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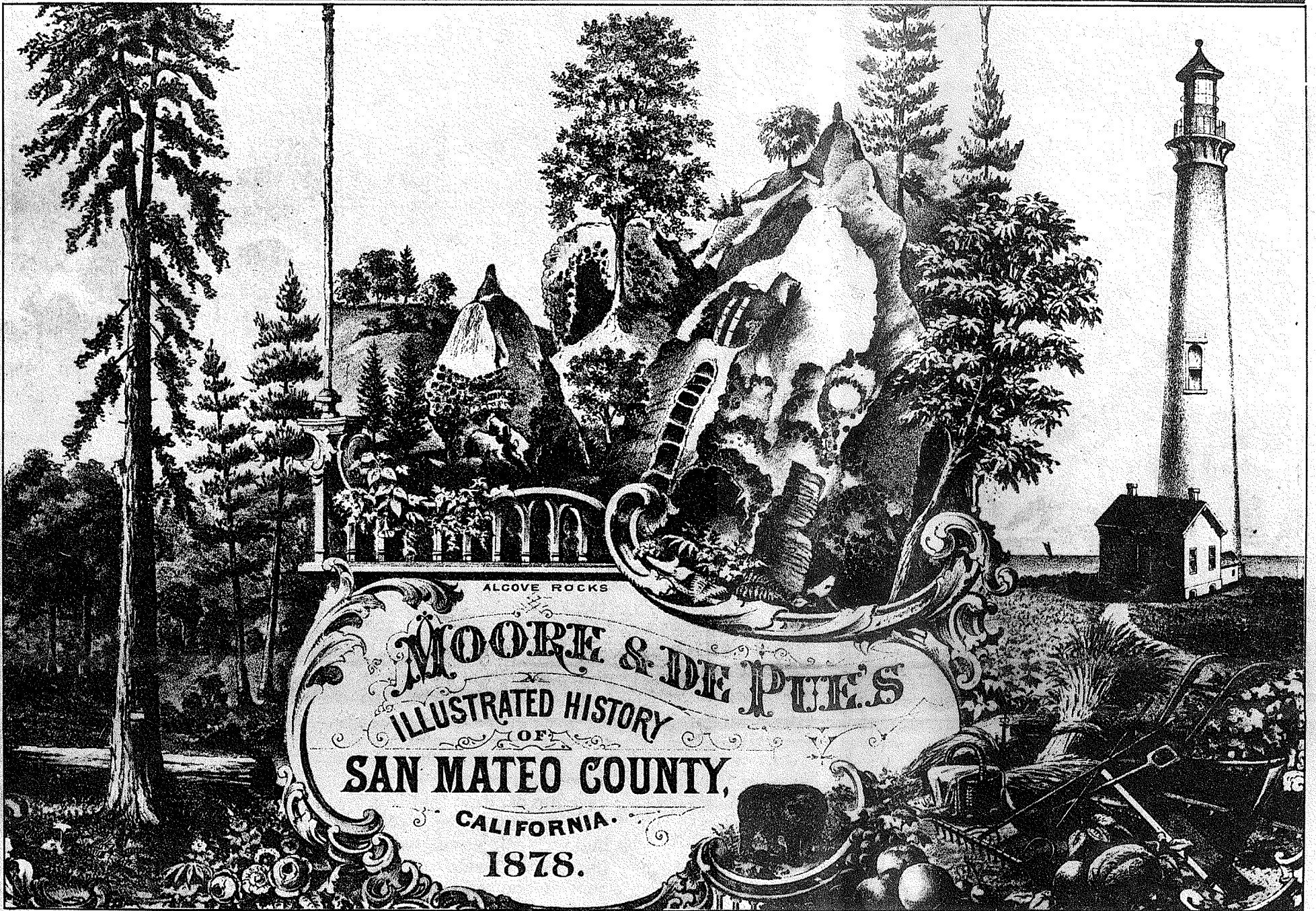


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ALCOVE ROCKS
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ILLUSTRATED HISTORY
OF
SAN MATEO COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA.
1878.

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SCENES FROM SAN MATEO COUNTY as they appeared in
artistic interpretation almost 100 years ago—an unfelled red-
wood tree; unusual rock formations near Skyline; and the
Pigeon Point Light House. The drawing is from Martin and
DePue's book published in 1878 and republished recently by Gil
Richards.

History revived in book

A book, "The Illustrated History of San Mateo County," published in 1878 by Moore and DePue, has been republished by Woodside historian, artist, author, and publisher Gil Richards.

Mr. Richards spent over six months on the new edition. He shrank the rather unwieldy sized book to an 85 percent reduction, added maps, drawings, a foreword and a great deal of copy about his research into the lives of the authors, artists, and publishers.

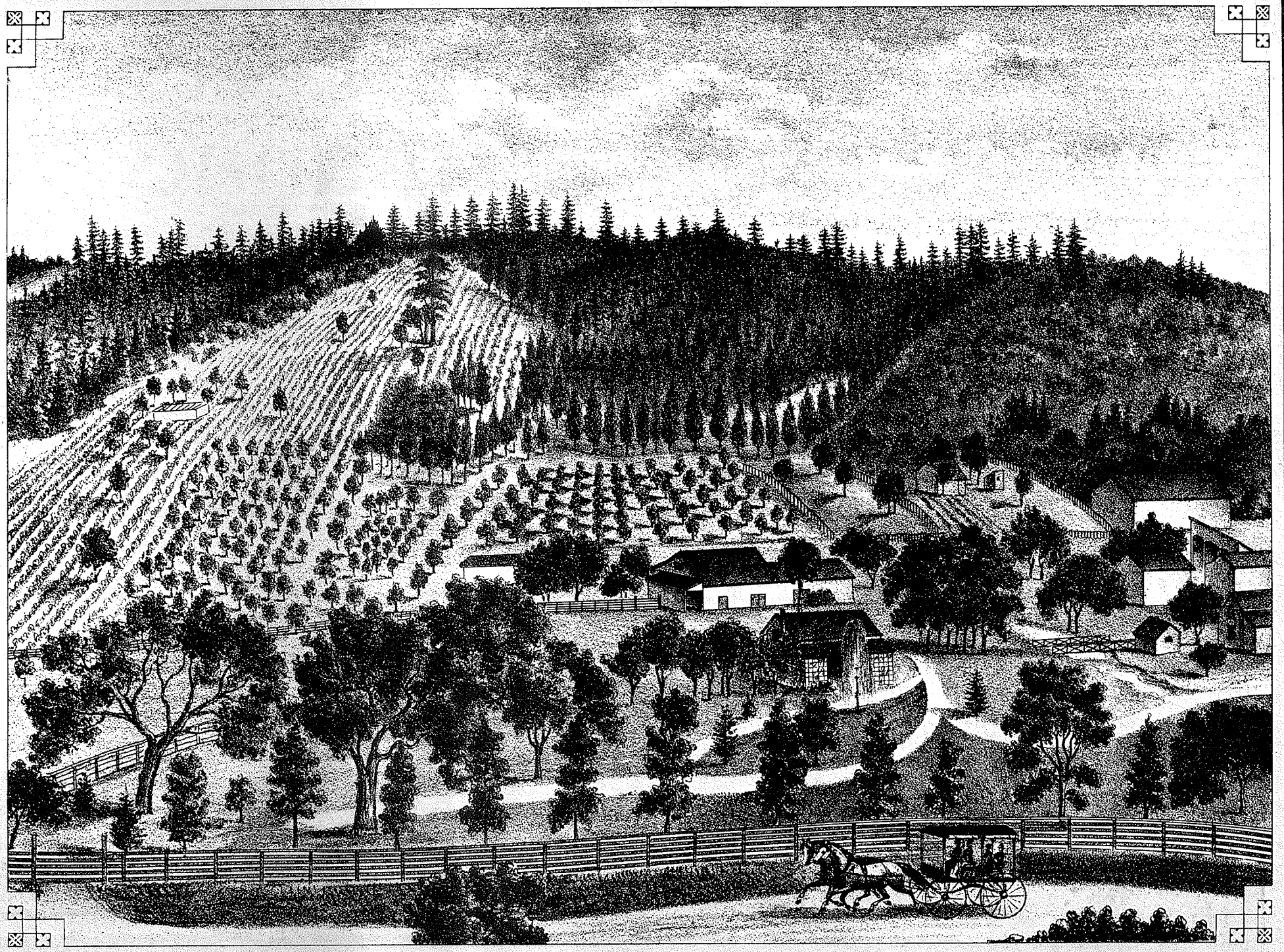
Martin and Depue's book has pages of facts and figures about San Mateo County's 1878 population, its division by ethnic groups, landowners at the time, industry, and other pertinent facts about every-day life in the county. There are also many drawings of places, churches, ranches, and homes—life as it was lived then.

In reviewing the book, several coincidences and facts become of particular interest to COUNTRY ALMANAC readers. One of the most striking coincidences can

be noted on the above reproduction of the book's cover.

In the center of the picture, the artists, and lithographer, Grafton Tyler Brown placed a drawing of some striking appearing rock formations labeled, "Alcove Caves." An explanation inside the book says "Aside from the many beautiful and varied scenes of mountain, hill, plain, ocean and bay that abound in this county, there is one almost unknown secluded gem, of rare beauty and picturesque form, and also a geological curiosity. Situated three miles south and west of the Summit Springs House, one the side of a canyon known as the head of Deer Gulch, nearly 2,300 feet above sea level, there stand two enormous sand rocks, like lone sentinels of the forest. They are covered with nature's hieroglyphics, consisting of several large alcoves and arches winding through and down among boulder-like formations, studded with columns of curious designs.

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LOOKING WEST from Woodside Road to what is now Wunderlich Park. After the redwoods were felled and with the departure of lumbermen from the area, ranch buildings were constructed by the then owner, S. L. Jones. The caption under the drawing says "This Rancho contains about 1500 acres, a portion of which only is cultivated. It is principally composed of wood land and is well watered, having a large number of inexhaustible springs of pure water, and several mineral springs, said to possess valuable medicinal qualities with indications of minerals. A small portion only of this land is

cleared; planted with fruit trees of all kinds, which produce an abundance of superior fruit, and the grape, as well as all varieties of citron family grown to perfection, as the climate on the side hills is very mild and free from frost." Two of the buildings still stand, hidden now by native growth, eucalyptus trees and second growth redwoods. The next step in the development and use of the land is in the hands of County officials. A meeting will be held Dec. 18, 2 p.m., for public discussion. No action is proposed to be taken.

History revived in reprint

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Along the sides of the rocks is a perforated mass of different sizes and depths, from one inch to over a foot, no two alike, all varying in form; some resembling the shape of a diamond, the square, the ellipse, the egg, and numerous other irregular shapes. Among these perforations may be seen several column-shaped formations, free from perforations and resembling somewhat the masonry of many. The oak, the pine, the redwood and madrona cling to the sides and top of these rocks.

"We have gazed in wonder upon the granite walls of the Yosemite Valley, but with all of its varied scenery and massive combination of rock, tree and waterfall, none will surpass this little gem in beauty at our own doors."

As reported in the Oct. 16 issue of the COUNTRY ALMANAC, the strange, fore-mentioned rock formations now known as the Sandstone Caves, following approval of a concept plan by the Board of Supervisors, are hopefully slated for acquisition as a County Park. Approval of the Concept Plan is just that, the report emphasized. The Plan is a very general statement of the overall idea of the park, and not a definite plan. One of the important facets of the

park still to be worked out, is one of access, since the land and its approaches are in private ownership. Anyway, it is nice to know that historians almost 100 years ago felt the weird, jumble of weathered sandstone was worth a page of rather lyrical prose.

Also of interest to area residents is a drawing of S. L. Jones' property, Hazelwood Farm. Since 1878, the land has changed hands several times - a 942 acre portion which was most recently owned by Martin Wunderlich and then this year deeded to San Mateo County for use as a park. That drawing appears on page two of this issue. Note the open spaces, the absence of redwood trees, and the proliferation of ranch buildings. Less than 100 years later, nature and time has wielded quite a few changes.

Asked why such a historical book would be published originally, Mr. Richards explained that during the late seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century, the "mug book" was the mode of the publishing trade. "More properly named the 'subscribed edition,' this type of publication preyed upon that human frailty known as vanity; people were willing to pay and pay well to see a name, a face, a piece of

property in print. Within a brief span of seven to ten years mug history flourished; then, like the 'hula hoop,' it unaccountably died. There were other sporadic efforts throughout the years, but the main body of works was bunched into the period 1877-1885."

No one can really quarrel with the desire of the publishers to put such a book on the market, as the remaining copies are a valuable source of information about life styles, mannerisms, political activities, landowners, sizes of towns, and other information that would have been lost if not recorded in a book.

The printer of "Illustrated History of San Mateo County," G. T. Brown and Company performed a dual function in that its owner, Grafton Tyler Brown, a gifted black artist who drew the bulk of the pictures in the book left both words and drawings of San Mateo County at one specific time in its history.

A large portion of the six months work by Mr. Richards was involved in trying to learn about the publishers and artists. Mr. Brown's comings and goings were relatively easy to unearth, Mr. Richards said. As an artist and publisher he left behind proof of his being. While trying to

develop biographies of the original publishers, Moore and DePue, Mr. Richards bumped into dead-end trails. He said "There is little for the historical sleuth to go on." His conjectures about the two men from then on trace the elusive history of the publishers. He said it is presumed that after some time in California, DePue returned to his eastern world but Moore elected to remain in California.

Mr. Moore, whomever he was, left behind significant lithographic works. Mr. Richards explained "The question as to where in the spectrum of art these old graphics lie is not here germane. Suffice to say that for an understanding of the times they were without parallel; the animation of humans and animals, the costumery, even the mannerisms, have through their existence bestowed upon the 20th century a valuable heritage."

Considering the going price for the book in 1878 which was \$10, Mr. Richards' limited edition (1,000 copies) is a bargain for the historical buff and students of days gone by. Today's price? \$24.50. The book may be purchased at Woodside Enterprises, and the following bookstores: Books, Inc., Shirley Cobb, Peninsula, Stacey's, Kepler's and The Guild.