



# **HISTORY OF FRESNO COUNTY**

**VOLUME 4**

**PAUL E. VANDOR**

# History of Fresno County

## *Volume 4: 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**

### **CHARLES B. SHAVER.**

A very important factor in the promotion of the Fresno Flume and Irrigation Company, was the late Charles B. Shaver, who located in Fresno in 1892. Being a man of extensive experience in the lumber business he foresaw the possibilities of the Fresno Flume and Irrigation Company, an enterprise which had just been organized, and immediately bought an interest in the company and at once assumed charge of the construction, completing the surveys and building the flumes from Stevenson Creek, where the company built a dam sixty feet high, to Clovis, Fresno County, the flume being forty and one quarter miles in length, and requiring 9,000,000 feet of lumber to construct and an expense of \$200,000. At the same time the construction of mills in the mountains was begun and carried to completion, two years being occupied in preparation for this extensive work. The planing mills, box factory and dry kilns of the company are located in Clovis, to which place the lumber is brought down by the flume. The output of this great enterprise is shipped to all parts of the world. To the energy, enterprise and experience of Charles B. Shaver, is due the culmination of this important



undertaking, which has proved of such great importance in the development of this section of Fresno County.

Charles B. Shaver was a native of Steuben County, N. Y., where he was born in 1855, a son of John L. Shaver who was a native of Delaware County, of the same state. John L. Shaver was a miller in New York state until 1864, when he removed to St. Louis, Gratiot County, Mich., where he engaged in farming and continued to make his home until his death, which occurred at the age of seventy-four years. His wife, who in maidenhood, was Mary Rose, has also passed away. Charles B. Shaver was next to the youngest child in a family of four and received his early education in the public schools of Michigan, to which state he moved with his parents when a lad of nine years. At the age of nineteen he engaged in lumbering and was employed by Whitney and Stinchfield of Detroit, Mich., later becoming a foreman in the woods and in which position he remained until 1882, when he resigned and accepted a position with A. B. Long and Son of Grand Rapids, Mich. While in their employ he assisted in the building of the logging railway and became interested in their mills and lumber plant until 1889, when he resigned and became associated with the White Friant Lumber Company, with whom he continued two years and during which time he constructed fourteen miles of logging railway and put in over one hundred million feet of logs. In 1891 he went to Missouri where he built a mill for Boyden and Wyman Lumber Company, at Neelysville, Mo. In 1892, he migrated to California and located at Fresno, where he was instrumental in the building and the development of the Fresno Flume and Irrigation Company, becoming the president of the organization in 1894. He was also a member of the Pine Box and Lumber Company, of San Francisco, and the California Sugar and White Pine Agency, in both of which companies he served as a director.

In Grand Rapids, Mich., on December 6, 1883, Charles B. Shaver was united in marriage with Lena A. Roberts, a native of Pennsylvania. This union was blessed with three children: Grace, who is the wife of Captain H. J. Craycroft, U. S. A. medical detachment; Mrs. Ethel Hoover; and Doris who is the wife of Harold McDonald, of Fresno.

After a very active and successful career, Charles B. Shaver passed away on Christmas day, 1907. Fraternally, he was a Mason, having joined the organization in Edmore, Mich., later becoming a member of Fresno Lodge, No. 247, F. & A. M.; he also belonged to Trigo Chapter No. 69, Fresno Lodge No. 29, K. T., Lodge of Perfection at Fresno and Islam Temple A. A. O. N. M. S. of San Francisco. He was a member of Fresno Lodge No. 439 B. P. O. Elks, the Chamber of Commerce and the Sequoia Club.

### **A. G. WISHON.**

Prominent among the citizens of widely-felt influence in both the commercial and financial circles of Fresno, and one whose contributions to the development of the resources of the San Joaquin Valley have proven of inestimable value and are generally recognized, is A. G. Wishon, the worthy representative of a family that traces its ancestry with justifiable pride through the history of the State of North Carolina, back to the romantic days of la belle France. He was born in Phelps County, Mo., on November 6, 1858, the son of Marion Wishon, a native of East St. Louis, Ill., who was a farmer and merchant at St. James, in, Phelps County, and a man of unusual ability. He interested himself for years in fostering the best movements for the community, and consented to serve as the first Sheriff — and an intrepid one, too — of that county.

He married Miss Mary Coppedge of Missouri, a daughter of Lindsay L. Coppedge, a Virginian and an honored member of an old and distinguished family of that State. He came to be a pioneer settler of Pulaski County, Mo., and for sixty years resided at Coppedge Mills, a place named from the mill he established there. Seven children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Marion Wishon, among whom the subject of this review is the eldest; and five of whom, and also the mother, are now residing in California.

After completing his education at the Missouri School of Mines, at Rolla, Mo., a branch of the well-endowed University of Missouri, A. G. Wishon at the age of eighteen became dependent upon his own resources and was for a while employed in the office of the wholesale grocery firm of Moody, Michel and Company of St. Louis. Later, he traveled through the South for the Adler Goldman Company, cotton brokers and commission merchants of the same city, and after that he engaged in mercantile business for himself and successfully conducted stores at Sullivan and Stanton, Franklin County, and at St. James, Mo. When he disposed of his stores, he became chief of office for Captain R. M. Peck, superintendent of bridges and buildings of the Missouri Pacific Railroad at Pacific, a town in Franklin County; and on resigning from that trust in 1888, he migrated to California with so many thousands of others who were attracted here through the great land boom of the late eighties.

Arriving in the Golden State, he associated himself with the old San Joaquin Lumber Company at Tulare, at that time under the general management of T. G. Yancey, and local management of E. Lathrop, and subsequently he filled the position of cashier and bookkeeper for the Tulare County Bank. Still later, he opened an office in Tulare for the promotion of various enterprises and the disposition of lands, and he became a notable factor in the promotion of pump irrigation in the San Joaquin Valley, a scientific

enterprise that soon rendered highly productive vast areas of land which hitherto could not be profitably cultivated.

Mr. Wishon's first extensive project was the building of the Exeter Ditch, for which the water was brought from the Kaweah River above Lemon Cove, and along the base of the hills almost to Lindsay, Tulare County, a distance of about twenty miles. At the time when this difficult and expensive task was undertaken, there was not an orange or lemon grove in the region designed to be supplied by the canal, but through his successful completion of the work he transformed the country into one of the best citrus-fruit producing sections of the State. He financed the enterprise and after its completion sold his lands at a handsome, deserved profit; and some of the acreage then disposed of includes today some of the finest California groves.

Another important enterprise which was fostered and developed by A. G. Wishon, and which has brought to so many incalculable returns, was the organization of the Mt. Whitney Power Company, which was the pioneer in electrical pumping in California. Having secured the rights to the headwaters of the Kaweah, he then associated with him as partner William H. Hammond, brother of John Hays Hammond, the famous mining expert, and installed a power plant, and not only did he bring the project to a reality, but he himself managed the enterprise until its success was assured. This plant distributes power and light to Tulare, Visalia, Exeter, Porterville and Lindsay.

In May, 1903, Mr. Wishon became the General Manager of the San Joaquin Power Company of Fresno, and soon after Vice-President, Director and Manager of the Fresno City Railroad, and Vice-President and Manager of the Fresno Water Company. In 1904, foreseeing the increasing appeal of Nature's wonderland and the rapid advances in population, he was active in the organization of the Fresno Traction Company, with a capitalization of \$5,000,000, to absorb the Fresno City Railroad and to construct a line to

the Yosemite Valley, a distance of eighty miles through a most picturesque section of the State, and he has gradually become associated with many other California enterprises, a number of which he helped to found.

On October 5, 1881, Mr. Wishon was united in marriage with Miss Henrietta Emory, a native of Steelville, Mo., and the daughter of Azro Emory of St. James, Mo., members of the Emory family that has already given to the advance intellectual guard of America a leading bishop, an educator, a soldier of prominence and a naval official who distinguished himself while commanding the Bear of the Greeley Relief Expedition. The ceremony was solemnized at St. James, Mo., and of that happy union two children were born, Emory and Jenny.

Fraternally, Mr. Wishon is a Mason and a charter member of Las Palmas Lodge, F. & A. M., at Fresno, and also of other branches of the order. He belongs as well to the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, where he is never found wanting when expected to put his shoulder to the wheel, and to the Sequoia, Commercial, University and Sunnyside clubs of Fresno, the California Club of Los Angeles, and various other representative organizations throughout the state.

## **JAMES C. PHELAN.**

The automobile garage owned by James C. Phelan, and named after him, is cleverly planned, well built, and managed according to up-to-date methods. Mr. Phelan's father, who was an honored veteran of the Union Army in our Civil War, is D. F. Phelan, and he is still living at Los Angeles. Prior to casting his lot in the Golden State, he was

a pioneer in Colorado. Mrs. Phelan, who was Annie Donahue before her marriage, is deceased.

Born in the Centennial State on October 25, 1867, James C. Phelan was educated at the public schools in Colorado and New Mexico, and also, as he likes to put it, in " the great school of experience." As a young man, he ventured in both the grocery and butcher business, having a store when only nineteen years of age, at Albuquerque, N. M. For fourteen years, too, his business at Williams, Arizona, was one of the most progressive and profitable establishments in that town.

On September 9, 1893, Mr. Phelan was married to Miss Myrtie Dickinson, and this union was blessed with three boys and four girls, viz: Mary M., Chris E., Roy N., Jimmie J., Ruth E., Bernice L., and Leoma C, all of whom were educated in the public schools of Fresno, the two eldest studied at Heald's Business College, while Roy N., is a student at the University of California at Berkeley. Mr. Phelan has accepted the doctrines of the Christian Scientists, socially he finds recreation in the circles of the Woodmen of the World, the Knights of Pythias, and the Young Men's Christian Association.

In May, 1916, he built the finest and most complete auto establishment in California, spending \$90,000 upon the same. He then became agent, for the San Joaquin Valley, of the Maxwell, Mitchell and Marmon automobiles, and the Kleiber and Maxwell Trucks. He employs from forty to fifty men to man the several departments, each of which is complete in itself. When he first came to California, in 1905, he worked for three years on the Fresno ranch; and then, getting into the automobile business in a modest way, he has made success after success, Mr. Phelan sold out in August, 1919.

Mr. Phelan is a stanch Democrat, but always something more than a political partisan. In advocating and working

for good roads, for example, his public-spiritedness has been particularly shown.

## **NELS HANSON.**

Everybody in Kingsburg has a kind thought and a good word for Nels Hanson, who was born at Lund, Skaarn, Sweden, on December 8, 1858, and reared in the old university town, where he began his education at the public schools. His father was Hanson, a farmer in modest circumstances who lived to be only thirty-three years of age and died in Sweden. His mother, Elna Peterson before her marriage, also lived and died where she was married. As a lad of seven, Nels, while attending the Lutheran Church, in which faith his parents brought him up, worked in a woolen mill at Lund, continuing there for five and a half hard years. After that he served a three years' apprenticeship to the tanners' trade, working for the well-known tanner and capitalist, Thelander, and becoming a journeyman in 1879.

Having thus equipped himself for a definite line of labor in life, Nels, in the latter part of 1880 sailed from Copenhagen for New York, and once safely within the borders of the United States, he made his way to Chicago where, for three months, he worked at the tanner's trade. Then he joined a construction gang on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway in Iowa, but in a short time he came back to Chicago and in the fall of that year went with some companions to Ishpeming, Mich., and there undertook to work in the mines. In time he became foreman and inspector, and received the highest wages paid to anyone there. After several years he became an independent mine contractor; and while saving his money, he sent it to a partner, Charles Carlson, at Kingsburg, now

deceased, with whom he had purchased some eighty choice acres, which Carlson was farming to grain.

As a result of this investment, Nels arrived in Kingsburg early in the spring of 1888. He liked the town from the very first, although he was fated to suffer heavily in the panics during the Cleveland administration. In May, 1888, Mr. Hanson, longing to see the scenes of his native land, made a trip back to his old home at Lund. He wished also to meet again his fiancée, Cecelia Hanson (of the same name, but of no kinship), to whom he had been engaged for ten years; and the result of this meeting was that Miss Hanson came out to America, and they were married at Kingsburg on September 25, 1888. Now they are the parents of four children: Frank, who was in Company B, Three Hundred Sixty-fourth Regiment, Infantry. Washington, and at Camp Lewis, later served with the Ninety-first Division in the Argonne in France, became automatic gunner, was gassed, arrived home and was honorably discharged at Camp Kearney and reached home April 26, 1919: Alfred, who married Emma Peterson of Kingsburg, and is a rancher: Victor, who lives at home; and Henry, a graduate of the Kingsburg High School, Class of 1916, and who was in the military police at Camp Fremont. When Messrs. Hanson and Carlson sold the eighty acres referred to, they accepted, as part of the sale price, a note for \$1,800, but the purchaser having defaulted in his payments, Mr. Hanson had to take back part of the land — for him a disappointment through which, at the time, he saw only misfortune and the necessity of his remaining at Kingsburg. Instead of a loss, however, it has proven a most valuable holding; half of it lies within the incorporated limits of Kingsburg, and such is the location that it is constantly advancing in worth. For six months Mr. Hanson remained at Kingsburg making improvements, and then he went to Portland, Ore., and became a bridge carpenter.



At the termination of three months, Mr. Hanson came back to California and Kingsburg, and continued improving the land. He planted twelve and a half acres to muscats, and the balance to alfalfa. He put up the customary outbuildings, and erected a comfortable, ornate residence, so that as a home-place he has succeeded in evolving a choice country property. Mr. Hanson also owns a vineyard of twenty acres one and a half miles north of Kingsburg, which he has set out to zinfandels, and twenty acres set out to Thompson's seedless grapes; and he has forty acres four miles west, all in muscats, planted by himself and now ten years old.

As a public-spirited citizen, Mr. Hanson has done his full duty in serving on federal and trial juries; while he has contributed to the social life of the community in his activity within the circles of the Masons and in particular within the Traver Lodge, No. 294, at Kingsburg. He is well-informed, progressive and withal a man of large heart; and his excellent wife is a true companion.

### **PAUL E. VANDOR.**

The life career of Paul E. Vandor, writer of this History of Fresno County, is typical of the varied experiences and activities common to that remarkable product of American institutions, the newspaper writer — that restless, indefatigable worker that is ever in touch with the popular pulse, that aids in directing public opinion and while wielding an invisible but conscious power yet sinks individuality in the impersonality of his work, that contributes to and encourages the development and permanent exploitation of communities, and that, while giving the best years of life and an unimpeachable loyalty

to a chosen vocation, seldom reaps personal reward for his unceasing efforts in behalf of the public weal. This newspaper class or body of journalists has humorously perhaps been named the Fourth Estate to distinguish an acknowledged power in the state body politic, distinct from the three recognized political or social orders. The subject of this sketch was born at Milwaukee, Wis., June 13, 1858, and is the eldest son of three living children. His father, who died in San Francisco in the seventies, was Joseph Vandor, a Hungarian nobleman, who was a major in the Austrian army. He cast his lot with Kossuth and the Hungarian revolution of 1848-49, but with its collapse and the loss of ancestral estate, escheated to the Crown, fled proscribed to America, sailing from Glasgow, Scotland, as the last port of embarkation. On December 4, 1849, he arrived in the United States in such an impoverished state that, with ignorance of the English language, life for him in the new land was beset by many vicissitudes, and he was reduced to manual labor for a livelihood. Gaining after a time a working knowledge of the language, the while economizing strictly to meet the demands of his necessities, he gave instruction in German, French and fencing, and also did amanuensis work and so worked his way through Harvard Law School, from which he was graduated. Eventually, he moved to Wisconsin to engage in the practice of law at Milwaukee.

On August 22, 1857, in that comfortable city, Joseph Vandor was married to Miss Pauline Knobelsdorf, who had come to America in childhood, and whose family had settled at Milwaukee. She was of gentle birth, a lineal descendant of the Major von Knobelsdorf who was distinguished as the royal architect of Frederick the Great and who planned and constructed for him the first edifices that marked the Unter den Linden in Berlin. This bit of ancestral history is the more interesting in our story because Mr. Vandor's grandfather on the paternal side was

a tutor and mentor of the Duke of Reichstadt — Napoleon II., son of Napoleon Bonaparte. His grandmother was a lady-in-waiting of the duke's mother, Marie Louise of Austria. Mrs. Pauline Vandor was one of the pioneer settlers of West Park Colony in Fresno. She died in Fresno City, May 7, 1907. She was a woman of indomitable energy, and an intensely loyal American of the type so often found among those of favored birth in foreign lands who have chosen the American republic as their home.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Joseph Vandor was commissioned a Colonel by Alexander Williams Randall (the plucky governor of Wisconsin who had called a regiment into existence without authority of the legislature), to organize the Seventh Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, later a unit of the historic Iron Brigade, but as the outgrowth of a cabal in the regiment, nurtured by jealousy of his military proficiency as evidenced by his being called upon to act in the capacity of brigade commander, an attempt was made upon his life. Under cover of night, he was shot in the shoulder by an unknown assassin, who fired at him through his tent and inflicted a wound which developed into a malignant cancer. He resigned his military command, and with the helpful recommendations of such influential men as Governor Randall, Carl Schurz, Governor Salmon Portland Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, and William H. Seward, Secretary of State, President Lincoln appointed him American Consul at Papeete, chief town of Tahiti, for the French protectorate in the Society Islands, and in those days station of the New England whalers in the Southern Pacific.

Colonel Vandor's loyalty to the country of his adoption was intense, and the American flag such an object of veneration for him that our subject recalls how he quelled a native insurrection on the island of Huaheine by the display of Old Glory from the masthead of the little Tahitian schooner aboard which was the consular party. The flag

was run up while the insurgents on the beach fired on the craft and refugees swam out or canoed to the schooner for protection. Speaking of these romantic but exciting days, Mr. Vandor says: "My father knocked me flat upon the deck, to escape the bullets he heard whistling on their flight toward us, but for which and being in the line of range. I might not have survived to tell the tale. I can recall, also, that often he emerged from the consulate at Papeete to liberate American sailors from the custody of Kanaka policemen, indignant at their practice of tying prisoners' wrists behind their backs for want of handcuffs, and then roundly castigating the policemen. At that time, as a small boy. I was familiar with the Kanaka language of the Islands, and could read it as printed in the French Jesuit or English Episcopalian missionary books; and although only a child in years I was the interpreter for the consulate. I accompanied my father on official tours of the islands in the archipelago, and rendered the translations of Kanaka into the German or French, as I had only an indifferent knowledge of English."

The serious nature of the Colonel's wound, and the education of his three children, prompted him to resign the consulship, and the family arrived in San Francisco, in April, 1869. Colonel Vandor took up the practice of law, became prominent in the Grand Army of the Republic, and a leader in the German-speaking colony, still including many of the most loyal and most efficient citizens of the state. Because of the evil effects of the wound upon his health, he declined the political preferments from time to time offered him. Before his death in the middle seventies, and after the Franco-German War, he returned to Europe and journeyed to Paris and Vienna, to consult eminent surgeons; and after submitting to operations, he made a last pathetic visit to the estates at one time his ancestral possessions, and the grave of his mother in a closed Vienna cemetery, and returned home, never again to leave his bed.

His remains lie in the family plot in the G. A. R. reservation of the Odd Fellows' Cemetery at San Francisco.

Paul E. Vandor grew and thrived under somewhat disordered educational conditions. He was taught French by the Jesuit Fathers in the South Sea Islands, and, on return to his native land at the age of eleven, was French in spirit and habit, although German was spoken in the home circle. Attending the cosmopolitan public schools and a private collegiate institute in San Francisco, he began the study of English, of which he had only a smattering, gathered from an American school teacher, a protege of the family while in the Islands. Being a voracious reader, he learned of himself to read and to write, delving into classic literature from the time when he read his first English book, Robinson Crusoe.

Newspaper work had for him its fascination even during boyhood, and as a school lad in the late seventies he was a publisher in San Francisco, when amateur journals were a juvenile fad. He once had the questionable credit, while in college, of being held to answer, with two older companions, on two charges of criminal libel lodged by a rival boy editor. The grand jury gave all concerned a lecture on the enormity of their offence, and then, after treating them to a good scare, made heroes of them all by ignoring the accusation. Mr. Vandor studied law in San Francisco, thinking to make that his profession; but with the loss of family fortune following collapse of the mining-stock gamble of the late seventies in San Francisco, abandoned the law to take up newspaper writing. Today, he is the second oldest newspaper writer in point of continuous service in Fresno County. In his career he has been dramatic critic of the old Golden Era, a reporter for the Chronicle, the Evening Post, the Examiner, and the Morning Call, in San Francisco. He has also been a reporter on the Morning Telegram, the Argus and the Encinal of Alameda, and he has served in like capacity in

Fresno with the Evening Expositor and the Democrat, the Morning Republican and at present is with the Evening Herald. Alternately, Mr. Vandor has also been assistant city editor of the San Francisco Call and Editor of the Fresno Democrat. He has spent the major part of a busy life in the ever interesting city of San Francisco, of whose marvelous growth he was an eye-witness, and he has wept amid her devastated streets, when he beheld the aftermath of the earthquake and the big fire. While in San Francisco, he was a charter member of the first Press Club of 1880, whose supporters hobnobbed with and welcomed many of the notable literary men of the world as they sojourned in or passed through the Bay Metropolis and sipped of a life now largely a memory.

From January, 1885, until the Spanish-American War, Mr. Vandor was in the California National Guard, having enlisted in Company G, First Infantry, Second Brigade, which with Company C as the mother organization dated from the days of 1856 and the San Francisco Vigilance Committee, and he held transfer memberships in Company G, in Alameda, Fifth Infantry, Second Brigade, and in Company F. in Fresno, of the Sixth Infantry and Third Brigade. Having been color-sergeant in the First Regiment, he was in his own company first sergeant, but he was rejected for service in the Spanish-American War on account of physical disability. A veteran member of the Nationals, Mr. Vandor was a charter member of the Veterans' State Association of the National Guard. In national politics a Republican, Mr. Vandor is locally decidedly non-partisan. A charter member of Pitiaches Tribe. No. 144, I. O. R. M., of Fresno, Mr. Vandor is also a member of Manzanita Camp, No. 160, W. O. W. of Fresno. He also belongs to the Shaver Lake Fishing Club.

A Californian to the backbone, although compelled sincerely to regret that he was not born within the limits of the Golden State, Mr. Vandor has made the study of