2 senior citizens share April party

EDGAR ALLEN
Celebrates 84 years

MARSHALL BENN
95 years young
Marshall Benn was 95 years old on Sunday, April 15, and about 80 friends and relatives came to a party to pay him honor and wish him well.

The party hosts, Benn's three sons and their wives, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Benn, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Benn and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Benn, had the party out in the yard at his house on First Street.

Honored guest was Edgar Allen, who has the same day for a birthday and was 84 years old.

Marshall Benn came to Brentwood in 1890 as a boy of 12 years from Fresno county and went to the Brentwood Grammar School that was on the site of the Liberty High School today.

The nearest high school in the 1890's was in Martinez and because the transportation was so poor, many of the grammar school graduates did not go to high school.

"After all, you couldn't drive a horse and buggy to Martinez and back every day as they drive a car now," said Benn.

As a young man, he farmed the area now called Camp Stoneman in what was Black Diamond, now Pittsburg, raising barley and hay for 30 years.

"Don't let anyone tell you ranching is not hard work," cautioned Benn, and it is this hard work that he says has let him live so long. All his relative except one died way before they reached his age and that one lived to be 99 years old.

Benn was married for 57 years. His wife died in 1963, and his two daughters have passed away some years ago.

After he retired from ranching, Benn went to work for the Brentwood Water Department in 1944 and retired from there after 10 years, in 1954 at the age of 76.

All of his life, Benn has loved to dance and used to go to the old fashion dances three Saturdays a month in Oakland and one on Saturday at Knightsen. He stills goes to the Knightsen dances and loves the people and dances.

"I have always been very healthy; in fact, I have never spent a day or even a night in a hospital," he said proudly.

Another amazing thing for the 95-year-old man is that he does not wear glasses and spends most of his time cover to cover.

He misses being able to drive a car after 40 years of driving, so now he has trouble getting around, but he loves to walk and does as much as he can.

Benn has seven grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren but his nephew who lives in West Point is the only relative to carry on the name of Benn.

Having been born on the same day but not the same year, Edgar Allen celebrated his 84th birthday Sunday, April 15, with his friend Marshall Benn, who was 95.

Allen, said he was very appreciative of being invited to share the birthday party with Benn and because of the party, he was having a birthday week. His son, Charles, is coming up from Modesto to be with him next weekend.

The man who was editor and publisher of the Brentwood News for 25 years, has three sons and one daughter, Charles in Modesto, Arthur in San Jose, Dr. Edgar in Washington and Barbara in Colorado. Allen has 11 grandchildren but no great grandchildren.

Allen confessed he was having a love affair with a couple of his granddaughters and proudly showed the letter from Noel in Madrid, Spain and some of the momentos she had sent him.

Allen came to Brentwood with his family in 1926, where his father had a real estate and insurance business. Allen and his brother, George, went into that business until 1930, when five of the townpeople put up $100 a piece so Allen could make a down payment to buy the Brentwood News from Sam Hill.

One of the activities that he enjoys today, is writing his biography and jotting down some thought that he has. He started this writing at the insistence of his grandchildren.

Allen said, "You know, I found I was spending an awful lot of time watching the TV and it is was bad so now I write some every few days and try to do it every day."

Allen attributes his long life to his mother's side of the family as she came from Nantucket, where her family were all rugged whalers that lived a long time.