



Lafayette, California

April 2023

Vol.50, No.2

Located on the Lower Level of the Lafayette Library



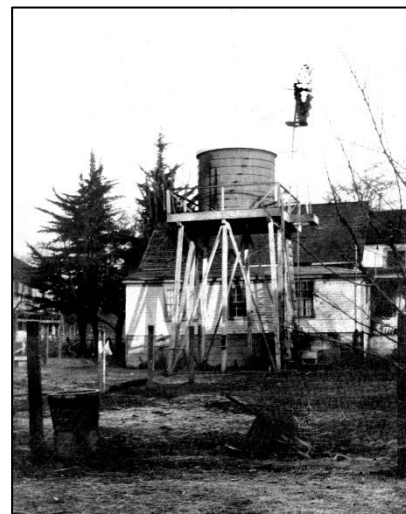
**CELEBRATING 175<sup>th</sup>+ YEARS OF LAFAYETTE HISTORY**  
**STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING INFORMATION ON THE CELEBRATION**

## THE LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR

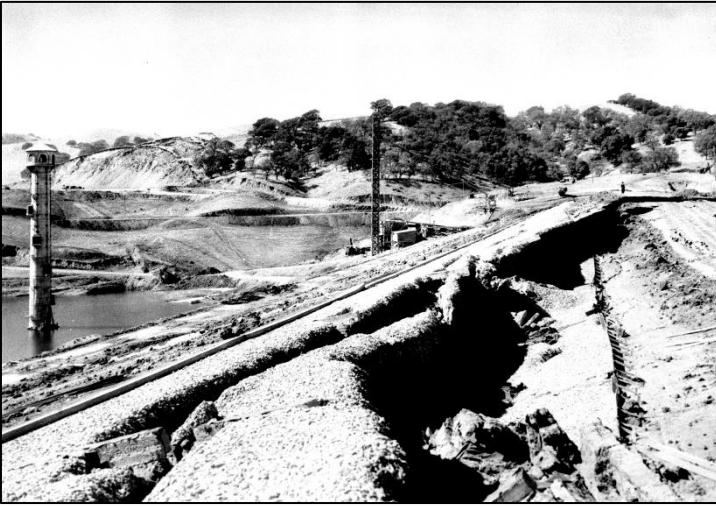
Early Lafayette residents built their homes near the many creeks that flowed in the area so that they had a source of water for their needs. Later, wells were dug and water towers constructed. Water was brought up from a well by a windmill and was stored in the tower which sustained families in times when wells ran dry and creeks dried up in the summer months. Elam Brown moved from his first two homes because of the lack of water.

Often, though, too much water could be a problem. A monstrous flood occurred in January 1862, and barns were lost, buildings and bridges were washed away, cattle died, and travel was impeded. Consistent water was an ongoing problem when there were droughts, a concern that continued into the early 1920s. Somethings needed to be done.

The Lafayette Improvement Club (LIC), an early group of local, civic-minded people, was responsible for forming a water district that would bring Mokelumne River water to town. Lewis Rodebaugh, Col. M.M. Garrett, M.H. Stanley, and George Meredith worked with the LIC to form the Lafayette County Water District, and Lafayette eventually became part of the East Bay Municipal Water District (EBMUD). In 1927, a dam running east to west at the west end of town was proposed. It would control flooding and provide



water for the community. In July, 1927, the contract was awarded to the George Pollock Company (who was the low bidder), for \$1,370,685, on the basis of 50 cents per cubic yard for earth embankment, 85 cents for clay puddle fill, and various other units for concrete facing, core walls, drains, outlet tower and pipes.



In September of 1928, when construction was more than 80% complete, an unexpected settlement occurred in the massive structure. The earthen barrier was sliding on its foundations, opening great cracks in the reservoir bed. It continued for ten days, then stopped. The night of the first cracks, Leo J. Coleman, engineer for EBMUD, had walked across the dam in darkness, which caused him to tumble down the face of the dam. The apron of the dam was to be concreted to present water seepage. The water tower was equipped with valves and pipes to send

water to the filter station across from the bottom of the dam. At dam completion, the tower would be barely above the water.

The investigation into the collapse found that the soils were the wrong type to support so much weight. A consulting board recommended that the dam base be widened and the ratio of height to width cut by about half. This would reduce future storage in the reservoir from 10,540 acre feet to about 3,700, but by cutting the height some forty feet and flattening the slopes, they could prevent an unsightly blemish on the landscape. Work was delayed temporarily and reconstruction costs ran to \$300,000, but the misshapen dam has never moved since.

A year before the dam collapse, the St. Francis Dam in Los Angeles County had failed, and 400 people died. Residents of Lafayette remembered and were worried. If the dam had been filled, Lafayette and Walnut Creek would have been flooded. Work on the dam stopped for three years after it settled.



It was almost six years from the start of construction of the dam in 1927 until its final completion in 1933, and the final product was one of the biggest dams to be then found for the smallest amount of water stored behind it.

In 1966, the reservoir was opened as a recreation area, something innovative at the time. The 925-acre site holding 1.4 billion gallons was opened to public recreation in 1966. Besides being used as an auxiliary water supply, the reservoir is a recreational area for hiking, fishing, boating, and picnicking. The recreation area is open year-round during daylight hours. There is a daily parking fee for cars or a yearly permit may be purchased

instead. Fishing is free at the reservoir; only the usual state license requirements and bait restrictions apply. The State Department of Fish and Game plants many thousand catchable trout each year. Surrounding the reservoir are picnic tables to accommodate families and small groups.

Today the reservoir is not part of EMBUD's water supply and is intended for use only as an emergency water source.

## **AIRPLANE CRASH AT THE RESERVOIR**

Grappling hooks were dragged through Lafayette Reservoir in a search for a missing plane believed to have crashed there on January 3, 1953. Navy divers from the San Francisco Naval Shipyard at Hunters Point were prepared to descend again into the water as soon as the bulk of the plane wreckage was located, and an Army "weasel" ( a semi-amphibious tracked vehicle) was brought to the scene to assist if needed.



East Bay Municipal Utility District personnel were also aiding in the search, as were sheriff's deputies while Lafayette firemen stood by.

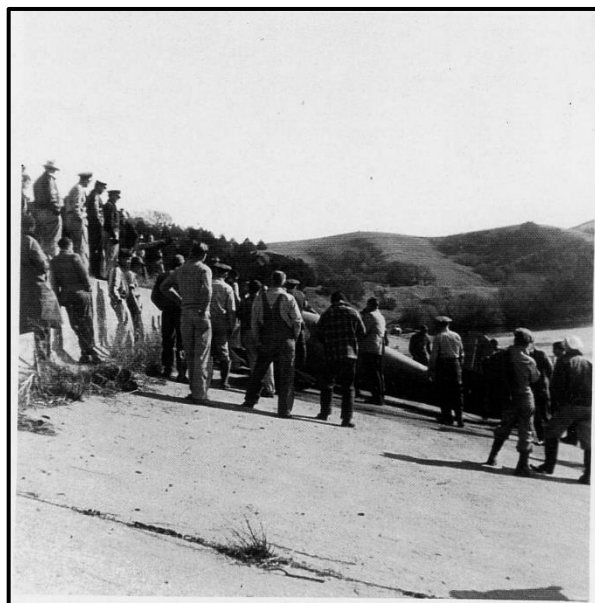
The missing men were Thomas A. Pritchard, 27, of Berkeley, and William Harrison, 25, of Oakland. They disappeared late Saturday after having taken off from Buchanan Field in Concord for a return flight to Hayward Municipal Airport, having refueled at the Salinas airport at 5 pm.

The two had left Hayward Airport earlier Saturday afternoon on a pleasure flight in a low wing monoplane, with Pritchard piloting.

With fog and rain hampering the search, and with interruptions caused by darkness, the quest had initially netted part of a propellor, a piece of fuselage, a piece of wing-bracing, and a jacket containing a wallet with papers of Harrison – all found in the reservoir waters, which vary in depth from 60 to 100 feet.

At one time it was believed the bulk of the plane wreckage had been located – but a 30-foot section of steel pipe was brought up instead.

Thirteen days after the crash, dragging operations were temporarily suspended after the body of Harrison, the pilot, was found. The plane was later found and towed to shore with grappling hooks after it was recovered about 600 feet from the shore. The following day, Navy divers tied cables around the tail. The plane was hooked to a Coast Guard "duck," raised from the water, and towed to shore. Divers were still searching for the body of pilot Pritchard and sheriff's deputies remained at the scene to see if his body, believed to be in the deep waters, would float to the surface in the next few days. Pritchard's body was apparently never found.



## CAMPANA MUSIC

The walls of Joe Campana's Moraga Road office were a visual history, not just of Lafayette, but of the world at large. Joe, owner of Campana Music for over fifty years, smiles down on the visitor alongside photos of celebrities. Photos of sports teams Campana has sponsored, a *Diablo* magazine poster proclaiming "Campana Music: the place to shop in the East Bay", and hand-written notes from Petar of Petar's Restaurant fame are all preserved in a space crammed with a half-century of music memorabilia.



Joe was born in Oakland in 1920, served in Europe and Africa during World War II, and returned from the war to work in his uncle's Oakland plumbing business. "My folks bought me an accordion when I was nine years old, and I took private music lessons," he says. "After the war the world changed. People's attitudes changed. They wanted to be their own bosses. They'd tell their boss I don't want to this or I don't want to do that. I saw the light immediately when I got back and decided to go out on my own. Music was the only thing I wanted to do." After the war he started teaching accordion on the side, picking up students. The accordion in the 30s, 40s and 50s was a very popular musical instrument. Then he decided he wanted to open a music store. He and his wife used to drive out to Lafayette on weekends where all the hay fields were and say

"someday we're going to live out here." He wanted to open a store in Walnut Creek because it was more developed, but there was already a music store there. He opened his store in Lafayette in June, 1947.

Kids sometimes rode to Joe's store on horseback for their music lessons and tied the horses up outside. At first Joe commuted from Albany. While Joe gave lessons on the other side of the tunnel, his wife would run the store in Albany. He'd leave the house at 6:30 am and get to Lafayette at 7:00 and start teaching kids the accordion before school. Then he'd give lessons after the store closed and get home around 11:00 pm. He did that for a number of years until he finally got enough students in this area. It took about seven years of real struggle. The family moved to Lafayette in 1951.

At first it was just Joe and his wife in the store. Later both of his children worked part time. He was in his first store for six years when Claudio Garibotti, a fellow Italian, told him he was going to build a new building on the west side of Moraga Road. Around 1953 they moved to the new building. The Fiesta Market was on the end of the block, Sam Napolitano's barber shop was in the back. Then there was a hardware store, Joe's music store, Sutton's Shoes, a children's store, and Dorothy Foster's gift shop. They sold radios and Magnavox and Zenith TVs in the early 1950s. He got into the record business at about the same time. There were three record booths where records could be played, 78s, 45s,

<b>CAMPANA MUSIC</b>	Guitars Accordians Band Instruments Music Lessons Instruments Rented Records Sheet Music
RCA and ZENITH COLOR TV HI-FI STEREO Sales and Service	
JOE CAMPANA	990 Moraga Road Lafayette, California Phone 284-4624

and 33 1/3s. High school kids used to come in. They sold 8-track tapes, then cassettes. In the 90s when CDs came in, the store got out of the record business as they couldn't compete with large stores like Tower Records and Internet sales.

Joe stayed in the Garibotti Building until St. Patrick's Day in 1968 when a fire, which began in the Fiesta Market, destroyed the entire building. Joe had already bought the site for his current store on Moraga Road so he was able to rent space nearby until the new building was completed in 1970.

Joe's business basis was lessons, sales and rentals, sheet music and instrument repairs (done by Joe himself). On the top level were studios where teachers gave music lessons.

Joe died in 2011 and Fannie in 2015 after over 70 years of musical education and service to Lafayette and nearby communities.

## **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE 2023**

**Welcome to our new members and to those who have recently renewed their membership or have made a donation:**

**Nancy Goodmiller  
Trudy Salter  
Carol Singer  
Jane Minor  
Kirk Allen  
Frank Barham  
Katie Peacock  
Michelle Fanto-Chan**

**John Kennett  
Richard Silbert  
Stan Pedder  
Carol Zischke  
Judith Jordan  
Sande Hubbs  
Dick & Lisa Cohen  
Allen Hopkins  
Laura Torkelson**

**Glen Zamanian  
Paul Sheehan  
Stu Sweidler  
Lynn Hiden  
Jenny Rosen  
The Flynn Family  
Lauren Deal  
Shane Reisman**

**Thank you for your support of the Lafayette Historical Society.**

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Your membership is exceedingly important as it makes it possible for our organization to pay annual rent to the City of Lafayette for our space and be able to pay for our phone, insurance, and other needed supplies. If you have a **red dot** on your address label for this issue, your membership is up for renewal in the next month or two. If you have a **red L** on your address label you are a Life Member and do not pay dues so if you'd like to make a donation it would be appreciated.

**Student Membership is \$15**

**Individual Membership is \$30**

**Family Membership is \$60**

**Additional donations are always appreciated. Please send to LHS**

**PO Box 133, Lafayette CA 94549**





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