

Some familiar names in the Pajaro Valley

Onetime owner of the Interlaken Acres, near the Carlton District, was Dr. James Bird Cutter who was born in New York on Aug. 8, 1868. After working in the publishing business for a number of years he eventually ended up in Oregon where he graduated from the University's medical school in 1893.

Cutter was to serve on the staff of the Chambers Street Hospital in New York; as a ship's surgeon aboard the vessel Vega; a country doctor in Idaho and as a volunteer captain in the medical corps during the Spanish-American war.

He and his wife retired to the Pajaro Valley in 1912 buying a portion of the Salsipuedes land grant around what is now known as Cutter Drive. There was an old farmhouse located on the property and the Cutters remodeled this to suit their own personal needs.

A the beginning of WWI Dr. Cutter returned to the medical profession serving as executive surgeon of the South Pacific Hospital in San Francisco and then as medical director of the Children's Hospital.

He again retired to the Pajaro Valley where his wife died in 1925 and, in 1926, he married Mrs. Edith Milburn of San Francisco. 1937



saw him again coming out of retirement to serve as the medical supervisor of WPA projects in San Francisco and afterwards being named director of the Franklin Hospital. Then followed a period of private practice after which the Cutters returned to Watsonville. Dr. Cutter died in December 1954 at the age of 87. He was the author of a number of books including "The Voyage Of the Vega," "A West Coast Doctor Reminisces" and "Early Hospital History In the United States and the Modern Hospital in California."



Peter Cox, one of Watsonville's hardy pioneers, was born in New York in 1825 coming to California at the age of 28 via the Nicaragua route on the steamer Independence which was wrecked on one of the

Margarita Islands off the coast of lower California. One hundred and sixty of the 500 passengers were drowned but Peter was able to swim ashore and subsequently made his way to San Francisco on a whaling vessel arriving in the city with \$70 in his pocket.

From there he went to El Dorado County where he mined for a year and a half at Diamond Springs and Gold Hill. Coming to the Pajaro Valley in 1855, he purchased farming land south of town in Monterey County and became quite successful in his endeavors. Mr. Cox married Rebecca Cathers in 1858; she was the daughter of James Cathers and Margaret Moreland Cathers. The couple had seven children; five living to maturity — Mrs. J.M. Waugam, Mrs. W.A. Trafton, Mrs. S.B. Gordon, Miss Sarah Cox and Lyman Cox.

Peter Cox died on Oct. 23, 1901 and the Pajaronian noted: "He was a director of the Pajaro Valley Bank and the Watsonville Creamery. He was an industrious and upright man and faithful in the discharge of his duties in all walks of life."



Samuel Comstock was a familiar

figure in the local courts back when Watsonville was first struggling through its birthing pains. Mr. Comstock held the belief that Alexander Rodriguez, brother of Sebastian, held title to the Bolsa del Pajaro land grant and proceeded to purchase property in Watsonville through his heirs.

Others purchased land from Sebastian's heirs who were finally given clear title to the land so Comstock, after years of expensive litigation, was ruined. He moved to greener pastures and was to discover a quick silver mine in San Benito County but this did not prove to be a financial success and he returned to Watsonville.

The old pioneer spent his declining years in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Otto Stoesser until his death in 1885 at the age of 86. Mr. Comstock was at one time a very prominent and leading citizen of this town and very active in local affairs back in the 1850s and 1860s. His house where he lived was located on Rodriguez Street and, at one time, he owned the property where the Mansion House now stands.

Betty Lewis, a local historian, is a contributing columnist to the Register-Pajaronian.