

## Carl and Dorothea Janke

By: John Edmonds

Carl August Janke was a native of Hamburg, Germany, as was Dorothea; they left Germany in late 1848 and sailed to San Francisco arriving in 1860 following a brief trip to the gold country. They spent little time in San Francisco, finding the climate more to their liking in Belmont, San Mateo County.

Carl built the well known Belmont Picnic Grounds in the vicinity of today's Twin Pines Park. The grounds became well known in San Francisco and when the railroad became well established in the mid 1860s the well intentioned and sometimes the not so well intentioned citizens of the great city took the train to Belmont. Good citizens of San Mateo County also enjoyed the good imported German beer and the dancing to the German band.

One of the problems for the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad that serviced Belmont and the San Mateo County Peninsula was that the trip back to the city often resulted in a great number of broken windows. The railroad solved that problem by increasing the toll for the trip to Belmont to cover the cost of replacing the windows. Thus everybody had to pay for the misdeeds a few.

On one occasion one of the less than gentlemanly males from San Francisco, thinking himself a playboy, took affection to a teen age young lady from Belmont. After a dance or two he took her for a walk in the nearby field and raped her.



*The Belmont Picnic  
Grounds*

The young lady reported the incident to her mother who, in turn, reported it to the Sheriff's Office. The rapist, of course, disappeared in the crowd but the



*2<sup>nd</sup> courthouse, which stood on Broadway where the Old (4<sup>th</sup>) courthouse stands today. The murder occurred in the courtroom in this building.*

Deputy along with others took the young lady, one to the front of the train and the other to the back of the train and they worked their way toward each other until they located the suspect who was arrested and taken to the Jail in Redwood City.

A trial was held in the courtroom in Redwood City and during the process of that trial the suspect rose and walked forward to testify. The father of the victim rose and fired two shots into the suspect killing him instantly. The newspapers were blatant about

the suspect got what he deserved and the father pleaded he went crazy after the rape. Several people testified to that fact. The father, having regained his sanity while waiting for his day in court, walked out of court a free man. This seems to fully agree with the newspapers, it's nice to see justice served.

This is the only murder in a San Mateo County courtroom.