

Do You Remember?

By Anne Homan



Please Help Us with This Puzzle

Some months ago, Dick Finn learned from Betty Holdener that her brother-in-law, Dan Berry, owned an historic collection of caricatures of Livermore men. Dick, a fellow member of L-AGS (the local genealogy group), and the Livermore Heritage Guild, invited me to look at the collection with him. Dan's father and grandfather, also named Dan Berry, were saloonkeepers in Livermore. His father and Jack Reimers collected the caricatures, which used to hang in his father's saloon, Dan's Place.

Dan owns 43 of the crayon caricatures, all drawn by "Vasco" in 1910. An article in the March 26, 1910 issue of the *Herald* noted: "The Hub saloon has an art exhibit which attracts a great deal of attention. It is a gallery of local celebrities executed in crayon by Vasco Loureiro. The likenesses of most of them are excellent." Probably the portraits started out at the Hub and then traveled over to Dan's Place when the Hub closed down. Dick and I have undertaken the project of identifying the men. I call this a 43-piece puzzle, because the artist wrote very few of the men's full names on the portraits. Please note that none of them are of women, who were not allowed in saloons. Many of them are portrayed with cigars, a few with cigarettes or pipes. Evidently, smoking was enjoyed in saloons.

Some of the men can be identified from their career or their connection to Livermore city government. For example, one is labeled "our judge;" in 1910 that would be Daniel J. Murphy, at that time the Livermore judge. Later, he became an Alameda County Supervisor. Another says "our post master." In that year, the post master was Thomas E. Knox, a cement contractor, who served as mayor of Livermore for two terms, from 1903-1909 and from 1918 to 1921. "George" is portrayed as a lawman, with a star on his suit; this would probably be George S. Fitzgerald, who was the Alameda County constable in 1910. "Our marshall" was Charles P. Lefever, an oil well driller.

"President of the horse show" in 1910 was Hans M. Christensen, who held that position for a number of years until the last show in 1914. "Max Berlin" was the treasurer of the horse show and also an owner of several local businesses. The "secretary of the horse show" that year was Theodore Gorner, who owned a harness business and later a drygoods and furniture store in the IOOF building on First Street—his name is still in tiles in the sidewalk in front of the building. The next man in this set of portraits was "the colonel." I am guessing that he was Francis (Frank) Fennon, who for many years was the marshal of the horse show parade, making sure that all the horses were lined up in proper order for the judging.

"Our center," who is holding a basketball, has to be Anthony "Doc" O'Donnell, according to several Livermore oldtimers. Roy Beck, who worked at his father's grocery store, was identified with the name "Tod Sloan." Sloan was a jockey, and Beck was known for his small stature. His father, "oily George," was George Beck, who ran his grocery business in Livermore from 1889 until 1924. He also served as a high school trustee, the Livermore post master, town trustee, and from 1913-1916 he was a Democrat in the California Assembly.

"Mike, the mayor of Midway," was Mike Mulqueeney, rancher out on Patterson Pass Road. The entrance to the ranch is still visible near the old site of the town of Midway. "Jesse, the mayor of Altamont," was Jesse Young, who farmed and ran stock in the Altamont Hills. "Brunswick" was probably Franklin C. Duncan, who was the proprietor of the Brunswick Billiard Hall in the Masonic Building. A further clue to his identity was the inclusion of a little pool table in the drawing's background.

"Norm" was most likely Norman McLeod, saloonkeeper at the Hub. "McLeod Street" is named for his father, Andrew, who filed a plan in 1875 for city development of 18 blocks on the east side of South Livermore Avenue. The other Hub saloonkeeper was Fred Sangmaster. His portrait has "O.U. Fred" on it, indicating, according to Dan Berry, that he still owed Vasco Loureiro for the art work. Jack Reimers is drawn with a toy white horse. In 1910, he owned a livery stable. Later, he had a mortuary that eventually became the Callaghan Mortuary.

"H.P." is drawn sitting on top of a sugar barrel. H.P. (Harry) Winegar owned half of the Livermore Commercial Company, a general store that was near the Hub. His partner, "Charlie" Beck was portrayed holding a list of groceries. "Manager of the Buckeye" was most likely David McDonald, who was the manager of Camp Buckeye, out on Mines Road. Dan Berry's father was drawn wearing a white suit; Dan said that this was the customary clothing for a saloonkeeper in those days.

Some of the men we have been unable to identify. In these cases, there are no names, and we do not understand the clues. We know that this collection is incomplete, and we would like to find more of the drawings. The Livermore Heritage Guild has a copy of one caricature by Vasco of "Simon," no doubt Simon Foscalina. We need the public's help—does any reader have or know of someone who has another crayon portrait by Vasco? Also, if you have a chance, drop by the Carnegie Building to see if you can recognize the unidentified models. Perhaps you'll find great-uncle Felix. Please help us with what is now a 44-piece puzzle!

(Readers can reach me at am50homan@yahoo.com.)