

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. 75 THE SECOND HANGING

Antonio Valencia was a daring young boy who rode waddy about the field of the battle at Santa Clara but before the year was over he had committed murder. Because of his youth, the respectability of his family, the mystery connected with the murder, and the unusual character of the criminal, the hanging of the boy was unusually tragic.

Antonio was the son of Julio Valencia, who owned ranches between San Jose and San Francisco. Valencia street in San Francisco is named for the family.

In 1847 a young son of Edward Pyle, one of the first Americans in San Jose, went to the ranch of Anastasio Chaboya, south of San Jose, where cattle were being "putted" for branding. Antonio Valencia, a cousin of the Chaboyas, was present. Young Pyle rode a mare, and the Spanish boys teased him about it, saying that he was no horseman. Among the Spaniards it was considered bad form to ride a mare, something like making a woman work. The Spanish boys told young Pyle that he could not ride as well as they. Valencia ridiculed Pyle's horsemanship. He threw the riata and caught Pyle's horse by the foot, laming him.

Young Pyle rode off threatening to make Valencia pay for injuring his horse. After the American boy had gone the Chaboyas teased Valencia, saying that the Pyles would ruin the Valencias if they began litigation. Val-

encia was frightened and made up his mind to overtake Pyle to urge him not to begin suit and to ask him to keep secret the injuries to the horse.

When the Valencia boy mounted his horse he left peace behind. Two years later he confessed that he had overtaken Pyle, pleaded with Pyle to keep his secret, but Pyle still threatened. Then he threw a riata over Pyle and dragged him from his horse and along the ground for several hundred feet, but Pyle was not dead.

Frightened, Valencia rode back to the Chaboya ranch and told his uncle what he had done. The uncle warned him that the Americans would lynch him. Again more frightened, Valencia went back to the injured boy, cut his throat with a knife, dragged his body into the foothills and buried him beyond Silver Creek. Then he covered Pyle's body with brush.

For two years no one knew what had become of young Pyle. Even now no one precisely knows how the news became public. Probably a vaquero of Tullus Martin of Gilroy told Martin, but the story was known only to a few. Martin came into San Jose and repeated it to Mr. Cad Keyes. Keyes, Martin and John Pyle made up a party and arrested Valencia. Davidson, Pyle and William McCutcheon found Pyle's body in the spot indicated by the vaquero.

Before R. H. Dimmick, Judge of the First Instance, Valencia confessed all. He was tried by a jury and found

guilty.

To Valencia atone came as a relief. He said that he had lived a life of torment after the crime. Every night for two years he had gone to his victim's grave. His feet had worn a path to the spot.

He said he did not wish to live. At night for two years whenever he closed his eyes he could see Pyle on his hands and knees, his tongue out, his eyes staring at him. When Valencia was about to be hanged a Mexican rode up, offered a fleet horse, but though he was loosely guarded he chose death to life with a conscience in torment.

Antonio Valencia was hanged in public in 1849 in the presence of Judge Dimmick, then Alcalde, and a large number of spectators. This was the second execution of the death penalty in the county.