



# La Verne Historical Society

Preserving Old La Verne's Environment: Making History for the Future



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## Special Edition: Touring La Verne's Cemetery

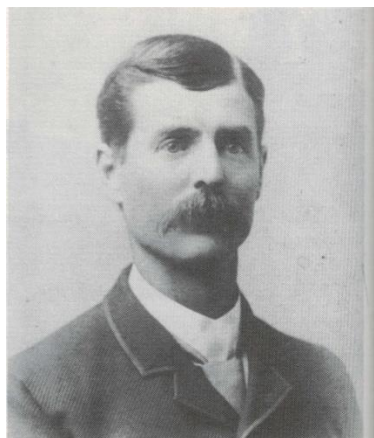
Story: Sherry Best & Bill Lemon

Contemporary Docent Photos: Sherri Szabo & John Best

It was a beautiful day to stroll outdoors, and over 70 visitors to the La Verne Cemetery on "B" Street spent a few peaceful hours on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, enjoying the fall weather and learning about several of La Verne's early pioneers. Tours were conducted by docents drawn from the Hillcrest Thespians, community volunteers, and LVHS board members.

After their tour, several visitors remarked that they would like a copy of the scripts that were read by the docents. So – what follows is a special edition of the *LVHS Newsletter* with the scripts (slightly altered for space and readability), selected accompanying photos, and images from the tour day. The scripts are presented in alphabetical order by family last name.

### The Bixby & Kendrick Families



Lewis Hillard Bixby, 1853-1926

La Verne got its name from a member of the Bixby family. When they first moved here from Pasadena, the area was not named. In 1887, the town of Lordsburg was laid out and a post office was established. The townsite to the south and west changed its name from Mud Springs to San Dimas. The Bixby land was north and west of Lordsburg. The name "La Verne," which means "The Green," "Growing Green" or "Spring-like" from the French word "vergne" or "verne" characterized the greenness of the Bixby citrus ranch and generated the name. In 1917 the people of Lordsburg voted to

give up the name Lordsburg and change the city name to La Verne.

Lewis Hillard Bixby was born in 1853 in Cooper County Missouri, where he was educated and gained his first employment as a bookkeeper in the Citizen's National Bank in Sedalia. This is where he met and married his wife Margaret in 1876. They moved to Texas, where he owned a general hardware and farming implement



Margaret Young Bixby, 1854-1921

business. A son and a daughter were born in Texas.

A visit to California in 1881 was so pleasing to Margaret and Lewis that they settled up and had moved to Pasadena in 1883. They bought 20 acres and planted them with apricots,

peaches, grapes, and oranges. It was also profitable for Lewis to open a general merchandise store, but the store and the Pasadena holdings were sold in order to buy 120 acres of land in La Verne. Their third child (a son), was born in La Verne. Like many people, they were caught by the great land bust of 1887 and lost the property, but began again and concentrated on oranges on land north of what is now Foothill Boulevard. Some of the land was augmented by 15 acres that was left to Lewis' father Elias Bixby, who came to California in 1889 and homesteaded the property.

Lewis spearheaded an organization to form the San Dimas Land and Water Company and served as its secretary. He was also President of the Citrus Water Company and helped found the La Verne Orange Growers Association. The orange crate label on the following page was used by the La Verne Orange

Grower's Association and it depicts the Bixby family house and groves.



Lewis and Margaret believed it was important to be active members of the community. Like his father Elias, Lewis was a member of the Odd Fellows and a charter member of Pasadena Lodge #324. He and Margaret were charter members of the Christian Church in San Dimas and Lewis was a Trustee for the grammar and high schools.

Margaret had been a teacher in Sedalia Missouri and continued her interest in education. Lewis and Margaret donated land on their La Verne property for a new school which was first called La Verne Public School and was later named La Verne Heights School. As the children grew, Margaret became concerned that there was no place of public secondary education in the area. In 1901 she circulated petitions among representatives of the communities of Lordsburg, La Verne, and San Dimas to establish a comprehensive high school that would be funded through taxes. In 1903 the state legislature passed a law providing for such taxation. The first classes were held upstairs in the old Milne building on "D" Street located next to the site of what is now Roberta's Village Inn. They opened with 34 students and a curriculum that included Latin, German, History, Mathematics, and Science. Within a few months the students moved to the upstairs of the La Verne Public School and continued their studies while they waited for construction to be completed on the high school. Chonita Palomares was our first graduate in 1904, but the new building was not completed until 1905.

The Bixby and Kendrick families are related through Harold Kendrick's second wife, whose mother had been a Bixby before her marriage to Fred Johnston.

Harold Kendrick was born in Kansas in 1899 and his first wife, Maude Milnes, was born in Indiana in 1900. By 1920 he was living in Los Angeles with his parents (John and Clara) and grandmother Minerva Kendrick. Harold was employed as a laundry wagon driver when he met Maude and married her in Los Angeles in 1922. They had four daughters, although the first one died in infancy.

By 1934 Maude and Harold were living in La Verne and he had launched his new career as a poultryman. Maude passed away in 1944. Margaret Johnston, who became Harold's wife in December of 1945, was a schoolteacher born in La Verne. In 1948 Margaret and Harold had twin boys, Donald and Richard.

Leadership and service were important to the Kendrick family. Harold served on the Bonita Union High School Board of Trustees in 1948. In 1953 he was head of the Mount San Antonio College Poultry Advisory Committee. Their June 29<sup>th</sup> Poultry Field Day at Mt. SAC was attended by



**Above: Margaret Johnston Kendrick (1914-1994) and Below: Harold Kendrick (1899-1993)**

poultrymen from all over Southern California. The Field Day hosted over 3,000 programs by speakers from the USDA, University of California, local poultrymen, and county livestock inspection agencies. People today may think that raising poultry is not significant, but it is a huge industry and Harold Kendrick was one of several poultry raisers in La Verne.

Kendrick's service on behalf of the City of La Verne continued in 1956 with a position on the City Planning Commission, which he maintained until 1969. He was a long-time member of





the Methodist Church Men's Group, and in 1962 he ran for City Council in La Verne. In that year Harold was also a Director of the Los Angeles County Federal Farm Loan Association. He stated: "I want to see La Verne a clean, aggressive town and let industry know it is welcome. I want to keep zoning standards high and protect our water." This sounds like a good slogan for 2020!

### **The Hanawalt Family**

The name "Hanawalt" comes from "Hahnewald", meaning "Cock of the Woods," or "Woodcock," after a



game bird that lives in the Black Forest of Germany. The name evolved over time to its current spelling. Maybe the Hanawalts were so named because they were successful professional hunters or gamekeepers, although one family member stated that they may

**George Hanawalt (1831-1913) & his first wife Caroline McKee Hanawalt (1837- 1858)**

have also been successful poachers!

George Hanawalt's earliest ancestors in America were Henry George and Elizabeth Laman (also identified as Lemmon, Lehman, or Leymon), who met on their voyage to America when George was 19 years old. Henry George was bound out to a farmer who paid his ship fare and Elizabeth was bound out to a different farmer for the cost of her fare. After Henry gave his required work time he was released and helped farmers in the area with their stock. He traveled to the place where Elizabeth was working out her time and stated his intention to marry her. He continued to work to help pay her obligation then purchased land from the farmer where Elizabeth was living. Newly married and on horses given to them as wedding gifts by their employers, Henry George and Elizabeth traveled to McVeytown, Pennsylvania and built a log cabin on their property on the banks of the Juniata River. There they lived and raised five children (George, Henry, Margaret Ann, Christian, and John) until Henry George's death in 1794. Elizabeth remained on the farm until her death.

George Hanawalt was the great grandson of Henry George and Elizabeth Hanawalt, born in McVeytown in 1831 to Joseph Rothrock Hanawalt (son of Henry George's eldest son George) and Mary Swigart. He was the oldest of their 16 children and grew up on the original homestead of the American Hanawalts. He farmed in the summers and taught in winter months for over 16 years.

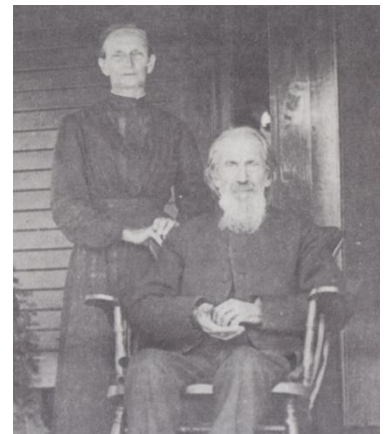
George married three times. His first wife was Caroline Matilda McKee, whom he married in 1856. She died of typhoid fever soon after their first child was born. Their daughter Carrie Jane lived only two months and died of cholera. Two years later George married Barbara Repogle and she died at age 30 after 13 years of marriage and leaving behind eight children under the age of 12 years. During his second marriage George was called to the ministry and ordained as an elder in 1886.



**George and his second wife, Barbara Repogle (1842- 1873)**

George's third wife, Lucinda Stutzman, married him in 1874 and bore nine children. In 1902 George was persuaded to come to California by his son William Cyrus Hanawalt, President of Lordsburg College from 1902-1908.

His son Harvey McKee Hanawalt was also living in California. The mild climate of California suited George and he remained in La Verne until his death at age 82.



**George & his third wife Lucinda Stutzman Hanawalt (1851-1929)**

George was borne to his final resting place in the La Verne Cemetery by six of his sons. The officiating ministers were Edmund Forney (standing next to the hearse) and Simon Yundt.



Lucinda Stutzman Hanawalt lived 16 years beyond the death of her husband and was buried next to him. Sons with George who came to California and are buried in this cemetery include Samuel Emery, Harvey McKee, Charles Hartman, John Ross, and George Russell. Their daughters Katherine Elizabeth and Luella May are also buried in the La Verne Cemetery.

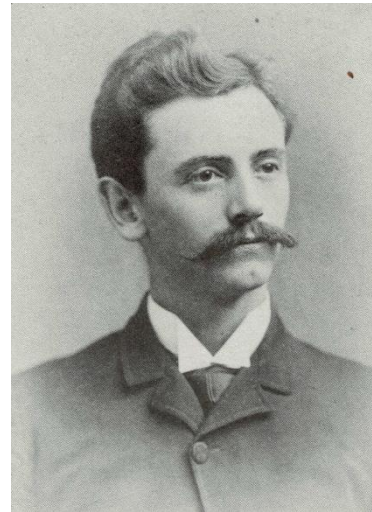
George's first two wives are buried near McVeytown, Pennsylvania. Caroline was the first person to be buried in the Spring Run Cemetery and rests next to her infant daughter. She was said to be well educated for her day and had a pleasing personality that won her friends wherever she went. Barbara Replogle Hanawalt is also buried in Spring Run Cemetery next to the infant son who preceded her in death. She had a lovely singing voice and helped in many musical functions in McVeytown. Lucinda Stutzman Hanawalt, third wife of George Hanawalt, was described as having a most pleasant and considerate personality.

24 people with the Hanawalt last name are buried in La Verne Cemetery and this number does not include Hanawalt females who took other names when married.

### The Hubble Family

John Edgar Hubble was the ninth of 12 children born to Virginia planters left impoverished by the Civil War. When he was ten, a traumatic experience changed his life. His ankle was crushed by a cart wheel and his father, not understanding the seriousness of the injury, kept John with him in the field until the end of the day. Infection settled in the bone, causing terrible pain. Home remedies did no good and none of the

country doctors could cure him. John spent the next 15 years on crutches and in a wheelchair. He decided to become a doctor to cure himself and to end the suffering of others. His brothers and sisters taught him



John Edgar Hubble (1864 -1936)

at home until he could walk enough to attend an academy and prepare for medical school.

Studying medicine was an arduous journey. John took a position as a teacher in a country school and taught for one year, then attended the University of Virginia the following

year. His pattern was to teach for a year and save tuition, then attend medical school the following year. John was especially interested in osteomyelitis, what we call bone infections. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1891.

There was still the problem with John's knee. At age 27 and after 17 years of pain, he decided to treat himself. Without local anesthetic, he lifted up his kneecap, cleaned the infection underneath, then stitched it up again and was never more troubled by pain or swelling.

Dr. Hubble was strongly motivated to cure himself because he had vowed never to marry until he was cured. He returned to his hometown of Chilhowie Virginia to practice medicine, and boarded in a hotel where he met the love of his life Lauuna, daughter of the hotel owners. They were married when she was 16, in 1893.

The Hubble family was very musical and their love of music brought them together. John grew up playing violin in Virginia and listening to black gospel music in country churches. Eventually he added the banjo, mandolin, and guitar to his musical repertoire. From time to time he would exchange knowledge of a banjo tune as payment for medical treatment. Lauuna was also musical. From the time she was 9 years old, she was the church piano player for Sunday School in Lynchburg, Virginia. John and Lauuna played music



together all their lives. They settled in Chilhowie Virginia and built a beautiful colonial style house, where their daughters Vivian, Mattie, and Jean were born. Their first house in Chilhowie is still standing.



Attending patients on horseback in winter brought back pain to Dr. Hubble's leg, so a decision was made to move to California. Lauuna's parents also moved from Virginia. The whole tribe arrived in San Bernardino in 1904. In those days without refrigeration on the train, they brought their own food for the 5 days and 5 nights from Virginia to California. They were

#### **Lauuna Carner Hubble (1877-1941)**

remembered for entertaining the other passengers with music and song throughout the journey.

After talking to doctors in the area the Hubbles settled on Lordsburg to establish Dr. Hubble's medical practice, as there were no doctors there or in neighboring San Dimas. We bought a house on "E Street" near the corner where it crosses Fourth Street (what we called Fourth Street is now Bonita Avenue).



**The Hubble House on 2337 "E" Street in La Verne, bought in 1905 and sold in 1921.**

Like many doctors of the time, Dr. Hubble's practice operated from his home. He had an annex with a separate entrance built at the back so that he could see patients and not disturb his family members. Sometimes his patients could not pay in money and he was known to take vegetables, a load of hay, and even music lessons in payment. Dr. Hubble served as Mayor from 1912-1914 and during this time the cities of Lordsburg, Claremont, San Dimas, Glendora, and Covina cooperated in building a float for the Rose Parade. A daughter no older than 15 was chosen to represent each city and his daughter Mattie was the Lordsburg girl.

For relaxation, the Hubble family relied on music and often had "Hubble Orchestra" concerts in their Lordsburg home. This photo of the Hubble family was taken in 1917. Family members (Top row, L to R, are Jean, Mattie, Page, and Vivian. Bottom row, L to R, are Douglass, Dr. H., Mrs. H., and Harriss).



The Hubble family moved from La Verne in 1921 and settled in Pomona but Dr. Hubble continued to attend to patients in La Verne. He died in 1936. On July 30, 1936 an article in the *Pomona Progress Bulletin* stated:

"Among the medical fraternity, Dr. Hubble was highly respected and throughout this district he was known as one of the 'old school' of family doctors. To the practice of medicine and the welfare of his patients, Dr. Hubble has dedicated his life and from such high ethical standards he never deviated. His natural friendly and sympathetic nature made his visits a benediction to the families he served." A benediction indeed... Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could all receive such an obituary while we were still alive?!

A descendant of a Dr. Hubble patient tells the following story: My husband's great grandparents lived in La Verne and worked in the citrus groves. His great grandmother Ignacia Yopez, was called Mama Nacha. Mama Nacha had 16 children. Dr. Hubble would come to the house when a baby was coming and send the children into the yard to wait for the baby. When the baby came Dr. Hubble would hold the baby in front of the window and that was the signal for the children to come back inside.

Here is another story about Dr. Hubble's skills with delivering babies. When the twins were born to Mama Nacha, Dr. Hubble could tell that she was in trouble and asked her husband, Papa Chente (Vincente), if he should save the wife or the babies. He was afraid he could not save both. Papa Chente would not choose but disappeared from the house and went to church to pray. Finally, when he returned to his house there were two healthy baby boys and Mama Nacha in answer to his prayers.

### **The Miller Family**

John and Grace Miller lie side by side under a flat marker stone next to a beautiful rose bush. Both of them made contributions to the development of Lordsburg and La Verne, in ways that reflected their skills and interests. John was a businessman and ranch manager. Grace was an educator, reporter, and dedicated to service in many areas.

Born in Virginia, John Luther Miller arrived in Lordsburg in 1901, just when citrus groves began to replace the early orchards of apricot and plum trees. He owned a general store on "D" Street then sold out and

started a chicken ranch in north La Verne. Raising chickens was a big business in this area at one time.

Besides managing his chicken business, John was involved in managing the finances



**JL Miller (1873-1972) and Mary  
Grace Hileman Miller (1878-1955)**

of the city. He served as the first City Treasurer of Lordsburg and remained in that position for 10 years, served as secretary-treasurer of the Mills Tract Water Company for 26 years, and was Superintendent of the Evergreen Cemetery, now called the La Verne Cemetery. John and Grace and were active members of the Church of the Brethren.

In 1970, when he was 96 years old, John was honored by the Kiwanis Club of La Verne-San Dimas for his "special quality of life." John lies next to his beloved wife Grace, whose life was cut short by a car accident in 1955.

Grace Hileman Miller was born in Hollidaysburg Pennsylvania in 1878 and came to Lordsburg in 1902 with the family of William Cyrus Hanawalt when he took over the Presidency of Lordsburg College. Her objective was to be a student there. A staunch Presbyterian, Grace's father opposed her association with the Church of the Brethren and she defied him by coming to California. Grace worked for John in his store and married him in 1904 in the Lordsburg College auditorium with W.C. Hanawalt officiating. They bought a home at what became 2325 "E" Street and this is where they raised four children (Lois, Ruth, and twins David and Daniel). The house is no longer standing and only the two palm trees that graced the front of the property remain.



**The Miller Home at 2325 "E" Street; no longer standing**

Grace was a correspondent for the *Pomona Progress Bulletin* for 22 years before joining the staff of the *La Verne Leader* in 1947. In 1955, just two months before her death, the *La Verne Leader* named Grace "Woman of the Week."



Missionary work and community enhancement were Grace's passionate life goals. She was a Sunday School teacher for the Church of the Brethren since the age of 19 and arranged their summer program for the young adult district camp. She was a life member of the PTA and active as an advisor for the "Buds", a junior girls' program at the YWCA. Grace served on the board of the Red Cross, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, among other activities. The 1919 photo below shows Grace and John, his father, their two daughters, and the family of the pastor of the La Verne Church of the Brethren, in San Dimas Canyon enjoying a picnic after church. Joining them were some of the Japanese men from a night school English class taught by volunteers in the church. Look at the cars in those days!



Education was important in Grace's life. She spent many years organizing and supervising English and sewing classes in the homes of the Mexican people before the public schools had such programs. Additionally, she hosted a prayer and study group in her home following the night school classes. She also attended Lordsburg College and earned her degree in 1914.

La Verne College honored Grace Miller with their first Community Builder Award, stating "Ever since you came to this community in 1902, you have given yourself completely and tirelessly to the influence which makes a community a worthwhile place to live." Wasn't that a nice thing to say?

Grace's life came to a tragic end. In December 1955, she was riding in a car driven by her grandson, when they suffered a collision with another vehicle. Grace was thrown out of the car and died almost instantly. Her husband, daughter, and another grandson were

also passengers but survived. The crowd attending the service at the Church of the Brethren was said to be the largest ever recorded in the city.

Another honor was bestowed on Grace Miller in 1958. School board members were deciding what to name a proposed new school. Grace's name kept coming to the top of the list. John Miller and Rachel Landeros, a



member of the YWCA "Buds," lifted the first shovels of earth for Grace Miller Elementary School on June 10, 1958.

### **The Neher Family**

As of 1989, fourteen souls who share the Neher name lie in La Verne Cemetery. They may not all be related to each other but all have a story to tell.

Bartimeus "Bartie" Ashley Neher (1886-1904) was the first person to be buried in the La Verne Cemetery. He was the eighth of nine children and a twin with his brother Harvey. Bartie's mother died when he was 1½ years old and he traveled to Lordsburg from Kansas after 1900, partly in the hope that his tuberculosis could be cured by a change of climate. He lived in the home of Mrs. Tena Connor in Lordsburg. Mrs. Connor was a member of the Church of the Brethren. The tuberculosis cure was not to be and he died in 1904.

William Henry Neher was the third child of John and Margaret Neher, and known to his friends as Will. He was born in Salem Illinois in 1871 and moved to Lordsburg from McFarland, California, in 1922. He married Charlotte (Lottie) Edith Flory in 1894 in Lordsburg but moved several times before finding their final home and resting place back in Lordsburg. They had four children; Mae and Maudie (their twins), were born in Hemet. Their daughter Minneva Josephine and son Virgil were born in Inglewood.



**John Fredrick Neher, father of William Henry Neher. William's son Virgil with his first wife Ollie and son Clarence**



Minneva Neher (1896-1937) first went to China as a missionary in 1924. Right before she left her mother hosted a three-course luncheon for almost 30 people

in her honor. An article in the La Verne Leader described the luncheon this way: "The dining room was beautiful with carnations, roses, and ferns. The colors pink and white were carried out in the table decorations which included dainty pick rose favors. On the hand-painted place cards were scenes of water and boats."

Minneva lost her life in the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 along with two other missionary friends. They left home when called out to help during riots and were believed killed; their bodies were never recovered.



Noah Garst Neher (1849-1911) was born in Ohio and married Mary Blickenstaff in 1870 in Macoupin County, Illinois. They came to Lordsburg sometime after 1905. Their daughters Lizzie, Susie, and Clara were all married at the Neher home at 2219 Third Street on May 19, 1909. The minister who married the girls was the science teacher J.Z. Gilbert, who discovered the saber-toothed cat in 1913 in the La Brea Tar Pits. The cat is now on exhibit at ULV at the Abraham Campus Center. Alberta Harris, who recently passed away at Hillcrest, was Noah's granddaughter. His daughter Clara Vaniman was a long time school teacher in La Verne and her son Joe recently passed away at age 94. Noah Neher died in 1911 and Mary died in 1927.

### **The Price Family**

Oranges brought the Price family to California. Jacob Price had heart trouble before he moved from Illinois, but when he arrived in California, he stayed involved in tending his citrus business. It was his pleasure to take people in his car and tour through his groves.

Jacob Price was born in Ogle County, Illinois, in 1854 and married Lillie Spickler in 1881. They had four children: Rhoda, John, Ruth, and Margaret. In 1910 they came to California after spending several summers here and liking the climate. In Illinois Jacob



had been a farmer so continued that tradition and had orange groves in La Verne, Charter Oak, and Covina.



**Jacob (1854-1922) & Lillie Price (1863-1960)  
with their children John, Margaret  
(Blickenstaff), Ruth (Pobst), & Rhoda (Roynon)**

In addition to his groves, Jacob was Vice President of the Farmers and Merchants Bank and President of the Mills Tract Water Company. He served the Church of the Brethren as a Deacon for over 35 years.

In 1917 the family moved into a new house at what became 2707 White Avenue. The house is a unique example of late Edwardian architecture with decorative timber work over a stucco finish on the outside and wood detail inside. This house is still standing.

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1922, Jacob went downtown and enjoyed dinner and a quiet evening with his family before retiring for the night. Shortly after he woke up on January 7<sup>th</sup>, Jacob spoke with his wife about breakfast and then lay back in bed. At 7:00am he peacefully passed away with his family by his side.

Lillie Price was born in Maryland in 1863 and by 1867 she was living in Illinois, where she married her first husband Jacob there in 1881 at age 18. Three of their four children were born in Illinois and the third child, Ruth, was born during one of their visits to California. They settled in California for good in 1910.

In 1930 Margaret Price married Harry Blickenstaff. The ring bearer was their grandson David Price, who grew

up to be Bill Lemon's high school biology teacher and Sunday School teacher. The flower girl was Jean Roynon, the eldest granddaughter.



Lillie remarried in 1934, 12 years after Jacob died. Her new husband was David S. Dredge, and they were a sprightly 73 and 71 years old when they wed. Lillie lived to be 97 and was buried next to Jacob. Her granddaughter's name (Jane Margaret Blickenstaff) is also on the gravestone and they are buried together. She was struck by a train at the age of two.

John Calvin Price was Jacob and Lillie's son. John Price taught at Bonita High School for 19 years. He was well known as the football coach for Bonita High School, where he coached Glenn Davis, who led the Bearcats to their first ever football championship in 1942. Glenn went to West Point and was named All American three times. In 1946 he won the Heisman Trophy. Glenn later played for the Los Angeles Rams and Bonita High School named its football stadium after him in 1989.

John served as a member of the Bonita High School Board of Trustees for a number of years, served on La Verne's City Council from 1942-1952, and was Mayor from 1946-1952.



**John Calvin Price (1901-1961)**