



Perhaps you saw the story in the Chronicle a while back, covering the closing days in San Francisco of W & J Sloane, the pioneer furniture store. It's going out of business, driven out by the demise of the carriage trade and problems of interest rates, et cetera.

I never bought one thing in my life from W & J Sloane. I can't think of a time when I was inside one of their stores. Yet I am far more distressed at their loss than I would be at the closing of some stores I visit time after time. W & J Sloane was an institution. As it happens, I have never been in a position to go to Sloane's and stock my home with the furniture they sell. Now I never will.

But in my teen years, in the forties and early fifties, W & J Sloane sponsored a program on radio. It may have started before KPO changed its call letters to KNBC. It's another ironic result of the power shift in western radio from San Francisco to LA that the National Broadcasting Company shifted ("stole!") those proud initials for their TV station in Los Angeles a number of years back, changing the local outlet to KNBR.

The program Sloane sponsored, "This is San

Francisco" (also known at times as "San Francisco Is Your Home") was one of the most delightful concoctions I have ever enjoyed in my 45 years of radio listening.

Budd Heyde, long since retired and passed on, was the narrator. The format was simple. Heyde read a script detailing a chapter of early San Francisco history, with musical bridges.

That description completely misses the delightful nature of the program, because it can't give you Heyde's nuances of voice expression, the skilled use of classical music, especially that of Edvard Grieg, and the excellent scripts by Samuel Dixon which took the listener back to the early days of Northern California each week.

It was from this program that I first learned about that curious men's lodge of early California, E Clampus Vitus. (Their device to call the "Clampers" together, I think it was a ram's horn, was known as the Eugag.) As written by Dixon, and narrated by Heyde, the fun and nonsense of the pioneers, their efforts to entertain themselves as they learned to live in this new state, all came together in a way I have not heard since.

I own a copy of the book of scripts from "This is San Francisco." It's fun to read, but seems a bit flat unless I can imagine the words in the book being read by Budd Heyde, broken up by the rousing music he chose, and the tasteful commercials he read for W & J Sloane.

Samuel Dixon, a diamond salesman before he became a writer of early San Francisco history, is gone. Budd Heyde, who spent most of his career at KPO-KNBC-KNBR during its great days, is gone.

The station, now on its third set of call letters, specializes in blah music, disc jockeys and baseball.

And now we are losing Sloane's. I am the poorer.

11-18-81

*[Handwritten flourish or signature]*