



Black Spartans (1907-1948)

Curators

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Artist

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Exhibit Curators Statement

“Black Spartans (1907-1948)” represents ongoing research in SJSU Special Collections & Archives identifying documentation of Black experiences throughout SJSU history. This exhibit is the first of several installments.

Much of the information we have comes from the Spartan Daily student newspaper and the La Torre yearbooks. With too few exceptions, Black Spartans' stories are not told in their own words but from the perspectives of their majority white classmates. This is reflected in the language and focus of the articles. We invite you to read critically.

The Black Spartans featured in this exhibit pursued their educational goals while contending with institutionalized racism and other major crises of the 20th century: two World Wars, the influenza pandemic of 1918, and polio. Locally, “the deed to virtually every home in San Jose” included restrictions against Black and Asian residents known as “restrictive covenants” (Spartan Daily, February 16, 1948, page 2). On campus, blackface and minstrel shows were a regular part of student events.

“Black Spartans (1907-1948)” is an invitation to the community to join us in surfacing these stories, ensuring these histories are preserved and presented in a way that honors these students' lives. Contact us at special.collections@sjsu.edu to participate.

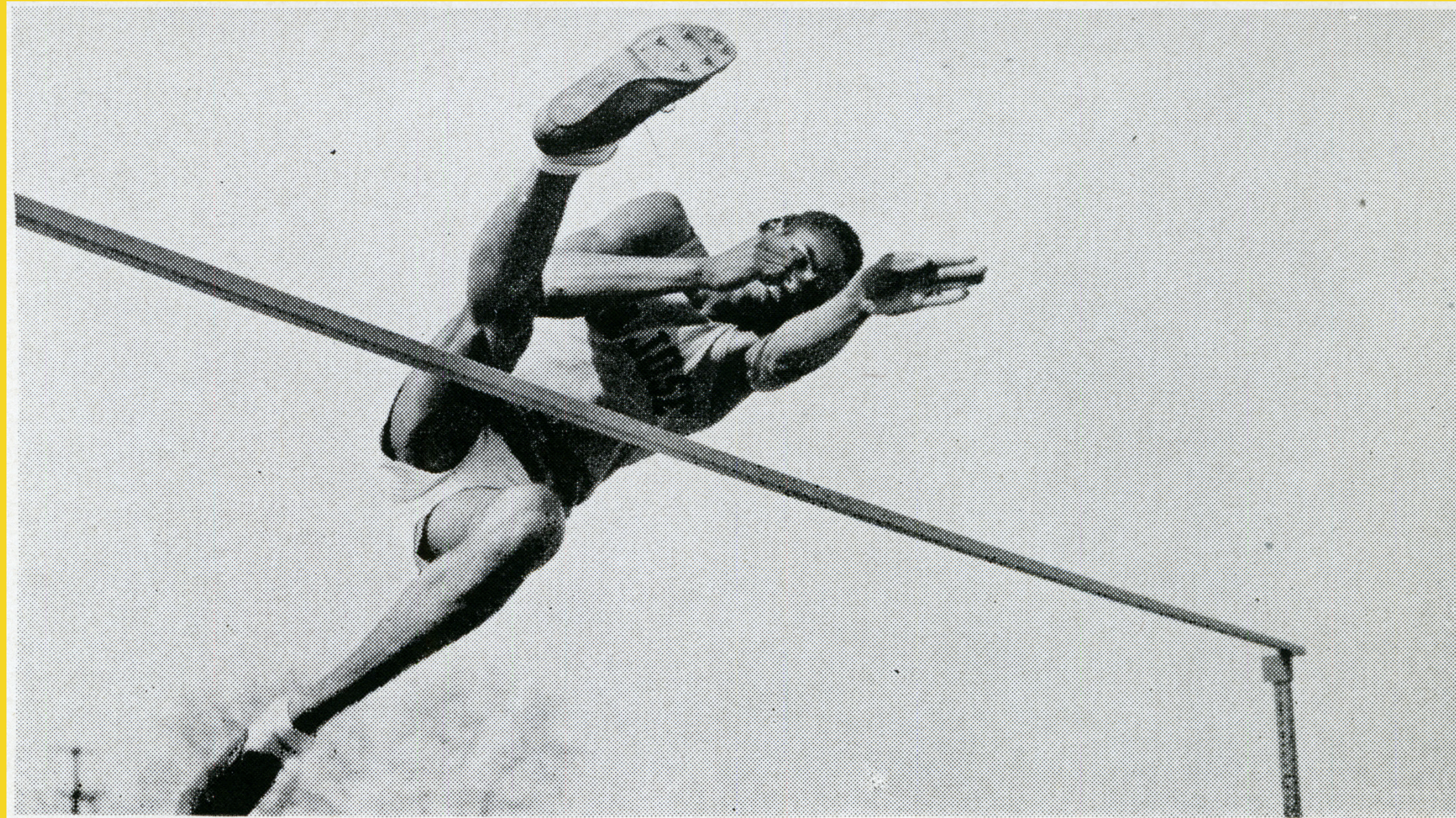
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Artist Statement

The “Black Spartans (1907-1948)” exhibition is a homage to Black culture and history at San José State University and the Bay Area at large. Until recently, the significance of Black bodies in Bay Area history (as well as U.S. history) was overlooked. Unless it was associated with the struggles of civil rights leaders, athletes, or celebrity-personas, the story of a graduate from a state school wasn't valued because we weren't part of the mainstream culture. As a Black Spartan myself, I was deeply connected to these individuals that started out just like me. I saw a reflection of myself and my community throughout the process of making these mixed media portraits and came to realize how important it is to know your history because it becomes a catalyst for knowing who you are.

My work explores the intricacy of identity and the role culture, tradition, and history play. These portraits are embodiments of our Black Spartans, they are visual representations of the colorful and captivating lives they led. Through this work, I hope to influence other artists and individuals to take part in researching and finding out the infinite layers of what it means to be Black. Our history is beyond our struggle. We are the blueprint.

Yeab Kebede
'22 Digital Media Arts



Originally from Los Angeles, **Hal Capers** attended San Jose State College in 1943. He was a member of the track team and specialized in the broad and high jump. As a high jumper, Capers was one of only two first place winners from San Jose State during a Spring 1943 meet against U.C. Berkeley, and the sole first place high jump winner at the 1943 Stanford Invitational. At the end of Spring quarter 1943, Capers withdrew from school and returned home to Los Angeles, his reasoning being that he was bound to be drafted into World War II.



FOURTEEN SPARTANS SCHEDULED TO COMPETE IN NEXT SATURDAY'S STANFORD INVITATIONAL TRACK MEET

San Jose's practically untried, untested track men get their first taste of outdoor competition for the 1943 season Saturday afternoon at Angell Field in Palo Alto, and while some of the thinclads have already seen action this year—in the Olympic Club indoor meet—the April 10 outing will be the initial one for most of the boys.

The meet will be sponsored by Stanford University, and is an invitational, with entries expected from most of the nearby colleges and service teams. Originally, the Spartans were intending to hold the event here in this city, but when the San Jose State athletic department decided to call it off, Stanford took over the reins.

Close to one hundred trackmen from Stanford, Fresno State, USF, San Francisco State, St. Mary's Pre-Flight school, Alameda Coast Guard—and from other schools and encampments will be on hand to vie with the 14 men that Spartan track coach "Tiny" Hartranft is planning on entering in the various events.

Despite the fact that most of his luminaries have been called into service, Hartranft feels that the "remnants" of his team will be able to give a very good account of themselves, and expects them to win their share of points.

Seven of San Jose's entries are signed up for field events—javelin, broadjump, highjump, shotput, pole vault, and discus, and the other seven are registered for track chores.

Outstanding among the locals planning to compete in the meet are: Elwood Clark, javelin thrower—who won the national J. C.

title in that event two years ago. Hal Capers, newcomer from L. A., who can top the high jump bar at 6 ft. 5 in.

Bud Veregge, a very classy performer in the low and high hurdle races.

Kenny Horn, who has done 22.0 in the 220, and who is also a fast 440 man.

Vern Cooley, who pole-vaults consistently around the 13 ft. 6 in. mark, which is good enough to win or place high in most college dual meets.

Spartan Daily

April 8, 1943

Hal Capers first appears in the San Jose State student paper in 1943, as a newcomer to the school and the track team. He quickly makes a name for himself with his high jump skills.

S. J. Trackmen Meet Bears In Opener

SPARTAN THINCLADS TRAVEL TO BERKELEY TOMORROW FOR FIRST DUAL MEET OF SEASON WITH CAL

By JOHNNY HUBBARD

With their chances for a victory extremely on the "doubtful" side, San Jose's trackmen, under the direction of coach "Tiny" Hartranft, travel to Berkeley tomorrow afternoon for their first dual meet of the season against just about the toughest opponent on the west coast, namely, the University of California.

Having already bowed to the Bears in a track meet this year, although it was in a rather indirect manner, State will be the very far under underdog for the clash. The defeat at the hands of Cal came in the Stanford Invitational meet two weeks ago, U. C. placing first and San Jose fourth in a group of seven or eight teams.

A glance at the form chart on this page will show you very graphically why the Berkeley outfit is so highly favored to make the Spartan's dual debut an unsuccessful one. All the listings on this chart were made according to the best times, heights, and distances of the different contestants, and it is not hard to recognize Cal's superiority.

The twenty-nine point margin of victory for the Bears may be either too optimistic of State's chances or too much in awe by the brilliance of the city team, but in either case it is a pretty safe advantage.

The Spartans are going to have to turn on all the heat they can generate to keep from being snowed under in the track events, where the big weakness exists. As figured in the form chart, Cal is going to pick up approximately 51 points in the running contests as against about 21 for San Jose.

State's strength is in the field, where they can be expected to hold their own against the opponent, or even do a little better.

First place winners for San Jose will be few and far between, most of them in the field events. Hal Capers will probably be able to win the high jump, Cooley — if everything goes right — can win the pole vault, and Elwood Clark — who hasn't had much practice yet this season — can walk off with the javelin throw, if he can recapture some of mid-season ability.

Only two blue-ribbon boys can be seen in the track side of the picture, and they are by no means clinch winners. Ken Horn has a chance to beat Dunn, of California, who beat him by only a couple of steps at the Stanford Invitational, and if the Cal coach doesn't enter Dewey in the two-mile, Jack Bredin may be the fastest man of the day over that distance.

Little Jimmy Johnson may be able to give a boost to the Spartans' score if he can extend his 22-foot broad jump mark a bit. Jim Jurkovich, who is doped as a winner, does just about 22 feet, and Johnson might be able to go out far enough to beat him.

The starting time for the meet is 2:00 p.m., the place is Edwards Field on the U. C. campus in Berkeley.

Spartan Daily

April 23, 1943

Hal Capers competes in the high jump against U.C. Berkeley.

TRACKSTERS TRAVEL TO PALO ALTO TO MEET POWERFUL STANFORD TEAM

By JOHNNY HUBBARD

As the headline event of this weekend's gigantic sports program, San Jose's heretofore unsuccessful track team will attempt to break into the win column at the expense of Stanford's thinclads up at Angell Field in Palo Alto, tomorrow afternoon.

From every viewpoint, statistical, psychological, etc., the Spartans' chances for a victory seem pretty slim, especially from the cold, hard, unyielding figures of the statistical point of view, as can be seen by a glance at the meet's dope chart on this page.

Stanford, like State's last opponent, California, is just too tough to be mowed under by a team such as "Tiny" Hartranft has been able to piece together this season. If some of the mainstays of his team—Billy Smith, Thelno Knowles, Willie Steele, and many others—had not been called into service, there would be a different story to tell today. But that's just idle wishing, and track meets aren't won by day-dreaming—so let's confine ourselves to the facts, unpleasant as they might be.

In the first place, it's going to be the same old massacre in the track events, with the Spartans coming closer to holding their own on the field—but with not enough there to be able to pull up even with or ahead of Stanford.

As figured in the dope chart, the Indians can be counted on to pick up about 50 points in the running races, as against only in the neighborhood of 20 digits in those events.

In the field events the margin of superiority for Stanford should be only about 10 points, with 30 points for them and 20 points for San Jose. The results of this part of the meet are likely to be more fluid than the ones in the track events, and for this reason the Spartans might show up a little better, or a little worse than figured.

Looking at the meet from the individual's standpoint, all evidence points to Bud Veregge as being the shining knight in armor for San Jose tomorrow afternoon. If everything goes right, Veregge should take first place in both hurdle races—the 120 highs and the 220 lows, and thus establish himself as the high scorer for the Gold and White in the meet.

Two other first places are probable for Hartranft's boys—one in the high jump, and one in the broad jump. Hal Capers is practically a cinch winner in the former event, and Jimmy Johnson has shown his ability to go as far out into the ozone as will be necessary to top anything that the Indian

leapers can offer in the broad jump.

Kenny Horn, all this season, has had the hard luck of having to run the 220 and 440 yard dashes against just about the best man on the opponent's team, and his adversary from Stanford will be no exception. His name is Fulton, and he is considered one of the classiest men in the middle distance sprints on the coast.

Horn, no mean runner himself, should be able to win second place in both of these races, which will be a big boost to the Spartans' scoring total.

The meet is scheduled to start at 2:30 p.m.

Spartan Daily

April 30, 1943

Hal Capers travels to Stanford's Angell Field to compete with his fellow track teammates, hailed as "practically a cinch winner" in the high jump event.

Spartan Trackmen Wallop Fresno

RIBERA, VEREGGE, CAPERS DOUBLE VICTORS IN SAN JOSE'S FIRST TRIUMPH OF SEASON; TEN OF FIFTEEN EVENTS WON BY HARTRANFT'S LADS

Upsetting all of the dope charts, and surprising even their most ardent admirers, San Jose's trackmen jumped all over favored Fresno State in the Raisin City Saturday to score an unexpected 71 - 60 victory. Figured to lose by more than the eleven points they won by, the Spartans took undisputed first place honors in ten of the fifteen listed events, and gained a tie for the top spot in another event.

It was the first time this season that "Tiny" Hartranft's State outfit has met an opponent of its own class—judging from pre-war standards—and in scoring their first triumph of the campaign, the locals showed that they are still very much the class of their league.

Altogether, it was a very satisfactory afternoon, from the individual as well as the team

point of view. There were three two-time winners for the Spartans, Ernie Ribera in the mile and half-mile, Bud Veregge in the high and low hurdles, and Hal Capers in the high jump and broad jump.

Then these three boys teamed up with fleet Kenny Horn to score another victory for themselves in the mile relay, churning the distance in the good time of 3:29.7.

This victory for San Jose was the second in a row over the Bulldogs in dual competition. The locals have three meets remaining on their schedule with the Modesto Invitational slated for this weekend.

Mile—RIBERA (SJ), England (F), Kisling (F). Time: 4:43.2.

440—Baker (F), Shropshire (F), HORN (SJ). Time 50.1.

100—Hunt (F), Hyde (F), McGowan, (F). Time: 10.6.

120 hurdles—VEREGGE (SJ), Pattee (F), CARSON (SJ). Time: 15.5.

Javelin—COLLIER (SJ), 173 feet 6 inches; CLARK (SJ), 159 feet 8 inches; COOLEY (SJ), 150 feet 6 inches.

Shot Put—Lamoure (F), 44 feet 2½ inches; Schroeder (F), 48 feet 5½ inches; CERRO (SJ), 41 feet 1½ inches.

880—RIBERA (SJ), Shropshire (F), NASH (SJ). Time: 2:00.2.

High Jump—CAPERS (SJ), 6 feet 1 inch; tie for second between Lewis, (F), Carlsen (F), Morrison (F), and CERRO (SJ), 5 feet 8 inches.

220 — HORN (SJ), Hunt (F), Baker (F). Time: 22.1.

Pole Vault—Tie for first between Carlsen (F), and COOLEY (SJ), 12 feet 6 inches; BORG (SJ), 12 feet.

Two Mile—BRESLIN (SJ), ARDAIZ (SJ), Flores (F). Time: 11:8.5.

220 Low Hurdles—VEREGGE (SJ), Pattee (F), Carlsen (F). Time: 24.6.

Discus—Hunter (F), 136 feet 8 inches; Sturgeon (F), 135 feet 1 inch; COLLIER (SJ), 129 feet 3 inches.

Broad Jump—CAPERS (SJ), 21 feet 5 inches; JOHNSON (SJ), 21 feet; Carlsen (F), 20 feet 10 inches.

Mile Relay—Won by SAN JOSE (Horn, Ribera, Capers, Veregge). Time: 3:29.7.

Spartan Daily
Sports

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, MONDAY, MAY 10, 1943

Spartan Daily

May 10, 1943

Hal Capers is among a group of 10 winning members of the track team that provided San Jose State's first big win of the season, winning both the high jump and the broad jump events against Fresno State, along with a shared win in the mile relay.

SAN JOSE'S 'BIG FOUR' ACCOUNT FOR 41 POINTS IN VICTORY OVER FRESNO STATE'S TRACK TEAM

By JOHNNY HUBBARD

In San Jose's surprise track victory over Fresno State last Saturday, four of the Spartans accounted for no less than 41 of the 71 point total rung up by the team.

This "big four"—Bud Veregge, Kenny Horn, Ernie Ribera, and Hal Capers—was the main reason for San Jose's first conquest of the current campaign, winning eight of the fifteen listed events on the program.

Bud Veregge scored triumphs in both the high and low hurdle races, Horn won the 220, Ribera won the half-mile and mile, Capers won the high jump and the broad jump, and then they all four teamed together to win the relay.

Not enough credit can be given to these boys—who literally ran and jumped their hearts out to spark their mates into the victory over Fresno, but the rest of the team also merits a lot of praise for their improved showing in the meet.

Floyd Collier, Vern Cooley, Lowell Nash, Jim Johnson, Jack Breslin and the rest of the boys who made the Fresno trip are in line for some compliments, too.

They were the lads who gave their team the other 30 points necessary for the victory.

On the whole, Coach "Tiny" Hartranft has every reason to be proud of the showing his charges made. After their severe and convincing defeats at the hands of Cal and Stanford, they might have been expected to lose their drive and spirit.

But that wasn't the case at all—the team, encouraged by fiery little Ernie Ribera, was in the best all-around condition it has evidenced this year.

The times, distances, and heights turned in by the Spartans show this concretely. Kenny Horn, for instance, toured the 220 yard dash in his fastest time of the season

Spartan Daily

May 11, 1943

Hal Capers and three of his teammates were responsible for a staggering 41 points out of the 71 point team total.

TRACK TEAM'S CHANCES IN MODESTO MEET HIT BY LOSS OF HAL CAPERS; RIBERA HAS COLD

Hal Capers, San Jose's ace high jumper, has withdrawn from school and returned to his home in Los Angeles. Destined to be called in the draft in the near future, he decided to drop out now instead of waiting until the end of the quarter.

His leaving is a body-blow to the chances of the Spartan track team in its remaining meets of the year, Capers being one of the best high jumpers on the west coast and a constant first-place winner for State's cindermen.

He was being counted on to give San Jose some very necessary points in the Modesto Invitational meet, which is coming up this weekend, and his departure along with Ernie Ribera's illness will put a serious crimp in the Spartans' chances for a good showing in the meet.

RIBERA WILL MISS MEET

Ribera is in the Health Cottage with a bad cold, and even if he should be dismissed from the Cottage before the week is over, his condition would not allow him to enter in the competition.

Capers and Ribera were among the scanty seven boys who were to have made the trip to Modesto for Saturday's contest—the former scheduled to participate in the high jump and relay, and the latter in the half-mile run and relay. Their inability to perform, narrows the Spartan list of entries down to five—unless Track Coach "Tiny" Hart-ranft decides to bolster the depleted ranks of his representatives at the meet.

FIVE LEFT ON ENTRY LIST

Still left on the list are Bud Veregge, who is to run both hurdle races and one lap of the relay—Kenny Horn in the 220, 440, and relay—Jim Johnson in the broad jump—Floyd Collier in the javelin and discus—and Vern Cooley in the pole vault.

All these boys will have to make the trip at their own expense, because war-time regulations will not allow the use of the school bus, and the college is not planning to pay their expenses for this particular meet.

With a meager five-man entry in the meet, San Jose will have little chance to cop the team title, because the opposing teams—St. Mary's Pre-flight, Fresno State, San Francisco's Olympic club—plus numerous unattached athletes will have an overwhelming superiority in numbers.

Spartan Daily

May 13, 1943

Hal Capers's burgeoning college track career is cut short by the strong possibility of being drafted into service in World War II.

SPARTAN TRACKMEN ENTERED IN MODESTO INVITATIONAL TOMORROW IN VALLEY CITY

Team Weakened By Loss Of Hal Capers And Ernie Ribera; Has Little Chance For Team Title

Minus the services of Hal Capers and Ernie Ribera, a small percentage of San Jose's track team will travel to Modesto tomorrow to take part in the Modesto J. C. Invitational meet.

Actual names and exact number of the Spartans who will be competing in the event are pretty much of an unknown quantity, because the boys are making the trip at their own expense and anyone can go who wants to. It was originally intended by "Tiny" Hart, ranft, track coach, that seven of his best cindermen would be on the entry list — Bud Veregge, Ken Horn, Jim Johnson, Floyd Collier, Vern Cooley, Hal Capers, and Ernie Ribera—but the way things stand now, that list is going to have to be altered.

Hal Capers, the school's number one high jumper—and one of the best on the west coast—has packed his bags and returned to his home in Los Angeles. He was being counted on to pick up some valuable points in his specialty, and also to run one lap of the mile relay.

RIBERA SICK

Ernie Ribera has been sick in the Health Cottage for the better part of the week, and even if he is dismissed today he will be in no shape to run the two races

mapped out for him—the half-mile and relay.

The rest of the original seven boys are still planning to try their luck in the meet, and will compete in the following events: Bud Veregge, both hurdle races, and the relay—Vern Cooley, pole vault—Jim Johnson, broad jump—Floyd Collier, javelin and discus — Ken Horn, 220, 440 and relay.

With this line-up, the Spartans should be able to take a couple of first places in the meet. Veregge might well win both of his hurdle races, although only one of his opponents has met him in a race before—Pattee of Fresno State.

His other adversaries will be unknown quantities from San Francisco's Olympic club, St. Mary's Pre-flight, along with some athletes running unattached.

WARMERDAM TO COMPETE

Competition in the pole vault is going to be pretty tough, because Cornelius Warmerdam, world's title holder in that event with a mark of better than 15 feet, is planning to be on hand to lend some excitement to the proceedings. Vern Cooley, San Jose's man in this field of endeavor, needless to say won't be able to give Warmerdam much of a battle for blue-ribbon honors, but he will probably be able to take a second or third.

Horn, in the 220 and 440, will

be up against some high-class opponents himself, especially in the shorter race against Peyton Jordan, former USC sprint star, and now affiliated with St. Mary's Pre-flight. Jordan churns the eighth of a mile somewhere in the vicinity of the 21-second mark, which is just about one second better than Horn can do.

But, similar to Cooley's case, although he won't be much of a first place threat in the 220, he will be in the thick of the place and show winners.

In the 440 he is up against an unknown field, with the exception of Baker and Shropshire from Fresno State, both of whom beat him last week.

Johnson in the broad jump, and Collier in the javelin and discus may bolster the Spartan's cause with a few points, themselves.

Possible additions to San Jose's entry list for the meet are Karl Hummel and Lowell Nash—each of them running one of the two vacated laps in the relay, plus probably being entered in their best regular events.

The Invitational is a twilight affair and will get under way about 4 p.m.—immediately following the high school and junior college meets, which are also part of the program.

Spartan Daily

May 14, 1943

Called “the school’s number one high jumper,” Hal Capers is immediately missed by his coach and teammates after his return to Los Angeles.



Bud Veregge
Captain

Tiny Hartranft
Coach

Track

For the track team, 1943 was a year marked by disappointments, loss of valuable men, and valiant attempts of the remainder of the team and a new coach to carry on "as usual." Only one team victory was hung up by San Jose, a win in dual meet over Fresno State. In all the rest of their attempts, the team met with failure. Losses were handed the locals by Stanford and California, and the Spartans also had to take a back seat in the multi-team meets: the Stanford Invitational, the Fresno Relays, the Modesto Invitational, and the PAA Championships. "Tiny" Hartranft took over the mentorship reins at the start of the season when incumbent coach "Bud" Winter was called into the Navy.

- Row 1: Floyd Collier, Carl Underwood, Ernest Ribera, Vern Cooley, Jim Johnson, Hal Capers, Lowell Nash, Jack Breslin.
- Row 2: Kenneth Horn, Karl Hummel, Dick Campion, Arden Ardaiz, Lawton Hay, Victor Cerro, Bud Veregge, James Carson.
- Row 3: Coach Hartranft, Emanuel Lund, Justin Hensley, Philip Henry, Elwood Clark, Vernon Wiseman, Ray Vidler, Emil Cava, Evan Jelsick, Harvey Gorham, Don Ashby.

La Torre yearbook

1943

Hal Capers is highlighted in the school yearbook, shown here in a group photo with the track team, along with a photo of him at the high jump.

