

## **Weddings of Santa Clara County pioneers at Trinity Cathedral in San Jose: Inez Juana Pacheco—James R. Lowe, Jr. (1861)**

by Jean Libby

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral historian Janice Paull wrote “A Master Gardener: James R. Lowe” for *Trailblazer*, the Santa Clara County Society of Pioneers, in 1996.<sup>1</sup> This inspired the sequel, the story of Inez Pacheco and James R. Lowe, Jr. whose historic nuptials merged the San Jose Pioneers with Spanish Californios, the earliest European explorers and settlers from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. They were the second wedding performed by the first Rector, Reverend Sylvester Etheridge on May 22, 1861. It is a story of ambition and fulfilled promise, mixed with unbearable tragedy among their surviving children. Inez passed away only eleven years later. They and all their six children, including two named infants, are buried in the Lowe Family Plot at Oak Hill Memorial Park, the oldest cemetery in San Jose.

James R. Lowe, Sr (1808-1874) was an Englishman who married Irish-born Mary Tuckwell (1810-1862) in Massachusetts. They migrated and settled in San Jose with their three sons in 1852. Their home was at 346 N. First Street. James R. Lowe, Jr. (1840-1904) became County Clerk, a Justice of the Peace, and Commissioner of Deeds. He was elected to the California senate in 1884 and then the assembly first in 1890. He was educated by his mother, a college graduate, and at the Gates Institute of San Jose, founded by Freeman Gates in 1854. *A History of the New California, Its Resources and People* extensively quotes James Lowe’s description of the school’s beginning amidst a mustard field with four students—two of whom spoke only French, the other two himself and his brother Waldo H. (1841-1879).<sup>2</sup>

James Jr. married Inez Juana Pacheco (1841-1872) from the founding family of a Spanish soldier who obtained a Mexican land grant.<sup>3</sup> Inez was educated at the Convent of Sisters of Notre Dame, now Notre Dame High School. Her mother, Rafaela Soto de Pacheco (1816-1902) was “one of the few women left of the old Spanish aristocracy” according to her obituary in the *San Jose Mercury News*.<sup>4</sup> The Pachecos had been Recorder of Deeds as well as *alcalde* (judge) in the San Jose pueblo. According to Spanish law, women owned property. A considerable amount in Milpitas owned by the Pacheco widows in San Jose passed to James R. Lowe, Jr. at his marriage to Inez.

The Lowe family was on the winning side when the Castillera Mexican grant claim was annulled by the U. S. Supreme Court. An attempt in May 1863 by President Lincoln to nationalize the mine ended after massive protest by the immigrant workers from England, Wales, and Chile. The battle was won by investors in the Quicksilver Mining Company, which included friends of the national administration and local businessmen like James R. Lowe, Jr. who became a Republican for life.<sup>5</sup> James Jr. was the Justice of the Peace in Almaden. He is credited for doing just that—making Almaden a peaceful community from a lawless mob.<sup>6</sup> His older brother Ralph Lowe (1838-1918) was a supply clerk, then store manager, at the quicksilver mines.



Members of the San Jose Militia march through the streets of San Jose, ca. 1860.  
ARB-0024, Clyde Arbuckle Collection. San Jose Public Library California Room.

The Trinity Episcopal congregation was formed in 1861, just two months before the outbreak of the Civil War. At the time of the marriage of James R. Lowe, Jr. and Inez Pacheco the members met on North Market Street in a building which became City Hall. Trinity Parish founders believed that San Jose would become the capitol of California and wanted to be in the center of that growth.

With the Civil War commencing in 1861, San Jose would never return to quiet development of country estates. Whoever controlled the gold production in California would be able to finance their railroads and troops and other infrastructure. Mercury produced at the mines in San Jose (now the Almaden Quicksilver County Park) provided the amalgam to separate the metal from its natural state into commodity. The production created fumes that permeated the air and endangered health, especially of the workers, but soon everyone. The toxic wastes in the water reservoirs are still present today.<sup>7</sup>

The extant Trinity Episcopal Church, oldest active church building in San Jose, was completed in 1863 from materials shipped around the Horn by Captain James Hammond. The founding rector The Reverend Sylvester Etheridge negotiated and arranged the original 18 stained glass windows from Doremus of New York and a majestic pipe organ with manual pumps to be carried by mule through the Isthmus of Panama and then by ship to Alviso. Important founding members included Samuel J. Hensley and his wife Margaret, who established the Sunday School. The Hensleys sold (with a mortgage) the group his horse corral lot at 2<sup>nd</sup> and St. John Streets for \$3000. The Vestry decided that the church could not be dedicated until the debt for the buildings and the lot was paid. This occurred in July, 1867.<sup>8</sup>



Trinity Church in 1865. *Trinity Parish San Jose*. Diocese of California Protestant Episcopal Church Centennial 1861-1961. San Jose Public Library California Room.

**Samuel Hensley had established the California Steam Navigation Company in 1851, rapidly becoming wealthy. Shipping products from San Jose to San Francisco is detailed by local historian April Halberstadt: “Although the Guadalupe River was navigable by boats with a shallow draft, it was still an all day journey. Loads of hay and tons of fruits and vegetables [shipped] on flat-bottomed scows, which were quickly replaced by small steamers that carried provisions as well as passengers.”<sup>9</sup> The heyday of steam shipping came to a close in 1865 when the interurban railway was completed.**

**President Andrew Johnson, who succeeded the assassinated President Lincoln, recognized the skills of James R. Lowe, Jr. and appointed him as consul to the Mexican port of Tehuantepec in 1867. Fluent in Spanish, the San Jose-educated (Gates Institute) attorney was on his way to a diplomatic career. The assassinations of rivals by Mexican president Benito Juarez cut short this path. Lowe was recalled for his safety and that of his family. By 1870 he was the Commissioner of Deeds for Santa Clara County with an office at 289 Santa Clara Street, Room 15. The Lowe’s are recorded dwelling at 155 Market Street in the 1870 Directory of San Jose, the first year it was published.**

**Inez bore six children between her marriage in 1861 and death at age 32 in 1872. Four of them survived her into adulthood; two named infants—Charles, five weeks, Elizabeth, one day—are buried near her and their father James R. Lowe, Jr. at Oak Hill Cemetery in San Jose.<sup>10</sup>**

**Even though her wedding was at Trinity Episcopal, it is evident that Inez remained Catholic. The children were baptized and attended St. Joseph’s Church in downtown San Jose with their grandmother Mrs. Rafaela Soto de Pacheco. St. Joseph’s is an older congregation than Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, but their buildings are not original due to earthquake damage and reconstruction. Thus the distinction of the oldest active church building in San Jose is credited to Trinity at 81 N. Second Street.**



Although the location of Trinity Church remained the same, the configuration of the Carpenter Gothic buildings designed by Captain Hammond did not. With a new \$850 mortgage, a rectory was added in 1872. In 1876 the church was reconfigured and enlarged to face 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. This original stereograph was recently found on eBay by Trinity Junior Warden Roger Lobbes. It is dated ca. 1874.

Putting that date into context, 1874 was the year that James R. Lowe, Sr. died at age 65. He had remarried the widow of George D. Comstock after the death of Mary in 1862. Ellen Comstock Lowe moved from the family home at 346 N. First St. after James R. Lowe, Sr. passed away. She died in 1899 at age 79.<sup>11</sup> It was also the year that James R. Lowe, Jr. remarried Emma Forsyth, the president of the San Jose School Board. The home of James and Emma Lowe was at 195 West St. James Street where Terraine Street ends, now the site of the Spencer Hall of Justice.<sup>12</sup> They had three children: Duncan, Alexander, and Eleanor.

James R. Lowe, Jr. also owned property in Milpitas, part of the Spanish land grant to the early settlers. Following his election to the California Senate in 1884, Lowe was first elected to the California Assembly 64<sup>th</sup> District in 1888. He intended to plant vineyards on the Milpitas property that was part of the original Spanish land grants to the Pacheco family. Senator Lowe's political activities included denunciation of Chinese labor in agriculture and support of home rule for Ireland.<sup>13</sup>

James Jr. did not forget his Newburyport, Massachusetts birth and first ten years before his parents emigrated to California. In 1850, when the Master Gardener emigrated to California with his family, Mexican War hero General Charles E. Allen had been elected the first Assessor in the new city of San Jose in the new state of California. Allen was from Newburyport. James Lowe kept General Allen employed in his law office at the Hall of Records long after his civic career was over.<sup>14</sup>

The life history of Inez and James Lowe's four surviving children—with one exception, Ralph A. Lowe—is very sad. Mary A. (named for her paternal grandmother) was killed in a tragic carriage accident in March 1887. The event caused great mourning throughout the city.<sup>15</sup> She was twenty years old. Six months after the carriage accident death of Mary, her stepmother Emma Forsyth Lowe died of consumption (tuberculosis). “Everything that wealth, affection and medical skill could do was done for her, but all to no purpose.” Statement of Hon. James R. Lowe to *The Evening News* November 21, 1887.

Mary's brother William W. Lowe died suddenly of extreme intestinal inflammation in 1895 after a trip to Japan with his uncle Ralph Lowe, who remained a bachelor very active with his nephews throughout his life. Already gaining prominence and respect as a real estate specialist in the rapidly changing city, William Lowe was just twenty-five. The following year the oldest brother James A. Lowe murdered a woman with whom he had an affair and then committed suicide after a brief imprisonment in Sacramento.<sup>16</sup> He was thirty-three.

The exceptional career of Ralph A. Lowe (1868-1938) took place in Whittier, California, beginning in 1900 when he was appointed Secretary of the State Reform School. *The Evening News* published a private letter that Lowe wrote to Major H. S. Foote about the natural surroundings in the San Gabriel Mountains and the adoption of “the more modern policy of placing the pupils somewhat upon their honor and giving them certain liberties with wise restrictions, rather than to treat them in the old way of placing them behind bars and high fences.”<sup>17</sup> Ralph moved to Los Angeles and lived there the rest of his life, passing away at age 80 in 1938. He is the only Lowe of his generation with a monument or marker at Oak Hill.

In 1889 James R. Lowe, Jr. married a third time, Ellen McDermott at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco.<sup>18</sup> She was 24 years younger, and bore a son, Edmund, in 1890. They are listed in the Census of 1900 with Ralph, the only surviving child of Inez, age 31 and the three children of Emma, ages 24, 20, and 16. There is a 16-year old Japanese servant in the household.

At the time of his death on September 23, 1904 their home was 314 N. First Street. Lowe's obituary names Ellen and five surviving children: Ralph A. [Inez], Alex F., Duncan F. Eleanor F. [Emma] and Edmund Lowe [Ellen]. The notice of Lowe's funeral that took place on Sunday September 25 remarked that “Rev. Father Walshe of St. Joseph's Church paid a touching personal tribute to the departed.”<sup>19</sup> It seems likely that Lowe found communion at St. Joseph's throughout his adult life with his marriages to Inez and Ellen and the religious instruction of his children.

**James R. Lowe, Jr. is buried next to Inez and with their children at Oak Hill Memorial Park, Block 16 Section C. Mary Lowe his mother heads the next group, including her husband James R. Lowe, Sr. the Master Gardener. Emma Lowe their second daughter-in-law is buried between them. Of Emma's three children only Duncan F. is interred at Oak Hill. Duncan died in Hollister in 1906, age twenty-four. He lies next to his half-brother James A. Lowe. Ellen, the third wife of Senator James Lowe is not interred at Oak Hill, nor is their son Edmund.**



**Lots 1,2,3,4 in Block 16, Section C at Oak Hill Cemetery owned by James R. Lowe include his parents James R. Lowe, Sr. and Mary A., his brothers Ralph and Waldo and families, James Lowe's wives Inez and Emma, and relatives in the Hitchcock, Hoyt, and O'Keefe families. Photo by Jean Libby, August 2014**



SAN JOSE FROM THE ELECTRIC LIGHT TOWER.  
LOOKING NORTHWEST.

Trinity Cathedral (center) ca. 1884. *Santa Clara County and its Resources, Historical Descriptive Statistical; A Souvenir of The San Jose Mercury 1896*. Reprinted in 1966 by The San Jose Historical Museum Association.

The belfry with a “ring” of five bells was installed in 1880. In 1905 two more bells were added from the Petit & Fritsen Royal Bell Foundry in the Netherlands. The present carillon of 18 bells is in restoration at the Meeks, Watson Foundry in Ohio, the only bell foundry in the United States. The historic tower is being strengthened by Biggs, Cardosa Engineering and Bach Construction for installation in Spring 2015.<sup>20</sup> The natural acoustics of the open space of St. James Park creates a lovely ring that is eagerly anticipated by the ministry and congregation of Trinity Cathedral in San Jose.

## Acknowledgements

*Mary Hanel, recently retired Local History Program Coordinator at the Santa Clara City Library is much appreciated for expert research guidance. Photo reconnaissance by Connections editor Trina Gentry and author Jean Libby was guided by the Oak Hill Memorial Park staff, particularly Fabian, who located the Lowe family in the older section. The chart of burials and identifications with dates of death are helpful correlates to the notices found in the database “The Historical San Jose Mercury, Evening News, and San Francisco Chronicle” at the Santa Clara City Library. Janice Paull, historian/archivist at Trinity Cathedral is essential for continuity and support. Profound appreciation to Trina Gentry for seeing the possibilities within the details and editing the whole for SCCHGS.*



The next issue of *Connections* will feature the wedding of San Jose pioneers Jacob Overton and Sarah Massey Overton, who married at Trinity in 1869. Their story includes the African American Peter Williams Cassey, the first person of color ordained in the Episcopal Church in the West. St. Philip's Mission for Colored People was organized from Trinity Church by Cassey in 1861, another aspect of the history of San Jose in the Civil War. Herbert G. Ruffin II, *Uninvited Neighbors; African Americans in Silicon Valley 1769-1990* published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 2014 is a major source. Those who know the connection between Sarah Knox-Goodrich and Jacob Overton will not be disappointed. Their mutual roles as liberal benefactor and formerly enslaved employee include the patronage of Edmonia Lewis, African American sculptor whose work is in the California Room of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in San Jose as well as the Smithsonian Institution and the Harvard University Library. Coming in the next issue of *Connections*, the biyearly journal of the Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> See the full *Trinity's History 1854-1959* by Janice Paull. Other histories and commemorative pamphlets are in the California Room at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library: *Trinity Episcopal Church, San Jose California. Parish Profiles 1980. Trinity Church San Jose Cal. 1860-1903. Seventy-five Years in the Life of Trinity Episcopal Church San Jose, California 1861-1936. Trinity Parish San Jose. Diocese of California Protestant Episcopal Church Centennial 1861-1961.*

<sup>2</sup> Leigh Wadley Irvine, editor, *A History of the New California, Its Resources and People*. Vol. II, Illustrated, 1905:950-951.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara & Rudy Marinacci, *California's Spanish Place-Names; What They Mean and How They Got There*. Presidio Press, 1980: 63,121.

<sup>4</sup> January 25, 1902. *The Evening News*

<sup>5</sup> Books and interpretation about the Quicksilver Mining Company are available at the New Almaden Mines State Park. An online presentation "The Lincoln Writ" by the late R. Larry Comstock of the South Bay Civil War Round Table: <http://www.sbcwrt.org/sbwp/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lincoln-Writ.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> "Joe Bowie" a deputy at Almaden in the 1860s "laid the foundation [with James R. Lowe] for the peace and quiet that prevails in that village at present. Joe was frequently compelled to dodge bullets while making arrests but he always escaped without a scratch and never failed to bring in his man." Twenty Years Ago, *San Jose Mercury News*, 02-26-1887. Volume 6, Issue 30 page [3].

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<sup>7</sup> Jane Kay, *Chronicle* Environment Writer “Tracking a toxic trail / Long-closed mine identified as largest source of mercury in San Francisco Bay” December 22, 2002

<sup>8</sup> Janice Paull, *Trinity’s History 1854-1959*: 5, 11-12.

<sup>9</sup> April Halberstadt, “150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Railroad.” *Trailblazer; Journal of the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County* Vol. 55, No. 1 March 2014:1.

<sup>10</sup> “Lowe’s Family Plot—Section C, Block 16, Lots 1,2,3, and 4” was prepared for this article by Cecilia Humphers at Oak Hill Memorial Park and Funeral Home, 300 Curtner Avenue, San Jose..

<sup>11</sup> “Death of an Old San Josean.” *The Evening News* October 6, 1899. Vol. XXXVI, Issue 103:8.

<sup>12</sup> The Lowe family home at 195 W. St. James, Terraine St. SW corner was replaced by the Spencer Hall of Justice and parking lot. See Sanborn map 1932, page 80 in the California Room of the Dr. Martin Luther King., Jr. Library.

<sup>13</sup> “Citizen’s Meeting. Addresses by Senator James R. Lowe, H. H. Main and Other.” *The Daily News* March 13, 1886. Vol. 6, Issue 44:5 “For Ireland. Enthusiastic Meeting at the California Theater.” *The Daily News* July 9, 1886. Vol. 6, Issue 144:3

<sup>14</sup> “Passing of a Noted Pioneer. General Allen is Taken by Death.” *The Evening News* Vol. XXXV, Issue 86:5

<sup>15</sup> “Dashed to Death. A Terrible Tragedy at the Southern Pacific Depot. The Daughter of Senator Lowe is Thrown from her Buggy and Fatally Injured.” *The Evening News* March 30, 1887. Death Notice *The Evening News*, 04-01-1887 Vol. 8 Issue 59 page [2]

<sup>16</sup> “Taken by Death. The Brief and Fatal Illness of W. W. Lowe” *The Evening News* April 14, 1895. “Mr. Lowe’s Statement” [Senator James R. Lowe]. [San Jose] *The Evening News*, October 22, 1896, Vol. XXX, Issue 102:4.

<sup>17</sup> “Whittier. A Very Interesting Letter from Ralph A. Lowe.” *The Evening News*, April 5 1900.

<sup>18</sup> “Wedding Bells; Senator James R. Lowe Married to a San Francisco Girl.” *The Evening News* Vol. XIV Issue 108:3.

<sup>19</sup> “Throng of Friends Pay Last Respects To James Lowe.” *The Evening News*, September 26, 1904.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Archambeault, “Historic Trinity Cathedral Bells” prepared for the exhibition “Good Will, Good Works—Trinity Cathedral in San Jose 1861-2014” curated by the author, Jean Libby. Mr. Archambeault is the Coordinator of the Bellringers and Treasurer of Trinity Cathedral.