

# 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. 70 'INDIAN WARFARE IN 46-47

In 1846 and 1847 life was military and exciting in San Jose. The Americans and the Mexicans were always on the verge of conflict. To add to the tenseness of the situation the Indians often in bands of one hundred made raids on San Jose, took provisions, cattle or whatever they need. They carried them away to the San Joaquin and the Spaniards never crossed the river in pursuit. The people felt helpless because the Indians were numerous, hungry and relentless.

In the old days before the missions were secularized Indians gave little trouble. They were taught that the cattle, the horses, the crops, the land was theirs. Each believed himself to have a share, although he was paid very little for his work. When the missions were secularized the Indians were helpless children. They had grown up since the fathers came, and had no taste for acorns and grasshoppers. They wanted the new foods and the new clothing. They thought that they were unjustly deprived of their property. Whatever they found they took.

One of the most daring of the Indian leaders was Jose Jesus, who became chief of the Sikayumnas on the death of Estanislao, their chief. The rancharia of the Sikayumnas was at Knight's Ferry. Jose Jesus had been educated at the Santa Clara Mission and there had been an alcalde or foreman. Jose Jesus and his followers lived in the fastnesses of the San Joaquin and plotted raids on all Spanish food producing communities, but especially on San Jose, where he had lived and where he believed that his property existed. At that time Americans seldom dared ride alone. Armed with rifles and revolvers, they traveled in squads of half a dozen on horseback.

Charles M. Weber was one of the first to retaliate against the Indians. Weber had taken arms with Castro to expel Micheltorena and had received therefor a commission in the Mexican army. When the Bear Flag uprising occurred Weber, who was a naturalized German, realized that probably the Americans would gain possession of California, and then he took arms against the Mexicans. He had had considerable experience in handling men, although his business was keeping store.

The Indians raided Coyote and shot A. B. Caldwell. Later they attacked Weber's ranch in San Joaquin County, called French Camp, from which settlement Stockton developed. Weber had bought this property from William Guinnac.

Weber was always more than ready to act in self-defense. He put up a skull and cross bones sign on his ranch with a notice that thieves would be punished to the full extent of the law.

The Indians stole some of Weber's cattle and then he organized a band of his vaqueros, pursued the Indians and inflicted on them terrible slaughter. Few of the Indians survived, but Weber spared the life of Jesus, the leader.

When Weber came to California in 1841 he was Sutter's manager at Sutter's Fort. He had known Jesus and had been on friendly terms with him. The people in San Jose were

amazed when Charles M. Weber appeared with Jesus as a captive. Jesus had so terrorized the people that they had an idea that he was unconquerable.

When Weber brought the chief, six feet tall, into San Jose the Indian was dressed as only the chieftains dressed, with the sash, serape and sombrero of the Mexicans.

The Spanish-Californians had suffered so much from Jesus' depredations that they urged Weber to put him to death, but this Weber did not do. He knew when to be cruel, and when to be merciful. With Jesus he went to Monterey and brought about a conference between him and Governor Mason. The Governor asked Jesus what he intended to do.

Jesus stated his case. He said that he and his people had been reared in the missions. The fathers were good to them. To be sure they worked, but they were fed and clothed. They believed that everything belonged to them. The Mexicans had taken their property and turned them back to acorns and grasshoppers. Now they warred for what they thought were their own possessions. However, Jesus promised Governor Mason that his depredations would cease. Jesus kept his word and became a strong ally of the Americans. He thought in this way he injured the Spanish. Once he took some of his tribe and proceeded against another tribe to recover stolen cattle for Weber.

For years afterward Jose Jesus used to call on Weber and bring him presents. In return Weber always gave handsome gifts.

In 1849 Jose Jesus was wounded by an American in Stockton. Weber paid \$500 to Dr. Ryer for the operation, but the Indian died.