

MY EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF JOLON PEOPLE

by Dagny L. Jacobsen, undated (1970's)

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One of the earliest settlers to my knowledge was the Earl family who had to take up residence in the old deteriorated mission until their land rights along the San Antonio River were cleared so they could build their large adobe home with the well in the middle of it -- rather unusual but labor saving for the times.

They had six children -- 4 girls and 2 boys -- one the oldest and Chum the youngest one in the family. Billy Earl of today is Chum's son. When the girls were of marriageable age one married a man named Smith who purchased land adjacent to her parents. I think it had an adobe house already on it. Another girl married a man named Pinkerton. They built a very impressive adobe house with other needed buildings in addition farther down the line still along the banks of the San Antonio River.

Another daughter married Norman Paulsen living farther inland with a beautiful large, 2 story home (not adobe) and land of the very best in that territory. Between fishing and gambling too much, and not attending to proper farming procedures, he had to give up the place to someone else who moved the house to Lockwood center for a hotel there. He actually lost his farm and property.

The Sobranes families had ownership of vast land holdings all over California and one family had a magnificent adobe home and large cattle ranch also including land along the San Antonio River. In the early 1890's they had to sell it to a wealthy San Francisco man named Bolton who in turn hired a S. F. family to run it for him.

The Sobranes Family moved to their last holding in the area with an adobe of the same type as the Gil adobe structure now under restoration. Their granddaughter, Virginia, was in the upper classes when Einer and Elmer Bergersen started school at the Franklin School. The last holdings of the Sobranes family didn't last long and they left the Jolon area altogether for other holdings near Salinas. The Zoffman family moved in. After they dispersed the Snowbergs took over the ranch.

The Sobranes adobe on the place Bolton purchased was a grand structure with the inevitable 3 foot adobe walls outside. It had large spacious rooms inside. There were 3 bedrooms downstairs, large living room, dining room, kitchen and maid's room downstairs. Upstairs had 3 bedrooms. It was in the shape of a [blank] with a lovely patio and wide veranda all the way around. Our blind army at that time were so obsessed with destruction, they had to practice on their own front first and chose one of the most solid structures down there, the Sobranes adobe, to destroy. By doing this they foolishly ran out of sufficient proper housing for their own personnel. Destroying something like that was something that can never be duplicated.

The Murray family was the only one I really knew had been one of the victims of the vicious Milpitas eviction scandal. Mr. Murray then took up a homestead on very poor soil over the creek east of Jolon and set up a blacksmith shop. They had 7 children the youngest a son Carl was Elmer's age. Mrs. Murray was a grand woman. She had studied to be a doctor but married before getting her degree. Since there was no doctor in Jolon those days, she valiantly took care of the situation without charge -- pay or no pay -- and many there were who had no money to pay her for her humanitarian endeavors. She continued on anyway regardless after raising 7 children.

After the Zoffmans were settled, they had relatives come directly from Denmark to get in on a land deal along the King City road with an adobe house on it. That was the Juhl family with 8 members -- 6 men and 2 girls -- to start with and later separated. I was quite young when the oldest daughter Maria got married in the Jolon Episcopal Church with an elaborate spread of good food afterwards at home. Papa was called upon again to practice his bakery skills he was famous for. There were many other large functions, but he was not always available because he had to be in S. F. so much of the time to earn money as the farm was not providing money yet.

There may have been many other marriages in the little church before my time for those members who belonged to it, but I was not old enough to know much -- for instance the three Earl girls.

The first clergyman was Rev. McGown Sr. who remained pastor until his son Edward took over. He prepared our age group for our confirmation. There had to be at least a class of 10 before Bishop Nicoles would come to serve the rights. I think we had even over that number in the group. There were so many in our age group and the church was far from stagnant even if the stage coach had ceased operating except from King City to Jolon after the railroad had been extended farther south in 1887.

Judge Forbes was a member of a very well educated and prominent family whose father was sent from England to help during the colonizing era on political matters. The Judge lived in Los Altos and the Athertons were his bosom friends. He himself was a black sheep and the one son of the Athertons was also of that type. I do not know when the Forbes family left Los Altos to go into hiding after a charge of vicious manslaughter was charged against the Judge before 1878. They were situated adjacent to the homestead on the west side. They were living there when mama and papa came. For some reason some of the evacuated victims of the Milpitas put the blame on Mr. Forbes and even bent on hanging him in vengeance. This was not cleared for 20 years when it was noticed a little 0 had been added in a vital place, changing 500 acres to 5000 acres.

One day Mr. Murray was wandering up the Jolon creek when he heard a lot of unusual chatter going on among the trees so went to investigate and found Mr. Forbes ready to be hung. He managed to convince wrong never corrects another wrong and they let him loose. They must have had 12 children. We knew the latest six as Fred being the oldest -- Annie, Jim, Phebe, Henrietta and Luis, the only one younger than us, Ragna and I. Those girls spent much of their time in Los Altos where their precious Aunt saw to it those things they needed were provided. When they came back they were dressed in the best of fashion attire.

Fred played the guitar often for dances. Annie could play any instrument by note or without. Phebe was an accomplished violinist and played it at the Pantages at one time. The others most likely played the guitar but not to any extent.

A man came to Jolon around 1903 to operate the mine that was named the Ruby Mine -- not for the rubies but for gold but it didn't pay off so closed it down. In the meanwhile he had married Henrietta Forbes and never heard anything more about them.

When Becky Garcia and I were student nurses at Fabiola Hospital, a patient from Los Altos came in to be operated on and Becky was put on as "special" nurse. She liked Becky and told her she reminded her so much of her niece, Henrietta near King City. Becky of course told her she knew her well. Then she told her brother, Judge Forbes, why he had to flee for his life where he couldn't be located again. The Judge had come from a high class family. His father was sent from England to straighten some sort of political issue during the colonization period.