



# **HISTORY OF FRESNO COUNTY**

**VOLUME 5**

**PAUL E. VANDOR**

# History of Fresno County

*Volume 5: Biographical (Contd.)*

PAUL E. VANDOR

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ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF BIOGRAPHIES

## **PREFACE**

Dear reader,

we, the publisher, have carefully reviewed and edited this book, whose original edition dates back to the year 1919. Well over a hundred hours of work have passed correcting it, but still it was not possible to eliminate all the mistakes that a 20<sup>th</sup> century scanner produced. The original scans we had at our disposal were of very poor quality. While it was possible to correct and eliminate special characters or false letters, there is unfortunately sometimes a dot where a comma should be, or a colon where a semicolon belongs, or the odd apostrophe, that a small dot in the scan generated in the text file. While we still corrected and eliminated ten thousands of errors, does not hinder the reading pleasure in any way and still makes this version of this rare book much more valuable than other versions on the market that have not been edited at all. We think it is fair to say that this is not 100% of a perfect book, but a 99% edition that has not been available since the original editions vanished from the shelves. We wish all readers a great time browsing through the history of Fresno County and the hundreds of biographies of the most important personalities.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL**

### **REV. CORNELIUS E. KLIEWER.**

When we meet a man, in this busy world of today, who has given his time and money unstintedly to the betterment of mankind, we feel that no praise can be too great for such an example of unselfish benevolence. Rev. Cornelius E. Kliewer, founder of Emanuel German Baptist Church in Fresno, lives solely to help his fellow men, and his unusual success as a missionary is due to the sincerity and understanding sympathy shown in his work in the Master's vineyard. Born in Warsaw, Poland, May 25, 1856, he received his education in private schools of his native land. In 1876 he came to America, and six months later declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States. He was ordained at Hillsboro, Kans., in 1893, in the German Baptist Church. His first charge was at Newton, Kans., where he erected a church and served for two years. In 1898 he came to Stafford, Ore., remained there six months, and thence went to Salem, Ore., where he remained four years; in these places, as elsewhere, his missionary duties were carried on with a zeal which has never failed to meet with success. Rev. Kliewer then went to Tacoma, Wash., and served in that city five years, building the church there and

leaving it free of debt. He also had a preaching station at Seattle, and did missionary work in the northern metropolis.

In 1903, Rev. Kliever came to California, his first charge in the state being at Anaheim, Orange County, where he was pastor three years. This concluded his fourteen years of service as a missionary of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, and he retired from active church work for a time, and located in Long Beach, where he engaged in buying, selling and building, meeting with success, and never failing to devote much time to church work, though not having a public charge.

After several years spent in quietly doing the work which came to hand. Rev. Kliever again took up his public duties. In 1907 he came to Fresno and here he built the Emanuel German Baptist Church, at 2203 Kirk Avenue, at a cost of \$2,000, taking his own money for the immediate building of the church, which is now free of debt, the pastor having donated \$600 as his share of the cost of the edifice. The church has 47 communicants, with about 150 members, including the children, for whom he has organized a Young People's Society with 30 members: and his wife, who has been of great help to the pastor in his life work and leads the choir in the church, has recently organized the Ladies' Aid Society. She has accomplished much noble work, having been especially active in Tacoma, and in Salem, Ore., as well as, at present, in Fresno. Rev. Kliever organized the Mission Sunday School here and later turned that work over to the German Methodist Church. He uses his own automobile in doing missionary work, and in taking the sick to hospitals; he also does missionary work in the Russian colony on the west side. His church contributes to all public charities, and is prominent in all missionary work in the city. Rev. Kliever receives no salary for his services, donating his time and money for the good cause. He is a member of the Ministerial Union of the San Joaquin Baptist

Conference of Northern California, and helped to organize the Pacific Baptist Conference on the Coast, and is also a member of the general ministerial union in Fresno. He takes an active part in revival meetings in Fresno and can always be found at hand when the spiritual uplift of the community is being undertaken, as well as when the material needs of unfortunate humanity are at stake.

When not busy with church and missionary duties, Rev. Kliewer has helped in the upbuilding of Fresno, buying lots and improving same for sale, and has met with success in his business ventures.

Rev. Kliewer was united in marriage, at Bethany, Ore., December 17, 1893, with Miss Mary Walter, a native of Germany, and his Christian work has been upheld by her sympathy and devotion to the cause. Three children have blessed their union: Walter, who died when four months old; Lorena, wife of Alex Ramer of Fresno; and Elmer, attending school. Rev. Kliewer has five sons by a former marriage: Henry; Herbert; Cornelius; Edward; and Harry.

Rev. Kliewer took a firm and uncompromising stand against the liquor traffic, from the early stages of the fight against alcohol. He was the only minister among the German speaking contingent in Fresno, who openly took part in public demonstrations against the saloon. He has been fighting rum ever since he was converted, at Hillsboro, Kans., when he joined the Baptist denomination. At times his uncompromising stand has made him enemies, but all true Christians will approve.

### **CARL W. CHRISTENSEN.**

Since 1912, when the genial cashier of the allied banks, the Selma National Bank and Farmers Savings Bank of

Selma, Carl W. Christensen, came to the favored section of Fresno County known as "The Home of the Peach," he has forged rapidly to the front among the business men of prominence in Selma and vicinity. Congenial, bright, well-informed and experienced in his line of work, he is known in the business world as a rapid and accurate cashier and an excellent judge of values.

Of Danish parentage, his father, J. P., and mother, M. (Hornbeck) Christensen, who reside in Selma, were born in Denmark. Carl W. was born at Racine, Wis., December 26, 1877, and was eleven years of age when his parents removed to Turner County, S. D., where he grew up on a South Dakota farm. He received his primary education in the Racine and Turner County schools. Of studious habits, by means of self-study and the assistance of a private tutor, he acquired an excellent education, and at nineteen years of age passed the teacher's examination. He taught school four years in Turner County, S. D., then an opening occurring in the bank of Viborg, Turner County, he accepted a clerkship in what is now the First National Bank of Viborg, remaining with the bank eleven years, being cashier during the last four years. In 1912 he came to California to take his present position, as the successor of Mr. W. E. Street. He helped reorganize the old Farmers Bank of Selma and takes an active interest in the business of the allied banks, of which he is one of the directors.

He married Miss Etta M. Nielsen, of San Jose, Cal., and they are the parents of three children: Warren N., Roger W., and Alan D. Mr. Christensen is an acquisition to Selma's social circle as he is to its business world. While of a refined and retiring temperament, he is a young man of excellent musical attainments, coming honestly by his musical genius, as C. C. Krogh, the well-known violinist and composer of Denmark of the century just ended, was his grandfather. While a young man at Viborg, S. D., he attained celebrity as a cornetist and bandmaster,

organizing four well known bands of which he was leader. He became one of the foremost bandmasters in southeastern South Dakota, playing at the state fairs, and often being called upon to play during the state capital campaign as well as in the campaigns of ex-Senator Crawford of South Dakota.

Mr. Christensen is the owner of eighty acres near Selma, planted to Thompson seedless and muscat grapes, and peaches, all in full bearing. In 1913 he built his residence in Selma, which is located on Logan Street. Mr. and Mrs. Christensen are active members of the First Baptist Church of Selma. Mr. Christensen takes an active interest in the financial interests of the church, as well as in the Sunday School, of which he is superintendent.

Taking a pardonable pride in the prosperity and financial standing of his community, he rendered valuable service in the various drives connected with the activities of the war just ended. It is needless to say that in its Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., and other charities, as well as in the Liberty Loans and the recent Victory Loan, Selma went promptly "over the top," with a considerable percentage of surplus to her great credit.

### **J. B. CROCKER.**

Of New England birth and endowed with the characteristics that are supposed to belong especially to people of that section of the United States, i. e., frugality, thrift, and unceasing activity, J. B. Crocker is well known as a leading horticulturist of the Selma district, his intelligence and kindly disposition making him a general favorite in the community in which he lives. He was born at

Newburyport, Mass., thirty-five miles northeast of Boston, February 5, 1857.

He is the son of John Crocker, a ship carpenter and a native of Nova Scotia, and Sarah (Holmes) Crocker. His father died at Newburyport, Mass., in 1869, at the age of seventy-four, when J. B. was a lad of twelve. His mother had seven children by her first husband, the father of J. B. She married a second time and had a son by her second marriage. She attained the unusual age of eighty-eight before her demise in Massachusetts, in 1916.

A half orphan at twelve, Mr. Crocker at that time began to depend upon his own exertions for a livelihood, removing from the place of his birth to Maine, where he worked on a farm for four years. He then went to work in a cotton factory at Great Falls, N. H., remaining there six or eight months, until the panic of 1874 caused the cotton factories to close down. Afterwards he returned to farm work, which he continued until 1882, then went to work at the marble works at Rutland, Vt. From thence he went to Iowa, where he worked as a farm hand in O'Brien County. In 1886 he came to California, where he worked on a farm near Fresno. In 1889 he went to Kingsburg and made his first purchase in the Kingsburg Colony, three miles east and one mile south of his present place.

In 1882 he was married to Miss Mary H. Wildermuth. Of the four children born of their union, the three sons were United States volunteers in the recent world conflict. Clark W., a graduate of the Selma high school and Stanford University, was in the aviation corps at Berkeley; Percy S., also a Selma high school graduate, was a senior in the Leland Stanford University, pursuing the geological and mining engineer's course, when he enlisted for service in the World War; Ernest H., a senior in the Selma high school at the time of his enlistment; and Celia F., a graduate in the Class of 1918, is now pursuing a post-graduate course.

In 1907, Mr. Crocker sold his Kingsburg Colony ranch and purchased his present home place of twenty acres, three miles east of Selma on the Canal School Reservation. He has always been particularly interested in education and in 1915 was elected a member of the board of trustees of the Selma high school, a school that ranks among the very best high schools in the State of California.

A true American and an ardent patriot. Mr. Crocker is held in the highest esteem. He is a member of the Modern Woodmen. He is a fine example of the California rancher who denies himself much in order to properly rear and educate his children. They are all high school and some are university graduates, while his three sons bear the distinction of having rendered excellent service to their country during the recent war. Percy S. served thirteen months in France, while Ernest H. was in the Coast Artillery in France. They have their honorable discharges, and came home safe and sound.

## **THE SELMA IRRIGATOR.**

An important factor in the development and growth of the enterprising community of Selma, Cal., is the semi-weekly, eight-page newspaper, known as The Selma Irrigator, owned and edited by J. J. Vanderburgh.

The first edition of the Irrigator appeared in 1886, when the paper was founded by W. T. Lyon, who later became associated with W. L. Chappell, and under the firm name of Chappell & Lyon the Irrigator continued to be published for several years, in both daily and weekly editions.

In 1892, J. J. Vanderburgh, who at that time was a public school teacher, purchased the interest of W. L. Chappell, and subsequently engaged in the publishing of the Irrigator

under the firm name of Lyon & Vanderburgh from 1892 to 1897, when Mr. Vanderburgh became the sole owner of the business. The business soon began to expand under the efficient management of Mr. Vanderburgh, and in course of time he sold the little old frame building, which had been the home of the Irrigator for a number of years, and purchased a block consisting of twelve lots, across the street, and on a portion of this property he built, in 1906, the present new and commodious Irrigator Building, a two-story-and-basement brick block, 30 x 60 feet in size. The first floor contains a large office and editorial room, a large room for the accommodation of the job-printing department, which contains three electrically operated up-to-date presses, and one large newspaper press and Omaha folder. The linotype machine used by the Irrigator was shipped through the Panama Canal, and is one of the first two machines of its kind to pass through the canal. It is very complete, having three magazines and nine faces of type, and is regarded as one of the best linotyping machines on the Pacific Coast. The stereotyping room is situated away from the building to lessen the fire hazard. The basement of the Irrigator Building is used as a dining hall and banquet room, having accommodations for one hundred twenty persons, and this room has often been the scene of many enjoyable banquets. A public hall is located in the second story of the building and is used as lodge rooms for various fraternal organizations, also as the church home of the Christian Science Society, of Selma. The Irrigator Building is a great credit to the up-to-date city of Selma, "The Home of the Peach," and will be a standing monument to the enterprise and business sagacity of its builder and owner, J. J. Vanderburgh.

The Selma Irrigator has been a potent factor in the development of this prosperous community and has justly earned for itself an important place in the front rank of journals of its size in Central California. It pursues a

constructive policy in regard to all that makes for the good of the community, educationally, religiously, commercially, and agriculturally; while it is always the uncompromising foe of evil, whether it presents itself boldly, or in some veiled and alluring form. Mr. Vanderburgh is ably assisted in the editorial department by his talented wife.

### **ELMER THOMAS WALL.**

Among the leading raisin-growers in the Selma section, Mr. Elmer Thomas Wall stands prominently forth for his skill and success as a viticulturist. He is an example of a hard-working man endowed with firmness of character and determination of purpose, qualities that bespeak the ability and energy which have caused him to attain his well merited success.

A native of Missouri, he was born in Johnson County, May 2, 1872, and is the son of Lieut. James M. and Nancy B. (Gray) Wall. His father was the owner of an 800-acre stock farm in Missouri and was a large raiser of mules, horses and beef cattle. A native of North Carolina, he served with distinction as lieutenant during the Civil War, on the Confederate side, was body-guard of General Price, and was twice wounded during his time of service. In 1888 he disposed of his business interests in Missouri and came to California on account of his wife's health, where, four years later, in 1892, he died. His wife, who survived him, is living in Fresno. Of the five children of the parental home, three are living. Benjamin F., who settled near Selma, died twelve years ago, leaving two children, Lois and Ethel by name. A daughter, Ona B., single, died in California. The living children are: Sydney Jackson, a fruit-buyer residing in Fresno; Elmer Thomas; and Erna Ethel, wife of A. M.

Haldeman, who is employed on the Fresno Republican and owns a twenty-acre ranch adjoining Elmer Thomas' place.

Elmer Thomas received his education in the public and high school at Windsor, Mo. A lad sixteen years of age when he came with his parents to California, in 1888, he engaged with his father in the fruit-growing business. He purchased forty acres southeast of Fresno, near Malaga, which he improved and afterwards sold. He bought his present place in 1916.

He chose as his life partner Miss Addie J. Barr, to whom he was united in 1894. She is the daughter of Thomas A. Barr, and is a sister of Dr. W. T. Barr of Fresno. Mr. and Mrs. Wall are the parents of three bright and interesting children: Gladys, a graduate of the Fresno high school, now sophomore in Redlands University; Thelma, attending the Selma high school; and Warden, a student in the grammar school.

Mr. Wall has always taken a lively interest in educational work and was school trustee for fifteen years at Malaga. He has also served as juryman. While he is a Democrat politically, he votes for the man best fitted for the position, regardless of party. Mr. Wall and his family are prominent members of the Baptist Church of Selma. Mr. Wall is greatly interested in all that advances his community, and he and his family are highly respected.

### **E. J. MONCRIEF.**

Among Parlier's aggressively energetic and successful young business men is E. J. Moncrief, dealer in hay, grain, oils and greases, wood, and ice. He was born at Nevada, Mo., November 29, 1888, and is the son of C. E. Moncrief, formerly of Sanger, now living with his son at Parlier.

The father, C. E. Moncrief, was born at Madison, Ind., November 19, 1863, and lived in his native state until the age of fifteen. He then accompanied his parents, William and Cynthia (Montgomery) Moncrief, to Vernon County, Mo., where they settled upon a farm and where the son grew to manhood. He was married in 1884, became a farmer and the owner of a 160-acre farm. He brought up a family of three children, namely: Daisy, wife of Mr. Popney, residing at Parlier; E. J., and R. E., the latter residing in Fresno. He sold his Missouri farm in 1904, and came to California, settling first at Oakland. In 1908 he came to Reedley. He is the owner of a ten-acre ranch at Reedley and a twenty-acre ranch at Kingsburg. In politics he is a Republican, and he and his good wife were members of the Baptist Church. Since the death of his wife, in the fall of 1917, he has made his home with his son, E. J., at Parlier.

E. J. Moncrief was sixteen years old when his parents settled at Rodeo, Cal., in 1904, and he was in the employ of the powder company for twenty-seven months, going thence to the oil fields at Maricopa, where he worked for the Sunset Monarch Oil Company, one of the J. D. Spreckels interests, until the spring of 1912, having charge of the fishing tool department and the storehouse on the Sunset Monarch property. During this time he visited his old Missouri home twice — in 1907 and in 1908 — the latter year returning with his bride, who before her marriage was Miss Olive Hogge of Nevada, Mo., one of his schoolmates.

In June, 1912, Mr. Moncrief removed to Parlier and engaged in his present line of business on a much smaller scale. The business has grown and prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations. Aside from being the public weighmaster, Mr. Moncrief gets ice from the Central California Ice Company of Fresno and distributes it to his customers in Parlier and vicinity.

He has built a cozy bungalow on his four acres east of and adjoining Parlier, where he resides with his wife and

children, Charlie and Oliver.

In his fraternal relations Mr. Moncrief is a member of the W. O. W. He is an enterprising and substantial citizen, justly entitled to the esteem and respect accorded him, and the family is highly regarded at Parlier, Sanger, Maricopa, and other places where they have lived.

### **OLOF HANSON.**

The cultivation of a barren piece of land into thriving orchards and vineyards can rightfully be called a factor in the development of the county's resources, and Olof Hanson is numbered among the successful fruit and raisin growers of Fresno County, who have thus added to its development and have proven substantial and worthy citizens of the commonwealth. A native of Sweden, he was born at Soderham, August 20, 1859. Mr. Hanson is the son of John and Kare Hanson, both natives of that country, whose family consisted of eight children. In 1881 they and their offspring immigrated to the United States, locating, after their arrival in the new country, in Kansas. There Olof remained for nine years, working at home with his father on his farm.

Olof Hanson and two brothers made a trip to California in 1890, but Olof was the only one to stay here, and in the following spring he purchased his present home place, a ranch of eighty acres in the Wahtoke district, Fresno County. The land at that time was mostly in a state of wilderness — hog-wallow and grain fields. He now has a fertile, well cultivated fruit ranch, yielding large returns to the owner. Mr. Hanson cultivates and raises figs, prunes, peaches, and grapes, specializing in the Thompson Seedless, Muscats, and Sultana varieties. An experienced

and intelligent rancher, he has met with success in his chosen vocation, and commands the respect and confidence of the community in which he has made his home for so many years. He has been a staunch advocate of cooperation among fruit growers and is a member of the California Associated Raisin Company and the California Peach Growers, Inc.

### **J. H. BREWER.**

A self-made man, an especially good judge of livestock, and one of Selma's most successful business men, is J. H. Brewer, senior member of the Selma Meat Company. He was born in Linn County, Mo., on July 15, 1877, the son of William Jefferson Brewer, who was a large farmer and stockman there, and a native of Illinois. He fought in the Union Army and was discharged with an honorable record, which means more than ever today; and when he died, in 1913, he had rounded out sixty-eight years. Mrs. Brewer was Amanda Baber before her marriage, and she came from Missouri, her native state, where she is still living, honored by many, and in particular beloved by her four sons and three daughters, among whom the subject of this interesting sketch is the fifth in the order of birth.

J. H. Brewer's early life was spent in working on his father's stock-farm, and in attending the public schools of the neighborhood. Growing up on a Missouri farm, he continued to till the land for years, and in that state was married to Miss Alice Streets, the daughter of William and Mantia Streets, esteemed residents of the same county. He began butchering at twenty-one, and for a year and a half was in partnership, in the little town of Bucklin. In 1902, however, having heard of the greater opportunities here, he

disposed of his Missouri interests and came west to California. For a couple of years he worked around in the stock business, buying, selling and feeding; and then, in partnership with his brother, A. T. Brewer of the Kingsburg Market, in 1905 they started a meat business at Sanger. For four years they managed this enterprise and then, being attracted to the Eschol district, they moved there and bought 220 acres. For another four years they ran a genuine country market. Then the two brothers came to Selma and bought the Selma Meat Company, after that owned by J. H. and A. T. Brewer; and when A. T. sold out, in 1917, Mr. A. C. Casner became the owner of a half interest. They have three delivery autos and make a specialty of their own farm and meat products.

Mr. Brewer, who certainly is a hustler and one who attends strictly to business, attends personally to the buying and the outside work, superintends the slaughtering and makes of it the cornerstone of the market's success. He owns 160 acres four and a half miles south of Selma, and 80 acres two miles farther south. Mr. Brewer is a popular member of the Woodmen of the World at Selma, and he never fails to rally to the support of his country or community.

### **WILLIAM J. POSSONS.**

A brilliant Easterner who made a distinguished place for himself in industrial, commercial, and financial circles, thereby ruining his health by overapplication to work and duty, and who found in California's wonderful climate a temporary relief, was William J. Possons, who died in April, 1917, leaving a widow who, with the aid of her gifted son, has shown marked ability and achieved success in the