

He Named The Orchard For A Rose

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In those days his fame as a successful orchardist was such that he was widely referred to as the "Pear King of California." The first carload of the year of his Rose Orchard label Bartlett pears was planned to be loaded for dispatch so as to be the first on the New York market and thus command the highest price. Loading of this first carload of the season at Rose Orchard packing house was always a matter of great local excitement and pride for the people of Bryte who picked, packed and loaded. It had for people then some of the suspenseful drama of the launching of one of today's rockets into outer space. There were special arrangements with the short line Sacramento Northern Railway to pull the loaded box car away for the short run over its line to the connection with the major transcontinental railroad for the fast journey to New York. I remember how we would follow it up the track of the Rose Orchard siding and then watch it go out of sight at the bend beyond the Mikon Tower crossing. And we would say in a spirit of adventure, "There it goes."

Hayward Reed was the first citizen of Bryte in many ways and, in those times, the Rose Orchard annual payroll was important to the economy of the town. My father worked for him as a foreman during the picking season and I recall that my older brother Leo, when in his teens, was permitted to achieve the high pay

prestige of a boxmaker in the packing shed. It was great fun for those of us who were still very young to play in the orchard during the picking season getting underfoot in the busy packing shed and hitching rides on the horsedrawn wagons which hauled the boxes of freshly picked pears from the orchard. The orchard seemed so vast in those days — now as an adult observing it from the Interstate 880 Freeway, I realize that it really was not so big after all. But there is no denying that those days of the orchard so long ago were the best times of all.

Rose Mather was her name and she was from Marysville where her father was a partner in the Mather and Stewart Department Store. She was truly a rose with soft brown hair and her natural complexion so like the blush of a fresh-bloomed rose. This is from the clear memory of myself as a small child as it had to be for she was taken away in the great influenza epidemic right after World War I. It was a tragedy that one so gracious and lovely and kind should have been swept away leaving five young children to be raised to maturity by her widowed husband. Losing such a fine woman it is no wonder that Hayward

never remarried — for it was not possible to replace such a rose and it was evident that for him there was no other. My sister Helen went to work in the Reed household a little later when she was about thirteen or fourteen years of age to help care for the lusty

young brood. My sister Theresa, who was two years older, lived and worked in the Mather household in Marysville during which time she attended Marysville High School nights studying the business course from which she went on to become the bookkeeper for Allyn L. Burr Roofing Company in Sacramento.

The original Reed home at Rose Orchard, is still there. The walkway to the front outside stairway of the house was framed over with a long trellis shaded by an arbor of climbing roses of various colors with roseate hues predominant. The spacious grounds were tastefully landscaped with broad lawns and plantings of bush roses and other shrubs, and orange, lemon, grapefruit, mulberry and other trees. There was a separate small building on the grounds originally intended as a carriage house, I believe, and then redesigned as a playhouse for the growing young family and as a shaded summer retreat beneath the great oak trees and vines which grew over it. It was to this home in the early 1900's that Hayward Reed brought his young bride for whom he named its quaint shingle covered passenger and freight station at the foot of Lisbon Avenue. Later, the much larger two-story house was built (more about this another time) where I remember her lying abed with a newborn son. And where she was a gracious hostess to all in the neighborhood, young and old alike. And then, a very short while later, she was gone.