

# Watsonville's Dr. Butterfield: A musical dentist

One of the more interesting men who lived in Watsonville at one time was Dr. Charles L. Butterfield. Not only was he a very skilled dentist but he also played a mean trombone; wrote the words to the musical selection "Love's Wireless" — the composer was his son-in-law, S.J. Mustol; and often dressed as Uncle Sam for the local 4th of July parades.

Dr. Butterfield was born in Gilroy, the son of Josiah Butterfield — who owned a large stock ranch near Chittenden where most of the Butterfield children were raised until they later moved to Watsonville. Charles, after becoming a dentist, moved around the state announcing in advance how long he would be in any location. "Dr. C.L. Butterfield is down from Calaveras County again and is in his old office in the Ford Block. He is crowded with orders for dental work and may remain longer than the time announced." *The Pajaronian*, 1887.

Two years later, he announced in the local newspaper that he would give laughing gas to those who wished to have their teeth extracted without pain! The Butterfield family was very musical — five of them gave a concert in 1907 at the I.O.O.F. Hall with Beatrice on the violin; Bernice at the piano; Marian playing the cornet; Dorothy the violin and, of course,



Betty Lewis

Local columnist

the good doctor playing the trombone. "There are but five (small and tall) in the Butterfield family of concert entertainers, but they are equal to holding an audience down in fine shape with artistic selections, as was evidenced last evening at IOOF hall, where the family gave a concert, to an appreciative audience, under the auspices of the local lodge of Brotherhood of American Yeoman. The Butterfield family is a very talented quintet. The selections, whether solo or concerted were very pleasing, and, in some cases artistic — notably Miss Beatrice Butterfield's violin solo."

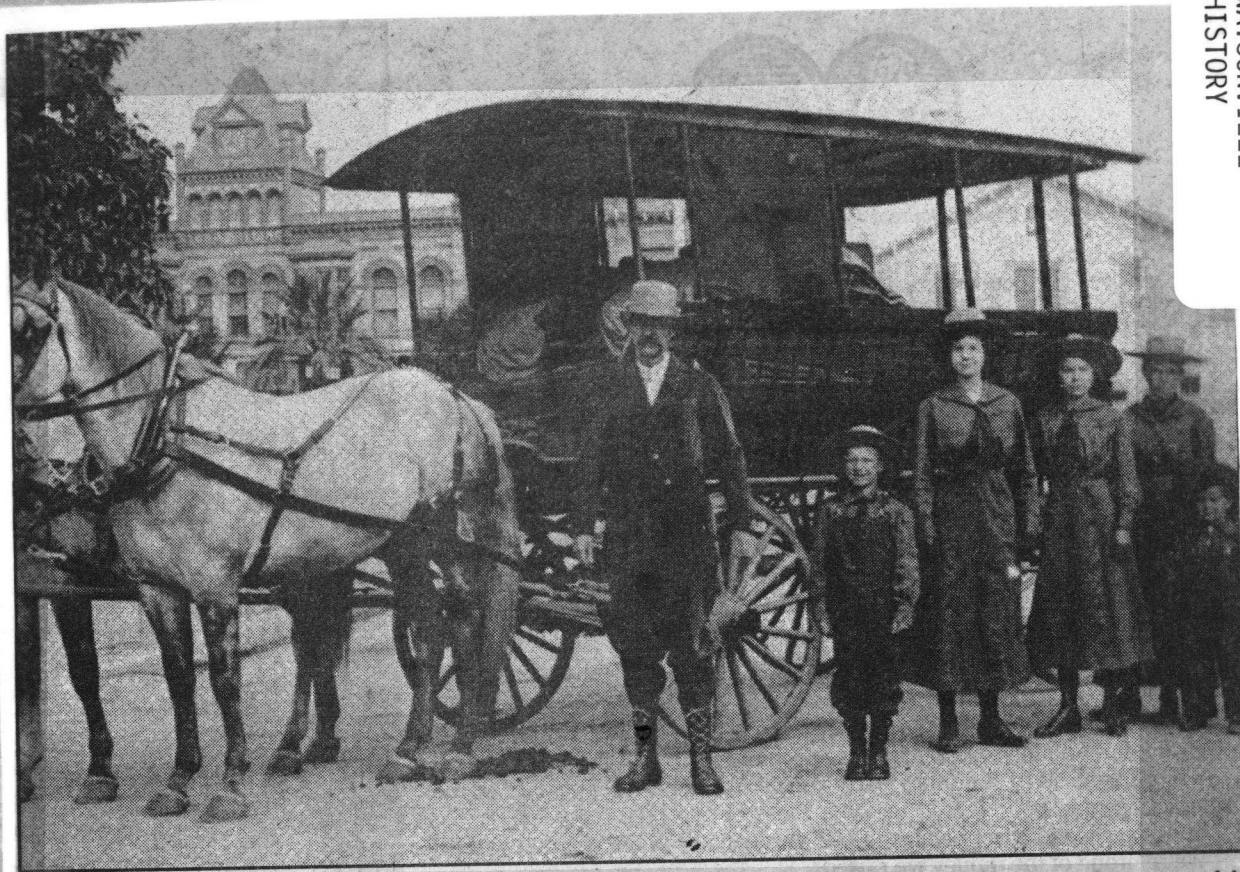
When daughter Dorothy married a San Jose businessman in 1921, the *Evening Pajaronian* (James Piratsky was editor) commented: "You take these girls, train and educate them up in music and just when you have them ready to go on the Orpheum stage, they clear out and get married. What

## That was Watsonville

can a father do? The orchestra is bustled."

While living in Watsonville, the Butterfield family lived on East Lake Avenue — there were also three sons in the family. Charles retired in 1924 and moved with his wife to a ranch ten miles from San Andreas. In 1928, he returned to Watsonville for a visit and visited the Pajaronian office where he told of his children scattered around the state. His daughter, Beatrice (Mrs. H.J. LeBlanc) then living in Santa Rosa, became a well-known artist. The doctor visited his old friend George Brewington before leaving Watsonville to return home.

Dr. Butterfield died in 1934 at the age of 71 years leaving behind his widow, children and ten grandchildren plus his sister, Mrs. R.F. Blohm of Aromas. A very talented man both professionally and musically, he left his mark on the pages of this town's history.



Dr. Butterfield and his musical family. This picture was taken at Peck and Union Streets with the IOOF Hall and the Opera House in the background.