This series of photographs documents the process of counting votes after an election in Santa Clara County in the mid 1960s.

“Voted ballots in sealed containers were brought to the Counting Center under guard from the Receiving Center. The ‘Seal and Container Inspection Board’ logged each precinct received and inspected the seals.” Circa 1966.
Left: “The ‘Ballot Inspection Board’ breaks the seal.” Circa 1966.

“Voted ballot cards are being ‘read’ by 1402 computer system.”
Circa 1966.
Right: “‘Print-outs’ of results of the election were made by precinct with periodic summaries by candidates and measures.” Circa 1966.

Left: “Election officials receiving receipt for uncounted ballots at Counting Center and seals are being inspected.” February 3, 1966.
“Ballot Inspection Board” is checking off precinct on Log, placing program sheet on top voted ballots and adding ‘Manual of Talley Envelope.’” February 3, 1966.
“Right center—messenger picking up counted ballots for precinct just completed. (note buffer and key punch unit at upper left.)” February 3, 1966.

“Precinct summary cards being fed into 1402 system.” February 3, 1966.
“Summary listing of ballot items being printed by 1402 system.” February 3, 1966.
Voting Machines ‘Unqualified Success’

The problems were few and the compliments many during San Jose’s first step into the field of computerized ballot counting Tuesday, city and county election officials said yesterday.

City Clerk Frank Greiner said use of Votomatic ballot recorders in 60 of the city’s 164 consolidated precincts during the election was “an unqualified success.”

County Registrar of Voters H. P. (Pat) Sullivan was equally enthusiastic, although he said he is not ready yet to recommend the county purchase the IBM Corp. devices for use in all future elections.

Sullivan said he also wants to test the Votronic system, a paper ballot-reading system employed in Southern California counties in recent election.

An improved model of this system is available but has not yet been approved by state election officials, he said. It would cost between $1.2 and $1.8 million to cover Santa Clara County with the Votronic system, compared to about $1.1 to $1.2 million for Votomatics, Sullivan estimated.

The County Board of Supervisors will discuss purchase of election devices at next June’s budget hearings.

Sullivan and Greiner agreed that Tuesday’s test proved the Votomatic more accurate and faster than the traditional hand counting methods.

The Votomatic was relatively trouble free, with only seven distress calls reported.

Sullivan said one voter faced a ballot assembly by writing on it, another accidentally tore off the ballot stub while the special ballot card still was in the device, two lamps burned out and three assemblers were replaced because election officials thought it was too difficult to insert the ballot card.

Greiner said voters’ reaction seemed to be one of amazement when they discovered how simple it was to operate the device.

He said that the election count could have been completed shortly after midnight if all 164 precincts were using Votomatic and if election officials had experience in using the device.

As it was, the first Votomatic precinct reported in 55 minutes after the 7 p.m. closing. By 9:45 p.m., all but one had delivered the ballot pouches. (See story below.)

The last of the hand-counted precincts delivered ballots at 2:50 a.m. yesterday, Greiner said part of the delay was caused by the fact there were 10 issues on the ballot and that more than 30,000 voters went to the polls.

But Even Computers Couldn’t Help H-160

Precinct H-160, where are you?

Anxious election officials were asking themselves that question about 9:45 p.m. Tuesday night when all but one of the IBM Votomatic-equipped precincts had reported.

Results from the other 59 Votomatic precincts had already been tabulated on the county’s 1401 computer.

City Clerk Frank Greiner, somewhat glassy eyed, dispatched a police officer to track down the missing precinct.

The officer found the precinct officials busily poring over the 13-page instruction sheet sent out with the Votomatics.

“We’ll be done soon,” they informed him cheerfully. “We’re already on page 11.”

Left to right: Supervisor Martin J. Spangler, Registrar of Voters H. P. Sullivan, unidentified man, unidentified man, Supervisor Ralph Mehrkens, Supervisor Sam Della Maggiore, unidentified man, and Supervisor Ed Levin. These men are standing next to what is possibly a Coleman Vote Tally System. T. C. Coleman, the president of the Coleman Engineering Co. Inc. is probably in this picture. May, 1963.