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VIEWS OF SHIMADA

It's good to be back where we say Richmond- Shimada instead of Shimada- Richmond for family reasons , a wonderful climate (never over 99° F, I understand), and the quiet , peaceful atmosphere of the Point.

During July and August, I spent an enjoyable six weeks teaching conversational English to students and adults in Shimada , Japan, Richmond's sister city. I lived with three different families in Shimada and visited with many other individuals and community groups.

When in Shimada, I was asked many questions about Richmond, my family, my impressions of Shimada, etc. I want to share now, with as many Richmond citizens as possible, my experience in Shimada and in Japan.

The Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission is dedicated to aiding the development of mutual understanding through a sister-city relationship between Richmond and Shimada. Sister city affiliations are part of the People-to-People program which grew out of a White House Conference in 1956. Following a mayors' conference in Washington, D. C., in 1961, our sister-city relationship was formalized. The original 11-member board of the Commission was appointed by the City Council in May, 1962.

Shimada, a city of about 70, 000 people, is located 120 miles south of Tokyo. It is an industrial city with much tea and rice cultivation also. In the past few years, smaller towns have been incorporated into the city so the boundaries are quite extensive; but most of the population lives in the original city which is much easier to cover on foot or bicycle than Richmond.

The city should be visible from the train, but I must admit that I missed it last week. I was anticipating the view, but a blink at 130 miles per hour prevented it. More about the super express later. It's a wonder of the modern world.

NEXT WEEK: The Bath Scene in Japan. It's not what you think since the American occupation.

--Hagen-san

The ideal sister-city program involves a large number of citizens and organizations in both communities and a continuing cultural interchange. This is the goal of the Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission.

Any person in the Richmond area may join in the Commission. All that is required is a real interest in strengthening the bonds of friendship between our two cities and broadening the understanding between peoples of different cultures.

There are no dues.

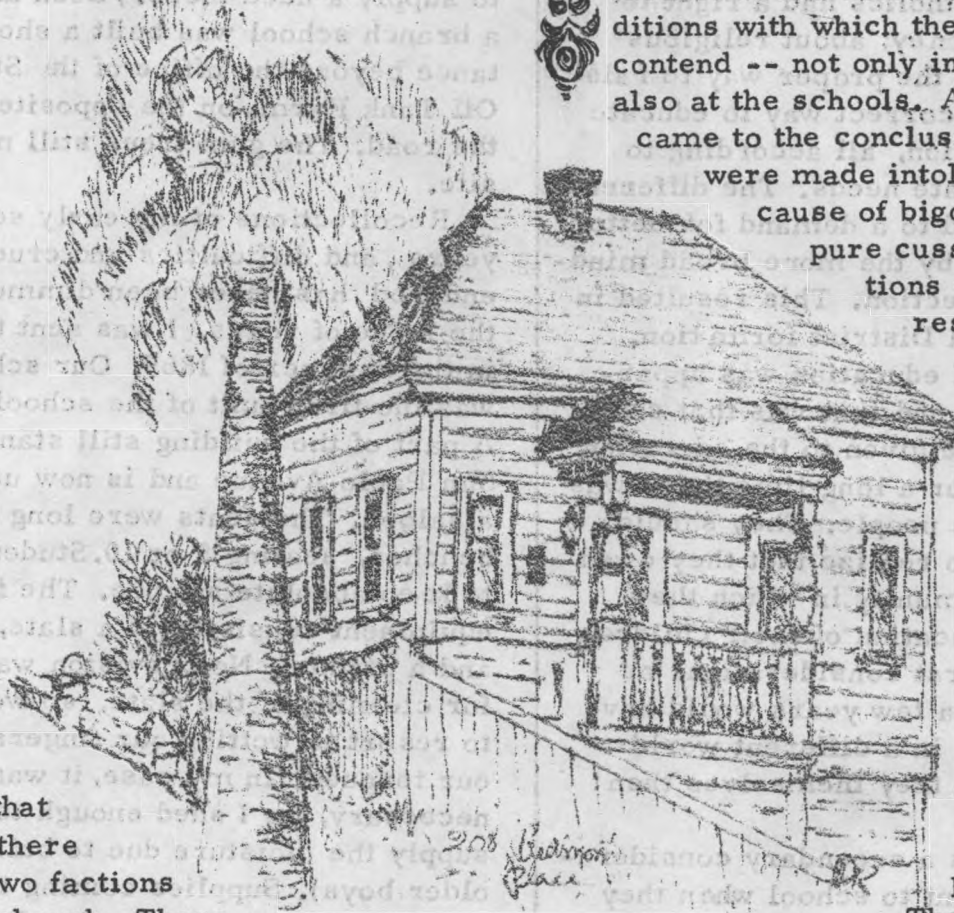
To join, write to the Richmond-Shimada Friendship Commission, City Hall, Civic Center, Richmond, 94804, asking for a membership application.

REMINISCENCE

with Don Church

Excerpts from Early History of Richmond, written by Evan Griffins in December, 1938.

PART III



At that time, there were two factions in the church. There was dissension because one faction did not consider the minister a fit person for the position he held. One objection was that he smoked; but being a retired seafaring man, such a procedure was a matter of course to him. The dissenters were defeated, and the victors then decided to improve their church by adding a gallery to it. This proved to be their waterloo, since it made an ideal place for the younger generation of males to target practice. (until the day when the preacher's eye stopped a wad of freshly masticated tobacco; with the result that the church was discontinued.) The Presbyterians effected an organization in 1875 which lasted until 1889. Dissension arose, and the church was again

disbanded. The Baptists finally took over the church and succeeded in their effort so that at this time we have a fine and credible institution known as the San Pablo Baptist Church. I mention the trouble in the churches to show the conditions with which the settlers had to contend -- not only in the churches, but also at the schools. As I grew older I came to the conclusion that conditions were made intolerable mostly because of bigotry, conceit and pure cussedness by the factions which impeded progress.

The San Pablo school district included the territory from the county line to San Pablo Bay, and as far East as San Pablo Dam.

A school which the Catholic people decided to build was consummated in the seventies; erected on property they owned.

The school functioned a few years and the project was abandoned.

A little explanation in regard to El Sobrante might be advisable. At the close of the Mexican War in 1846, the United States acquired California by the terms of the treaty in which it was guaranteed to respect all legitimate Spanish or Mexican grants. Reference to this tract of land as El Sobrante grant is an error since there never was a Sobrante grant. Sobrante is a Spanish word meaning an ungranted tract of land intervening between two grants.

As this tract was occupied and held by squatters rights, it naturally brought on a controversy, clouding the title, which had to be settled at Washington D. C. in 1886. The Interior Department

had no record of such a grant, and decided in favor of the settlers, who were required to prove claims, pay the required fee and then received the deeds. The Standard Oil Tank Farm is located within this tract.

I can recall the many weary hours that I was compelled to listen to my father and the neighbors argue over the school question: whether the district was too large; whether or not Catholics had a right to share in public money; about religious convictions; about the proper way to raise a family, and the correct way to educate the rising generation, all according to their own immediate needs. The differences of opinions led to a demand for better school conditions by the more broad minded people of the section. This resulted in the Sheldon School District formation. The main issue of education was apparently overlooked, and that was that some attention should be given to the education of the parents. For a long time there was no leader of these people. They should have been made to realize that they owed a duty to the community in which they lived; that the education of their children should be their first consideration, as these children in a few years would have to face conditions in a different world than that in which they themselves then lived.

Education was a secondary consideration. Children went to school when they weren't needed at home. Many parents thought that the more that was produced within a family, the sooner prosperity would come. It was the few who brought the community out of this unconcerned state. These people could be led, not driven; so, as always happens, there appeared one who had been silently working for some time among these inhabitants, who slowly but surely was raising them above their environment. This he accomplished by force of example, honesty of purpose and kind advice.

He succeeded in improving our school system, which today is second to none in California. That this condition exists might be justly termed the lengthening of the shadow of this broadminded man. The

foundation he succeeded in building is being carried on and advanced at this time by his son-in-law, our present Superintendent of Schools, Walter T. Helms.

Mr. Rumrill was elected trustee of the district. One of his first moves was establishing a school at the county line, called the Castro School. (It was later moved to San Pablo Avenue to supply a need there.) Soon after, a branch school was built a short distance beyond the office of the Standard Oil Tank Farm, on the opposite side of the road. The gum trees still mark the site.

Recollections of my early school years, and difficulties and crudeness endured has never been dimmed by the lapse of years. I was sent to school in the summer of 1869. Our school was the first unit of the school system. A part of the building still stands near San Pablo Avenue and is now used as a saloon. The seats were long wooden benches, seating 8 or 10. Students were to keep absolute silence. The first equipment consisted of a slate, pencil and a primer. No provision was made for cleaning of the slate, so we had to resort to wetting our fingers with our tongues. (In my case, it was not necessary, as I shed enough tears to supply the moisture due to bullying of older boys). Supplies coming to our ranch arrived in flax sacks, designated O. G. (Owen Griffins). Sacks either came from around the Horn, or from New Zealand. The New Zealand sacks were of a better grade of material, so mother used them for various necessities, among which were blouses for me; and in every case, the O. G. came in the middle of my back. It was no use to object, as it was an economic measure, and I suffered the humiliation. But this was nothing to the humiliation caused by my father, who, being an ex-trustee, came to examine the students in history and geography. He attempted to correct some right answers, at which the teacher attempted to correct him, resulting in a strong rebuttal.

OVER



AMERICAN FLAG AS A PATCH

A couple of weeks ago I read a newspaper article about someone using the American flag as a patch on a pair of pants. I can't remember where it happened or any of the details -- obviously it didn't seem too important to me.

But then -- right here in Point Richmond -- I saw a young lady in blue corduroy pants with a small (3" by 5") American flag sewn over one knee ... and I, usually a calm, objective, rational human being, felt a seething rage beginning to boil up inside me. I could hardly restrain myself from ripping the flag off.

There were several years difference in our ages and obviously she didn't learn the same things about the flag that I did. Young people today seem to see only negative things -- and there are negative things to see. But that flag represents the blood soaked rags the Continental soldiers wore on their feet at Valley Forge, the hardship endured by the pioneers who settled in the wilderness, all the apple pies ever baked by a grandmother, all the young men or not young, who ever gave their lives in any war -- the list is endless. I'm sure you have your own ideas of what the flag means, and I'll respect your opinion -- as long as you respect that piece of cloth.



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TRIVIA

by Mid Dornan

"Trivia" is still on vacation, after a really -- what happened? this summer it was the shortest one on record!

The second annual Crest Avenue and Belvedere Party will take place Saturday night, September 7 at the Standard Oil Rod and Gun Club. The pot luck party was planned by Anita Christiansen, Marian Hawkins and Carol Garcia, who were surprised to find that they actually have 75 neighbors in the short span of Crest and Belvedere! Last year, the first "annual" party, was instigated basically to say good-bye to Crest residents, the Ed Hoiland family, who moved to Connecticut for a year. This year, the Hoilands might get here just in time for the second "annual" party, since they have been traveling back home, and were last known to be in Montana. Their dog, Charlie, is already here, having traveled by air. The Crest neighbors paid his air fare with their going-away gifts last year!

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Missed (around July): Jean and Vern Doellstedt, who were in Chicago (sans children) for fun, and Vern's class reunion. (A reunion is where you go to see who is falling apart).

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Because Washington School will be closed Admission Day on Monday, Boy Scout Troop 111 won't meet until the following Monday.

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IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, in November, but aren't registered, REMEMBER: your last day to do so is September 12!

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West Side PLANS

The West Side Improvement Club had its first meeting of the year Thursday, September 5 at the Community Center. After a luncheon, the group elected their new president, Mrs. Marian Downey. They were pleased to see Ruby Ellis, who is recuperating, and back "where the action is".

The annual Wreath Tea is planned for November 23 at the Community Center. Hand crafts, baked goods and lovely Christmas decorations will be on sale. They are usually sold out early, so put the date on your calendar now, and come early on the twenty-third of November! Money raised by the Wreath Tea enables the club to buy Christmas turkeys for needy families.

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Regional Park Rumbles

Some favorable sounds about the Point Park are emerging from the East Bay Regional Park Board... but celebrations won't take place until there is a definite commitment.

Cookbook

The Point Park Cookbook workers thank all the great cooks who sent in marvellous picnic menus and recipes for the book. Gertrude Harris, compiler of the book, did some reminiscing as she looked through the now fine collection of recipes from Point residents and friends from other areas. Her reminiscing begins on page 11.

BOOK REVIEW

The Swan in the Evening is a lovely, lyrical book about the elegant Edwardian childhood of Rosamun Lehmann, with the realities of death omnipresent but never shattering until the death of her only child: "And she went on her way, with one star awake, as the swan in the evening moves over the lake."

She recommends the following books for research on the subject of psychical phenomena: Swan on a Black Sea, The Road to Immortality, and Beyond Human Personality, all by Geraldine Cummins; The Imprisoned Splendour by C. Rayner Johnson; The Country Beyond and The Fourfold Vision by Jane Sherwood; The Silent Road by W. Tudor Pole; and the books of F. W. H. Myers.

Her hypothesis may be objectionable to some, but her writing style is unique and beautiful.

-- Gerrie Kretzmer.

