

# 50 Uncommon Names (cont'd.)



Bruce Lee was a local businessman in the 1950s.

on the north side of Mount Diablo. Today, about 100 families are members of the Association. Bruce was a dedicated and tireless advocate for building and improving riding and hiking trails in and around Mount Diablo State Park. He was the owner/operator of Bruce Lee Appliances in Walnut Creek. He and his wife, Bobbie M. Lee, and son Marty and daughter Deborah, lived in Pleasant Hill.

## CCC TRAIL (A8)

The acronym stands for the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC was founded in 1933 by the Federal government in order to plant trees, combat fires and tree diseases, and otherwise add to the value of the forest domain. The CCC was disbanded during World War II. It served a useful purpose during the days of unemployment by training and educating youth throughout the country. It was an instrument for preventing delinquency and providing opportunities for young men to learn a profession. The CCC was responsible for many unique and useful work projects in Mount Diablo State Park, only one of seven California State Parks to benefit



CCC crew building a road on Mt. Diablo in 1935.

from CCC labor. In addition to the CCC Trail, a 200-man company, all veterans of World War I, built the Summit Visitor Center building from quarried stone taken six miles away near Rock City. The veterans also built camping and picnic sites including parking spaces, a water supply

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association is a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of interpretive, scientific and educational projects to help the general public enjoy and become knowledgeable about Mount Diablo. Their mission is "Preservation through Education". The Association also operates the Mitchell Canyon Interpretive

and distribution system, restrooms, stone fireplaces, hewn tables and benches, culverts, retaining walls, and constructed many access roads and trails.

## CARDINET OAKS ROAD (F2)

Named for George H. Cardinet, Jr. (1909- ), the former President of the Cardinet Candy Company, a business started by his father. George is a past President of the Concord/Mount Diablo Trailride Association, and founder of the California Horseman's Association. Known as "the



George Cardinet/Back Creek Trail.

father of California's trail system", he helped to establish, over the past 70 years, many of the hiking and riding trails in Mount Diablo State Park. Another trail, the George Cardinet/Back Creek Trail, was dedicated in his honor in 1992. His wife Margaret died in 1992. They raised four children.

## CHASE POND (F6)

The pond is named for John G. Chase (1837-1908) who owned a prosperous 320-acre farm in Sycamore Valley in the mid-1800s. He also had a home in Antioch. A native of New Hampshire, he arrived in Contra Costa County in 1858. He married Michigan native, Almira Johnson Chase (1842-1910) in 1868, and they had two children--a daughter Nettie, and a son J. Rudolph. Besides operating the farm, John operated a livery stable and stage line from Somersville to Antioch. He was also a Deputy Sheriff and constable of Township Number Five.

## CLAYTON OAKS ROAD (E1)

Joel Henry Clayton (1812-1872) was born in England and was the eldest of 12 children. He immigrated to America in 1837, and became a true pioneer of the early West. He was a talented mining engineer, prospector, trader, farmer, community developer, and all around entrepreneur. His

legendary activities across the country and along the entire West Coast earned him much respect, and are recorded in many places. Joel first saw Clayton Valley in 1843. In 1853, he purchased land, and in 1856, recorded and began developing his new town of Clayton. Unfortunately, he died of "quick pneumonia" after exposure in a chilling storm. He had struggled home carrying a sick calf that was dead by the time he reached the farmhouse. Joel and his wife, Margaret Ellen McLay Clayton (1820-1908), are buried in Clayton's Live Oak Cemetery. Four of their nine children survived them.

## CURRY CANYON (F7)

James R. Curry (1835-1908), a native of Virginia, and his wife, Ellen Callan Curry, a native of London, England were early pioneers in Contra Costa County, settling in the Clayton area in 1858. James was engaged in the livery business and established the first stage line between Clayton and Oakland, and also to Nortonville along the coal-mining regions. He made two trips back to his native home with an ox-team. The Currys had eight children, seven of which were boys.

## DAN COOK CANYON (D7)

Daniel Cook was the owner of a 6,000-acre ranch on the southwestern slopes of Mount Diablo. The property was initially called the "Railroad Ranch" (1877-1880). This ranch was first purchased by the famous Southern Pacific Railroad's "Big Four": Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins, Collis Huntington and Leland Stanford. It was managed, and subsequently owned, by another Southern Pacific Railroad magnate, David Colton. Dan and his wife, Caroline Colton Cook, inherited the ranch after Caroline's father's death on October 10, 1878, due to a horse-riding accident. Consequently, it became the "Cook Ranch" (1880-1889). By 1881, Dan and Caroline and their young son had tragically died, and Dan's brother Seth Cook (1830-1889) took over the ranch. After Seth's death in 1889, the ranch was left to the Cook's niece, and it became the "Oakwood Park Stock Farm" (1890-1912). The ranch operated raising thoroughbred horses. The original ranchland included Dan Cook Canyon, Rock City, Devil's Slide, and central portions of the Park along what is now South Gate Road. The Diablo Country Club is built on the site of he old headquarters of the Railroad Ranch/Cook Ranch/Oakwood Park Stock Farm.

## DONNER CANYON (E2)

This beautiful canyon on Mt. Diablo's north side is named for John Donner and his descendants. According to the 1880 census in Clayton, John was born in 1814 in Canada and was employed as a farmer. His father and mother were both born in Germany. He was not a member of the ill-fated Donner Party that came to California in the 1840s.

## EMMONS CANYON (B6)

This canyon is named for the "Emmons Ranch" which once encompassed 640-acres that included the canyon.

## FELT SPRING (G5)

William Felt named the spring in memory of his wife, Matilda Felt (1860-1906). Both were natives of Sweden. William was a miner in Colorado and a railroad man in San Francisco before purchasing 160-acres on the east side of Mount Diablo in 1905 from C.H. Bradley. The Contra Costa Gazette that William "made a little clearing and built a little house for himself and wife." On September 29, 1906, Matilda unexpectedly died of heart failure on the "slopes of Mount Diablo" at the age of 46. She was fluent in seven languages was governess for several affluent families.

## FINLEY ROAD (J9)

Harrison Finley (1837-1918) was a native of Missouri and arrived in Contra Costa County in 1863, initially leased land in Tassajara Valley. In 1875, he purchased 1,080-acres in Tassajara Valley and farmed and raised livestock. He and his wife, Lavina Roy Finley (1849-1945), had eight children. All of their children were born in Contra Costa County. In 1888, the Finley family moved to Sonoma County.

## GIBRALTAR ROCK (E7)

The "Rock of Gibraltar" is an imposing natural rock formation near the southern tip of Spain in the strait between Europe and Africa at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, Gibraltar Rock in Mount Diablo State Park is at the natural gateway to Rock City along South Gate Road.

## GOVERNMENT ROAD (B4)

In 1851, two U.S. Army officers Majors Robert Allen and Robert Loring purchased a 3,000-acre ranch on the Western slope of Mount Diablo. Their property was appropriately called "Government Ranch". Government Road was within their property.

Center. For more information about MDIA, visit their web site at [mdia.org](http://mdia.org) or write to MDIA, PO Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA, 94597-0346, call (925) 927-7222 or e-mail to [info@mdia.org](mailto:info@mdia.org).



## Park Superintendent

Brian Hickey (925) 673-2891

## MDIA President

Linda Sanford. (510) 848-4813

## Mount Diablo Review Editor

Linda Sanford (510) 848-4813

## Production Artist

Andi Goulet (707) 573-9030