

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. 68 THE BATTLE OF SANTA CLARA

PART II

Weber and his force went to San Francisco to report to the commander, but he did not meet Sanchez and his men until he had more troops. Sanchez pressed on to San Jose and demanded of Pinkney the surrender of the company. Pinkney refused. Soon there came to reinforce Pinkney Captain Ward Marston, U. S. N., commanding officer. Under him were Assistant Surgeon J. Duvall. Lieutenant Robert Tansil, commanding U. S. marines, and thirty-four men, Master William F. D. Gough and John Kell, who had charge of a field piece, a six-pounder. Then there were the Yerba Buena volunteers commanded by William M. Smith and Lieutenant John Rose and Captain Martin, in all about one hundred and one men.

The Americans were well armed, but the Californians had only swords, lances and out-of-date guns. All of them were mounted, and they presented a droll appearance with their bright serapes, broad-brimmed hats and gay bridles. In January the Americans and the Californians met in a mustard field ten miles north of San Jose on the C. J. Evans ranch, formerly owned by the Morse Seed Company and later by Mr. Worswick.

All one day and a part of the following day the Americans and Californians charged back and forth in the mustard field. The first, probably the only casualty, on the American side was when the cannon became disabled and injured the gunner. There was continual firing and the people at Santa Clara stood on the roofs of the buildings to watch the conflict. The Californians remained on their horses making targets of themselves. The Americans found the mustard forest an excellent ambush.

In Santa Clara an American appeared wearing a serape like that of Secundino Robles, and the news spread quickly that Robles was dead. His wife, who was about to give birth to a child, took one of her children and an ox team to fetch Secundino's body to Santa Clara. However, Robles was found to be living. Mrs. Robles lost

her child through the false rumor. No Californian was shot. Mrs. Trinidad Espinosa of Mayfield, daughter of Secundino Robles, remembers distinctly the battle. She says that the Californians' only casualty was a mule. The Americans had three wounded, Lieutenant John Murphy, Jackson Bennett and Robert Heeney, a marine.

After nearly two days of charging back and forth on the mustard field Sanchez found himself caught between two American divisions and he retreated to what is now Milliken's Corners. From there he went to the Santa Cruz mountains whence he sent to Captain Marston a white flag and asked for a conditional surrender. It was refused.

For two months Sanchez had kept Captain Bartlett and his men prisoners, but all he could gain when he surrendered them was the cattle taken by the Americans, which had been the first cause of the conflict.

The Californians were allowed to go to their homes. Secundino Robles broke his sword, took off his serape and promised to be a good American.

Sanchez was held as a prisoner for some time on board the war vessel the Savannah, but he was later released. He went back to his rancho San Pablo, where he died. He was buried at the Mission Dolores, San Francisco, where his father passed most of his declining years.

Captain Weber afterwards became wealthy in the mine. He built the first house in Stockton and laid out the town. He was a courageous Indian fighter.

Weber did not like to have his own property stolen. Once on a visit to San Jose in the Alameda a thief made off with Captain Weber's horse left standing by him at the entrance to a nursery. Captain Weber organized a posse, followed the thief. When the posse gave out Weber went on alone after the man. When the thief did not stop in response to Weber's command he killed him. Nothing especially was done about the incident. Weber was considered one of the most important men in northern California.