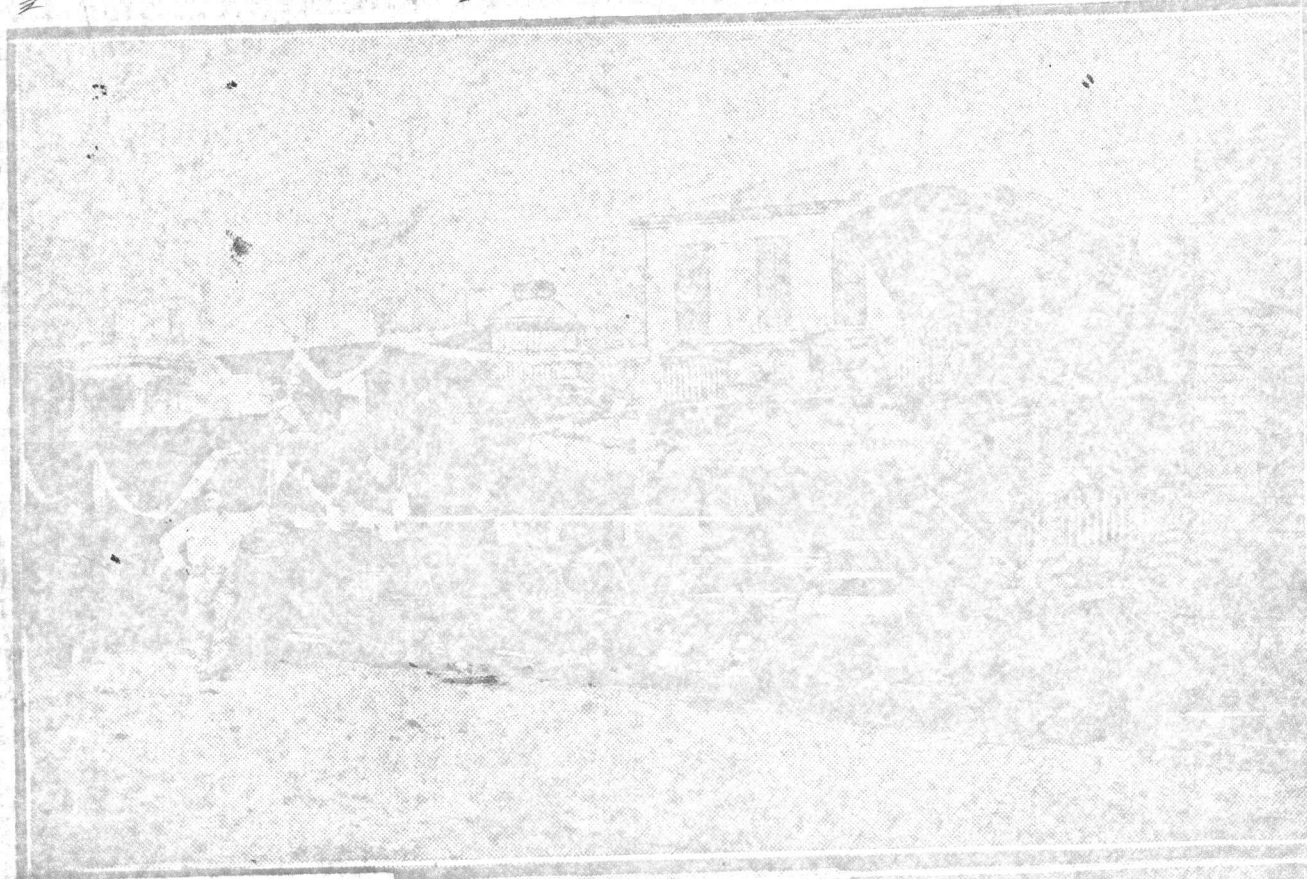


Third Section

# San Jose Mer

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY

## GHOST TOWNS OF THE SA



### RAILWAY EFFECTS VAST CHANGES TO MOUNTAIN REGION

Alma Springs Into Prominence As Lexington, On Wrong Side, Declines.

Chapter VIII.

THE RAILROAD.

By John V. Young.

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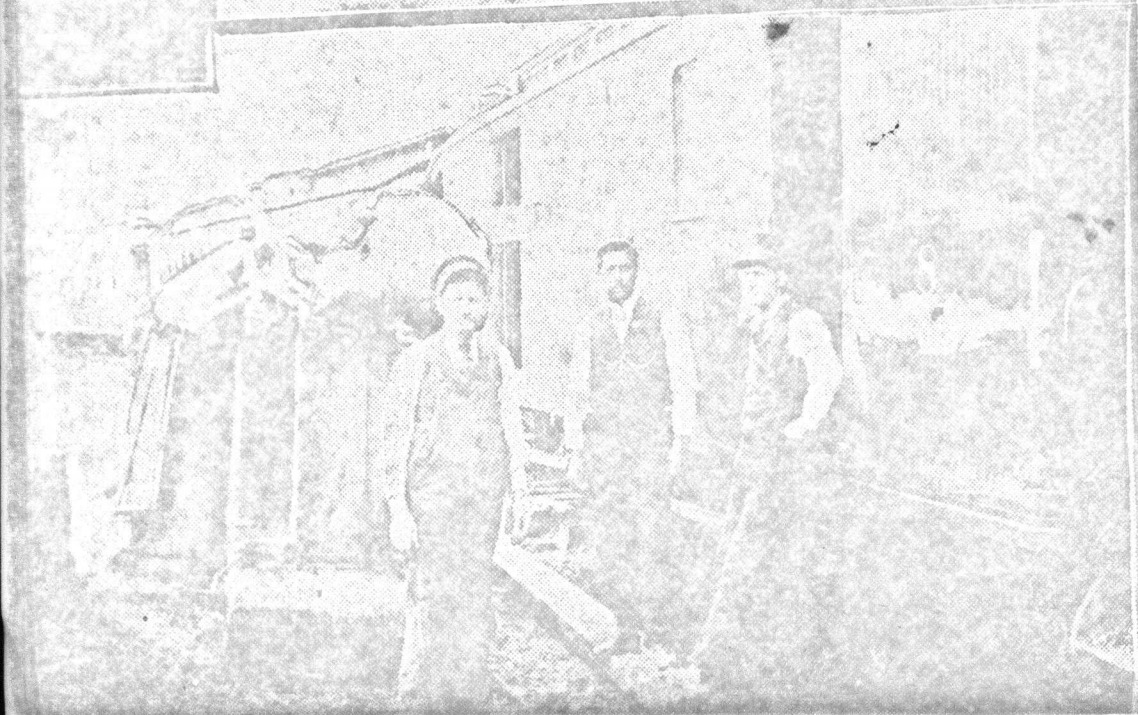
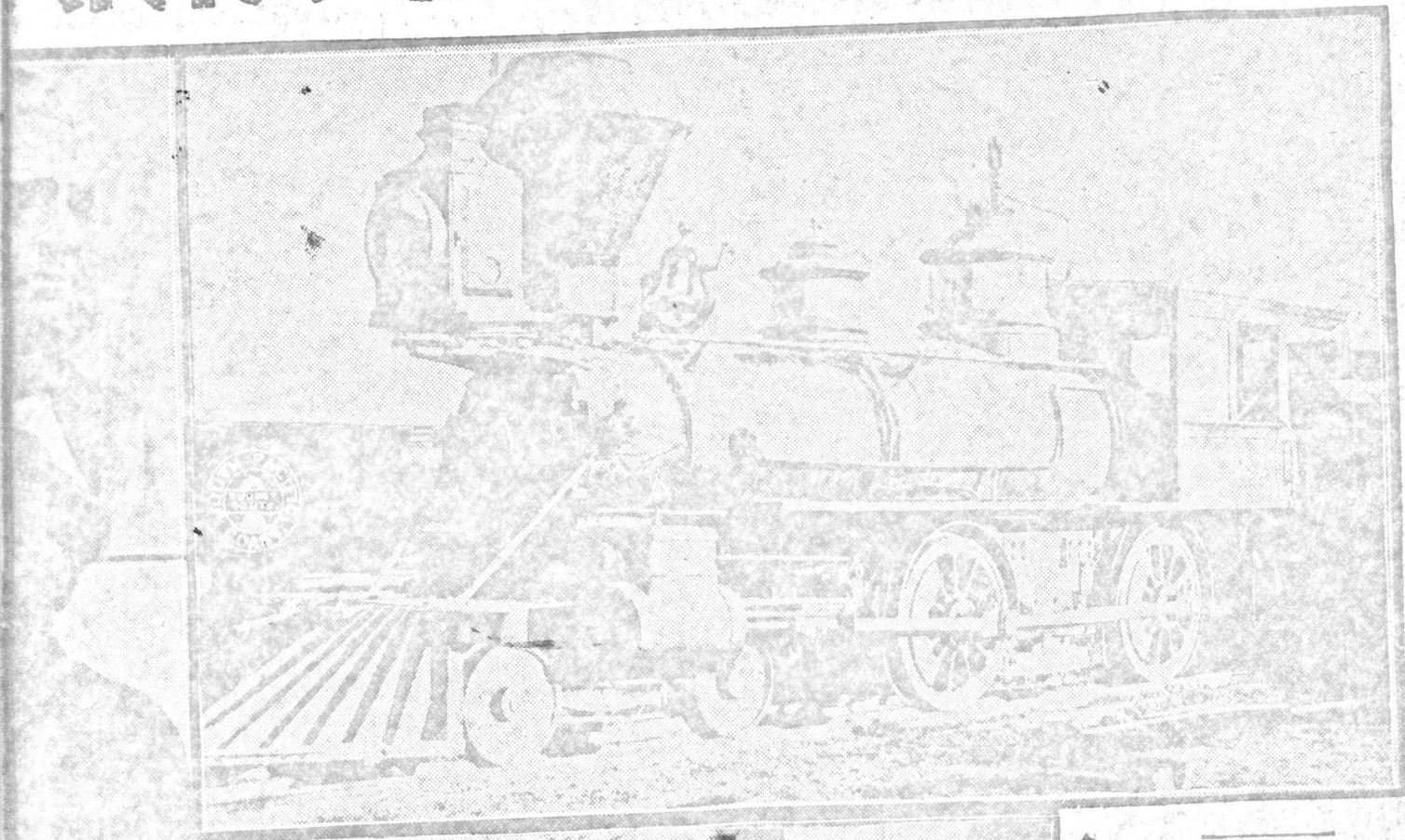
Installation of 85-pound rails in the San Jose-Santa Cruz railroad between Vasona Junction, near Los Gatos, to Glenwood, bodes a partial return, at least, of activity to a





DAY MORNING, MAY 20, 1934.

## SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS



### QUAKE DAMAGE TO RAILWAY 3 YEARS BEING REPAIRED

Re-opening, Of Line Celebrated At Los Gatos On  
May 29, 1909.

resulted from the situation before the railroad finally blew out the tunnel and made it into an open cut. Even then their troubles were not at an end, however.

#### PROBLEM FOR YEARS.

Blasting of the toe of the rock shoulder destroyed the natural foundation of the ledge, and without its rocky rampart to hold it the whole hill began to slide, presenting a tricky engineering problem that was years in the making.

return, at least, of activity to a line that is now but a semblance of its former self.

Here wagons by the score, bearing produce of all description, once lined up to load long freights at the several stations and stops in the mountains, today not a station is open between Los Gatos and Felton.

But in its decline though it may be, the railroad has played a part of immeasurable economic importance not only in the speed and height of development of the region, but in the direction of that development.

#### ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.

The railroad was originally intended to cut through the mountains not by way of Los Gatos, but near Saratoga and over the summit somewhere in the region of Waterman's gap, and to continue from there down the San Lorenzo, through Boulder Creek and thence to connect with the Santa Cruz and Felton line.

Had this intention been followed, remarkable would have been difference which would have been apparent today, there seems little doubt.

Not only would Saratoga have assumed something more than the size of Los Gatos, as the village at that time was a manufacturing center of note, but a number of towns that owed their existence and livelihood to the railroad—such as Alma, Wrights, Skyland, Laurel and Glenwood, would in all probability never have come into being.

But surveys showed the route to be impractical, or more so than the adopted route for all of its tunnels, and opposition from farmers in the San Tomas region clinched the decision—which was not altered in the least by the donation of rights of way in Los Gatos by J. W. Lyndep, and in Aldercroft gulch by the McMurtry family and others.

#### SOUTH PACIFIC COAST CO.

Incorporated March 25, 1876, under the name of the South Pacific coast railroad company, James G. Fair, Alfred E. Davis and their associates started from Alameda to Santa Cruz via Newark and San Jose, with the avowed intention of continuing down the Salinas valley, across the coast range into the San Joaquin and ultimately to meet the Denver & Rio Grande railroad, which at that time was building its narrow-gauge line toward the Pacific coast.

Meanwhile, in October of the previous year, 1875, the Felton & Santa Cruz railroads, a narrow gauge line built to connect with logging trains from Boulder Creek and the San Lorenzo country, had been completed.

Capitalized at \$500,000 by J. S. Carter, J. P. Pierce, C. G. Harrison, G. H. Gorrell and W. D. Tisdal, the road met with financial reverses, and was completed under the direction of F. A. Hihn, Santa Cruz capitalist without whom nothing much happened in the county. This was early in 1870.

When the Southern Pacific company took over the line, Hihn obtained judgment of \$1697 damages to his property in the potrero and for rights-of-way, in 1887.

Work on the road was supervised

by A. J. Storts, pioneer of the Boulder Creek region who was in later years well known in Saratoga. He was the father of Mrs. Neil Carmichael, wife of a prominent lumberman. Storts died in 1923.

Rail and ferry service was inaugurated on the South Pacific Coast line June 1, 1878, when a wharf was completed at Alameda point, running from San Francisco to Newark, a distance of about 25 miles.

#### INTO THE MOUNTAINS.

Built with Chinese labor, the road crept up the canyon past Lexington, which it left high and dry on the wrong side of the canyon; swung through Alma, which promptly sprang into prominence at Lexington's expense, and then turned up the Aldercroft canyon to come to a halt at Wright's station.

The tunnel, a mile and an eighth in length, was a seven-day's wonder in the mountains, and brought the curious from miles around. Passengers on the early-day trains were taken from Wright's by a jumper stage service to Felton until the line was completed May 15, 1880—probably one of the most important dates in Santa Cruz mountain history.

Great activity was centered about Wright's, which soon became a roaring camp along with Laurel, at the other end of the tunnel, connected by a snake-road over the top.

#### TUNNEL DISASTER.

The tunnel got off to a bad start—tolling somewhere between 17 and 34 Chinese lives in a catastrophe that has grown into mountainous proportions.

Crude pine torches were carried by the coolies for illumination after the work had progressed several hundred feet into the side of the hill. Nothing happened for a while, until one day a lusty blow of a pick opened a gas pocket.

The blast that followed tossed the Chinese about like ten-pins, blowing several out of the mouth of the shaft. The dead added up to 17, or 26, or 34, or 200, according to whose account you believe. Some say the bones of the victims still lie in the trench which was dug for their grave alongside the tracks at the tunnel portal—others relate that they were shipped back to China for burial with their honorable ancestors.

Little wooden carts without wheels were employed to trundle the dirt—one coolie to each corner carried the rigs. More than 2000 Chinese were employed at one time, divided into small gangs bossed by hard-boiled Yankee foremen who developed new cuss-words daily in driving the "pig-tails" to greater efforts.

April 18, 1906, meant quite as much to the railroad and the region it traversed as it did to any community outside of San Francisco, which gave the great quake its name.

Lying directly along the San An-



One of the best known figures of the stage coach days in the Santa Cruz mountains was George Colgrove, who became conductor on the South Pacific Coast railroad. He is shown standing beside Locomotive No. 10, which was decorated for Fourth of July in 1881, with Dan Quill, fireman, and Engineer John Hager, the latter in the cab.

Alfred G. Davis, associate of James A. Fair, builder of the road, is seen (top center) with A. J. Storts, construction boss on the Felton-Santa Cruz link. The first train on the Los Gatos-Santa Cruz run, South Coast No. 3, built by Baldwin in 1876, appears in the upper right photo.

Left center: Wreck of Engine No. 101, which jumped the track near Tunnel 6 June 13, 1901. Right center: Part of the crew of the same train—left to right—H. D. Antrim, express messenger; Smith the parlor car porter, and R.

deas fault line in some portions and across it in others, the road suffered heavily in the temblor. The Wrights tunnel cracked in the middle and settled several inches. Slides of a less serious nature filled the Glenwood bore.

A huge earth dam blocked the creek at Eva, near the News-Letter ranch, and created a natural reservoir of huge proportions that blocked all travel on the railroad and on the so-called canyon road from Los Gatos to Wrights for many months.

Driving labor opened the Laurel-Glenwood tunnel July 1 of the same year, when Conductor Thomas O'Neil and a venturesome crew brought a train through the shaft.

#### TUNNEL BROAD-GAUGED.

Railroad officials took advantage of the tie-up to broadgauge the Wright tunnel which was opened in

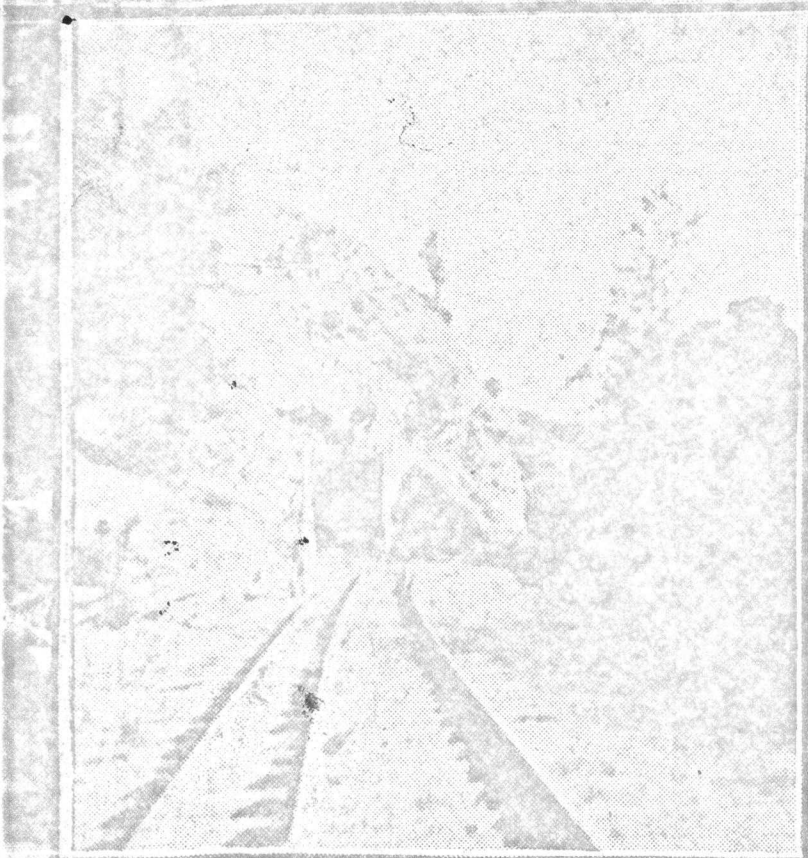
August, although the lake at Eva remained until December despite heavy blasting in an effort to move it.

But re-routing tracks around short tunnels that were later abandoned, straightening curves and other jobs kept the line closed for through traffic through the mountains just three years, one month and eleven days. Reopening of the line with a schedule of 14 daily trains was celebrated in Los Gatos May 29, 1909.

The broadgauge trains had been brought to Los Gatos from Campbell about 1897 when a group of large shippers including the Hume company, Bill Rankin, Hook and Malpus succeeded in persuading the Southern Pacific increased revenues would result from the change.

Previous to that time a 60-cent transfer charge per ton freight was





Stevens, brakeman. Engineer J. Stanley died of injuries three days later. Others in the crew were S. H. Davis, conductor, and H. Coyle, fireman.

Lower left: A. J. Storts (center of group) and a crew of men clearing away wreckage after a smashup on the Felton line in the nineties. Lower right: Old Tunnel No. 2, near the present trestle above Los Gatos, cause of much grief to the railroad. The San Jose Water company flume may be seen curving around the point above the tunnel, while the third rail tracks are shown as they were being built around the point to eliminate the tunnel, which was finally blown out about 1903-4.

Photos loaned by Miss Alice Matty, Wrights; E. E. Place, Mrs. Belle Carmichael, and the Southern Pacific News Bureau.

paid for changing loads from narrow-gauge to broad-gauge at Campbell. A third rail was laid alongside the narrow-gauge tracks, and a strange variety of transportation brought into existence.

Both broad-gauge and narrow-gauge cars were pulled by the same engine, but as the broad-gauge cars were much wider, they extended far over one side, and their coupling bars had to be lengthened to provide for the diagonal connecting arrangement made with their narrow-gauge brothers.

#### PASSENGER TRAINS.

Only freight was carried at first, but passenger trains were put on before 1900, and the service extended to Wright's station in 1903-04. Institution of the wider, heavier and more comfortable broad-gauge trains gave a decided impetus to the already growing industry of

Wright's station—its week-end picnic parties at Sunset park, and by 1905 the railroad was enjoying patronage never since equaled.

It was in this period that trouble arose over Tunnel No. 1—which had been early known as Tunnel 2. As both 1 and 2 have since been eliminated, the Wright's tunnel is now known as Tunnel No. 1 and the Laurel-Glenwood tunnel as No. 2.

Tunnel 1 herein referred to was a short bore under a large rocky shoulder near the present trestle between Los Gatos and Alma, but it made up in difficulty for the railroad what it lacked in length.

Against warnings by engineers of the San Jose Water Works, whose main flume rounded the same shoulder less than 50 feet above the tunnel, the railroad had been cut through the shoulder. Widening of the bore for the third rail added to

the damage, and slides began to bring in the roof, undermining the flume.

#### LOS GATOS IN DARKNESS.

Not only was the water supply impaired, but a curious effect was noted in Los Gatos—the city's lights went out!

Under an old riparian right, power was taken from the water supply, which developed about 200 horse power in its drop from the upper canyon into Los Gatos.

The power company, headed at the time by J. D. Farwell, vigorously protested the frequent interruptions, and began submitting bills for fuel used in driving the auxiliary generators which were called into use every time the water supply stopped.

These bills went to the Southern Pacific through the office of the San Jose agent, who was then Paul Shoup, later president of the Southern Pacific company.

Shoup conferred with Farwell and others, and many a heated wrangle

the whole hill began to slide, presenting a tricky engineering problem that was years in being solved.

Confronted with a somewhat similar situation at the north portal of the Wright's tunnel in 1893, when a huge slide obliterated a large portion of the tunnel, railroad engineers devised a unique machine for clearing the debris, and concreted the end of the tunnel against future slides.

Since 1887 the lines had been consolidated under the Southern Pacific company, putting an end to the confusion of names under which it was constructed in its various stages, including the Santa Cruz & Felton, Bay & Coast, Oakland Township, San Francisco & Colorado River, Felton & Pescadero and the Almaden Branch railroad.

Next Sunday: How a forest fire was extinguished with wine—a heroic tale of 1899, is told, with the stories of the notables of the mountain region—its poets and writers. The romantic history of Josephine Clifford McCrackin, one of the most famous and most beloved of all mountain residents, and her friends, Mark Twain, George Sterling and eccentric Ambrose Bierce.

## Patchen Named After Race Horse, Not For Repair Job On Pants

(Note: Additions and corrections of stories which have already appeared will be published here from time to time as further information is uncovered. The first, an amended version of the story of the naming of Patchen, which appeared April 29, is printed herewith.)

#### HOW PATCHEN WAS NAMED.

That Patchen, diminutive village on the Los Gatos-Santa Cruz stage line between Holy City and the summit, was not named from an old wood-cutter who was "patchin'" his trousers, is the opinion of Charles W. C. Murdock of Alma.

Murdock, the step-son of Louis Hebard, who settled near Alma in 1857, well remembers his mother's telling how the place was named.

Great discussion arose over the naming of the post-office, first established in 1872 at the Fowler place, with a man named Shirley as postmaster. When a postal inspector arrived, the name was still up in the air.

To settle the argument, Mrs. Hebard suggested asking the first man that came up the road to provide a name—that man was William ("Billy") Brown, well known in the region.

"Why," quoth Billy, "Call it Patchen." Patchen was the name of a famous race horse which about that time had won acclaim for breaking the world's record for something or other.

And Patchen it was.

The mail, previous to the establishment of the post-office, had been deposited in a hollow tree nearby, and the customers all sorted their own mail, Murdock recalls. The office was first in a little shack by the side of the road, but was moved in 1876 to a frame dwelling which still stands behind the larger home, now known as the Laddick place.