

Livermore Heritage Guild

"Help Save Yesterday For Tomorrow"



Masthead from 1888 Livermore Herald picturing Livermore Valley

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July/August 2004

Vol. XXXIII

No. 6

Livermore's Wonderful Street Railway By Gary Drummond

Local transportation systems have always attracted investors for one reason or another. But when the Livermore Board of Trustees, in September, 1887 granted a 50-year franchise to operate a street railway in the community, it's likely some local eyebrows were raised; a street railway in this town of about 1200 people??

A group of local citizens, G. W. Comegys, George C. Stanley, E. R. Lilienthal and A. L. Seligman, petitioned the Town Trustees for the right to construct and operate a railway on the principal streets of the community. It was a tremendously ambitious project. The company (for which no name is known) proposed to install the necessary single and double track, "with all necessary and convenient switches and turnouts" on all lines, some running east and west, others running north and south.

The east-west lines were on:

- First Street, from P Street "to Adam Fath's farm", at the eastern town border;
- Railroad Avenue, from the town's west boundary to the Catholic church;
- College Avenue, from the western town line to Lizzie Street (now South Livermore Avenue);

The north-south lines were on:

- L Street, from Pine to "the town limit near Jessie Bowles house", i.e., Arroyo Mocho;
- Livermore Avenue and Lizzie Street, from Pine Street to the southern town boundary;
- Junction Avenue, from Pine Street to First Street, at the old Laddsville site.

The franchise also specified optional means of locomotion: horses and mules, or wire ropes on cables running under the streets moved by a stationary steam engine, or compressed air, or electricity, or by locomotive. Any trenches or excavations were "to be filled in so as not to impair the use and enjoyment of such streets by the public." It also set a maximum speed at 8 miles per hour, and established the fare which was "not to exceed five cents each way for any distance over any of the lines of the railroad." Nothing in the franchise specifies where car barns were to be located.

Could this enterprise have been an effort to pre-empt an 1889 proposal to build a railroad called the Livermore Valley Railroad Company (LVRR) by tying up local real estate? The route announced for the LVRR was intended to come over the Hayward Pass and link Livermore with the San Joaquin Valley via Corral Hollow. It was to provide an alternative method of moving Livermore Coal Company product to market, but the coal mines failed before the railroad materialized.

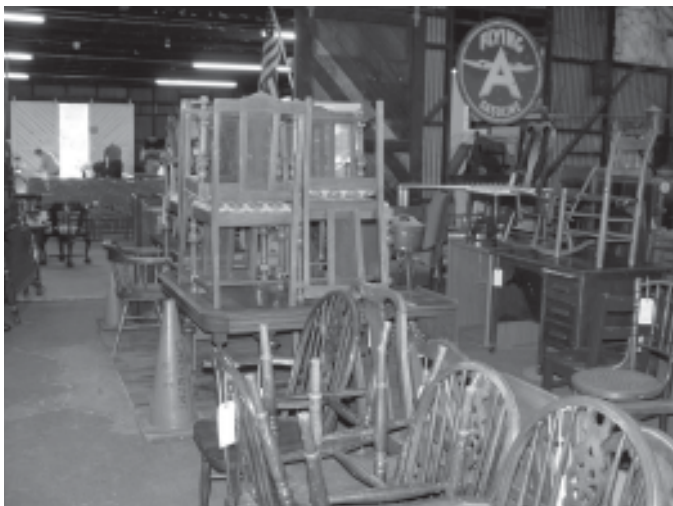
However, some progress on a street railway system must have been made: in the fall of 1908, a town crew excavating for a sewer line on Lizzie Street near College unearthed several lengths of rail and some badly rotted cross ties; and again in November, 1913, a crew uncovered more track-age and timbers on Lizzie Street near Eighth Street. These had most likely been laid to show some good faith effort toward constructing what could have been Livermore's first transit system. It was only the old-timers in town that remembered the story of how the rails and ties got there in the first place.



The 2004 Auction was a Huge Success!



The stuff was so good we had to bring in guards to control the crowd! No personality but they looked good.



Auctioneer Lynn Owens and his able assistant and wife, Linda. Once again they made the whole event a lot of fun.



We had tons of good furniture!



This year's auction was the best yet raising over \$6,000. The event was very well attended and we had to bring it to a close with plenty of stuff left over for a future garage sale (no pun intended). Thanks to the many volunteers who made the event a night to remember, but especially thanks to Anna Siig, Bill and Susan Junk and Treva Mauch for their super efforts. But most of all thanks to all of you who donated the many items we were fortunate enough to have so we could hold the best auction ever!

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR AT THE AUCTION!

HERITAGE GUILD HAPPENINGS

You saw 11 1/2 minutes in Livermore the Movie! You've heard about it in the news! You've read about it in the history books! Now see all 55 minutes in person! Olga Peiffer shares her landmark feature Livermore Centennial 1969. Bothwell Recreation Center, July 8 at 7 p.m.



WANTED: Volunteers to lead local 3rd grade classes on weekday downtown walks, while you talk about Livermore history. Walks take approximately 1 hour. Will gladly train. Contact Gary Drummond at gadrum@comcast.net or call 447-5475 for details.

If you would like to sign up for either a downtown or residential **walking tour**, you may now register by either calling the History Center at 449-9927 or by visiting the History Center and completing a preference card. When several people have signed up for one tour or the other, a Walk Tour Guide will contact you with a time and date to meet.



Feedback from Members:

From Paul Thode: Nice to find this site. We moved to Livermore in late 49.. came in on a Sunday and the only place to eat was at O'Malleys. Nice to see a picture of the grammar school that I attended and also some nice pics of the VA hospital where my Dad worked.

We bought the first Jensen Tract Home built. We were so tired of living in a motel that we moved in before the cement walkways were built and got huge rains. So mud was a huge problem .. but still much better than living in a motel in Castro Valley, coming into Livermore early enough for my dad to go to work then dropping my sister off at LJUHS and then me to grammar school. Then my mom would hang around all day and pick us all up. This went on for about a month.. what a pain for her.

A brief note about Granada. I was a senior at LJUHS in 1959 when they were starting to work on the new high school. A few of us tried to get it named "Boot Hill High" (due to its location) and have as their mascot the "galloping Ghouls" (think of St Mary's college mascot). We obviously did not get far with the conservatives in town.

Livermore was a great place to grow up. We had the creek not far from our house and I had quite a collection of tadpoles, frogs, toads and snakes for my mom to deal with.

LJUHS provided a very good education too, when I went off to CAL, I had no problem competing with kids from much bigger, urban schools.

Paul Thode paulthode@yahoo.com



CALENDAR

Thursday, July 8 @ 7:00 p.m., LHG Board Meeting
Olga Peiffer talks about Livermore Movie (\$2 suggested donation) INfo: 449-9927

Last Board meeting at Bothwell Recreation Center

Thursday, August 12 @ 7:00 p.m.
LHG Board Meeting, **New Library Community Room**
(Coffee provided by Library Cafe, \$2 suggested donation)

Thursday, September 9 @ 7:00 p.m.
LHG Board Meeting, **New Library Community Room**
(Coffee provided by Library Cafe, \$2 suggested donation)

Agenda for Future History Colloquiums:

The next 3 history colloquium meetings will be held at the New Livermore Library Community Room at 7 p.m. Note: \$2 suggested donation. Coffee provided by Library Cafe

July 21, 2004:

Lin Robertson Tobin, "Memories of Grandfather Robertson, Founder of the Livermore Sanitarium"

August 18, 2004:

Tri Valley Conservancy "Preserving the Land", Sharon Burnham CEO of Tri Valley Conservancy

September 15, 2004:

Forest Home Farms "Walnuts in San Ramon", Kim Guiliano

A Word From the Chair

The Livermore Heritage Guild held the annual auction and it was a great success. Lynn Owens and his wife, Linda, were superb and set the tone for the entire event. The number of active bidders and the quality of the merchandise brought in record sales. The funds will be put to very good use for several projects we have in the works.

The recent museum assessment that was performed on the Heritage Guild operations should be returned soon. The assessment was funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences. We are anxious to see the recommendations the survey will hold for the Board of Directors.

We are keeping an ear to the ground on the discussions regarding space that might be available from the City of Livermore and LARPD in the near future. It would be nice to have a larger area for displays so we can share more of the items from our collection with the community. We have had to be very selective in what items we accept as donations due to our limited appropriate storage space. We know we would be offered more interesting items from Livermore's past if we had a proper space to display them. We will see what develops.

We received inquiries about our interest in upgrading our web page. Exploring our options in that effort will begin soon. We are very pleased with the response we receive in our website guestbook each month; thank you for taking the time to write down your thoughts and keep it coming!

Hope you all had a great 4th of July.

Larry Mauch



Note: There are several bowls and utensils that were left at the Duarte Garage during the Auction/pasta feed. Please come to the Carnegie Bldg. to claim your items.



Update from May/June 2004 newsletter: When driving on Greenville road between Tesla and East Ave., if you count the hills that have been cut through, you can easily see that these were the Seven Sisters we wrote about in the last newsletter. Just imagine what it was like going over these hills instead of through them!

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