

In 1913, about one hundred years ago, Fred Mathiesen was president of the Livermore town trustees and served with Fred Lassen, Fred Schradler, Patrick O'Donnell, and John Ryan. The town had a population of about 2,000. Life expectancy at the time was 50 years for men and 55 years for women. Woodrow Wilson was our country's President, and the Eiffel Tower was the world's tallest building.

In 1913, the U.S. Post Office started its parcel post service, and the U.S. government collected its first federal income tax. In January the county clerk received voting registration blanks for women. The blanks did not differ from those for men except that they were pink in color. This was the second year that California women were able to vote. PG&E bought the local Livermore Water and Power Company for \$242,000 in April. PG&E continued to supply our community with water until 1927 when the California Water Service took over.

The *Livermore Herald* commented in 1912, "Livermore's fraternal societies are the centers of most of the community's social activities." This was still true a year later: the Dania Society, the Woodmen of the World, the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Eagles, the Red Men, Sons of Hermann, the I.D.E.S., and others. The Foresters started off the year's social calendar with a Mask Ball. The lady's prize for best costume was won by Mrs. Fernandes of Dublin, who was Queen Jane. Her prize was a Victrola talking machine. Many Livermore organizations held dances to raise money for worthy causes. Local police became involved in trying to tone down the "ragging"—jazz dances with lively steps like the grizzly bear, the turkey trot, and the bunny hug. The Underground Athletic

Club held their dance at the Sweeney Opera House at the southwest corner of First and McLeod Streets. No ragging was allowed, except that during one moonlight dance it could "not be altogether prevented."

Sylvan Bordes of the Vasco Grant killed his record-breaking 900-pound Berkshire hog. At the local general stores, housewives could buy sugar for 4¢ a pound, eggs for 14¢ a dozen, and coffee for 15¢ a pound. Meat was available at the butcher shops.

The California Legislature passed the Alien Land Bill. This, of course, did not apply to little green people from Mars. It applied to Asian immigrants—Chinese, Japanese, Koreans. They were not allowed to become citizens and, as aliens, they were allowed to purchase and own land in the state for a maximum of three years. Japanese were not allowed to purchase farmland at all. The Southern Pacific and Western Pacific Railroads continued their daily passenger service to and from Oakland. Riders could also board at Livermore for first class round trips to Denver for \$55, Baltimore for \$107, Chicago for \$72.

One of the most exciting world-wide events in 1913 was the building of the Panama Canal. Many people from around the world traveled to see the "Big Ditch," including two couples from Livermore, the Fassetts and the Crellins. The truly awe-inspiring sight was the nine-mile long Culebra Cut. "Culebra" means snake in Spanish, and it described the twisting turns of the steep cut, as deep as a 25-story building is tall.

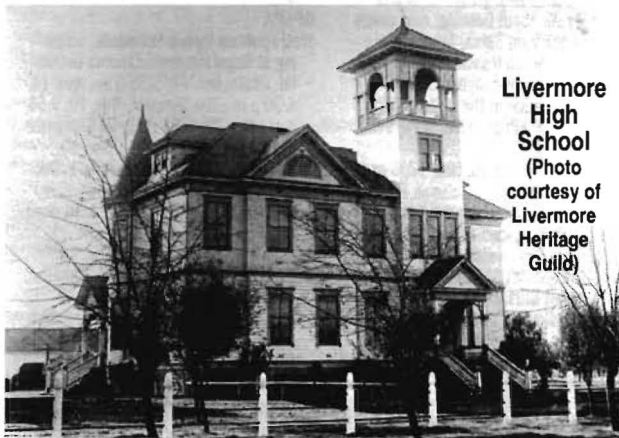
H.P. Winegar had built a large enclosed swimming pool at his home on Fourth Street near Holmes. This was a major incentive in persuading the Oakland Oaks minor baseball team to have their spring training in Livermore in 1912

Do You Remember?

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One Hundred Years Ago



Livermore High School
(Photo courtesy of Livermore Heritage Guild)

and 1913. The Livermore Horse Show was held in the first week of March. Many local farmers raised work horses for sale, and this was their opportunity to show off their results to the community and possible buyers from Oakland and San Francisco. Another tradition was the Holy Ghost Festival with a parade on First Street. At their park where the Eagles Hall is now on North Livermore Avenue, the I.D.E.S. held a grand ball and set off fireworks on Saturday night. On Sunday, after a mass in Portuguese at St. Michael's, they gave a barbecue and concert for the town.

Downtown, not far from the flagpole, the Schenone Building was erected. This was designed with two store openings on either side of the front; in the center was the entrance to the movie theater, then called the Bell Theater, which opened on December 27. One of the stores has always been a saloon. Early Livermore has been accused of having many saloons. This was before Prohibition, and I have to admit, applications for liquor licenses came before

the town trustees almost every week.

The Ark Club was a group of local men who fished and hunted for ducks and geese. In 1913 they had their boat, the Sprig, moored on the San Joaquin River. A new state fishing law passed that locals claimed was "an iniquitous measure." The *Herald* said that fishing is a right and not a privilege and should not be taxed. Before the law went into effect, four men from Livermore bagged 97 trout on one trip. Luther Burbank was very busy at this time in Santa Rosa working with various plants. One of them was the spineless cactus, which Burbank claimed had great value as cow and hog feed. Several ranchers, including the Goeckens, the Wentes, and the Concannons, planted it on a trial basis.

Livermore High School seniors gave their invitational hop at the Sweeney Opera House. Several weeks later the nine members of the graduating class celebrated their commencement there.

(to be continued next week)
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