



Livingston originally named Livingstone is a small farming community in the center of California's San Joaquin Valley. Livingston is known for its abundance of agriculture and specifically today its abundance of Sweet Potatoes.

Livingston incorporated or officially became a city on September 11, 1922. On September 11, 2022 Livingston will celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Both School districts in Livingston have given us permission to put the history of this wonderful and diverse city into the hands of all our students. We hope you will enjoy learning the history of the city you live in.

The city website [www.cityoflivingston.org](http://www.cityoflivingston.org) and the Livingston Historical Society have more information on the subjects in this workbook and we encourage you to dig deeper into the city's history.

We hope you will enjoy learning about this wonderful place so many of us call home.  
Jacquelyn Benoit, Recreation Superintendent City of Livingston



**A Special Thank You for the design of the Centennial Logo by LHS graduate and longtime resident Graphic Designer Hector Ramirez**

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## **Fun Facts & Early Days in Livingston**

1871 the first railroad station and telegraph office was an old train box car along the tracks near Court Street and Main Street.

1871 the first well was dug by the railroad tracks and provided water for the trains as well as anyone who lived in the area.

1872 the railroad was open for traffic as far as Merced

1873 Mail begins to come to Livingston First postmaster Edward Olds with the post office being at his merchandise store.

1876 Livingston's first school was built on McConnell Flats and had 1 teacher

1890s Livingston herded rabbits like cattle into a corral for the first Rabbit Drive

One of the town founders was William Jackson Little who made his fortune in gold as a 49er

Edward Jerome Olds worked for the railroad and was a lefty. Rumor had it he was made fun of by other railroad workers because of being a lefty.

Livingston Chronicle was established in 1909 with the first issue October 2, 1909

The first newspaper issue kept was an issue from July 8, 1911 before that none were officially stored.

The first high school was dedicated in May 1924, with 7 teachers

Livingston's first fire department was organized in 1909 and the first Chief was Bert Davis.

The town's first bank was established in 1914, First Bank of Livingston.

1918 the First Boy Scout Troop was organized

1919 first Telephone system comes to Livingston

The first city park was started with the land being purchased in 1924. R.W. Hammatt Park now Memorial Park.

In 1922 Livingston was incorporated. Charles Ottman was Livingston's first Mayor.

Livingston built its water and sewer system in 1928

A Garden Club was formed in 1934. Once a year they held a flower show of every kind of flower grown in Livingston with a variety of colors. This was a well-attended event.

In 1909 the first automobile to Livingston was purchased by Ben Berry, owner of the Livingston Hotel. The car model was a REO one of the most popular cars of the day.

1912 the first garage servicing the automobile was built called "The Pioneer"

1910 the Idanha Hotel was built at the location where city hall now sits

The fire station on C Street is the original location of the first fire house

1889 Cyrus Blivens owned the biggest house in Livingston which was located across from Memorial Park where the Baptist Church now sits.

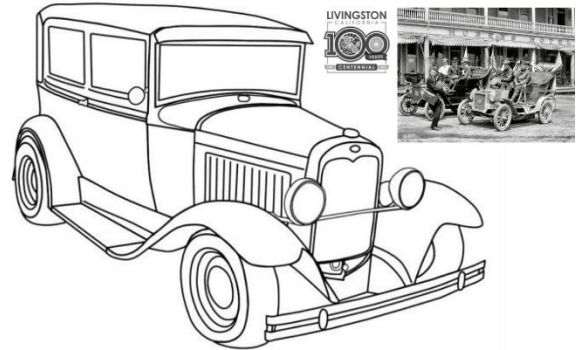
1894 Bill Dalton from the infamous Dalton gang was married to Cyrus Blivens daughter Jane. Bill was killed in Ardmore Texas and his body brought back and buried under a palm tree in the front yard. Later he was dug up and taken to an unmarked grave in Turlock near the Blivens family burial spot.

Hwy 99 going through Livingston was referred to as Blood Alley from the 1970's until the stop lights were removed in 1997, because of all the people killed due to the unsafe highway.

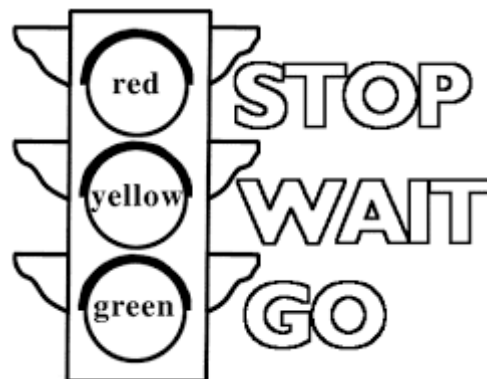
The Whist Club was organized in 1917, Whist was a card game popular at the time.

Livingston self-proclaimed Sweet Potato Capitol of the World.

Livingston has residents from many countries. We are a diverse city.



**First Car to Livingston was a REO similar to this drawing.**



## Yokuts Original Inhabitants of Livingston



The City of Livingston sits on the present and ancestral homelands of the Yokuts. ” Yokuts means “people” and describes 60 plus native tribes who spoke many different languages and held many different values. Together, Yokuts lived in a large spacious area that stretches from what is currently known as Stockton to Bakersfield in California’s San

Joaquin Valley. The group living in the Livingston area along the Merced River was called the “Ausumne” Yokuts. It is estimated the Yokuts original population (prior to the coming of wagon trains, pioneers and early settlers) numbered as low as 17,000 to as high as 70,000.

Yokuts built their villages as close to the river as possible and sought out high ground and spots where rivers could be crossed. Hunters and gatherers, Yokuts harvested berries, wild grapes, and edible grasses. Prior to the settlement of early settlers and pioneers large herds of Tule elk, deer and antelope roamed the valley along with grizzly bears, rabbits, coyotes, badgers, and other small

Mammals.



*California map showing the location of the many California Native Tribes*



*Yokut Homes are called Tule Lodges.*



*Tule is a tall, tough reed that grows in marshy areas.*



*Mat Communal Houses accommodated up to 10 families.*



## Yokut Children



Once summer hit, Yokuts headed to the high Sierra. They lived off wild strawberries, edible roots, various other berries, horse chestnuts, and pine nuts. Just like today, the local Yokuts' economy was strengthened by travel to the Bay Area. Instead of bringing home paychecks, however they traded furs for clams, abalone, and other shells from Coastal Indians. Their trade route was over the Altamont Pass through what is currently known as Livermore.



*Horse Chestnuts*



*Wild Strawberries*



*Acorns*



*Rock and Grinding Stone*

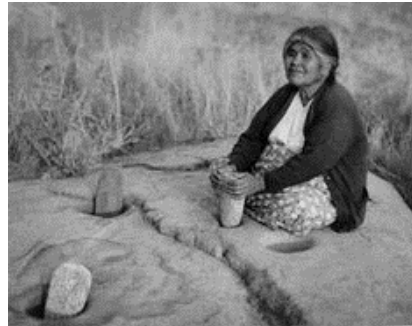


*Pine Nuts*

Yokuts were part of the balance of nature for thousands of years until the settlers began making money off the resources of the land such as gold, other minerals, water, timber, agriculture and more. During the mid-1800's Yokuts were deprived of their ancestral hunting and fishing grounds by the early settlers and pioneers. The Yokuts met many struggles and about 93% of their population were killed.. Between 1850 and 1900, survivors were driven off their lands and sent to reservations. In the face of all the struggles the Yokuts went through, today's enrolled members of the Yokuts Tribe stands at over 2,000 members that are recognized by the Federal government and an additional 600 that are not federally recognized.



*Baskets made from pine needles were an important tool in food gathering and preparation.*



*Yokut woman at a grinding rock, usually located near a river or body of water. You can still find grinding rocks on the Merced River.*

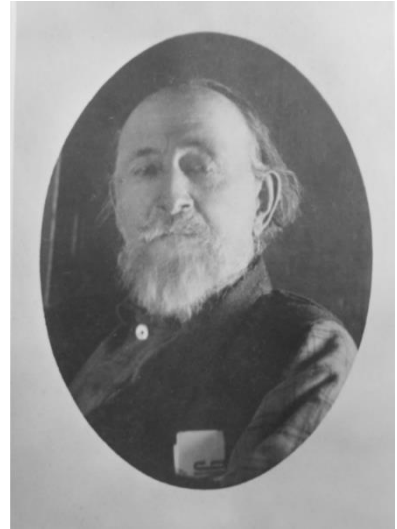


## First Settler in Livingston

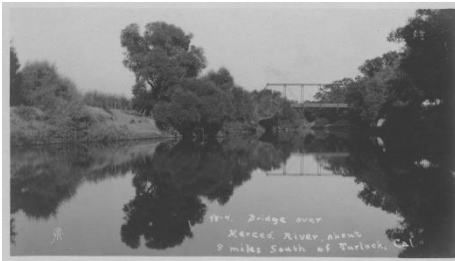
In 1862 David Baldwin Chedester a wagon master from Iowa, is acknowledged as the first pioneer settler to what is now Livingston.

Chedester sold his family farm in Iowa, which had been given to him by his Grandfather for his service in the Revolutionary War. Daniel led a wagon train of 100 people to California. It was a hard journey that took the life of his 3 year old daughter who was buried along the wagon trail.

The wagon train ended in Stockton in 1862 and several months later, Chedester headed south from there to Livingston, settling on the Merced River. Chedester handled the local mail and later ran a general store which supplied food to the predominantly Chinese railroad gangs building the transcontinental railroad out west.



David Baldwin Chedester



Bridge crossing the Merced River 8 miles south of Turlock circ. 1905

During his many years residence in Merced County he acquired considerable property eventually owning 1,500 acres in the area between what is now Griffith Avenue to the east, Westside Boulevard to the south and Lander Avenue to the west. He farmed grain, fruit and raised hogs. He also diverted water from the Merced River for household use. The first bridge over the Merced River was named the Chedester Bridge after him. This bridge no longer stands.

David Baldwin Chedester earned the reputation of being honest in all his dealings with his fellow men. David passed away at the age of 87 in 1903 leaving his wife Susannah Ann Chedester and 7 children. David was buried on the family ranch and later he was moved to a Cemetery in Merced. This is a the obituary published in 1903:

## A Pioneer Gone To Rest



David Chedester one of the pioneers of the county passed away at his home on the Merced river in the Jefferson school district. April 29th at the ripe age of 87 years. Mr. Chedester had been ill for a number of weeks and his death was not unexpected. He was a native of Virginia and came to California in 1862. During his many years residence in Merced County he accomplished considerable property and had the reputation of being honest in all his dealings with his fellow men. Deceased leaves a widow, his third wife, and seven children. The interment took place on the ranch on which he lived.

The Last of the Chedester property to be held by the family was owned by Mrs. Robert Mitchell who in 1964 after 100 years in the Chedester family sold the property to the Gallo Winery.





**Prairie Schooner Wagon**

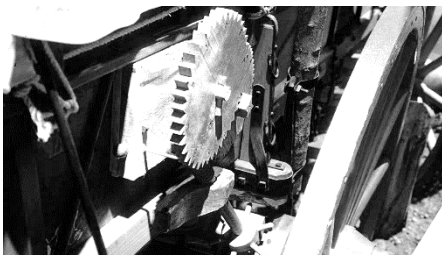
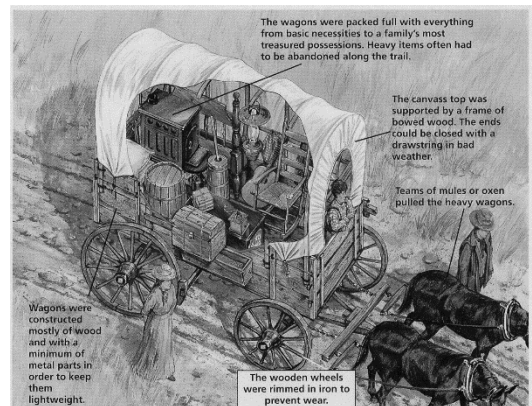
## What would it be like to travel by wagon train from the Midwest to California?

Wagon Train Life was not easy for early settlers because many traveled by wagon train. Travel from Iowa to California involved a six month ordeal traveling 10 to 15 miles per day. If traveling by stagecoach, it took 25 days and when the railroad was finished in 1869, it took only 4 days to travel the 2000 miles. People left all that was familiar to them and headed west. Some seeking a better life, some escaping the sickness and disease from the big city life, some as the result of gold fever.

Travel by wagon was costly: \$1,000 in expenses per family in addition to the wagon itself costing about \$400. (\$1 in 1862 is worth \$27.09 in 2022). Many people had to save up for more than a year to be able to pay for their trip out west.

Most pioneers came in wagon trains and most trains would have about 100 wagons. It was safer to travel in large groups. There were several types of wagons, Conestoga wagon or Prairie Schooner wagon. These wagons would weigh at least 400 pounds. Either way, the wagon was made mostly of wood. Iron reinforced crucial points of the wagons, especially the four wheels. Iron was very heavy, so the pioneers only used as little as was absolutely necessary. The cover was made of canvas that stretched over the hoop-shaped slats. The canvas top was waterproofed with linseed oil so it could protect the wagon's contents. The front wheels of the wagon were smaller than the back wheels.

What was carried inside each of the wagons? Each family or group needed food supplies, cooking equipment, and kegs of water. A shovel was also needed. A typical family of four needed 800 lbs. of flour, 700 lbs. of bacon, and enormous quantities of lard, beans, fruit, coffee, and salt. Most wagons could hold 2,500 lbs. but it was recommended that they carry less. There was usually only about five feet of enclosed space from the bed to the top for storage and shelter. Many started out with furniture but learned to abandon that as the travels became harsh. Due to lack of space, only small children and senior citizens rode in the wagons themselves. The rest of the people walked, although some rode horses. The wagon train usually went 2 miles per hour, covering around 10 miles a day. That explains the incredible time the trip took.



To keep track of the miles the wagon would go, often a piece of cloth was tied to a wagon spoke and someone would count each time the cloth would pass a mark on the wagon. They figured a certain number of times around would equal 1 mile. The average wagon wheel radius was 2.3 feet. The cloth would have to pass the mark on the wagon 2,296 times to equal 1 mile. It was usually a child that was assigned to count. A few wagons had a roadometer that attached to the wheel and helped the guide determine how far the train had gone on the journey each day or in total.

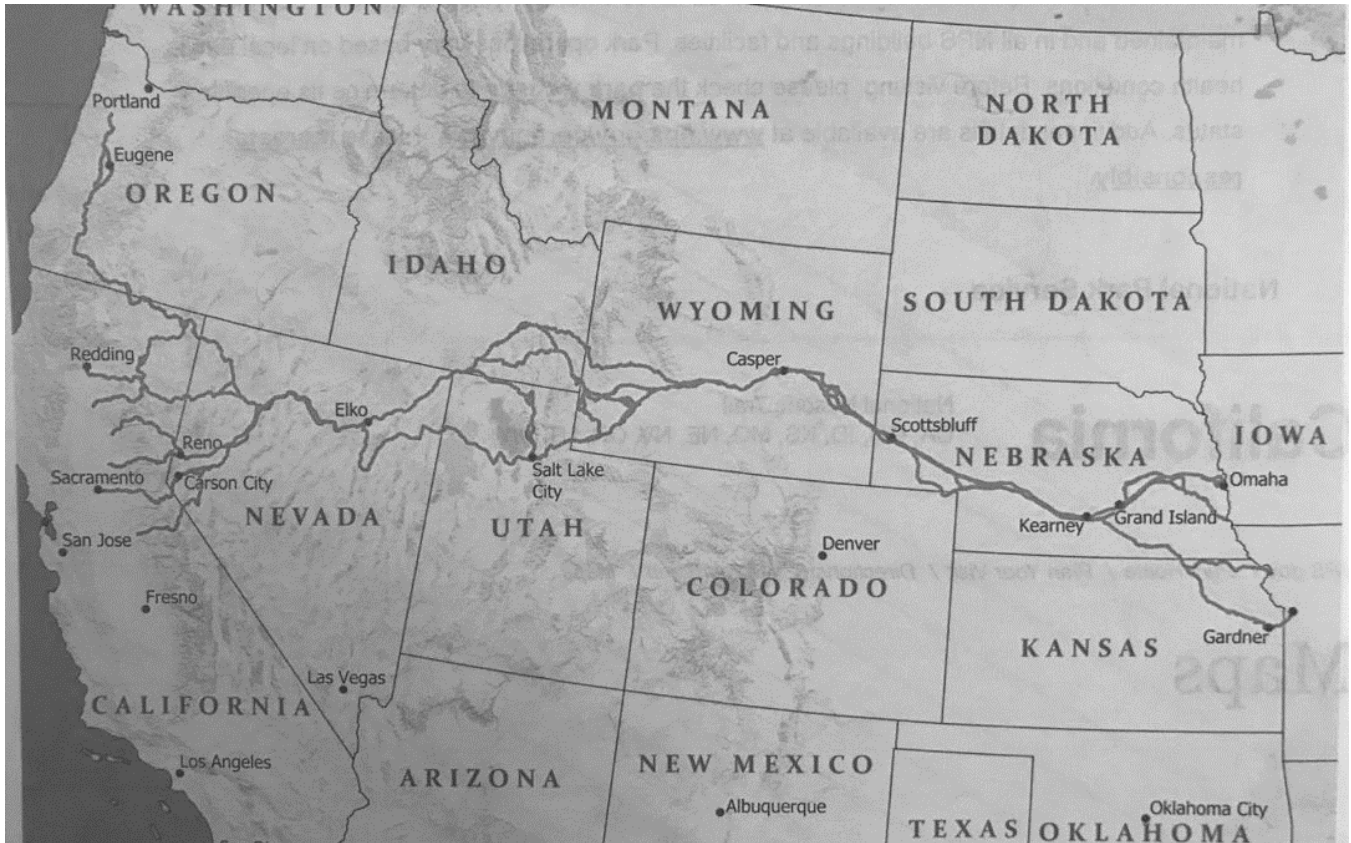


The wagons were pulled by horses, oxen, or mules. Many people chose oxen because they were cheap, strong, less likely to be stolen, and good farm animals. They only needed vegetation to eat, but they could be restless if they got too thirsty.

If your oxen, horses or mules died and you could no longer pull your wagon you would have to abandon your wagon and stay with the wagon train to a town where you could purchase the livestock needed to pull your wagon. You hoped your wagon and belongings would still be there when you returned.

It was not uncommon to see many belongings along the trail that people had to abandon due to the weight. It was also common to see many graves along the trail of children, older folks and adults that fell ill along the way and died. Cholera was a very common cause of death on the wagon trains.

#### California, Oregon, Washington, Wagon Train Trails

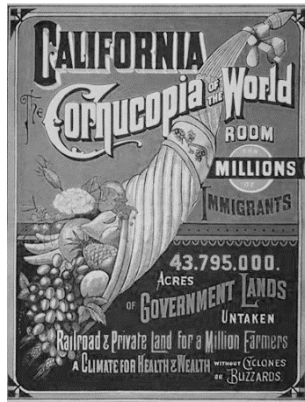
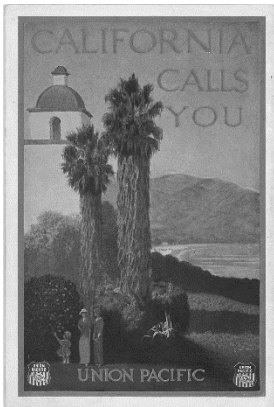


## Why Did People Come in California?

People were being drawn to California for many reasons, but overall they were all under the notion that heading west would result in fast money, fame, or success. This assumption was influenced by those who could make money off people coming to California called “investors”. The investors would advertise a fantasy about California’s lifestyle bringing financial success and physical health.

In the 1800s, the investors were made up of engineers, doctors, lawyers, authors, bankers, newspaper editors, public officials, and more who were part of groups which owned land, water and railway companies. By promoting settlement in California, these investors collected payments from settlers to buy homes, rent property, and use utilities.

The American Dream of people at the time as well as today is to be financially independent. The boosters took advantage of this dream by weaving a narrative of California development that was sure to animate migration to California. Images of California as empty but fertile land indicated opportunity for profitable investment.



1852 miners in California work their "long tom" to separate gold from gravel.

Courtesy California State Library



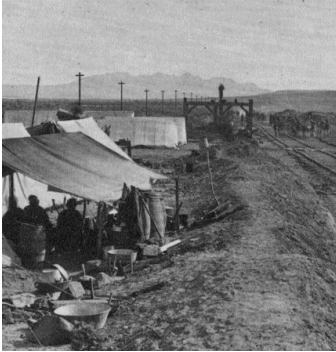
Gold was discovered in California in 1849. People who rushed to California to make their fortunes were called Forty-niners.



## Livingston Founders

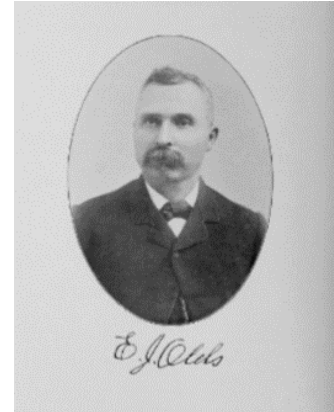
### Edward Jerome Olds

Originally a carpenter alongside railroad gangs, Edward Jerome Olds founded Livingston when he set up shop near the Merced River in November 1871. His stand was merely a counter made of rough boards and a large tarp used for the roof. The first products Olds sold was hard liquor but he also sold goods such as leather boots, rubber boots, shoes, overalls, hats, caps, pipes and tobacco. As long as the railway moved forward, Old's business boomed.



*What a make shift store may have looked like.*

At the peak of the Gold Rush, gold and land seekers came in by train on their way to the motherlode, and would stop at Old's stand to load up on fresh goods. Farmers who had settled along the river became Old's regular customers. The railroad made it possible for him to replenish his merchandise from Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco.



*Edward Jerome Olds*

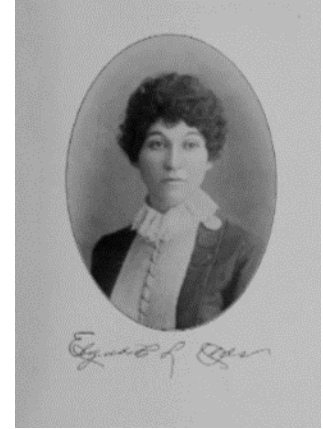
In 1911, Olds sold his farming interests and moved his wife and six children to Berkeley for education. He passed away in December 1913 at the age of 65. Mr. Olds Obituary as follows:

E. J. Olds, one of the pioneer ranchers of Merced county, died at 11 o'clock a. m. last Friday in a Berkeley sanitarium, where he had been undergoing treatment for injuries received several weeks ago. The funeral was held Tuesday and the following pallbearers were in attendance from this city: J. B. Olcese, Paul Neumann, George H. Barfield, F. V. Henderson, M. Zirker and Ed Mugler of Berkeley. The following obituary is contributed by one of our readers who now resides in Berkeley:

BERKELEY, Dec. 23. The funeral of Edward Jerome Olds was held yesterday afternoon from the undertaking parlors of Albert Brown & Co., .2045 University Avenue, the funeral being conducted by Gorman & Sons, undertakers. Dr. A. J. Sanderson officiated. He paid a high tribute to the staunch character and kind person, Mr. Olds. The interment was in Subset cemetery. The services and interment were private, only the relatives and nearest friends being present. Handsome floral, offerings in large numbers bespoke the esteem in which Mr. Olds was held by the large number of friends in the bay counties. Mr. Olds was one of the pioneer farmers and stock raisers of this state, having arrived here in 1865 from the state of Michigan, he was born and raised. He settled in Merced County, where he took up wheat growing and was one of the first to demonstrate and prove that agricultural irrigation was profitable in that valley, where he still owns large holdings. Two years ago Mr. Olds retired from active business and removed with his family to 817 Arlington Avenue, Berkeley. Mr. Olds was married in 1884 to Miss Lizzie Lee Collier, daughter of the late William G. Collier, the originator of the irrigation system of California. To them were born six children —Calvin J., Danton E., Roscoe C., Beatrice D., Isabel E. and Claude M. Olds, all of whom survive him.

## Elizabeth Lee Olds

Elizabeth Lee Olds, married to Edward Olds on January 20, 1884. She was the seventh daughter and child of William G. Collier. She was a noted writer and was well published, and was a frequent contributor to the Merced Sun – now known as the Merced Sun-Star. Elizabeth was a supporter of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the United State Constitution, which prohibited alcohol and gave women the right to vote. Elizabeth delivered the first speech ever made in the San Joaquin Valley on women’s suffrage.



Elizabeth Lee Olds



What was women’s suffrage?

The women's suffrage movement was a decades-long fight **to win the right to vote for women in the United States**. It took activists and reformers nearly 100 years to win that right, and the campaign was not easy:

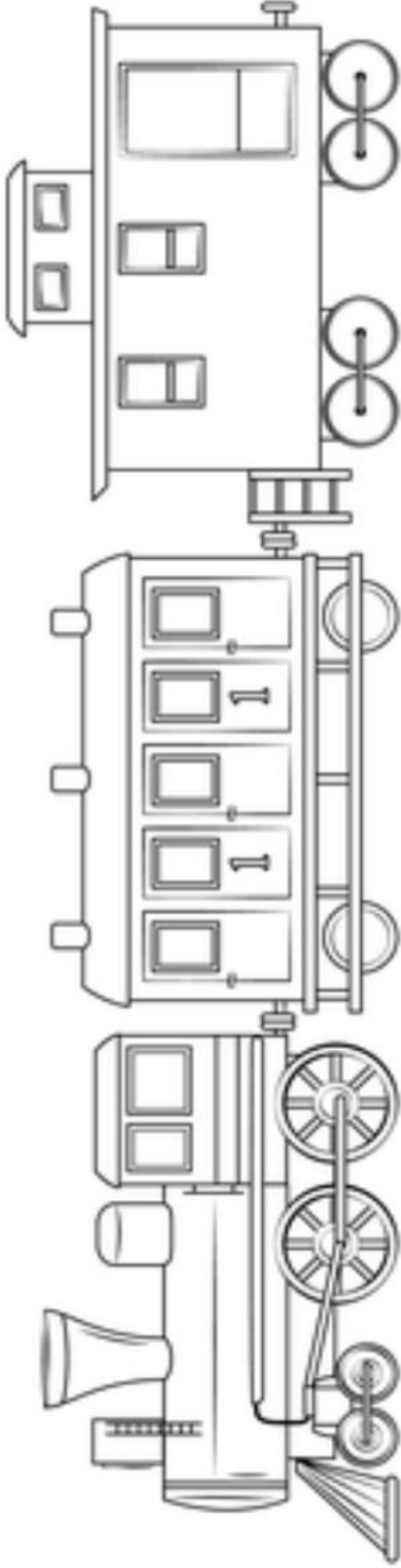
Some of her writings can be found in the Oakland Tribune Volume 117 Number 22 30 October 1932

## THE PASSAGEWAY

I am standing in a passageway, Behind, the past; Blown full of scented things Inhaled, kissed, pressed to the breast, But did not last. On the other side a vaulted space. Dark and unpierced, With chambers leading off. Grim guide, I cannot see your face. Draw your shoulders near and hold my fingers fast. I feel a counter-wind, God only knows what lies before; The next fell curve I turn Will, hurl me on what shore. Haste! my guide, I hear the waters . roar, The swirl is at the door; What lies out there I cannot see. Be swift my guide, is there no cove Where you and I may hide? And in our cockle-boat I hold your wrist While ply the oar grave. And we together meet the churn of tide And froth of angry wave. **ELIZABETH LEE OLDS.**



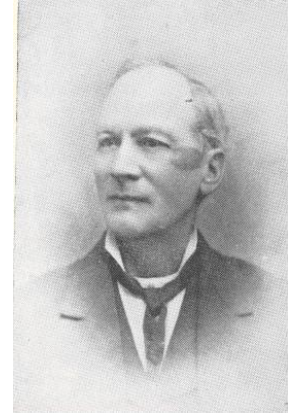
Edward Jerome Olds was a Railroad Worker and while working on the railroad decided to quit his job and stay in Livingston. He started the first business here.



# Transcontinental Railroad brought business to Livingston

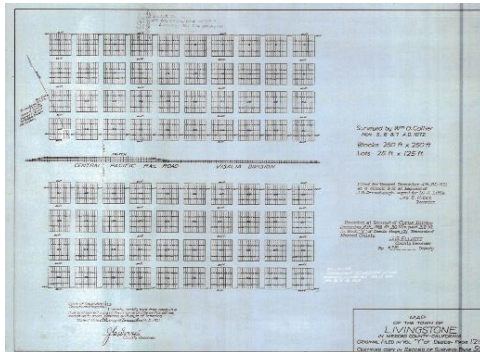
## William Jackson Little

William Jackson Little was a 49er who came to importance through his purchase of over 10,000 acres of grain land around the San Joaquin Valley. Little's grain business grew steadily and his grain was transported down the Merced River to the greater Bay Area. Edward J. Olds was put in charge of Little's grain warehouse.



William Jackson Little

In December 1872, William Little enlisted the expertise of William Collier to make a map of a new town site called Livingstone and file it for record. The map provided 80 blocks of lots, each one 25' x 125' feet in area. Forty of the blocks were south of the railway and 40 to the north. Little sold lots for \$1

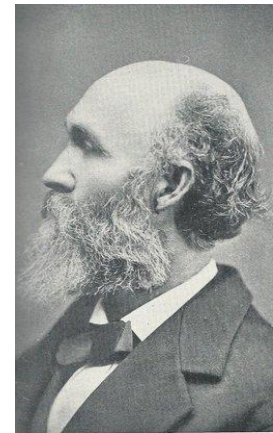


Original Map of Livingstone

each. It was hoped that Livingstone would be the county seat for Merced County, but Merced won the county seat by 330 votes. In the loss of the county seat, Livingstone's growth slowed down. Although Little owned most of what is now Livingstone he never actually lived here. His home was in Stockton. On May 21, 1883 Little sold all his properties to Cyrus Blivens who returned most of the unsold lots back in to grain fields.

## William G. Collier

William G. Collier was never a resident of Livingstone, though he lived on the Merced River and had much to do with the original promotion of the town. As father-in-law to Edward J. Olds, he helped to boost Olds' business.



William G. Collier

In 1859, Collier settled on the Merced River and became successful growing grain with over 3,000 acres of grain land. He did much business with the landowners in the area. Collier recognized early on that if he could divert water from the Merced River to a network of canals and then sell it to farmers, he could make a lot of money. He did just that through the Robla Canal Company in March 1870. Collier was also associated

with the Farmers Canal Company which became the Crocker-Huffman Land & Water Company, and eventually merged into the Merced Irrigation District. He was the county surveyor of Merced for several terms.



Workers in Merced County on the making of the first canal.

William G. Collier is an important person to remember, because of his design to bring water canals to this desert type land, the canals have made agriculture possible and profitable.

The Collier ranch sits closer to Delhi but was a hub for grain and livestock on the Merced River. Collier Road and Exit are named after this man.



## Livingston and the Post Office

Nearly every new community in California developed around a post office. In fact Livingston got its start because of the Post office. Edward Olds was not only a prominent business person, but was also the first postmaster of Livingston. He was appointed postmaster in January 1873 and resigned in May of 1882. A typo on the town's post office application resulted in a missing "E" at the end of the name "Livingstone". All though there are no official records regarding the location of the post office early writings would indicate it was in Olds' store.

The official postal system of the new United States began in 1792. Over the next decade and a half, it grew faster than it ever has. Mailing letters was expensive at first as it was used to help subsidize the cost of mailing newspapers. The postal service however was the long distance information system at the time.

In 1800, postal officials began using selected post offices as distribution centers, where mail for large areas was processed and sent on. This "hub-and-spoke" system is in use again today.

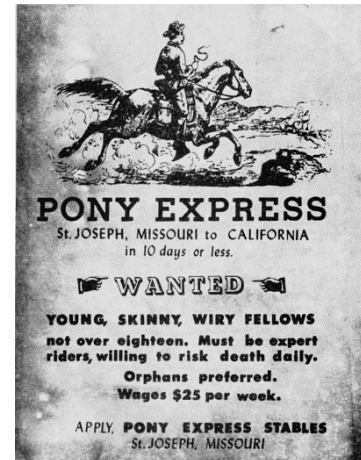
Private stagecoach companies held contracts to move the mail between towns. Stagecoach drivers would bring letters in a leather mail pouch and newspapers in a basket.

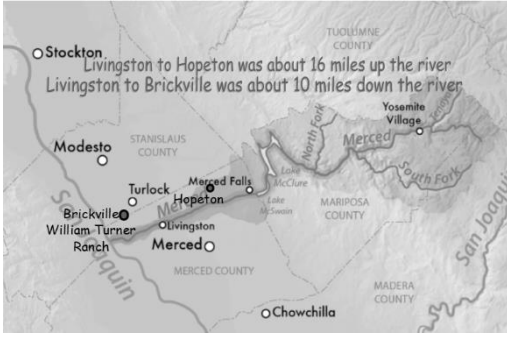
In small towns in the 1800s a general store, inn, or some other business often doubled as the post office. At this time, few towns had separate post offices. Patrons of all social classes eagerly awaited the mail. Mail was not delivered to homes as it is today but to one location where patrons picked it up.

The postal system helped the nation grow. Newspapers and letters linked settlers moving west and the families and communities they left behind. Mail eased the isolation of the frontier. The postal service was the means America used for communication.

Immigration and westward expansion pushed the postal service to grow. More Americans meant more mail, and the mission of the Post Office Department was to reach as many as possible—by horse, wagon, stagecoach, ship, and train.

Livingston did not have its own post office until January of 1873 with Edward J. Olds appointed as the first Postmaster. It would appear from historical writings that the post office was located in his store. In the Livingston Historical Society there is a picture of the original post office building, see if you can find it. The second building was located on Main Street near True Value where there is currently a barber shop.

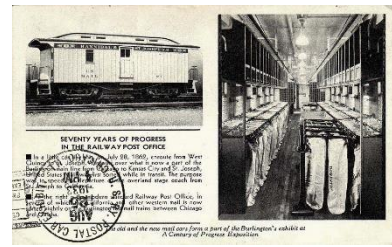




If you needed post office services you either went to Brickville, On the William Turner Ranch about 10 miles down the Merced River or you traveled 16 miles up the Merced River to Hopeton near Snelling.

Rural Delivery service began in Livingston on October 1, 1922. By petition the new route was only 18 miles long including delivery in the Yamato Colony with just 3 deliveries per week. By popular demand the routes grew and by the mid 1930's the route was 72 miles long. The

first mail carrier was appointed by the postmaster Franklin Farquhar to be Leroy M. Larimer, he was hired because he was honest. Energetic and on the job all the time.



Livingston Post Office in 2022

Today (2022) Livingston has 4 rural routes, and 3 city routes. They are currently fully staffed with 15 employees consisting of 6 City Carriers, 7 Rural Carriers, and 2 Clerks. The rural routes are evaluated by volume and mileage. The rural routes cover 155 miles a day and have 2,793 deliveries. The city routes are based just off volume and time. There is no calculated mileage for these routes. The city averages 16.5 hours of street delivery a day and has 1,832 deliveries. Today total miles are 155 and there are 4625 deliveries.



Mail Delivery THEN



Mail Delivery NOW



# PONY EXPRESS

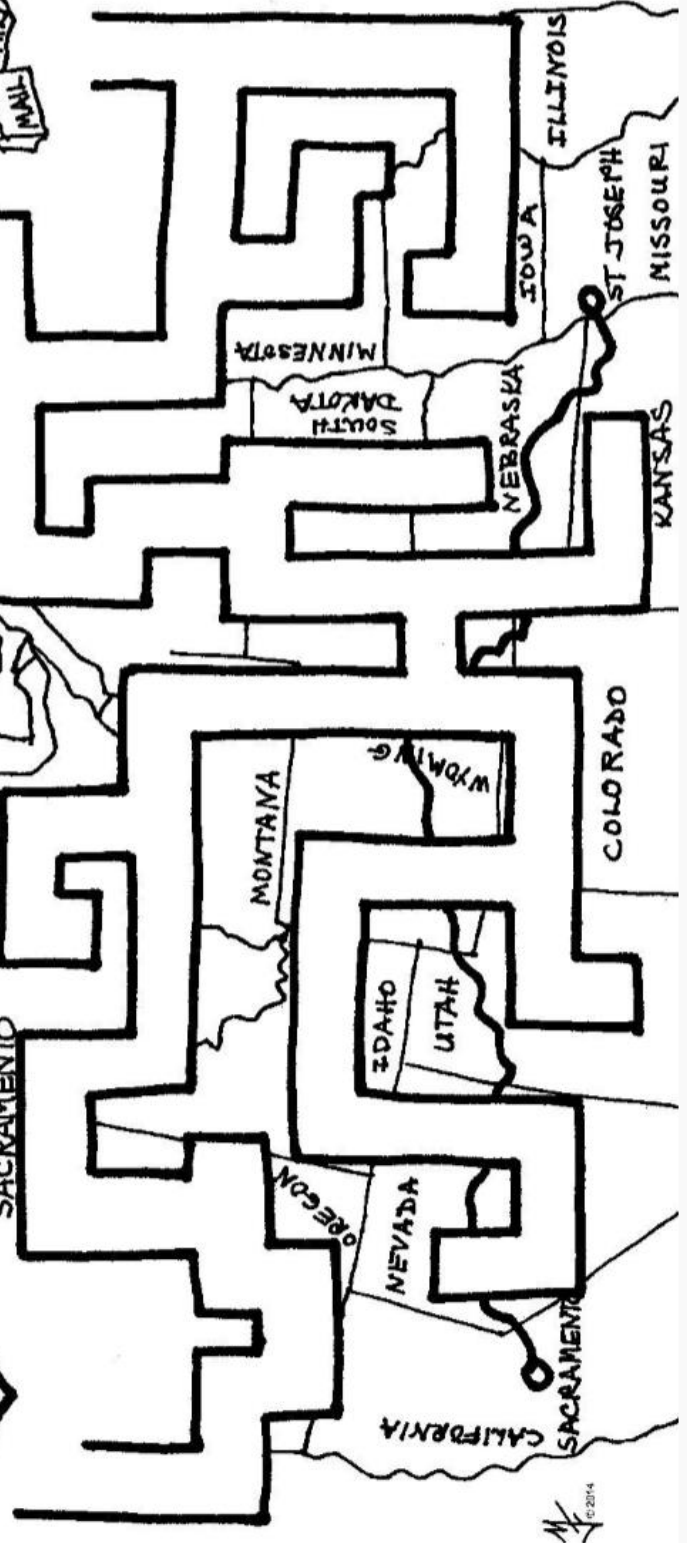
## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

- ARRIVE
- BANDITS
- COUNTRY
- DEPART
- EXPRESS
- FAST
- HORSES
- MAIL
- MESSAGE
- NEWS
- PACKAGES
- PASSENGERS
- PRAIRIE
- RELAY
- RIDER
- RISKS
- ROUTE
- RUSH
- STAGECOACH
- TEAMWORK
- TRAILS
- TRIP
- WHEELS

S S L E E H W S B D E P A R T  
 T E K H C A O C E G A T S A C  
 R S E R R I D E R G O T J O P  
 A R G A O D S W E N A L R A H  
 I O A U B W T R Y I C K S I C  
 L H S R V F M R O O R S C B P  
 S A S W D B V A U R E I R A S  
 S R E D L R A N E N I U A S P  
 N R M K Y W T N G T S S E R N  
 H I O A L R W E D H L R K P P  
 C V L U Y S R X N I P H I S Y  
 H E P O T S E L P X T B H W G  
 R L I A M E R S E T T S A F C

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY.  
 Find and circle each word.





## Why Livingstone?

Did you know there are over 22 locations in the United States that share the name Livingston and 9 other locations worldwide including Scotland, Canada, and Guatemala? Whether they are towns, cities, parishes, or ghost towns, their names rarely conclude with the “e”, including Livingston, California. But the question that is often asked, if we are named after Dr. David Livingstone, why not the “e”?



*Dr. David Livingstone*

Who is Dr. David Livingstone? David Livingstone was born in 1813 in Blantyre, Scotland and was the second of seven children born to Neil Livingstone and his wife Agnes. At a young age, David started in a cotton mill working 12 hour days while also studying medicine at nearby Charing Cross Hospital Medical School.

David’s father Neil Livingstone was a Sunday school teacher and door-to-door salesman and was known to hand out Christian tracts during his travels. Christianity became a big influence on his life and he hoped one day to become a missionary in china. Those plans changed however and David continued to study medicine in London where he met a missionary on leave from South Africa.

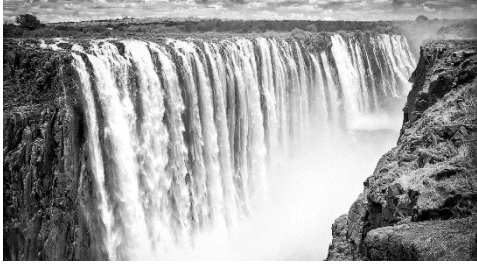
The excitement of missionary work intrigued David and he was further influenced by an abolitionist whose goal was to spread Christianity in South Africa in hopes of impacting the slave trade. Traveling to southern Africa to do missionary work became David’s passionate goal. Livingstone set out for South Africa as he felt led to spread the gospel and share Christ with those he came upon in hopes of eliminating slavery.

Missionary work can be quite dangerous in numerous ways as Livingstone ultimately lost two wives and three children to Malaria. At one point, he was attacked and badly injured by a lion and later would also succumb to the mosquito-borne illness. On and off Livingstone spent over 15 years in South Africa along the Zambia and Zimbabwe border.



*Statue of Dr. Livingstone at Victoria Falls*

He had no contact with any westerners for over 6 years when Sir Henry Morton Stanley was dispatched by her Majesty to locate him. In November, 1871 he found Livingstone near Victoria Falls and uttered the now famous phrase “Dr. Livingstone, I presume”. What made this phrase humorous was that the nearest white person to that area was hundreds of miles away.

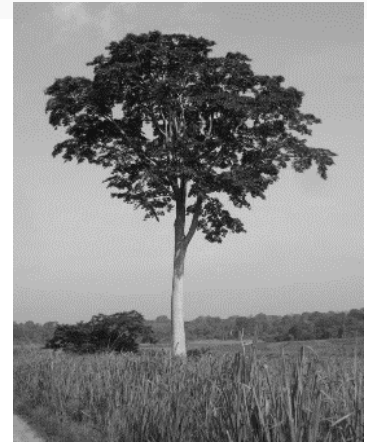


Victoria Falls

David Livingstone was the first European to visit the beautiful waterfalls, now known as Victoria Falls, which are famous for being the largest waterfalls by volume in the world. He named the falls in honor of Queen Victoria of Britain. A memorial statue was erected at the falls with the nearby city being named Livingstone, a city of over 114,000 people.

Dr. Livingstone was loved by the African people. Dr. Livingstone died on May 1, 1873 at the age of 60 in Chief Chitambo's North Rhodesian Village (now Zimbabwe). Upon his death the Westminster Abbey requested his body be brought back to England for burial. At first there was resistance from the village people and Chief. They did send the

body back but not before taking out his heart. There was a note pinned to the body that said you can have his body but his heart will always be in Africa. His body is buried at the Westminster Abbey in England however his heart is buried under a Muvule Tree in Zimbabwe at the Livingstone Memorial.



Muvule Tree



Marker in Chitambo's Village

Why no "E"? When paperwork was filed at the post office for the new town, it is said the "E" was inadvertently left off, thus the town was called Livingston.



In 2019 Joel Aguilar a local artist was commissioned to paint the city's first mural, "Heart of Livingston" depicting the famous explorer. The Mural was dedicated in the Court Yard Plaza which sits next to the Historical Society on the corner of Main Street and C Street, on January 30, 2020.

Visit the mural and look for the dropped "E".

Please Join Us

# Mural Dedication

**Thursday, January 30 - 10 am**  
**Livingston Historical Museum**  
**at 620 Main Street, Livingston**

Meet the Artist following the dedication across the street in the City Council Chambers  
 633 Main Street  
 209-394-8830 [jbenoit@livingstoncity.com](mailto:jbenoit@livingstoncity.com)

HOSTED BY  
**LIVINGSTON PARKS RECREATION & ARTS COMMISSION**



Livingston Chronicle Front Page September 8, 1922

## Livingston Becomes a City

In the summer of 1922 the leaders of Livingston got together and talked about becoming an official city. A petition for organization and incorporation was filed with the State of California on August 7, 1922. An election was scheduled and held on September 6, 1922.

The results of the election was 135 votes for making Livingston an official city and 51 against. At the same time Charles Ottman receiving 154 votes became Livingston's first mayor. The City of Livingston was incorporated on September 11, 1922 under the laws of the State of California.

In 1928 the city built its very first water and sewer system which was a great achievement. Between 1922 and 1944 many improvements were made by the Elected Officials such as reorganizing the fire department established street grades, laid new sidewalks and improved city streets.

## Role of Livingston Government

The City is a general law City and as such draws its authority from the California Constitution and the laws of the State of California enacted by the State Legislature. The City has a Council/Manager form of government. Under this municipal governmental form, the citizens elect four members of the City Council for four-year overlapping terms and a Mayor (who is also considered a City Council Member) for a two-year term. City Council members choose the mayor pro tempore from among themselves.

## City of Livingston Services

The City provides police, fire, water, sewer, storm drainage, sanitation, street construction and maintenance, community development, redevelopment, building inspection, economic development and general administrative services to the citizens of Livingston.

Livingston has grown in population since 1930. Listed below is a copy of the census records for Livingston:

Year	Population
1930	803
1940	895
1950	1502
1960	2188
1970	2588
1980	5326
1990	7317
2000	10473
2010	13058
2019	14896

## Livingston School History

The first students in Livingston studied in an adobe school house on the Robert Weaver farm in 1868. That Building was later replaced by another single class structure located on McConnell Flat Ranch in 1876. The building and classes moved into town in 1880, but as early as 1910 another school house was built on Crowell Street and the Old McConnell schoolhouse was torn down. It served the school district until 1921, when the Livingston School district, with a total student body of 197, combined



*McConnell School House*

with the Arena's School District's 80 students to form its own consolidated district. A bond was passed in 1921 in the amount of \$30,200 which was used to build a six-classroom, one auditorium structure that would house the 227 students of the consolidated district. In 1945 the Selma Herndon School was built at B and Prusso Streets and served the district well until it was torn down in 1962. That year a new school was erected on the site. It was also in 1962 and 1963 that Campus Park School was built. As time passed and the number of students attending school in the Livingston Union School District grew, Yamato Colony was built in 1989, and finally in 2001 Livingston Middle School opened its doors to receive the District's middle school students.



*Selma Herndon School*



*Livingston Grammar*



*Livingston High School*



*LHS School Bus Model T  
driven by Mr. Sheesley*

Livingston High School – Built in 1924 and in 1977 the old school was torn down and the new high school was built in the same location at 1617 Main Street.

Selma Herndon – Built in 1962 named after an admired Livingston School Teacher Mrs. Selma Herndon

Campus Park – Built in 1963 and was named after the Joseph Family planned subdivision (the Joseph Family was the first Greek family to Livingston).

Yamato Colony – built in 1989 named after the Japanese Yamato Colony

Livingston Middle School – Built in 2001



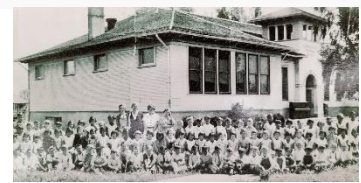
*1977 Demolition of Livingston High school*



*Students from Cressey School 1930s*



*Livingston High School 1927*



*Livingston Elementary School 1920's*



## Pioneer School Fun Facts



Schooling was a low priority until your family's basic needs were met. Children had to do chores such as farming, chopping wood, carry water, taking care of the farm animals or working in the family trade. These things were what provided a roof over their family's head and food on their table.

Today, laws require every child to attend some kind of school. Families choose from public schools, private schools, or homeschools. During the 1800s, not every state required children to attend school. Many children lived in an area where there wasn't a school. These children usually learned to read, write, and do basic math at home with their parents. Families had few books, but most had a Bible children could read.

For most students on the frontier, school education usually ended by 8<sup>th</sup> grade unless the family could afford to send their child to a high school. When the teacher rang the school bell around 9am, the students formed two lines, one for boys and one for girls, from tallest to shortest. Younger kids, often called 'Abecedarians' since they were learning their ABC's,



sat in the front of the classroom and older students sat in the back. After taking their seats and before starting lessons for the day, the class said a short prayer or sang a song.



Misbehavior at school in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was treated harshly. Students could be punished for not completing their assignments, being unable to answer the teacher's questions, or acting in any way that the teacher disapproved. Students might receive detention, by missing recess or staying after school. They might have to sit in a corner of the classroom, hold a heavy book for a long period of time, or clean the classroom. The teacher might assign the student to write a sentence again and again on the blackboard. Teachers were also allowed to use corporal punishment, hitting a student's knuckles, palms, or backside with a ruler or pointer.

The students generally had one hour for lunch and recess. Initially, schools did not have a cafeteria, so students either brought a lunch from home or walked home for the lunch break. Lunch at school, might include cold pancakes, bread with lard, jam or meat sandwiches, hard boiled eggs, dried meat, baked goods like muffins, cookies, and maybe even a slice of cake. The school also did not have a playground, so children enjoyed recess activities such as tag, jump rope, tree climbing, and chatting with their friends. More lessons followed the lunch break, with the school day ending between 2 and 4pm.

# Letter to Grandma

Pretend you have just arrived in Livingston and you are writing your Grandma to tell her about your time at your new school.

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## City Parks and Recreation

From the early days recreation has always been an important part of Livingston life. Whether it was sports, a community or school club, going to the show, parade or a community dance the whole town took part. Much like today.

### City Parks



*Young Joe Alvernaz*

#### Alvernaz Field

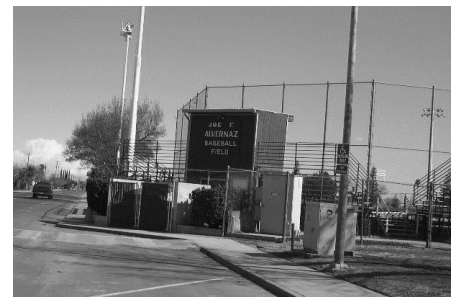
The field sits on 3 acres in Memorial Park. The ball field has been used for the great game of baseball since 1924 when the park was purchased even as early as 1922. With the help of community involvement Alvernaz Field was made into what it is today. This much love field was once the center of Livingston entertainment when the field was actually 2 ball fields and the community would park in the outfield to enjoy the games! Joe Alvernaz the parks namesake spent every waking hour (when not farming) either announcing ball games,

playing baseball or coaching it. Joe loved the ball field and his acts of kindness and generosity over the years proved it. From replanting Alvernaz field, having his family weeding the field, and he even paid for the stadium lights that are still in place over the field today. A story goes that in Joe's younger days used the last of his bank account to buy a kid a catcher's glove. Due to the involvement of the players with the agriculture in Livingston, summer was the highlight of baseball not spring as it is today. He said "First you plant your crops, then you play baseball. Many a player remembers loading into Coach Joes "Green Hornet" the families dodge coupe and being taken to tournaments, talking baseball all the way! Joe Alvernaz is a name when spoken in Livingston brings to mind fond memories of a kind hearted soul who loved his community and the great game of baseball.

*Joe F. Alvernaz Field*



*Old Grandstands. Joe would announce games from the announcer's box below the stands.*



*Harry Arakelian*

#### Arakelian Park

Though the Arakelian family never lived in Livingston, their faith in it through the years has never wavered. Their holdings of city property are among the largest and their farm developments in the late 1930's put them in the lead of others. They owned and operated the consolidate Packing company, producers and dealers in dried fruits particularly raisins at the time. The raisin packing business was started

here by this family in 1923 under the firm name of Harry Arakelian & Son, the son was John H. Arakelian. In 1916 Harry Arakelian was looking for an ideal raisin growing area and here he found it. He planted his first vineyard on 320 acres. The "Del Rio Nut Company" is still owned by the Arakelians. John H Arakelian left money in his will to purchase land in Livingston for the building of a park. Upon his death in 1968 this donation moved forward and Arakelian Park was built in the 1970's.



*Arakelian Park at the end of J Street*



*Lil Guys N Gals Field on F Street*

### **Lil Guys and Gals**

The City of Livingston built the Lil Guys field in the mid 1960's. It was built by community volunteers and was used by the baseball and softball teams from the beginning. Started out as Lil Guys Ball Field then in the 1990's Gals was added since girls used the field for their games too. It is still a hub for City Youth Baseball and Adult Coed Softball. Lil Guys and Gals was built in the 1960s.



*Lucero Park Sign on Celia Dr.*

### **Lucero Park**

Established in 1976 and named after Antonio Lucero, a long time city employee and resident. He was well thought of by the community and took pride in making Livingston Parks look great. Antonio died falling from a tree on the job. City Council named the park on Celia Drive after Antonio Lucero.



*Memorial Park Veteran's Monument Corner of Park and Main Streets*

### **Memorial Park**

Memorial Park is located on the corner of Park and Main Street in Livingston. Purchased in 1924 with funds that were raised by the community for \$3600. Credit should be given to William W. Abbott, Gordon H. Winton, William E. Rasor and William T. White who formed the committee which raised funds to purchase the park property. Originally named R.W. Hammatt Park after Robert W. Hammatt owner of the first and largest general mercantile in Livingston from 1883 to 1903. There is an old building that sits on the back corner of the park next to Alvernaz Field that retains the name Hammatt Hall. In the latter part of World War II Joe Alvernaz was serving in the marines and began thinking about home, thinking about a living war memorial for the cities veterans. Joe

wrote a letter to the editor of the Chronicle saying that we needed a living war memorial and when he got home they started to raise money to put the memorial at memorial park. Joe Alvernaz went door to door to every home in Livingston to raise funds. The chronicle helped promote Joes dream. The Park name was changed by resolution May 18, 1974 for the honor of the veterans. A memorial sits on the corner of Park and Main Streets.



*Max & Verda Foster*

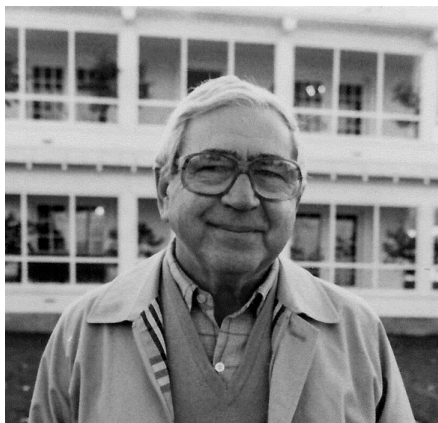
### **Max Foster Sports Complex**

Foster Farms was established in 1939 by Max and Verda Foster. They began by investing \$1,000 into a farm in Modesto, California, on which they raised turkeys. The back porch was Max's office and the first hatchery was built next to their bedroom so the eggs could get constant care. In 1942, Max quit his day job as a reporter and city editor for the Modesto Bee. Around this time, the Fosters expanded into raising cattle and chickens. As the business grew, the Fosters acquired another farm and a feed mill in the 1950s. The feed mill allowed the company some independence from outside feed contracts. In 1959, Foster Farms

acquired the Sunland Poultry processing plant in Livingston, California, and in 1960, the company's headquarters was moved there from Modesto. Livestock was slaughtered, processed, and packaged at the Livingston plant on an assembly line. Max Foster Sports Complex opened in 2000.



*Concession Area at Max Foster Sports Complex on Walnut Ave.*



*Joseph Gallo*

### **Joseph Gallo Park**

As a young boy, Joseph Gallo fell in love with the art of cheese making. This lifelong romance was nurtured by tasting his grandparent's homemade cheese at their home and then honed through a lifetime of hard work and dedication to a craft few others have mastered. Joseph Gallo was born in Antioch, CA in 1919. His parents had immigrated to America to escape poverty and find a new life. Both parents came from families involved in grape growing and farming, in Italy and in America.

Joseph enjoyed being active in the outdoors, developing a love for the land

and the beauty of the surrounding wildlife. For the rest of his life he would personally associate nature with health, fitness, and calming serenity. He worked hard, personally supervising all work and doing as much as he could himself. He believed that everything could always be improved and that there was no shortcut to success. He felt success takes getting up early and working hard every day. His mantra of "Next time I'll do better," served as a catalyst for constant improvement throughout the company.



*Joseph Gallo Park Walking Path on Winton Pkwy*

Joseph Gallo will always be remembered as being a loving family man and the visionary who struggled to make his childhood dreams of dairy farming and cheese making a reality. His environmental and philanthropic efforts have had a lasting impact on his community.

Joseph Gallo Park opened in 2011.



*Don Meyer*

### **Don Meyer Park**

Donald Porter Meyer was born June 16th, 1931 in El Reno, Oklahoma and died May 23rd, 2007 in Livingston, California. He, the oldest child of the Adeline and Dr. Harry A. Meyer, Jr. of Geary and grandson of Sarah and Dr. Harry A. Meyer, Sr. of El Reno, Oklahoma. Don was valedictorian of his graduating class at Geary, Oklahoma High School. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from The University of Oklahoma where he was a

member of Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity, the OU Band and Glee Club. Between getting his degrees he served in the U.S. Army, most of the time in Korea. In 1959 he began teaching social studies and coaching tennis at Livingston California High School and continued there until retirement in 1996. Tennis was his passion.

He coached many teams to area championships and continued coaching to the end. Don never married but had a huge family of students and friends. He was a member of St. Jude's Catholic Church where he was organist for over forty years. Don Meyer Park opened in 2008.



*Don Meyer Park Sign on Natsu Rd.*



*Fred Worden*

### **Fred Worden Park**

Fred was born in Preston, Kansas in 1924 and graduated from Inman High School. Fred moved to Livingston in 1942 and served in the US Army during WWII and the Korean War. IN the Late40's he met the love of his life Lorraine Morton a Livingston girl. They were married 60 plus years. From 1951 to 1974 Fred worked at Serve All and then for the Livingston Union School District from 1974 to 1992 as a gardener. He had 6 children, 2 girls and 4 boys of which 1 child still resides in Livingston. Fred was very active in the community and served on the city council from 1972 to the 90's. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, American Legion Post 8327 and the Veterans of Foreign War. Fred also worked for the school district from 1974 for 10 plus years. He loved gardening with the kids on school campuses. Early mornings Fred was out working in his beautiful yard and sweeping the gutters in front of his house waving to all those kids on their way to school. Fred will always be remembered as a well-respected pillar of Livingston. Fred wanted to live to be 100 but sadly his heart gave out on him just before his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. Fred Worden Park opened in 2007.



*Fred Worden Park Sign on Parkview Drive*



*Sarwan Singh Samra*

### **Singh Park**

The Samra Family were the first Sikhs to come to Livingston. In May of 1970 Sarwan Samra moved his family to Livingston from Samrai, Punjab, India where he was a humble farmer trying to provide for his family. Sarwan had heard stories about America and its opportunities from his cousin who lived in Lodi, California, he had a dream to come to America to provide a better life for his family.

Sarwan learned of opportunities in Livingston, California from an Indian woman from Winton, California. This woman went to India specifically Samrai in Punjab and told the village about the jobs at foster farms. With this opportunity Sarwan packed up his family and moved them to Livingston. For 6 months the Samras were the only Sikh family in Livingston City limits. The Sikh community continued to grow because of the jobs at foster farms.



*Singh Park Sign on Peach Avenue*

The park was originally a storm water drainage basin and the city developed it into a small neighborhood park in the early 2000's. Gurpal Samra, Sarwan's son suggested that the park be named Singh Park as it was just down the street from the Sikh community's first temple.

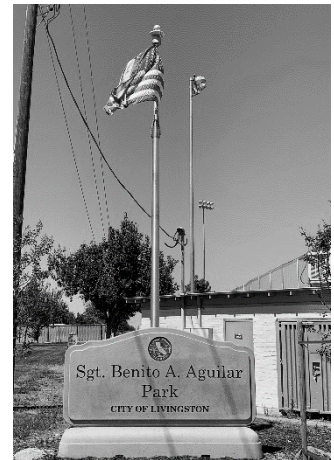
Gurpal Samra being a member of the Livingston City Council at the time felt since he was on the council it may not look right for them to name the park after his father. He felt Singh would be an appropriate name for the park because it would apply to all Sikh males. Singh means Lion.



### **Sergeant Benito A. Aguilar Park**

Benito "Benny" A. Aguilar was born in February 1987, the youngest of three brothers and one sister. Benito A. Aguilar attended local elementary schools and Livingston High School where he played tennis and football during the summers, Benito worked for the City's Recreation Department as an umpire and recreation leader. "Sgt. Benito A. Aguilar" served honorably in the United States Marine Corps and was an Iraqi and Afghanistan War Veteran. Helping others gave him a sense of purpose and joy and, therefore, he continued to serve as a memorable member of the community.

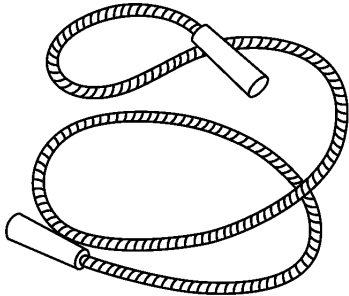
Benny volunteered as his children's T-ball coach, participated in Livingston's Relay for Life events and had hopes of continuing his service as a veteran, giving back to the community that supported his service so proudly. He earned the respect and gratitude of others through his service to humanity whether it was coaching his children at T-ball or greeting his neighbors with a warm smile. Benito's service to the community of Livingston and the devotion to his country will serve as an inspiration to others to seek a greater purpose for themselves, and find the joy of helping others. The park was built in 2009 and the Park was named in honor of Benito on December 5, 2019.



*Sgt. Benito A. Aguilar Park Sign on F Street*

## How did the Kids of Livingston spend their free time?

Because it was important for children and adults to work to survive, free time was not very often.



In the late 1800's children had simple toys and games made out of any available materials, such as pebbles, rope, pieces of wood and scraps of material. Dolls were made out of scraps of material and wool. Some toys were made of wood.

The World Series was not be played until 1903 and Little League did not start until 1939 however many children, boys and girls played baseball on dirt lots for fun.



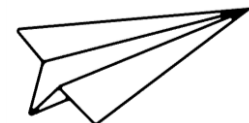
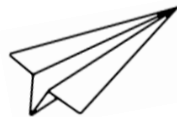
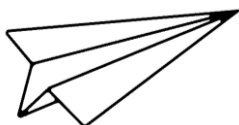
On schoolyards and playgrounds, traditional games like Duck-on-a-Rock (in which stones are thrown at a target) and Auntie-Over were popular. So was hopscotch, skipping rope, and rolling a hoop with a stick. In the summer, children would play in the dirt and spend hours converting sand piles into cities.



With no TV or radio, families sometimes played cards or a board game by electric light. Such lights were increasingly common. A popular board game was called the Motor Carriage Game. Its theme was an automobile trip. The funny thing was, there were only about 4,000 cars on US roads at the time. Children did a lot of pretending they were cowboy heros or gunfighters, movie stars or singers. Children of the time used their imaginations.

Toys also began to reflect changes in transportation. Boys with toy horse-drawn wagons and carriages made of iron and tin now eyed horseless carriages (cars).

A company that made croquet sets even became a construction-toy success story when the owner discovered that the interlocking wooden pieces of his croquet boxes made great building toys. Crandall's Building Blocks were a forerunner of Lincoln Logs and LEGOs, you might say.







The best dolls came from Europe. They were expensive. A middle-class girl might have several and was expected to take good care of them. This wasn't easy, because these dolls were made of porcelain, which could crack or break.

Dry goods stores sold fabric with dolls printed on it. Girls could learn sewing by buying and assembling these doll "kits." In fact, doll making became a booming backyard industry in America. Women converted sheds to workshops and went into the doll making business. Baby dolls began to look more like babies, and dolls' facial expressions were livelier.

In Livingston a neighborhood community dug swimming pool was in the backyard of a resident where in the 40s kids would gather and swim before the community pool at the high school was constructed. It was also common for the kids to swim in canals or in the Merced River.



*The McConnell Family on the Merced River in the early 1900s*

Livingston Historical Society members were asked in 2022 what they did in their free time when they were children. They had big smiles on their faces as they answered this question.

## Here are their stories:

*In the late 40's and early 50's*

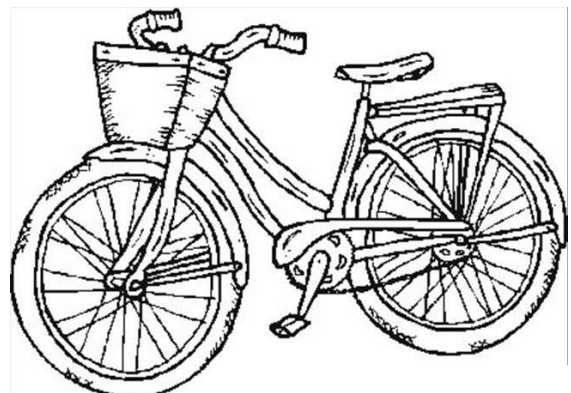
"When we were kids we spent time making forts in the back yard, we would dig deep holes and put a blanket over the top...."

"We made tree forts, played hide and go seek, tag and other games with our friends...."



"We rode our bike all over the city. As long as we could see the water tower we were good. We had to be home by dark or we would be in trouble..."

"Chickens would get loose from the Foster Farms deliveries and we would chase the chickens and catch them and bring them home to our backyards...."



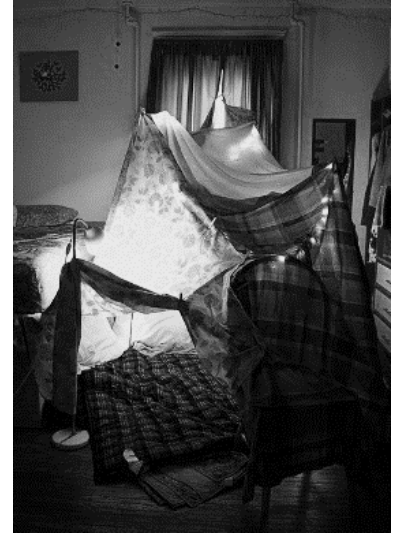
“Go to friends house ride bikes and be home before dark. We built forts out in an old grape vineyard on the back side of 8<sup>th</sup> street ally...”

“When the high school was torn down it was like going to the theater... kids on their way to and from the community pool stopped and enjoyed the show....”

“When money was available my mom would give me 25 cents and I could go to the store and get a bottle of pop and a twinkie...”

“In the early 70’s we would take a trip to the community pool to swim, we would run barefoot so we would walk on peoples grass to keep from burning our feet and then run really fast across the street...”

“I remember Fred Del Dotto would see kids swimming in the canal and he would go to them and give them a quarter to go to the community pool....”

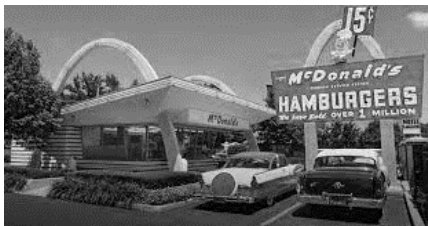


“I remember going to the court theater on a Saturday afternoon matinee, watching cartoons and got a few cents for popcorn, the movie was .69 cents at the time...”



“It was fun to play board games with family, monopoly and card games were fun....”

“Saturday morning cartoons were are favorite, Bugs Bunny, Popeye, Roadrunner were among the favorites...”



“Eating out was a treat and the only Mc Donald’s around was in Merced...”

“I remember when 7-11 came to Livingston in the mid 70’s that was a big deal, we heard about Slurpee’s , so on opening day they were giving away free Slurpee’s and the whole town of kids lined up for a free Slurpee...”



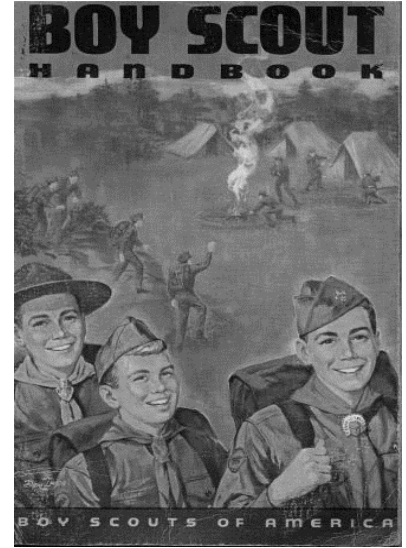
“We had so much fun in the early day’s roller skating in the hallways at Selma Herndon School and we had the best time climbing trees too....”





“Brownies and Girl Scouts provided popular activities for the young girls, we did day camps at Mc Connell State Park and Hagerman Park. We marched in the Veteran’s Day parade and a veteran came to our troop meeting and taught us how to march. We put on shows for the community, we wrote our own songs and made great memories, we participated in Mother Daughter Teas and Father Daughter Banquets what a wonderful time we had.....”

“Boy Scouts were an active group and provided us with fishing trips and camping trips along the Merced River...”



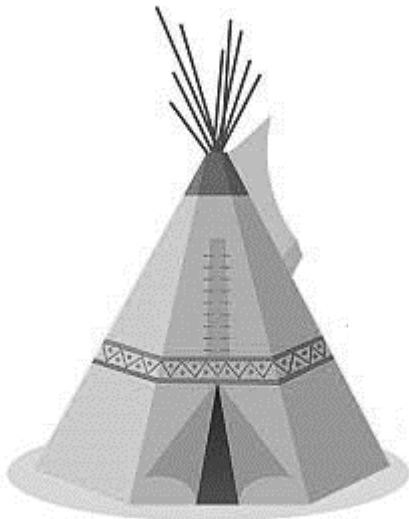
“There were lots of tumbleweeds in our area so we would make forts out of tumbleweeds...”

“We played cowboys and Indians and my brother was the Indian, I was the Cowboy he was chasing me, when I got tired of running from him I would just stop, he would get upset because if it were a real situation, I would not just stop! ....”

“When I was a kid we had lemonade stands or made silly things or collected things to sell to the neighbors like making stinky perfume or buckets of frogs....”

**Stories contributed by:**

Russ Winton, Barbara Ratzlaff, Ida Escola, Ellen Denny, Judy Dutra, Jo Ann Wells, Doug Wells and David Bates, Anna Guerriero, Elaine Garcia, Judy Alvarado



Now and Then  
What do you do during your free time?

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What did Livingston kids do in their free time 50 years ago?

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## Special Events In the Early Days

### Rabbit Drive

The large empty lands surrounding Livingston were great breeding grounds for wild jackrabbits. These animals multiplied quickly and caused problems for the grain farmers and cattle ranchers. Sometime in the early 1890s the very first Rabbit Drive was held. Hundreds of people would line up on their horses for miles and herd rabbits into large pens. The rabbits were destroyed and given to a group that made tamales from the rabbit meat. The second drive was held in 1918 with all of Livingston taking a part in the planning. The town invited participants to bring the family and enjoy the vineyards of Livingston. The participants would then gather for a big BBQ following the hunt. An estimation of 1000 shooters participated and 6,000 rabbits were harvested.



### Flag Day

One of the first special events the town celebrated with great significance was called "Flag Day". April 17, 1918 the event took place at the crossing of 3<sup>rd</sup> street and the railroad track. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is now called Main Street in front of the Crowell block on what is now Court Street. (Crowell block was taken out when the rerouting of Highway 99 took place). More than 1500 people gathered to honor the 44 young men of this area who had joined the military in the First World War. A special flag was made with 44 blue stars on it for those served. The flag was hung between poles that were set in the ground on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. This event originated by the ladies of the local Red Cross with much support from local business. The Livingston Brass Band played "Marching through Georgia" and the school children marched from the Livingston Elementary School to the event with a Boy Scout caring the flag leading them. It was a moving event enjoyed by all.



*Flag Day Ceremony April 17, 1918*

### Lighting of the Christmas Tree and Santa visits

Livingston would gather at the huge pine tree planted by the railroad tracks where the railroad station was which is now the AV Thomas warehouse. Children lined up to see Santa and would get ribbon candy and then get on the old firetruck and ride through town. Santa also showed up at the Court Theater where many kids sat on Santa's lap telling him their wish list for Christmas.

In later years at least since 1972 the pine tree in front of the post office at Liberty Square was used for the community Christmas Tree and Santa would load up on the Firetruck with his helpers and deliver candy to the neighborhoods as well as visiting the schools. Instead of handing out candy canes which is today's tradition, bags with ribbon candy a variety of nuts in their shell and an apple was the old fire department tradition.



*Students decorate Tree for Livingston High in 2014*

Today we have a Court of Trees of 50 plus trees that are put up in The Court Yard Plaza across from City Hall where the old Court Theater once stood. The community families and businesses, churches, schools and non-profits all festively decorate a tree and there is a big tree lighting ceremony the first Friday night in December. Santa continues to visit the schools and also participates with Mrs. Claus in the Kops for Kids toy giveaway.

**Lighted Christmas Parade**

Livingston has a Lighted Christmas Parade that was inspired by the Late Councilmember Roy Soria and retired business owner. His vision was to see a beautiful parade down Main Street at night with lots of lights! This tradition was started in 2002 by the Livingston Recreation Department and has grown each year. The antique firetruck carries Santa down the street and is the Star of the parade!



**Livingston 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration**

The earliest 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration was recorded in the Livingston Chronicle to have taken place on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1911 on the Merced River. Many prominent names are listed in the paper such as the Crowell's, White's, Bennett's McConnell's, Court's and Wilson's to name a few.

As it is celebrated today this event is fairly young compared to other events and is less than 30 years old. It started its humble beginnings in Memorial Park and was held there until 2012 and then was moved to Max Foster Sports Complex on Walnut Avenue. The event was moved due to the large attendance. The organizers boasted it was the largest Fireworks show in the valley!



*4th of July Celebration 2012*

**Harvest/Fall Festival**

This event was held in the early 1970's and was a 2 day event in September/October. Presented by the Livingston Chamber of Commerce this event attracted folks to Memorial Park, This event crowned a Miss Livingston. Sharon Johnson was crowned Miss Livingston in 1980.

**Veterans Day Parade**

Today the Veterans Day is still held on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am and starts downtown in front of the museum and ends at Memorial Park with a Veteran cooked lunch.

Why do we honor Veterans Day? Veterans Day began at the end of World War I when at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the fighting ended with the signing of an armistice. U.S. Soldiers celebrate the peace agreement that ended World War I, Nov. 11, 1918.

Livingston held the largest parade in the Valley. Bands, horse groups, military groups, law enforcement, as well as community members, would decorate their entries to honor the Veterans and put on a parade enjoyed by all.



*Pictured is Matt Winton, Scott Winton, Ryan Oats, Andrea Oats with their Grandfather, Pearl Harbor Survivor Stoddard Winton in the Veterans Day Parade 1975*



### Portuguese Festa

Azoreans in the United States have been celebrating the Holy Ghost Festa for more than 100 years. California is home to the largest Azorean population in the country, with over 85% of California's Portuguese population being of Azorean descent.

Livingston Pentecost Association traditionally hosts the Festa the first weekend of July. The Festa is open to the public without admission costs. No one must pay for the main meal served, but donations are greatly appreciated. Livingston always has the best sopas around. There's always a parade representing Queen Isabel and her courts. There's always a Catholic mass associated with the celebration. There's music and dancing and lots of fun!



*Festa Parade Down Main Street in Livingston 2016*

### Fireman's Ball

The Fire Departments Fireman's Ball was the "Event of the Year". The Fire Department would take their hoses down to the Portuguese Pentecost Hall across from Memorial park and hose out the big hall and then in turn the association would let them use the smaller hall at no charge for the Fireman's Ball. Community members would dress up put on their dancing shoes and turn out in force to participate in this fundraising event! The event was held generally in the month of February. The last fireman's ball was held in 1992.

### Pet Parade

The Livingston Pet parade was a popular event. The town would grab their beloved pets and dress them up for the pet parade downtown. Whether they were walked down the street on a leash or pulled in a make shift float everyone enjoyed this display of pets. From owls to cats many different animals participated. In honor of the Centennial Celebration Livingston will bring back this traditional event in October. The picture to the left was taken in 1959 of Jeff Winton, Jamie Maddox and Russ Winton carrying their dog "King Rexie".



*Livingston has had many community events for the residents. Take some time and look through the Livingston Chronicle online to find our more information on all the events listed as well as other ones not mentioned.*





# Pet Parade



The Livingston Pet Parade was a Community Favorite and the Livingston Recreation Department has brought this event back and will take place each October.

If you have a pet, how would you dress it up for the parade? If you don't have a pet what kind of pet do you wish you had, and dress it up for the parade!



### What street do you live on?

Livingston Streets have been named after many of our pioneers and people who made a difference in Livingston. Look at the list of all our street names. Dig deeper by looking up the name in the museum or in the Livingston Chronicle Newspaper archives online. Your street could be named after an import part of Livingston history.

Street	Name By or After	AMARETTO WAY	Vintage West Development 1991
1ST ST.	Tempo Estates 1975	AMARONE WAY	Bridgeport Village 2005
1ST ST.	Winton Subdivision 1952	AMBER CT.	Country Roads 2003
2ND ST.	Winton Subdivision 1952	ASH CT.	Woodland Heights 1993
4TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	ASPEN GLEN WAY	Country Lane II 2005
4TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	AUBURN CT.	Vinewood Estates 1993
5TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	AUTRY LN.	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005
5TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	B ST.	Original Street in Livingston
6TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BARCELONA DR.	Rancho Estrada 2018
6TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BARDOLINO DR.	Vintage West Development 1991
7TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BAY MEADOW LN.	Monte Cristo II 2004
8TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BIRCH ST.	Country Roads 2003
8TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BLACK PINE WAY	Country Roads 2003
9TH ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BRANDY CT. & WAY	Vintage West Development 1991
A ST.	Original Street in Livingston	BRIARWOOD DR.	Vinewood Estates 1993
ALDER WAY	Country Roads 2003	BRIDGEPORT AVE.	Bridgeport Village 2005
ALDRICH AVE.	Country Villas Dunmore Homes 2001	C ST.	Original Street in Livingston
ALMOND GLEN AVE.	Country Lane II 2005	CABERNET CT.	Vintage West Development 1991
ALMONDWOOD DR.	Vinewood Estates 1993	CALERO CT.	Bridgeport Village 2005
CAMBRIA PL.	Monte Cristo II 2004	DALLAS CT/ DR.	Named after Livingston Family

CAMPBELL BLVD.	Named after Jack Campbell Dispatcher	DAVIS ST.	Named after C.R. Davis
CARDELLA CT.	Possibly Campus Park Subdivision 1960's	DEL DOTTO CT.	Name after Fred Del Dotto a volunteer fire fighter.
CEDAR CT. & LN.	Country Roads 2003	DOSANGH CT.	Rancho Estrada 2018
CELIA DR.	Woodland Heights 1979	DUKE DR.	Monte Cristo Senior Community
CHABLIS CT.	Vintage West Development 1991	DWIGHT WAY	Original Street in Livingston
CHANDLER CT.	Country Villas 4 Dunmore Homes 2001	E ST.	Original Street in Livingston
CHANDON CT.	Bridgeport Village 2005	EAST AVE.	Woodland Heights 1979
CHARDONNAY WAY	Vintage West Development 1991	EAST AVE.	Woodland Heights 1979
CHASTANET CT.	Vintage West Development 1991	ELM ST.	Country Roads 2003
CHIANTI DR.	Vintage West Development 1991	ELMWOOD CT/WAY	Vinewood Estates 1993
CITRUS CT.	Vintage West Development 1991	EMERALD DR.	Monte Cristo 1 2002
CLARET CIR.	Vintage West Development 1991	EVANS LN.	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005
COLLEEN CT.	Vintage West Development 1991	EVERGREEN CT.	Country Roads 2003
COLOMBARD WAY	Vintage West Development 1991	F ST.	Original Street in Livingston
COUNT DR.	Monte Cristo Senior Community	FAIRLANE DR.	Monte Cristo II 2005
COURT ST.	Named after Stanley Court	FERNWOOD WAY	Rancho Estrada 2018
CROWELL ST	Named after Frank Crowell	FRANCI ST.	Named after Father Franci
D ST.	Original Street in Livingston	FRANQUETTE CT/ST	Country Villas 4 Dunmore Homes 2001
FRONT ST.	Original Street in Livingston	JOSEPH ST.	First Greek family in Livingston
FRUITBASKET LN.	Country Lane II 2005	KARINA LAU CT.	Livingston Veteran Lost Life

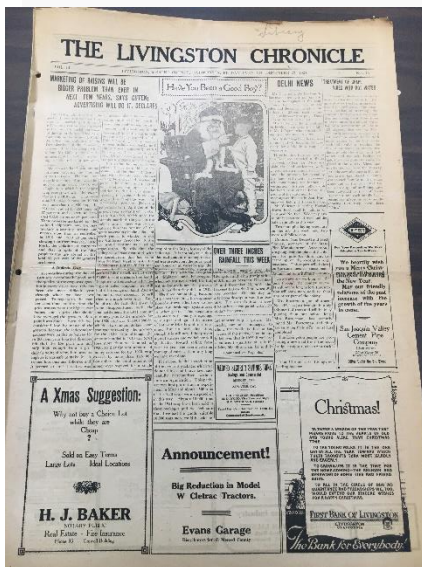
G ST.	Original Street in Livingston	KENSGINGTON DR.	Parkside at Livingston 2007
GLENMOOR PL.	Country Lane II 2005	KINOSHITA CT.	Japanese Yamato Colony Family
GOLDEN LEAF DR.	Sun Valley Estates	KISHI DR.	Japanese Yamato Colony Family
GRAPEVINE DR.	Country Lane II 2005	KNIGHTS CT.	Monte Cristo Senior Community
H ST.	Original Street in Livingston	LAMBRUSCO LN.	Vintage West Development 1991
HAMMATT AVE.	Named after Father Franci	LATOOUR WAY	Bridgeport Village 2005
HARVEST AVE.	Country Lane II 2005	LILAC LN.	Beck Homes Parkside 2007
HICKORY DR.	Woodland Heights 1979	LINDEN CT.	Harvest Gardens Apt Development
HILLTOP AVE.	Vinewood Estates 1993	LIVE OAK WAY	Parkside at Livingston 2007
I ST.	Winton Subdivision 1952	LIVINGSTON/CRESSEY RD.	Old Livingston Street/Now N Main
INDUSTRIAL DR.		LOMA VISTA CT.	Country Lane II 2005
J ST.	Winton Subdivision 1952	LUPIN CT.	Tempo Estates 1975
JANTZ DR.	After Mennonite Family	MADRID WAY	Rancho Estrada 2018
JASMINE LN.	Parkside at Livingston 2007	MAIN ST. once 3rd ST	Original Livingston Street
JOHANNISBURG DR.	Vintage West Development 1991	MANDARIN CT.	Monte Cristo II 2004
JORDONOLLA WAY	Country Lane II 2005	MAPLE CT.	Country Roads 2003
JOSEPH GALLO	After Joseph Gallo of Joseph Gallo Farms	MERIDA WAY	Parkside at Livingston 2007
MIADORA CT.	Bridgeport Village 2005	PAJARO CT.	Country Lane II 2005
MISTY HARBOUR DR.	Bridgeport Village 2005	PARADISE CT/ DR	Vinewood Estates 1993/Rancho Estrada 2018
MONT CLIFF WAY	Bridgeport Village 2005	PARK ST.	Being by Memorial Park
MONTE CRISTO WAY	Monte Cristo	PARK VIEW DR.	Sun Valley Estates
MONTECITO DR.	Monte Cristo II 2004	PARKSIDE WAY	Parkside at Livingston 2007
MONTELENA AVE/CT.	Bridgeport Village 2005	PATZER ST.	After Livingston Family
MORI CT.	Japanese Yamato Colony Family	PEACH AVE.	Original Livingston Street
MULBERRY CT.	Woodland Heights 1979	PECAN COURT	Vinewood Estates 1993/Rancho Estrada 2018
NARADA WAY	Japanese Yamato Colony Family	PINECREST DR.	Parkside at Livingston 2007
NATSU RD.	Japanese Yamato Colony Family	PINOT DR.	Vintage West Development 1991
NEWCASTLE DR.	Sun Valley Estates	POPPY CT	Winton Subdivision 1952
NUT TREE RD.	Harvest Manor 1986	PRUSSO ST.	Store Owner Old Livingston
OAKHURST PLC.	Monte Cristo II 2004	QUEEN WAY	Monte Cristo Senior Community
OAKWOOD CT/WAY	Vinewood Estates 1993	RAVENSWOOD DR.	Vinewood Estates 1993

OKHI ST.	Japanese Yamato Colony Family	REDWOOD WAY	Monte Cristo II 2004
OLDS AVE.	Town Co-Founder Edward G Olds	ROGERS AVE.	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005
OLIVE AVE.	Old Livingston Street	ROSE CT.	Vintage West Development 1991
OPAL CT.	Monte Cristo 1 2002	RUBY WAY	Monte Cristo 1 2002
ORCHARD WAY	Harvest Manor 1986	SAPPHIRE DR.	Monte Cristo 1 2002
SAUBER CT.	Country Villas 4 Dunmore Homes 2001	TOPAZ WAY	Monte Cristo 1 2002
SEAPORT VILLAGE DR.	Bridgeport Village 2005	TRIGGER LN.	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005
SERR AVE. & CT.	Country Villas 4 Dunmore Homes 2001	TULARE CT./ST.	Country Villas 4 Dunmore Homes 2001
SILVER LN	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005	TURQUOISE CT.	Monte Cristo 1 2002
SIMPSON AVE.	Original Street in Livingston	VALLEY OAK WAY	Country Lane II 2005
SOUTHPORT AVE.	Sun Valley Estates	VIEIRA ST.	After Livingston Family
SPRING BROOK DR.	Sun Valley Estates	VINA CT.	Country Villas 4 Dunmore Homes 2001
SPRUCE CT.	Monte Cristo II 2004	VINE CLIFF WAY	Bridgeport Village 2005
ST IVES AVE.	Sun Valley Estates	VINEMAPLE WAY	Beck Homes Parkside 2007
STEFANI AVE.	Original Livingston Street	VIRGINIA AVE.	After Virginia Joseph
SUN VALLEY AVE.	Sun Valley Estates	WAKAMI DR.	After Sister City in Japan
SUNDANCE ST.	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005	WALNUT AVE.	Original Livingston Street
SUNRISE CT.	Winton Subdivision 1952	WYATT EARP CT.	Country Villas 4 Dinmore Homes 2005
SUNSET CT.	Winton Subdivision 1952	WELLS AVE.	Named after Livingston Family
SWAN ST.	S.H. Swan a Livingston resident & superintendent of streets 1944	WHITE STREET	After W.T. White
SYCAMORE ST.	Country Roads 2003	WILLOW CT.	Harvest Gardens Apt Development
TALARA DR.	Rancho Estrada 2018	WINTON PARKWAY	Named after Livingston Family
TASHIMA CT/DR.	Parkside at Livingston 2007	WYCLIFFE DR.	Country Lane II 2005
TEHAMA DR.	Country Villas Dunmore Homes 2003	YAGI ST.	Japanese Yamato Colony Family
YORK AVE.	Sun Valley Estates		
ZELKOVA WAY	Country Roads 2003		
ZINFANDEL DR.	Vintage West Development 1991		

## Newspaper - Livingston Chronicle

In the early days the newspaper played an important part in communication with the community. Their purpose is to update and educate readers on current affairs and events. Newspapers also printed many advertisements for grocery stores, real-estate, and other merchandise eager business owners were selling.

The Newspaper was established by Peter H. Higgins in 1909 and the first issue was published October 2, 1909. The initial Chronicles were more of a “boom” paper rather than a newspaper as it promoted Livingston growth and county gossip rather than community news.



December 23, 1922 Livingston Chronicle

The paper was originally hand set in 10 point type with 8 pages and 6 columns. The original office sat on Main Street where the current Liberty Square parking lot is located. Higgins passed away in 1912 and Edward Stanton Ellis took over the paper. Since then, the Chronicle has had a number of editors but this weekly paper was something the town folks eagerly read.

Printing a newspaper was not an easy task. The wording was done a letter at a time with small metal letters placed in a type bed and tightly put in place. Once the page was finished ink was rolled on the letters and paper was placed on top and pressed.

Early editions did not have photographs. Pictures were hand drawn by artists as they are printed in the paper shown.

Following are highlights from the first issue:

### October 2, 1909

“While returning from Stevinson in a buggy J.P. Abell, manager of the Merced Lumber Company of Livingston, shot and killed a rattlesnake, coiled by the side of the road ready to strike, while it was only 3 feet long it was inches thick and had 8 rattles.”

“Finch Wilcock, building contractor, is erecting a new barn south of the railway, and soon will commence, building a fine six room residence.”

“George H Daniels of Livingston warehouse reports about ten thousand sacks of grain on hand. The better half of it belonging to John Rhodes, the grain grower.”

“Miss Mary Halteman of Atwater opened the Livingston school with an enrollment of 40 pupils, an increase of 15 over the year previous.”

"Ecclefield Brothers have moved 2400 turkeys from the Shaffer Ranch on the Oakdale Road to the home place a mile west of Livingston."

"Zeph Ecclefield and wife have moved from summer camp into the Frank Green cottage south of town."

"Station Agent L.J. Chase won a 35-40 Marlin rifle in a raffle conducted by Bert Davis and sold it promptly to Walter Elam for \$5."

"Hustling Dan Bennett, the blacksmith, is being kept more than busy with new and repair work for Contractor Hauser, building the big steel bridge over the Cressey for the Santa Fe railway."

"The health of R.W. Hammatt has improved so much recently that he is expected home shortly."

"H.E. Carmichael and wife and three children arrived in Livingston this week from Ashland, Oregon, and is now engaged in building a temporary residence"

The Livingston Chronicle has been digitized and can be found on the City of Livingston website. You can type in your family name, an event or any other information you want to research in the search bar. Have fun!



On October 2, 1909 the very first Livingston Chronicle was Published. Pretend you are the newspaper editor and using the highlights of the original paper make your own newspaper page.



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# The Telephone and Livingston

The Livingston telephone system was purchased and operated by Arnold A. Harrington. He bought the system in 1919 from G.H. Winton and W.T. White, who had bought it from the Bank of Italy, Merced. The bank of Italy obtained it through a mortgage foreclosure against the original builder and owner, Edward Thomas. When Harrington took it over the office was moved to the land office building at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Front Streets.

In 1922 Harrington bought the brick building at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and B Streets where the Frontier phone company is still today.



The first switchboard was created by George Coy, an office manager for the telegraph office. The switchboard was located at a central office, allowing callers to connect to an almost infinite number of callers. The switchboard was run by a telephone operator.

Before automatic switchboards existed, phone companies had to employ switchboard operators to connect you to your calls. That means when you dial the operator on your phone back then, you would speak to a human who would then connect you to your call. Livingston had its own switchboard located at the phone office. Phones have changed over the years but have been an important part of society's communication.



## TELEPHONE WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

- CALL
- CELL
- CONFERENCE
- CONNECT
- CONTACT
- DIAL
- DISPLAY
- HANDS
- HANG UP
- HEADSET
- HOLD
- KEYPAD
- LANDLINE
- MAIL
- MOBILE
- RECEIVE
- SCREEN
- SPEAKER
- TALK
- TEXT
- TOUCH
- TRANSFER
- VOICE
- WAITING
- YELL

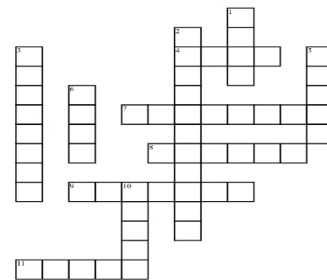
M T L B V O I C E J P B M  
 O E K A W C D T T O N E P  
 B S E L N L E L E Y E D M  
 I D Y E O D H L R X X Y O  
 L A P H V A L R L T T A B  
 E E A G N I E I C M L L T  
 C H D G Y K E E N A L F R  
 N O U V A E N C V E L S A  
 E P N E N N L H E X A I N  
 R T P T O X C L I R C D S  
 E S K C A U N E E R C S F  
 F A L T O C L H A N D S E  
 N K A T D A T W L I A M R  
 O A T E I T M V K V B S K  
 C D C D W A I T I N G A W

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY. Find and circle each word.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Telephone Etiquette



### Across

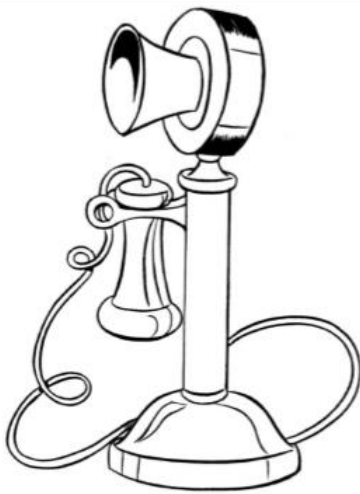
- 4. When possible, use the caller's?
- 7. When taking a message, do not?
- 8. What should you aspire not to do to a caller?
- 9. What threatens callers?
- 11. True or False. Never take a message.

### Down

- 1. When answering the phone, identify yourself by?
- 2. When taking a message verify the?
- 3. Do not jeopardize quality for?
- 5. Answer within how many rings?
- 6. You are having difficulty understanding the caller. You will remain?
- 10. Do this when answering the phone.



# Telephones Then & Now



Be sure to visit the Livingston Historical Society Museum and see the original telephone switch board.

## Agriculture Roots in Livingston

### Livingston Farmers Association (LFA)

The Yamato Colony founded *The Livingston Farmers Association* – a pivotal collective for the Japanese community. Driving around Livingston through the thicket of farms, you'll observe this sign on some corners. This local COOP originated from the initial 1910 COOP efforts by the first Japanese settlers. In anticipation of internment in WWII, many in the Japanese community formed a collective organization to reclaim their property when they got back. The community reunited after the war and in 1956, formed the COOP known as *The Livingston Farmers Association (LFA)*.



*Today LFA owns a plant for processing almonds and sweet potatoes on Eucalyptus and Sultana*

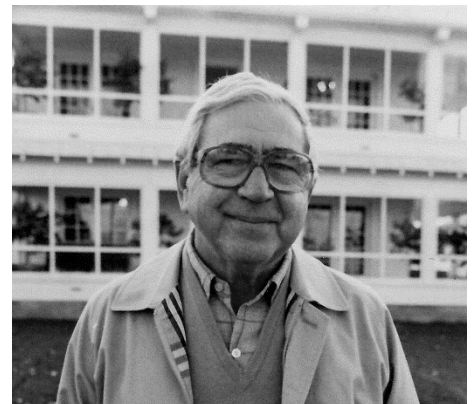
### Arakelian Farms

In 1916, Harry Arakelian came to Livingston looking for the ideal place to grow raisins. He found everything to his liking in Livingston. In 1923 the raisin packing business was started and named Harry Arakelian and Son, the son being John H. Arakelian. They grew raisins and other dried fruits. In the late 1970's production moved to almonds. In 1987, Del Rio Nut Company was incorporated as the marketing arm of Arakelian Farms' almond production. Today Arakelian Farms is led by Harry Arakelians grandson and John H. Arakelians son David Arakelian.



### Joseph Gallo Farms

Joseph Gallo Farms was founded .in 1946 just west of Livingston by Joseph Edward Gallo after returning from World War II. By the 1970s, Mr. Gallo began developing huge swaths of land. In 1979 he started a dairy with 4,000 cows. After working in the dairy business Mr. Gallo and his son Michael built the company's cheese plant in 1982. By 1983 Gallo Farms began producing a line of cheeses. His company has since become one of California's largest cheese makers, operating five dairies on about 12,500 acres. In 1995, Successful Farming Magazine called Joseph Gallo Farms "America's largest dairy farm."



After working in the dairy business, Gallo and son Michael built the company's cheese plant in 1982. It is currently in the third generation as a family-owned and operated business.

## Foster Farm

Foster Farms was established in 1939 by Max and Verda Foster. They began by investing \$1,000 into a farm in Modesto California, on which they raised turkeys. The back porch was Max's office and the first hatchery was built next to their bedroom so the eggs could get constant care. In 1942, Max quit his day job as a reporter and city editor for the Modesto Bee. Around this time, the Fosters expanded into raising cattle and chickens. As the business grew, the Fosters acquired another farm and a feed mill in the 1950s. The feed mill allowed the company some

independence from outside feed contracts. In 1959, Foster Farms acquired the Sunland Poultry processing plant in Livingston, and in 1960, the company's headquarters was moved there from Modesto. Livestock were slaughtered, processed, and packaged at the Livingston plant on an assembly line. Foster Farms jobs have been an open door for employment for Livingston for years.



## E & J Gallo Winery

Ernest and Julio Gallo started their world famous winery in the fall of 1933, following the repeal of Prohibition. Ernest and Julio were competing against larger, more established, and better financed companies, including more than 800 wine companies established in California in the first few years after the repeal of Prohibition. Their starting capital was less than \$6,000, with \$5,000 of that borrowed by Ernest from his mother-in-law, Teresa Franzia. The brothers learned the craft of commercial winemaking by reading old, pre-Prohibition pamphlets published by the University of California which they retrieved from the basement of the Modesto Public Library. Julio was focused on the production of wine, and Ernest on its sale.<sup>[9]</sup> They had just one tractor, and would run it permanently on 12/12 hour shifts. On the first year of activity, the brothers had produced 177,000 gallons of wine. E&J Gallo purchased thousands of acres in Livingston in the 1940s and built the Livingston Winery in 1970 moving their winemaking and distillery operations to Livingston. Livingston winery is the largest crush facility in the world and processes 600 tons of grapes per year which equates to 200 million gallons of wine.

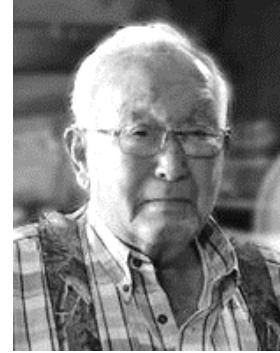


## We Must Not Miss the Sweet Potato

Livingston has been the "Self Proclaimed" Sweet Potato Capitol of the World and has been an important part of Livingston's agriculture since the early 1900s. There are many family names familiar to the Sweet Potato industry such as the Vieira Family, Dallas Family, Yagi Family, Garcia Family, Estrada Family, Silva Family, Angelakis Family, Jantz Family, Koehn Family and the Silveira Family to name a few. This article was written in November, 1995 dedicated to the Livingston Chronicle by San Francisco Gate writer Sibella Kraus.

For many families, eating sweet potatoes at Thanksgiving and Christmas is a long-standing tradition. For several families in Merced County, however, growing sweet potatoes has become an equally cherished link with the past. For Tom Nakashima and Joe Alvernaz, friends since the 1950s, this farming tradition dates back almost a hundred years.

Nakashima carries on the work of his father, who was part of the Yamato Colony -- an enclave of Japanese immigrants founded in Livingston in 1906. Alvernaz, too, follows his father, who went to Livingston in 1914 to join a Portuguese farming community established in the late 1800s. It was a time when immigrants from the Azores came to work on the huge sheep and cattle ranches that were then the hallmark of Central California agriculture.



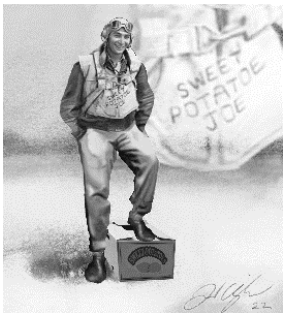
*Tom Nakashima*

Compared with the rich alluvial soils found in much of the rest of Central Valley, the fine sandy soil around Livingston did not look promising. But underlying these sandy soils -- almost like beach sand in places -- was a water table easily accessible by artesian wells.

The early Portuguese planted sweet potatoes from the start. In the process, they established Livingston as the heart of California's high-quality sweet potato industry.

"Sweet potatoes bought my parents their land," says Alvernaz. When he was growing up, early in the century, there were more than a hundred Portuguese families in the Livingston area. Most had small farms, about 40 acres big. "You could live on sweet potatoes and milk," Alvernaz recalls.

In the '20s and '30s, some 13,000 acres around Livingston were planted with sweet potatoes. That's down to about 8,000 today, but those acres are the major source of sweet potatoes for the Pacific Coast market (the bulk of U.S. sweet potatoes are still grown in the South).



And Alvernaz, who acquired the nickname "Sweet Potato Joe" from a popular song in the '40s, is one of the area's major producers: He and his wife, Florence, have been farming for 50 years, and his two sons now work with their parents.

Sweet potatoes have also played a major part in the prosperity of Livingston's Japanese American farming community. After their return from World War II internment camps, a number of Japanese American families turned to sweet potatoes as a cash crop to help reestablish their farms.

But the fact that they had farms to return to at all was a testament to their strong sense of community. Of the 125 or so families that made up the Yamato Colony in 1940, most were members of the Livingston Growers' Association. Along with the Livingston Japanese Methodist Church, the association was the center of business and social life. When they were forced to leave in early 1942, the families hired a manager to run their farms.

Tom Nakashima went to high school in the Amache Relocation Center in Colorado, where his family was interned during the war. When he returned to Livingston, his family's 20-acre farm was -- like most properties owned by Japanese Americans -- in poor shape. Despite the manager, many houses were run-down; most vines and orchards, which had supplied the primary crops, were untended. But at least the farms were intact.

"My dad was bitter, and after a while he went to Japan to retire," says Nakashima. "It was easier for us young people to adapt, but really tough on the old people." He took over management of the family farm after returning from the University of California at Davis in 1947 and married his wife, Caroline, in 1951. She's kept the farm books ever since.

In the 1950s, Nakashima rented out some of his land to Joe Alvernaz, who planted sweet potatoes on a

crop-share arrangement. Nakashima soon recognized the crop's value and started planting sweet potatoes himself. Today, he harvests more than 300 acres of sweet potatoes.

In late October, the end of the two-month harvest period for sweet potatoes, the fields awaiting harvest are a tangle of low-growing vines with wiry stems, fleshy leaves and heavy magenta roots.

Harvesting machines -- tractor-pulled work stations where 10 men sort and size the potatoes as they are pulled out of the ground -- toil slowly down the long rows of vines. After they pass, swarms of blackbirds alight to feast on the worms and other insects.

About 10 years ago, Nakashima converted half his sweet potato acreage to organic practices. "It just seemed like things were going that way," he says with characteristic understatement. He gets a premium of about 20 percent for his organic crop, about half of which he sells to baby food processors.

### SWEET POTATO PIE

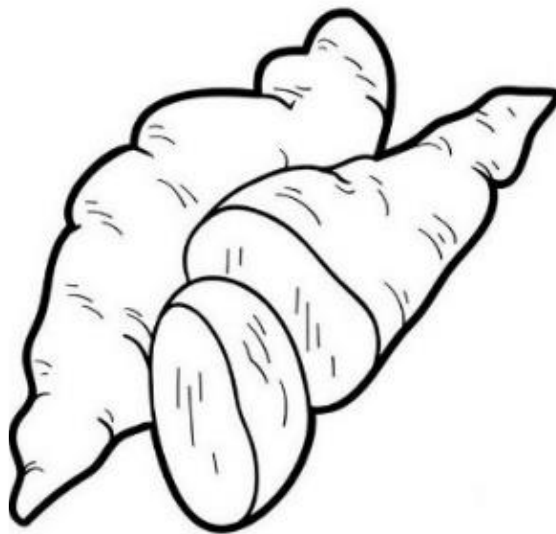
This dense, rich dessert is fondly known in the South as yam pie.

#### INGREDIENTS:

-- 2 cups mashed cooked Garnet yams (cook by either baking or steaming) -- 3/4 cup dark brown sugar -- 3 eggs -- 1 teaspoon cinnamon -- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg -- 1/4 teaspoon salt -- 1 teaspoon vanilla -- 1 tablespoon dark rum -- 1 tablespoon flour -- 1 1/4 cups milk or half-and-half -- 4 tablespoons melted butter, cooled -- A 10-inch pie shell, lightly baked

INSTRUCTIONS: Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

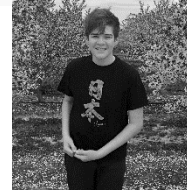
Combine the mashed yams and sugar in a bowl; mix well. Beat in the eggs, spices, salt, vanilla, rum and flour. Stir in the milk and melted butter. Pour the filling into the pie shell and bake for 45 minutes, or until the filling is firmly set.



## Families from around the World Settle in Livingston

### First Japanese Family to Livingston **Seinosuke Okuye**

written by Rikio Sauter, Great Great Grandson of Seinosuke Okuye



The first members of the Okuye family came to Livingston in 1907. Seinosuke Okuye was a son of a samurai and was a wealthy civil engineer, and he came with his wife Take, son Kiyoshi who was 14 years old at the time, niece, and the son of a friend. He was a Christian and wanted to live in a Christian community and country. He also had some charities in Japan, and hoped that the earnings from the farm would help support them.

Seinosuke Okuye heard about “The Yamato Colony” in Livingston, and came to check the location out. He also visited Yosemite and thought it was a sign from God to move here. He wrote in his diary “...When I saw the magnificent scenery of Yosemite I felt as though I had been given a sign. The sight captured my heart and made me feel the great power of God...”

Seinosuke and his family bought farmland, and newly arriving Japanese people who could not afford to buy their own farms lived and worked on the Okuye farm until they could buy their own. There were thirteen houses for them all to live on his property.



Okuye farm, house and water tower.

Kiyoshi ran the farm after Seinosuke passed away in 1938. Kiyoshi and wife Chiyo had 4 children Ruth, Ben, Sam, and Paul. During World War II all of the Japanese Americans were put into internment camps, but many people in the Yamato Colony hired someone to manage their farms while they were gone. They were interned at the Amache Camp in Colorado for three years. Ben and Sam both fought during the war; Ben in the 442<sup>nd</sup>, and Sam in intelligence. My grandfather Paul was only 9 years old and 12 years old when they were finally able to return. They were extremely lucky to have their homes to return to, although they were damaged in their absence.

When they came back, first Kiyoshi resumed farming, then one of his sons, Sam. When Sam suddenly passed away in 1980 at age 54, Paul moved up from Santa Barbara to take over the family farm with his wife Jean, son Alan, and daughter Sheryl, my mother.



Kiyoshi, Ben, Seinosuke, Chiyo, Paul, Ruth, Ben in front of the Okuye house which still stands on Olive Ave on the Family Farm

It was a difficult adjustment for them since they did not know anything about farming, but the strong community ties with the other Yamato Colony members supported them and neighbors helped them to learn how to farm and succeed. They could not have done the challenging farm work and made the transition from their life in Santa Barbara to the life of an almond farmer without help from the community. Paul had also been recently diagnosed with early onset Parkinson’s disease at age 46, so

he also had many challenges trying to do the physical labor with his limited physical capabilities due to the disease. It was a difficult time for the family, but they worked hard together to be able to keep the family farm. Alan and my mother Sheryl left for college and my grandparents continued on their own and continued to be successful farmers.

My grandfather Paul passed away in 2001, and my grandmother Jean, who had by this time been doing the majority of the farming anyway due to his disease, continued on her own until 2005. She convinced my father, who is from Germany, to come take over the farm and learn from her about farming while she was still alive. In 2005, my mother, father, and two older sisters moved to our family farm from France where they had been living. My father now runs the farm.

I don't know if I will end up farming but I can't imagine selling my family farm that has been in my family for five generations. There have been so much blood, sweat, and tears put into this farm, that we are planning on keeping it as long as we can; it is truly a labor of love.

## First Filipino Family to Livingston

### **Ceferino and Apolonia Jamero**

Written by Luna and Herb Jamero children of Ceferino and Apolonia, 2022

The Jamero Family has been part of Livingston's history since the 1940s. Ceferino immigrated from the Philippines to Hawaii where he worked in the plantations for a brief time. He arrived in the United States during the mid-1920s. Apolonia arrived a few years later. They were town mates from Garcia-Hernandez, Bohol and both were seeking a better life. After a brief reunion, they married in Sonora, California in November of 1929.

They experienced many hardships and lived a migratory life working in the fields of Central California. Times were hard during the Depression and afterwards but they survived the socio-economic obstacles. During 1944, they bought a home on forty-acres located on Magnolia Avenue in Livingston. By this time, they had six children with two more to follow.

They operated their labor camp on Magnolia Avenue for several years. Their town mates from Bohol were regulars at the camp. Papa Jamero was the labor contractor and cook. Mama Jamero took care of the business needs of running the camp along with taking care of her growing family. They also raised various crops and had a twenty-acre grape vineyard for several years. All of their children attended and graduated from the elementary and high schools in Livingston. Most of them went on to obtain their college degrees as well.

Mama Jamero found time to be active in the local community. She was active in the Livingston PTA, the Livingston Chamber of Commerce and in the development of the Livingston Community Health Clinic. She and Papa Jamero also instilled in their children the importance of knowing our Filipino heritage. Performance of Filipino Folk dances were held at various school and community events for many years. They were proud to be Filipino Americans and content with their life in Livingston especially after the labor camp closed and their children were off living their own lives. One memorable and proud moment was when Mama Jamero was named the Grand Marshall of the Veteran's Day



Parade in Livingston in 1970. Her family watched proudly as she waved from the convertible she rode in during the parade and when she gave a speech at the Memorial Park afterwards.

The property on Magnolia Avenue is still home to the Jamero Family. Currently, three of their children live on the property. Family gatherings continue to take place there as well. When the City of Livingston dedicated the "larger than life cut out figure" of Mama Jamero in May of 2021, family and friends gathered taking pride that she represented the contributions of Filipinos in the growth of the City of Livingston.

First Portuguese to Come to Livingston

## **Jose Cabral**

written by Matt Cabral, Jose Cabral's Great Grandson

In January of 1910, Jose Cabral arrived in the United States from a small group of Portuguese islands known as the Azore Islands. Many families of the islands lived very simple lives. Most men were fisherman by trade. Families typically owned very small parcels of land and may have owned cattle however it was not common for families to own more than one or two cows; unlike the massive dairy operations we see today.



In August of 1918 from San Pablo Contra Costa County, Mr. and Mrs. Jose S Cabral joined into partnership with six other Portuguese dairymen. They originally drove their dairy cattle from Newman to Livingston taking 2 days to do so. They stopped in Stevinson overnight to rest and milk the cows and then continued with their herd of about 200 head up the old highway 99 across the Merced River Bridge towards the William Collier ranch.

As the herd grew additional cattle were moved in by rail, unloaded in Livingston stock corrals on D Street and then were driven across the river to the ranch. The Collier Ranch at that time consisted of about 1,000 acres. It was seeded to alfalfa in the low spots and there were hundreds of oak trees. The Cabral's had 3 children 2 boys and a girl, Frank, Joe and Mary. All three grew up on the ranch. They rented the land from the Colliers for \$10 per acre per year.

In those days the surrounding uncultivated fields were all tumbleweeds and gum weeds and jack rabbits ran by the thousands. There was no electricity on the farms and the work was done by horse drawn plows and scrapers. Although Mr. Cabral did not speak English there were very nice people who would translate and step in to help communicate.





*Jose Cabral, daughter Mamie and John Sequierra*

Jose Cabral eventually broke away from the Collier ranch partnership and with his two sons Frank and Joe, moved their cows to a ranch on Dwight Way. In 1960 Frank and Joe parted ways from their operation, Frank remaining on Dwight Way and Joe moving to a ranch on Livingston-Cressey Rd. working with John Sequierra. In December of 1963, Jose passed away at the age of 73.

Mr. and Mrs. Cabral's three children grew up and started families in the area.

Mary, known as Mamie to many, married Joe Trindade. Their only child, Frank Trindade was tragically killed at a young age in a tractor accident in 1943. Frank Cabral married Marie Deniz and had 3 children, Louie, Patricia and Celeste. Joe Cabral married Natalie Sequierra and had 2 children, Christine and Gary.

Although many of the descendants of the original Portuguese immigrants moved on out of the dairy industry, several remain in agriculture, including Jose Cabral's grandson Gary and his son Eric.

Since 1927 (and continues today each July) the Portuguese people organize a celebration which is a tradition brought from Portugal and the Azore Islands. It consists of a large parade-like procession to St. Jude Thaddeus Catholic Church for a thanksgiving Mass, followed by a free public dinner of "sopas." Two dances are usually held, one preceding and one following the celebration. Many families maintain ties with relative in the old country. Today people still immigrate from the Azores to join their relatives in the Livingston area.

### First Greeks to Livingston

## Hardamos and Louise Siphakis

*as told by Peggy Joseph Potter and many of the Joseph Family*



*Hardamos Siphakis 1906*

Harry (Hardamos) and Louise Joseph (Siphakis) along with their four children, Cleo, George Athena and Alex arrived on October 15, 1915. The family rented their first ranch from Kirtner Realty, the old Hammatt Ranch located on Hammatt Road. There were two other Greek Families, also from Crete, Greece renting in the area. They were George Tavernas and Stratie Stavreanoudakis. George and Yiakavina Tavernas later purchased property in Denair where their grandsons still farm today. Stratie later moved to Hilmar/Turlock area and his nephews are also still faming in Hilmar.



*Louise and Harry Siphakis 1911*

The Joseph homestead property, which included 7 acres, was purchased on February 22, 1922. John Groom was the carpenter who built our home and later built the 5 rentals, the barn and bunkhouses. The Josephs planted the first pistachio trees in the valley. Horticulturalists from the Agricultural Department in

Modesto came to see the trees. Unfortunately at that time there was not a way to process the pistachio nuts.

Stavros Siphakis (Steve Joseph) was the first Greek-American born in Livingston in 1919, followed by siblings Georgia, Zoie and Harriet.



First Greek Wedding in Livingston  
Bill Katsounakis & Cleo Joseph

The Katsounakis Wedding at the Joseph Ranch was the first Greek wedding to occur in Livingston.

Harry had many jobs while raising his family. He was Livingston's first sanitation man. When Herb Swain was the water superintendent. He hired Harry to grade the streets of Livingston with his horses. Harry was also the first deliveryman. When freight was brought into the town on the train, he would make the deliveries to the local businesses. Sons Steve and Alex remember the fun they had riding with their Dad on his deliveries.



Steve Joseph child & Stratie Stavreanoudakis



Marriage of Anthony & Mary (Gianetti) Viotaris  
Back Row: Harry (Bill) Joseph, Frank (Harmon) Bill, Mike (Archie) Myrionidis, Edward (Kostas) John (Joe) Theodoridis, John Joseph, George (Joe) Myrionidis, Edward (Kostas) John (Joe) Theodoridis, Cleo Joseph, Steve Joseph



Bailing hay was one of Harry's big jobs. He had bailers and workers who worked from Le Grand to the West Sid. Louise would prepare lunches and deliver them to the workers. In 1939, Harry and son George became partners with Roy M. Day in the dairy business. The dairy was located on Peach Avenue. George lived on

the dairy with his family and was responsible for the daily operation of the dairy. The dairy business closed in 1944.

In 1943 Harry and George purchase 40 acres from F Street to Peach Avenue for farming. The property was later divided into 2 – 20 acre parcels. Son, Steve had the 20 acres from F Street to Park and son George from Park to Peach Avenue. Much later Steve sold his property to the School District for Campus Park School. In 1947 Harry and George went into business together again. They opened Joseph Brother Tractor & Implement, which was located on F Street. The original building is still there today. Joseph Brothers Tractor & Implement closed in 1965.



Joseph Brothers Tractors

Through the years the Joseph Family had 26 grandchildren and 80 great grandchildren who all have fond memories of Livingston early days. Two streets in Livingston come from this family, One is Joseph Street and the other is Virginia Street after George Josephs wife Virginia DiBartolo. Peggy Joseph Potter (Harry's Granddaughter, Steve Joseph's daughter) a second generation Livingstonian states, "some of the events relevant to the memories of many, some of the others were the Christmas Parade and the fire department throwing out candy, the gift bag of apple and candies received at the Court Theater. The snake dance down 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and the bon fire before the home coming game. We also loved the Pet and Veteran's Parades. Growing up in Livingston was our version of Mayberry. It was clean, safe and people felt they were on an equal standing with each other. We have many fond memories and are glad to share our experiences of being either the children or grandchildren of first generation Americans.

The First Mexicans to Livingston  
**Jose Zapien**

*As told by Isabel Todd and Gracie Sapien Jose's Great Great Grandfather*

Catalina Zapien Gonzales Farfan was born in the town of Churintzio in the State of Michoacan, Mexico, Her father, Jose Zapien, had been coming to the San Joaquin Valley since 1889. He worked here and then returned to his native country several times. Finally, in 1917 he went back to Mexico to bring his family permanently to California, but during preparation to leave, he suddenly fell ill and within a few days he died.

Upon hearing of this Mrs. Farfan's uncle, who was working for the railroad, sent word for the widow and her children to come to Livingston. Mrs. Farfan remembers crossing the border at El Paso, Texas, February 7, 1919, because she was to have her fifth birthday the following month.

Mrs. Zapien and her family lived in a small house near her brother and sister-in-law, but life was going to be very difficult for them. The only way she could make a living was to cook for the workers who were following the crops. Because most of the men had left their families behind as her husband had done, they were happy to pay to have their clothes washed and ironed, but when the crops were finished for the year, the workers left and so did her source of income.

"We stayed to ourselves. I want you to understand me clearly because it is very important. It is not like some young people say, that we were not wanted here. The American people were nice to us, but we were shy because we could not speak their language. When we went to town to shop, the people were friendly and helpful. But the women did not go to visit American neighbor ladies because, what would they talk about?"



*Conrad Zapien, Jose's Brother and  
Chloe Zapien Jose's wife.*

Catalina Zapien married her first husband, Robert Gonzales, in 1932 and soon after, their three children were born. Few years later when the children started school she and her husband practiced speaking English to each other but, she emphasizes, they always spoke Spanish at home. They wanted the children to think of Spanish as their own language.

Their oldest son, Robert, lived in LA in the years after serving in the Air Force. In LA he worked for a company that made x-rays. When returning to Livingston he was employed by the City of Livingston. Robert worked taking care of the City parks. He is the only sibling to still reside in Livingston. (2022)



*Robert, Aurora, Ralph Gonzales*



*Robert and Catalina Gonzales  
Wedding 1932*

Their daughter Aurora Gonzales Garcia, began working for Dr. Wolohan after graduating from LHS. She also continued to work in the health services, Aurora



*Back Robert and Ralph Front, Catalina and Aurora*

became CEO of Livingston Medical Group. She married Guadalupe Garcia who was a barber for many years. Both Aurora and Guadalupe served the community most of their lives.



*Aurora Gonzales Garcia and Husband Lupe Garcia*

Their youngest son Ralph, worked several years for Woody's Poultry in Livingston and retired from Proctor & Gamble in Modesto. He resides in Atwater with his wife, Rose.



*Catalina and Manuel Farfan*

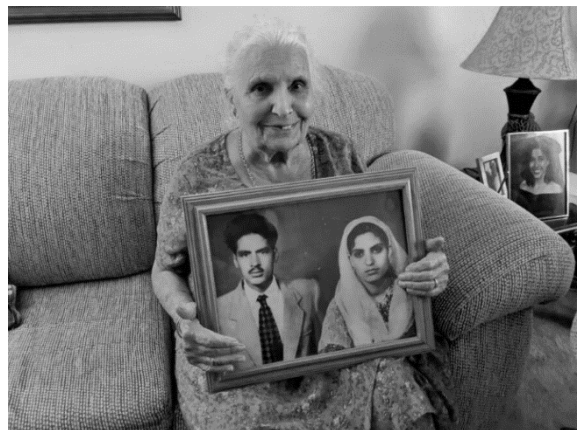
Catalina remarried after many years of being a widow and lived with her husband Manuel B. Farfan. Manuel worked at Foster Farms as a knife sharpener for several years before retiring. Catalina passed away in 1992, but leaves 3 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and 10 great great grandchildren, of which many still reside in Livingston.

**First Sikh to Livingston  
Sarwan Singh Samra**

*By Gurpal Samra Sarwan Singh Samra's son*

50 years ago (1972) an Indian family from Punjab left everything they knew and departed for the US. Sanwar Singh Samra and his wife Harjit were farmers in India They came with 2 sons 7 & 9 years old. An interview with Gurpal Samra the son of Sanwar and Harjit states "My Father My Mother my Brother and myself came to Livingston. Gurpal was nine, his brother seven. "If that doesn't show courage, I don't know what does," he said. "When you've got to move to a different country and don't even know anything about it, it's courage."

Harjit Samra's husband, Sarwan Singh Samra, died earlier this year (2022).



Gurpal's father, Sarwan Singh Samra, died in February. But his mother, Harjit Samra, lives with her son and his family. And the 87-year-old still remembers the move. "When we came here, it was nice but we were scared because there was nobody to talk to," she said in Punjabi.

In 1970, back in Punjab, Harjit and her husband were farmers. They didn't have a bad life, but they wanted more opportunities for their sons. Word had gotten to them that an Indian family had found well-paying jobs at that Foster Farms chicken processing plant and had made a home near Livingston, in the community of Winton. So they crossed the ocean to try it out. Just two days after arriving, the two parents found themselves on the assembly line, cutting and packaging chickens—even though they were vegetarians. "I did not like working in the beginning," she said. "First three days, I didn't eat at all."

They'd both end up keeping those jobs for more than 25 years. They'd process chickens at night, and by day they were farm workers picking peaches. Eventually they bought a house, then a farm, then began renting houses as landlords. They prospered. They told friends and family back home about Livingston, who would make the same move and then tell other friends and family.

Today, Gurpal estimates Punjabis make up nearly a fifth of the town – thousands of farmers, farmworkers, truckers, and business owners. They built two Sikh temples known as Gurdwaras. Harjit got to watch as her sons grew up, went to college, and became active members of their community. "I wouldn't give anything up for what I have now," she said. Now, two more generations of Samras are thriving. Gurpal has three kids, all in their 20s, and a one-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter he Facetimes with every night.



Gurpal's youngest daughter, Harleen, is 21, and is studying to be a psychologist. Unlike her parents and grandparents, she and her siblings never had to work the fields or process chickens. "I don't think I could handle it, which is kind of embarrassing to say, but I feel like it's kind of the sacrifice they made," she said. "They did that so that me and my siblings wouldn't have to."

Harleen is grateful to study Spanish, to work at a makeup store, and to go to college, among other opportunities. And she knows it's all because her grandparents took a leap into the abyss by coming here with no certainty about their future. "I feel like I've lived such a different life that I can't even imagine that," she said.



None of this would have been possible without another story of courage, however, and that is by Harleen's mother, Amarjit Samra. Her marriage to Gurpal was arranged in 1994. He had been living here for decades, but she had only ever known India. She was in her 20s and had gone to college there. Coming here was a giant leap for her as well, and she was scared. "And nervous too, my family not here, nobody, I'm lonely," she said.



For 20 years she was a stay-at-home mom. Her first job was also at Foster Farms, then she recently left it for something new. Now, she works early mornings at a laundromat, and in her free time she's teaching herself Spanish so she can communicate with some of the town's other immigrants. She actually nodded off while I spoke to her husband. "You're talking, I'm sleeping here," she laughed.

Amarjit misses her family in India. She's been back to visit only once. Still, she says she's at home in Livingston, straddling the line between Western and Indian cultures. She made sure her kids learned Punjabi and went to the Gurdwara, and she's so excited about having a granddaughter. "She hugs, kisses, flying kisses," she laughed. "She's so cute." Amarjit is making sure that she learns Punjabi, too.

## **The Livingston Mennonite Community First Mennonite Families**

*as told by Samuel J Steiner "Livingston Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (Livingston California, USA)." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia online. December 2020, also includes experts from the Alfred Koehn History, Leona Nichols.*

This Community started like most immigrant stories, coming over to American for a better life Seeking to escape persecution for their beliefs. Mennonites from Switzerland and south Germany, as well as Russia began immigrating to Pennsylvania in 1683. Most settled in the mid-west, but with harsh winters making farming hard and finding land of their own difficult. They started moving west for better opportunities. This is the beginning of their story here in Livingston California. These are faithful people, with everything they do revolving around Church and family. Some of the oldest families here stories start very similarly. The Koehn's arriving in the area in 1924 the year the Livingston Water Tower was raised, The Friesen's and The Esau's.

Most of these family's migrated this way looking for steady work, a place to buy land of their own and share their faith with their neighbors. The beginning of their story starts with establishing a church.

The Livingston Mennonite Brethren Church, Livingston, California, was organized on 9 June 1922, with A. Z. Sawatzky as temporary leader. In May 1927 the church attendance was around 100. J. M. Ens then became the leader. In the following years the people that had moved to Livingston settled more in the direction of Winton, and the two groups then organized as the Winton Mennonite Brethren Church, discontinuing Livingston.



*Winton Mennonite Brethren Church 1947 - 1952*

The Livingston Church of God in Christ, Mennonite congregation in Livingston, California, USA was established in 1943. The congregation started when the Winton congregation was becoming full. Instead of enlarging the Winton facility, the decision was to build another church building in the Livingston area, about seven miles away. The Peach Avenue property was purchased at that time.



The new congregation held the first service in the basement of the new building on April 2, 1944, membership at this time was 91. By the 1960s, a new facility was needed for the growing numbers, and a new building with a 500-seat capacity was dedicated on August 20, 1961. An addition was completed in 1969 with further additions in 1982/83 and 1994.

As the need grew to help within their community these families pledged to help build and other families would loan to meet costs for projects. These families referred to it as a blessing for being able to afford this or God's blessing with certain abilities to lend a helping hand in different areas. This Community has worked and continues to work in Livingston, whether it is for themselves or others.



When a long standing family in Livingston saw the need to help the elderly, Livingston gained The Grace Nursing Home, located next to the church, opened in 1959 with the Livingston and Winton congregations' support. It was able to accommodate 16 residents. By 2000 it had accommodations for 33 persons. In 2020 the facility was known as Grace Home and offered both Long Term Care and Independent Living options.

For their children, wanting to keep them in their beliefs these faithful people built The Longview Mennonite School in 1974 with 78 students and three teachers. This school still runs today.



As of 2020 the congregation was part of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. The ministers were Caleb Koehn, David E. Koehn, Doug Koehn, Sheldon Koehn, and Keith Koehn. This group is another part of Livingston's rich history and community that works to make this a special place to live.

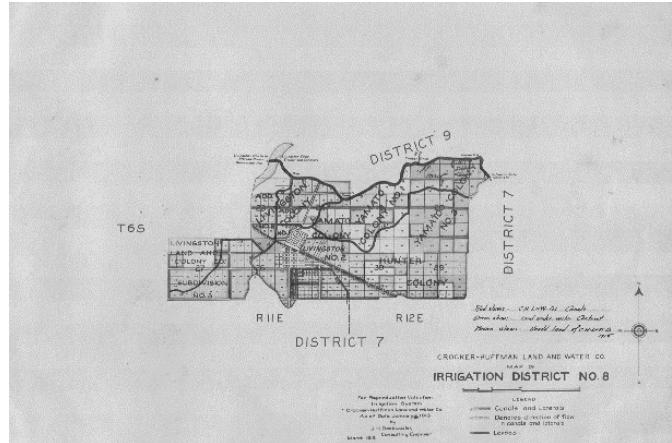


### Yamato Colony

Yamato Colony, California was a Japanese agricultural community in Livingston, California, United States. The Japanese farmers were instrumental in founding the Livingston Farmers Association.

The Yamato Colony was established by Kyutaro Abiko, who purchased 3,200 acres in Livingston through his American Land and Produce Company, and then encouraged Japanese farmers from Wakayama and Chiba prefectures to settle there. Most of the settlers from Chiba eventually left the colony. Abiko sold the land to the farmers in 40-acre plots for \$35.00 per acre. He arranged for a Japanese bank he was associated with to provide five-year loans for the purchase of the farms. Abiko is reported to have intended the colony to be a "Japanese Christian utopian colony", free of the gambling and dissolution that some of his recruits were involved with in Japan. While the

colony was not advertised as "Christian", most of the settlers did become Christian. The first settler arrived in 1906, and by 1908 the community had grown to a population of 30. The settlers originally planted peach trees and grape vines. One resident planted a crop of eggplants that sold well in San Francisco, and other settlers began raising vegetables, including sweet potatoes, asparagus, tomatoes and melons, which provided incomes while waiting for the trees and vines to mature. The Japanese settlers made an effort to fit in with the existing community by confining their economic activities to farming and patronizing European-American merchants. The new community had to overcome wind and water supply problems. The bank Abiko had recruited to finance the settlers failed, creating financial problems for the colony. A food buying cooperative was founded in 1910. The colony began to prosper with the formation of the Livingston Cooperative Society, a marketing cooperative, in 1914. A packing shed and a Methodist church were built in 1917. In 1927, the marketing cooperative split into the Livingston Fruit Growers Association and the Livingston Fruit Exchange. There were a reported 69 Japanese families in the Yamato Colony in 1940, farming more than 3,700 acres.

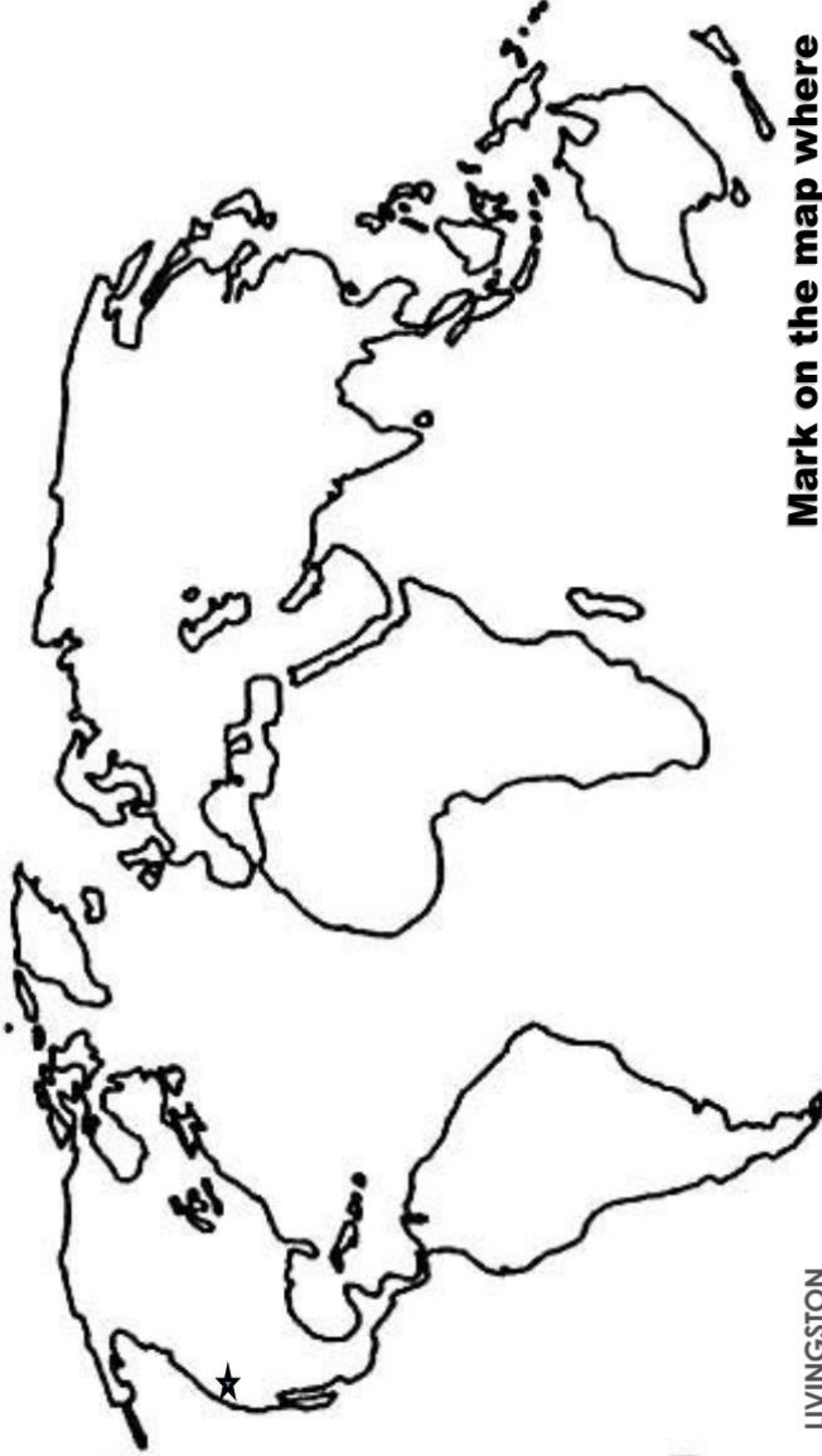


At the beginning of World War II, in anticipation of internment, most of the residents of Yamato and two other colonies established by Abiko, Cressey, and Cortez, formed a corporation headed by a European-American to hold their property. As a result, the Japanese residents of Yamato were able to reclaim their property after the war. The two cooperatives were re-united in 1956 as the Livingston Farmer's Association. The members of the association began replacing peach trees and grape vines with almond trees, and by 1976 the majority of the acreage held by members of the association was in almonds. As of 2004, 57 of the 65 members of the association were Nisei.

Most of the original area of the colony is now part of the city of Livingston. Yamato Colony Elementary, operated by the Livingston Union School District, was opened in 1990.



# Many Roads Lead to Livingston



**Mark on the map where  
Livingston residents came from.  
Draw a lines from those places  
to Livingston.**

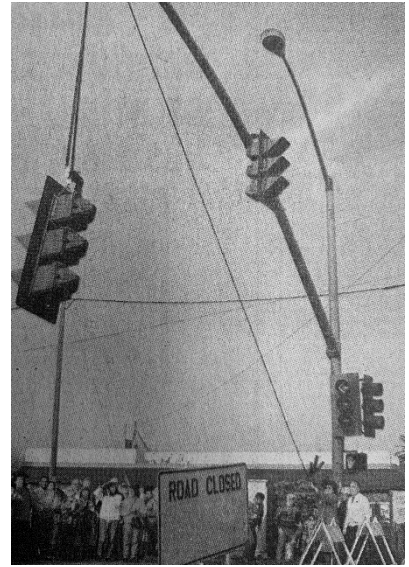


## Livingston the “Last Stop”



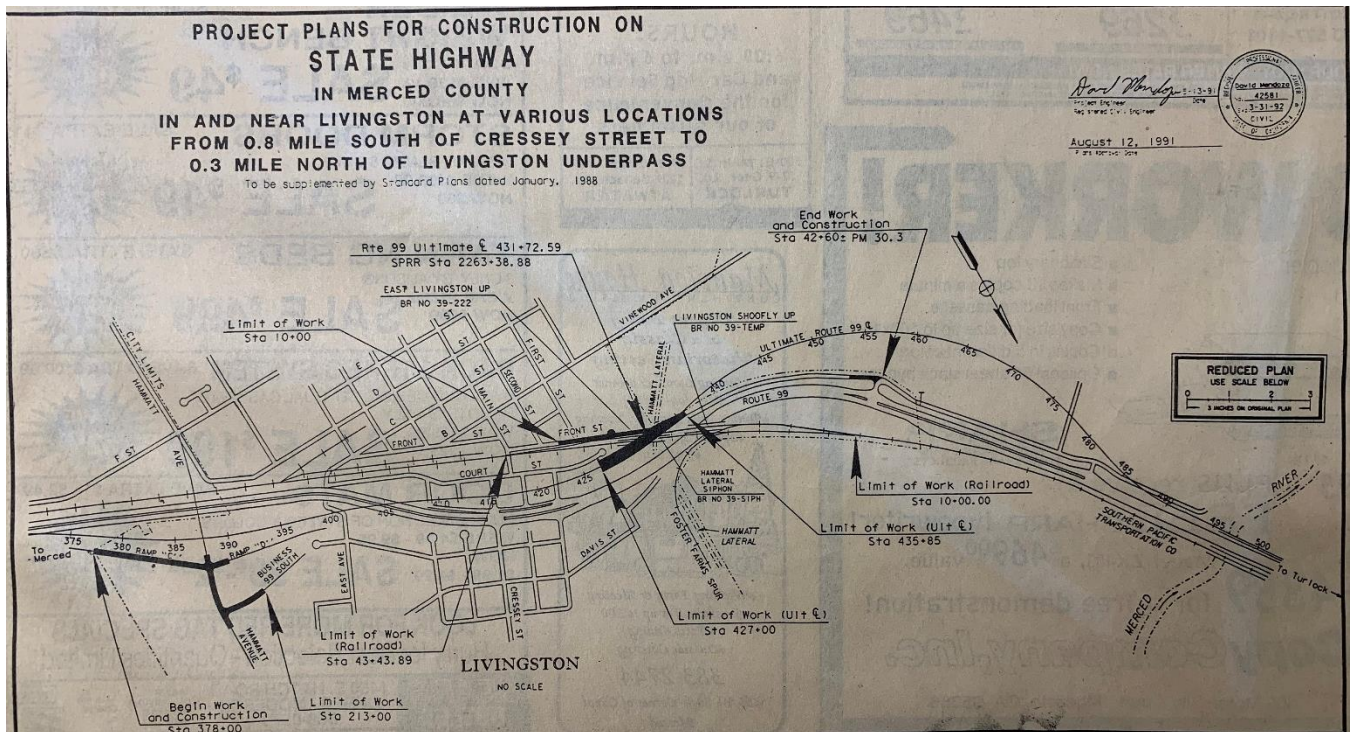
Many have seen the old stop light in front of the Historical Society Museum and probably wonder why it is there.

Livingston is on the alignment of what was US Route 99. When the US Route System was created during November 1926, US Route 99 was aligned through Livingston via what is now Court Street. US Route 99 moved to Campbell Boulevard when the Livingston Underpass was opened to traffic during February 1939. US Route 99 would be decommissioned in California by June 1965 and the highway on Campbell Boulevard would become part of California State Route 99. By the early 1990s Campbell Boulevard at Main Street in Livingston became the last location of a traffic light on CA 99 in the Wheeler Ridge-Sacramento corridor. The short approach to Main Street from CA 99 southbound on Campbell Avenue was notably hazardous due to the modern traffic approaching the traffic light with poor sight lines at high speeds.



The new freeway alignment of CA 99 in Livingston was scheduled to open fully during the following December. The San Francisco Gate article refers to CA 99 on Campbell Boulevard in Livingston as an infamous "Blood Alley" due to the high number of fatal accidents near the traffic light at Main Street.

Campbell Boulevard was bypassed by the current California State Route 99 freeway which opened during December 1996.



## How Livingston Downtown Has Changed

Once upon a time a long time ago Livingston's Main Street was lined with local family businesses. Whatever the community needed they could for the most part find it in the downtown business district of Livingston. Once "big box" companies moved into the region the small family business suffered and in many cases closed. Closing was due to a couple of reasons, #1 small family owned business could not compete with the "big box" pricing and #2 the huge selection of merchandise in its stores tend to draw consumers for a "one stop shop". "Big Box" stores were not the only reason for small family business closure, once the automobile entered the picture instead of blacksmith shops, garages opened for car repairs.

The business information listed below are from the 1940's and helped form our downtown history. Many of the excerpts were written in 1944 by Franklin S. Farquhar in his book, "History of Livingston California"

### Oldest Business

The oldest continuous business in town was Ecclefields. It started as a general store on November 4, 1871, by Edward J. Olds, it has continued through different owners and managements. Olds had partner named Barfield. In 1883 they sold to M. Goldman, who, the same year, sold to Zirker & Hammatt. In 1898 Zirker sold his interest to Frank E. Crowell, the firm name becoming Hammatt & Crowell. In 1909 Hammatt dropped out by selling his interest to William T. White, the firm name being changed to White & Crowell.



In 1923 the grocery department was sold to the Ecclefield Brothers, who occupied the old quarters. White & Crowell retained the dry goods and hardware departments and occupied the newly built store room, still under the trade name of White & Crowell, with Mr. Crowell as sole owner, Mr. White having dropped out of the business.

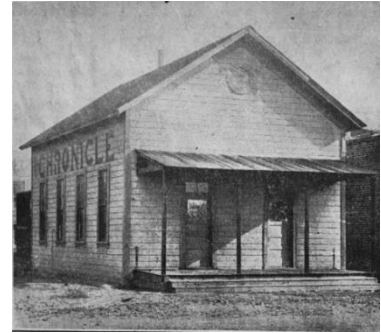
### The Warehouse

The oldest warehouse was originally built in 1868 by William J. Little, before the coming of the railway. At first it was used as a grain storage room before hauling the product to Dover, on the San Joaquin, to be shipped by steamboat to Bay points. Later, it handled all kinds of feeds for stock, and was also used as a storage room for farm machinery.

In 1883 Little sold the building to Cyrus Bliven, who later sold to Zirker & Hammatt. And still later Mr. Crowell became sole owner and at times its operator. It is now owned by his widow, Mrs. Pearl Crowell. After replacing the old structure by a new fireproof warehouse, it was leased to Fred H. Henneman, who transacts business in it under the name of the Livingston Warehouse.

### The Newspaper

The Livingston Chronicle, owned and operated by Elbert G. Adams was established here October 2, 1909, by Peter Higgins. Adams took it over in March, 1915, and has never missed an issue since. Under its present management the Chronicle has been a substantial asset to the community. (See special article on this business.) The Newspaper in 2022 is owned by McClatchy Newspapers and does not have any regular news pertaining to Livingston. The newspaper from 1911 to mid-1960 has been digitized and can be found on the City of Livingston website.



### The Drug Store

The local drug store was established by Alfred A Hoehn in the autumn of 1910. Hoehn sold to O. Glanville in about the year 1922. Other owners followed Glanville, but in 1929, W. V. Armstrong became the owner and operator. He improved on its capacity as a going drug store. In 1943 Armstrong sold to Ellis Virgo.



### Court Theater

Court Theater is the pioneer and was the only show house in town. It is really older than the date of construction on the front of the building, on Third street, indicates-1917. Albert Court Sr., founder, came to Livingston with a big part of his family in 1909, and lived on a farm north of town in the Japanese colony.

Not long after his arrival he held a silent movie-shows in the old town hall, on the north side. Later he bought a hall at the corner of third and B Streets.

Here he conducted his shows in temporary quarters until he built his new theater at

the time above mentioned. In this work he had as a companion and associate his son, A. Stanley Court.

After the father died in 1930 Stanley took over the entire management of the theater. In the early 40's the theater burned and in 1946 a new theater was built. The theater was a prize to the community and finally in 2014 due to deterioration and unaffordable costs to repair to make it "earthquake proof" the theater was torn down and a park takes its place.



### **Trigueiro's Store**

Before America's entrance into World War there were five grocery stores in town, all doing a good business. Soon after the war began three dropped out. The two remaining Ecclefields and Trigueiro.

Joe F. Trigueiro opened his first store in January 17, 1928, as manager of the branch store of J. L. Freitas of Turlock. Later he bought the store and took possession on January 1, 1939. His location is the Ward building at the north end of Third Street. Where Fiesta Market is 344 Main Street.

### **Bennight's 5, 10 and 15**

A newcomer to the city is the "5, 10 and 15c" store of Joseph F. Bennight. He came here with his family from Chehalis, Wash., and opened his popular store in the Ottman building in 1938. Later in the year 1943 he bought from Charles Ottman the old bakery building on Third Street. This was rejuvenated in time to move in on the first of the year 1944. Rite Aid sits on this property 500 N Main Street.



### **Beauty Parlors**

Adjoining the Bennight store on the south is the beauty Parlor of Miss Esther Ruth Stevens. She operated there for about three years. Upstairs in the back part of Virgo's Drug Store was another another beauty parlor, ran by Mrs. Rita Powell.

### **Morgan's Appliance Shop**

On the east side of Third street, in the Carlson building, built by the late Dr. G. C. Saunders, was the "Morgan's Appliance Shop" owned by A. L. Morgan. He was the successor B. G. Ramsey's hardware, paint supplies and furniture store. He took possession October 1, 1943. Besides keeping hardware, he sold athletic clothing and other supplies.

### **The Jewelry Man**

Adjoining the bank, in the Kohler building, was the watch and clock repair shop of J. H. Hoeppe. He made a specialty of fixing timepieces and repairing jewelry. He had been in the business about 13 years as of 1944. (Recently he bought the Kohler building.)

### **Roy's Store**

June 1. 1944 Edward Roy bought the supplies and fixtures of the old Stanley court store and soft drink emporium in the Court Building, at the corner of Third and B streets. He leased the room for a business to be known as "Roy's", a very plain and catchy slogan. He added some tables, counters and sold lunches, soft drinks, milk and hot coffee, and a partial line of groceries.

**Jack Gilbert's**

On Cressey Way, opposite the north end of the Crowell block, was the Fix-it Shop" of Jack Gilbert, who fixes everything fixable. He lives and operates his business in the building, built and owned by the late George K Simpson, who once operated a restaurant in it, and made it his place of residence.

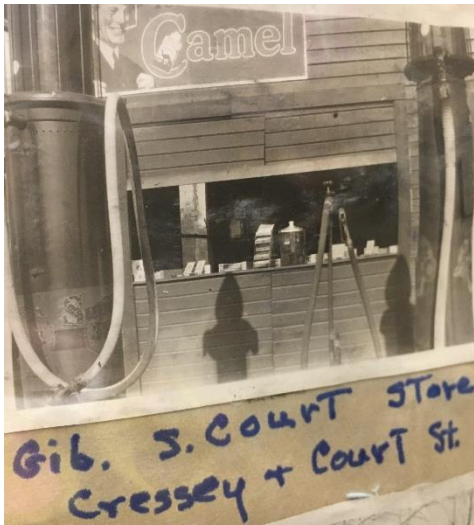


**The Shoe Shop**

Near the west end and in the Crowell Block is the shoe repair shop of Joe Machado, His is the only business of the kind now operating in Livingston and was kept so busy that the employees cannot keep up with the business.. He fixed the foot-wearing gear of all the population in and around the town.

**The Restaurants**

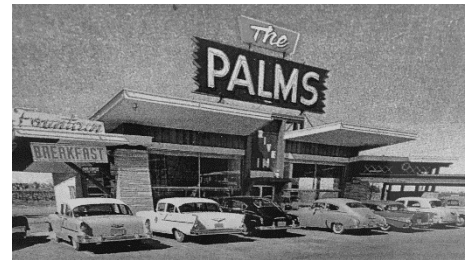
During its lifetime Livingston has had numerous restaurants serving the public. At one time as many as four were operating for a short period after the First World War. As of 1944, only two were left.



The “**Subway Café**” is the biggest, open night and day, on Highway No. 99. It was started by Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Brattin in 1938, following the rerouting of the highway through the city. The Brattin’s had been in business here for many years.

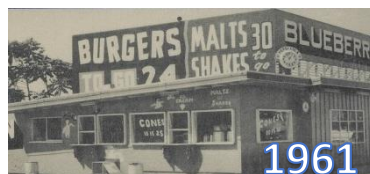
The other eating house is the old “**Gib Court Stand**” at the corner of Cressey Way and Court Street. For many years Gib Court sold fuel and ice supplies. Later he added his restaurant, finally dispensing with his supply department.

Many Restaurants have come and gone over the years such as the Rocket Café, The Palms, The Doll



*Located on Stefani and HWY 99 where the Livingston Cafe (Foster Farms)sits*

House Café and Blueberry Hill.



*Harry's Place Main Street*

### Packing Houses

Of the two large packing houses that once operated here the Japanese cooperative was managed by G. A. Momberg for the owners. This was built in 1917. The other packing house, operated here for many years by Frank Konno, is the Pacific Fruit Exchange, in a building on D Street, owned by Southern Pacific railway company.



### Department Store

Maler's Department Store, situated in the Crowell block, was the follow-up of the dry goods department of the old White & Crowell general store that operated here for so many years. Mr. Crowell sold the dry goods branch of his business to Leslie A. Reid of Atwater in 1939. Reid continued it here as a branch of his Atwater store.



### The Barbers

Clarence M, Baker is not only a native son but he is the pioneer barber of the city. He had been in business here a total of 35 years as of 1944, occupying the same location in the Crowell building since 1909.

George Burt came here from mid-California in 1939, having come into the stated from Oklahoma in 1936. With the help of his wife, licensed barber, he operated his shop in the old Bell building on Third Street. He has one son, Bob.

A new barber shop opened in 1944. It was located on West F Street and was named "Patzer's". John Patzer was the proprietor.



### Real Estate Agents

In the 1940's there were 2 real estate agents now called realtors. Gordon H Winton who came here in 1914 to work in the new First Bank of Livingston and closed doors, Bank of Italy takes over and renamed the Bank of America in 1928. Bank of America builds a new building in 1956 which is not the WestAmerica Bank. Winton Insurance Agency Buys the old bank building.

Real estate sales was a side issue with him then and he operated from his office in the Carlson building on Third Street, in connection with which he conducts the city's business as City Clerk.

The other realtor was Warren F. McConnell, who had an office in the alcove-room, fronting on Court Street, in the Crowell block, He is the successor of Baker Brothers, Harold and Harvey, who early in the 1920's, did an extensive business in the area.



*First Bank in Livingston, Bank of Livingston*

### The Lumber Yard

The local lumber yard was around for a long time. It was a branch yard of the Merced Lumber Company of Merced, and served Livingston for more than 40 years. M. F. Faria was the local manager.

### The Doctors, Dentists and Lawyers

These professions were once well represented in the early days of Livingston. According to population there have been as many lawyers, dentists and doctors here as any city in the state. None of them stayed permanently until the 1940's. At that time there were 2 doctors and one dentist.

The late Dr. G. C. Saunders was the first to locate here and hang out his M.D. sign. He came from Turlock in 1916, built himself a residence at the corner of Third and D streets.

### Ecclefields Grocery Store

Marion Ecclefield bought the grocery department of the old White & Crowell store. This store he operated in the middle of the Crowell block until July 28, 1939.







### Serv-All Market

Around 1953, the Jackman Family (Louie, Lil, Jacki & the twins, Jeannie & Janie) & the Knight Family (Frank, Marge, Frankie & Kristen) moved to Livingston to open up a grocery store & call it "Serv-All Market." At the time there was only one grocery store in town. Eventually a bigger & newer store was built around 1955 & was located at 549 Third St. (currently across from Livingston City Hall). The new store had a

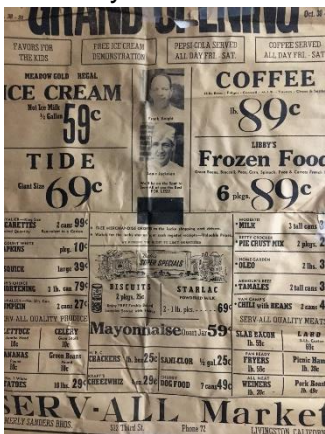
parking lot & home deliveries.

Louie Jackman loved being the Butcher & was involved in the American Legion, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary & Masons. You would see him at every Football game & Baseball Game (High School & American Legion).

Lil Jackman was involved with all the children's school activities, Ladies Legion Auxiliary, Livingston Little Theater Group, & was President of Livingston Chamber of Commerce in 1971.

Louie passed away in 1966 & as per their Partnership Agreement, Louie's partner bought Lil out & took over the store. Lil stayed in Livingston and opened up a Beauty Shop located by Dr. Wolohan's Office. She operated it for a few years & then sold it to Gloria Mendoza. After

several years, Frankie & Marge Knight sold the store & moved to another location. Throughout the years different stores have taken over the Serv-All location.



Fun Fact: Several people from Livingston worked at Serv-All during those years: Ernie Balazs, Fred Worden, Frank Wells, Richard Juarez, Dewey Bohling, Ernie Valdez, Chuck Gentry, Ernie Gonzalez, Mike Worden, & the list goes on & on.

Other Business that have been around for some time is True Value Hardware, Geneo's Pizza and Winton Ireland Strom and Green. Take a look at these names in the Livingston Chronicle and see how they started and who owned them.

Map of Downtown Livingston – 1920's



Idanha Hotel stood where City Hall is now.  
1416 C Street City Hall's current location



Map of Downtown Livingston – 1958 blue star  
is City Halls current location

# Grocery Stores Then & Now



1900



1920



1960



2000



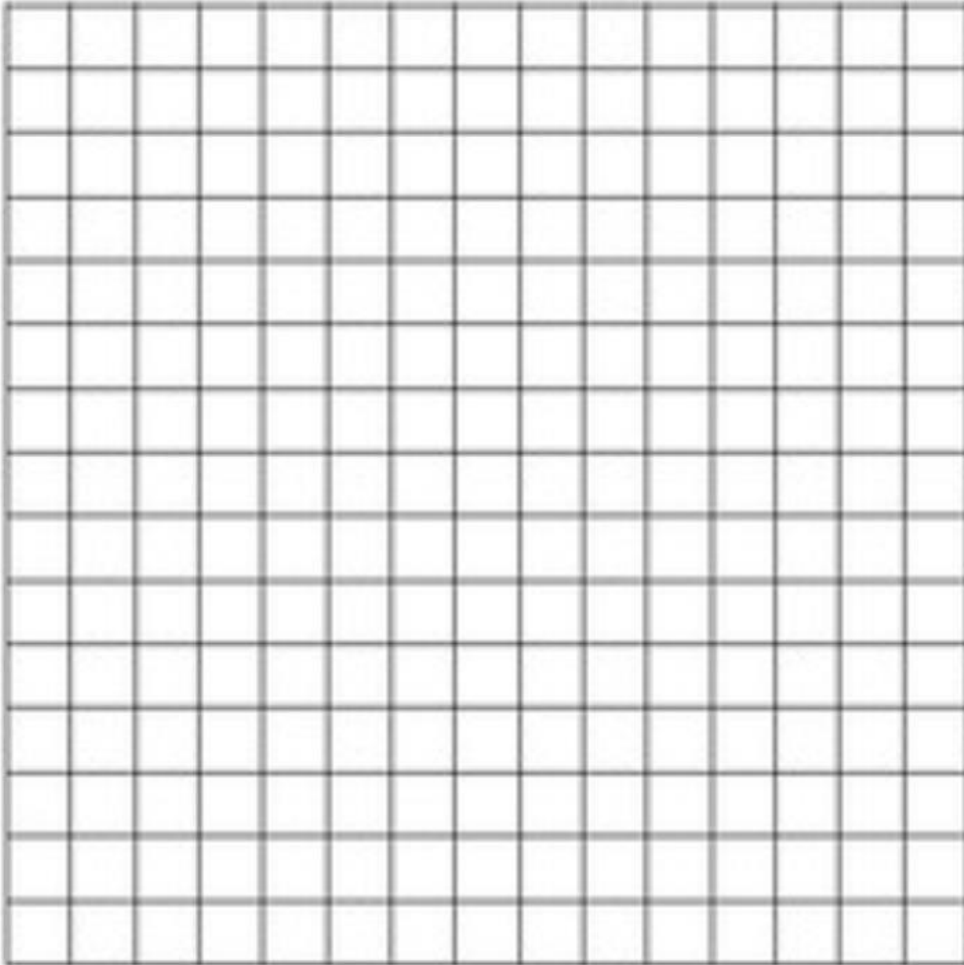
2022 Self Checkout





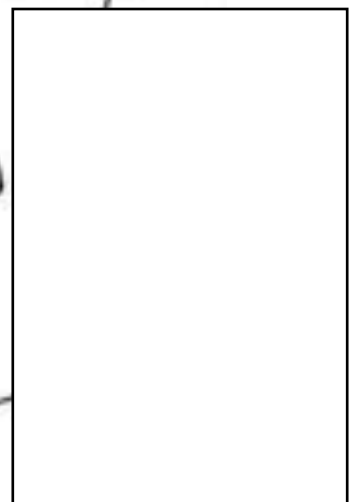
# Centennial Word Search

Make your own with names and words you learned about Livingston



1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_



Picture of me in 2022

# Your Highlights of 2022 and Friends Autographs

Mayor

---

Mayor pro tem

---

Council Member

---

Council Member

---

Council Member

---

Police Chief

---

Fire Chief

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# 2022 Centennial Community Events Celebrating 100 Years

- 4/8 Guns & Hoses Softball /Alvernaz Field 7:15pm
- 4/9 **Game For Joe & Larger Alvernaz Field 5pm**
- 4/10 Easter Egg Trunk Hunt Downtown 10am
- 4/12 **Centennial Children's Choir Registration Begins**
- 4/22 City Wide Yard sale Reg. Deadline
- 4/30 **City Wide Yard Sale 8am - 4pm Maps at City & City Website**
- 5/2 Splash of Color Run Deadline City Hall 5pm
- 5/7 **Volunteer Fire Company Pancake Breakfast**
- 5/16 Music in Memorial 6-9p LMS Band & Cover 5
- 5/20 **Color Run Kit Pick UP City Council Chambers 5 - 7p**
- 5/21 "Splash of Color Run" Memorial Park 9am check in
- 5/23 **Music in Memorial 6-9p LHS Band /Rhythm Blenders**
- 5/31 Music in Memorial 6-9 Los Kinos
- 6/6 Music in Memorial 7-9 Cynthia Huddleston Bennett
- 6/13 **Music in Memorial 7-9 Western Bound**
- 6/20 Music in Memorial 7-9p Mike Hammar & the Nails
- 6/27 **Safe and Sane Fireworks Sales 6/27 - 7/4**
- 7/1 Phantom S & S Fireworks Display Alvernaz Field - 8:30pm
- 9/17 Centennial Mobile Exhibit at Community Center
- 9/11 **Happy 100 years Livingston, Special Event at Museum**
- 9/30-10/2 **Sweet Potato Festival/Centennial Homecoming and King and Queen Crowned  
Max Foster Sports Complex**
- 10/1 **Annual Craft Beer Tasting 5-8p Sweet Potato Festival – Parks Recreation & Arts  
Commission Hosts**
- 10/6 Fall Street Fair 6-9p Love Livingston
- 10/13 **Fall Street Fair 6-9p Health and Safety Fair**
- 10/14 LHS Homecoming & Centennial Court king and Queen of the Centennial Presented
- 10/15 **Centennial Pet Parade City Hall to Memorial Park 3pm**
- 10/20 Fall Street Fair 6-9p Family Fun & Games Night
- 10/24-28 **Red Ribbon Week, Parade**
- 10/27 Fall Street Fair 6-9p Red Ribbon Activities
- 10/31 Trunk or Treat Downtown 6-8p
- 11/11 **Veterans Day Parade 11am Main Street**
- 11/23 Court of Trees 100 Trees for 100 years - Reg. Deadline
- 12/2 **Court of Trees Grand Lighting 7pm Court Yard Plaza**
- 12/9 Lighted Christmas Parade 6:30p "100 entries for 100 years"
- Centennial Christmas Concert at LHS - TBA**



Livingston Farmer's Association "Passed the Keys" to the City of Livingston on July 21, 2022 for the New Livingston Rec-Plex

## Museum Hours

*Historical Society is open Sundays from 2-4pm*

*Entrance is free - 1306 C Street - "Join the Historical Society Preserve History"*