

When San Jose Was Young

A Series of Interesting Articles of An Historical Nature Prepared Especially for The News by a Well Known Author and Journalist.

NO. 49, INDIAN WARS IN SANTA CLARA

The Indians of this valley were not so savage in comparison with the Indians on the eastern coast. Only the docile redmen became converts of the Mission. Some believed that the white men were ghosts of their own ancestors come back from death. On the coming of the fathers the savage, hostile tribes in Santa Clara valley withdrew to the San Joaquin and Tulare regions, where they are lost in legend.

In 1788 there were wars in the valley among the gentiles, as the unconverted Indians were called. The fathers at Santa Clara had considerable difficulty in restraining the neophytes, or converts, from joining the battles.

Indian wars about San Jose were curiously like modern wars in their cause and conduct. War arose from a member of one tribe stealing a rabbit or some acorns from a member of another tribe.

Usually the Ohone Indians married among themselves, but when by chance an Indian suddenly fell in love with a woman of another tribe and carried her off as his wife it resulted in war. Undoubtedly Yoseolo's attack on the Santa Clara Mission in the early part of the nineteenth century came from the tribal instinct to make war for women. Yoseolo could not understand that the three hundred young Indian women were kept at the Santa Clara Mission for their own good, and for purposes of education and civilization. His theory was that the women belonged to their tribes. For them he lost his life.

Nations still war for rabbits and acorns, but in this modern time no Troy is burned for a fair Helen. That is left for poets to dream of.

In the old days if the Indian losing his property or sweetheart, who was virtually his slave, could persuade the chief of the tribe to share his anger, from all the mountain tops angry fires flamed up.

War was declared. Poisoned gas is not modern. Probably the idea came from the Indians. The redmen fought with poisoned arrows.

The Indians were among the first believers in preparedness, and they compelled everyone, except babies, to do their share. Women pounded seed, and made ready the provisions for wars.

When all were ready, first marched the young strong men. Then came the older men. Last were the women and children. Sometimes war was a pre-arranged practice-encounter like a duel

or prize fight. This often occurred in the Santa Clara valley. But more often the war was savage, unpracticed, deadly.

The Indians went into battle singing a martial song. In order to terrify their enemies the first victims were the recipients of terrible cruelties, not unlike those seen in Belgium. In fact, there is much to be learned in the perfection of war by studying the Indians.

When the battle was on, women picked up the arrows and gave them to the warriors. No quarter was given, except to mortally wounded. They were turned over to the old men by whom they were scalped. The scalps were dried as souvenirs of victory. In fact, scalping has been overlooked in the perfection of modern warfare. There is something to be said for it. For instance scalping might put an end to war itself.

Sometimes the victorious Indians were not satisfied with mere victory. After they had exterminated the entire tribe they ate the bodies of their enemies. This too should be considered by the war ministers. If food is scarce in London, Russia, Paris or Berlin, canned Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans or Russians might be served, thereby lowering the price of food as well as forwarding a campaign of frightfulness.