

BUMPKINS AND EGGHEADS:

A CULTURAL LOOK

AT

LIVERMORE IN THE 1950'S

BY

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PREFACE

When I was fourteen and too young to get a job, I went to downtown Livermore where the older section of town is, in hopes of doing yardwork for the older residents that lived there. That summer opened my eyes to another world that I hadn't even fathomed existed, a world in which there were no Rad-labs, a world in which Livermore had only four thousand people - a world that had taken place thirty years ago.

I first learned about Livermore one fine day when the lady I was doing yardwork for brought me a glass of water and we sat on the steps of her porch and talked. She told me about the town, about her house, and her about her husband. "He built this house in 1938. Back then we were way on the outskirts of town. Back then these roads weren't paved, and the grain fields came right up to the end of our lot." I sat, enraptured, no longer listening to her speak; just floating with her words back some forty years. What had it been like? Did they all ride in carts and buggies? Were they all farmers? And why would they all want to be farmers? I could almost visualize it - the hot, dry days; the boys in dusty jeans walking down First Street without a care in the world, content that their world consisted of a small farm town.

I was intrigued by the stories my customers told me, and through high school as I got older I searched for people to tell me what it had been like before - before the lab, before the shopping centers, before I was there. The fascination with my town lasted and grew, and finally seven educational years later, I had a chance to really learn about Livermore. This paper is a result of that interest that began seven years ago. It is not a nostalgic look

at Livermore - rather I wish to inform and possibly help understand the people of Livermore at present. It is, however, a project that grew out of intense interest, and I hope I have satisfied myself and the reader, in making this paper enjoyable and instructional.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF LIVERMORE, CA

Livermore, California, is a town of approximately 50,000 people. According to the 1947 map of Livermore, the first Anglo-Saxon resident in the Livermore valley was Robert Livermore, an English sailor who left the sea to establish his home in 1835 on present-day Livermore. In 1869 William Mendenhall presented 20 acres to the Central Pacific Railway for a depot, and Livermore became a town. Livermore has existed under several names and jurisdictions, among them Murray Township and Laddsville. The U.S. Census of 1876 shows the population of Livermore to be 830 people. {There exist a number of books on the beginnings of Livermore in the public library. If you are interested you can go there.}

Livermore is entirely surrounded by hills, and has excellent soil for agriculture on the valley floor. Winemakers have been lured to the valley for its temperate climate and good soil. Agriculture, mining, winemaking, and health spas were the traditional Livermore industries. For more than fifty years Livermore remained a small rural town, its population in 1950 being only 4,364. The advent of World War II brought a slight increase to the indigenous population, because of Camp Parks. Around 40,000 sailors were stationed in the Livermore valley during World War II at a naval base called Camp Parks, located near Dublin. At the site of present day Lawrence

Livermore National Laboratory an airbase was constructed during the war as a training base. One resident told me that it was constructed there "because it was the only place in the Bay Area that was free from fog during the winter. I know because I lived across the street from them and fog wouldn't get out that far."

After the war, the airbase was converted for use by the Cal Research and Development project, in conjunction with Standard Oil. In the early 1950's, it was decided by the federal government to put a research laboratory in Livermore that would design nuclear weapons and also do peacetime research. The Bay Area was selected because of its easy accessibility to both Berkeley and Stanford. The laboratory was to be run under the auspices of the Regents of the University of California and work closely with the Departments of Defense and Energy, and in 1953 the lab opened.

Livermore was about to experience the same shock Sacramento had experienced when gold was discovered - a rush of people to a small town. Seven years after the lab opened, in 1960, Livermore's population was at 16,058 - four times the number it had been at in 1950.

Population of Livermore

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1876	830
1900	1,493
1910	2,030
1920	1,916
1930	3,119
1940	2,885
1950	4,364
1953	7,023
1955	10,16

(Population figures, cont.)

1957	12,595
1960	16,058
1965	25,300
1970	37,300
1980	48,150

source: Livermore City Planning Commission (based on U.S. Census of Housing)

The entire population increase was not due to the lab; however, the lab was what opened the doors and began the migration. Businesses, machine shops, housing, and all the accessory industries associated with a central one came to Livermore. Everything in Livermore needed to change, or at least adapt to a way of life that was far greater in scale and far more complex in scope than they had ever dealt with before. A prime example of this is the city government. Livermore has been an incorporated city with its own government and jurisdiction since 1876. However, at the beginning of the fifties the government consisted entirely of five councilmembers who shared the various jobs and took turns being mayor. There was no city planner, no city engineer, no street standards and no ordinances. By the beginning of the sixties the city had all of those things, and had changed their system of government to one where the city manager was the real man in charge, and the council voted on matters of policy, rather than actually taking part in the day-to-day running of the city.

In the process of "growing up", Livermore faced a number of problems that forced adaptations. Some of those solutions affected during the fifties were intelligent and well-thought out. Others were poorly decided upon. To other problems, no solution has yet been reached. This paper is an attempt to analyze what happened during that period, to examine the cultural

differences that set the agenda for conflict, and to explicate how this occurred - so that Livermore can go forward into the future with a better understanding of what we can and cannot do.

CAVEATS AND METHODOLOGY

I must interrupt my actual report here for a brief explanation of my research methods, and to give a few caveats. A word about nomenclature: I classify the residents of Livermore into two main groups: oldtimers/natives and newcomers/labbers. The people themselves divided people into those categories. As the main classification of people in Livermore twenty years ago, I believe it was accurate. By now these are unnecessary terms, because oldtimers are the small minority and many people have moved to Livermore who are not labbers. For this paper, however, I will hold true to these classifications.

I had the opportunity to do research in Livermore for a period of one summer, from June through August. A paper on Livermore could easily become a doctoral dissertation involving years of research. Unfortunately, as an undergraduate on limited funding, I was not able to do in-depth research. I had the chance to talk to some thirty-five to forty people, who were evenly distributed regarding age and sex. I talked to a number of minorities, labbers, and ranchers. In addition I also talked to two ex-mayors, a planning commissioner, the chief of police, the ex-president of rotary club, of chamber of commerce, and a number of other "Livermore luminaries". I also talked to men who had worked in real blue-collar jobs for their whole lives - construction, road maintenance, rose farmers, and

wineries. This has given me the widest range of both age, race, occupation, origin of birth, and sex possible. The research that I did have the time to do was in-depth - the only element lacking was great quantity.

In addition to oral interviews, I also did library research. I read mostly newspapers from that era, and read yearbooks and an occasional letter or magazine that I found. On the whole this aspect of my research was not nearly as rewarding, because there is such a paucity of written material from that time. Again, with a year of work I am sure I could uncover much more data, but the time I had was insufficient to make any deep literary search.

I talked with the Livermore Historical Society, the Livermore Chamber of Commerce, the Livermore League of Women Voters (now in Pleasanton) and the Livermore City Offices. Unfortunately, most of these institutions were unable to significantly help me, either because their interests in Livermore were with its "pre-history", or because they had no one from that era any more.

My methodology was basically to interview people and find out what I could about the town at that time, and then begin to see what struck me. I came in only with the goal of seeing how Livermore had changed from a rural town to a suburban city. I resisted the urge to pass out questionnaires and data sheets, and relied more on in-depth interviews with people to learn their opinions.

Perhaps because Livermore is my hometown, I had more people to talk to than I could in a month of Sundays. I had so many people telling me who to talk with and whom to see that I had too many informants for the time I was given. I could not contact half of them by the time my summer was

over. I could easily have spent a couple years doing research in Livermore. Thus, my paper is an "in-depth introduction" to the problems Livermore faced at that time.

Specifically, if I had had more time, I would have:

1) researched the political aspects much more thoroughly. I would have talked to all the politicians I could find, read as many reports and minutes from meetings I could get my hands on, etc. This aspect in my paper was minimal. I looked at politics only as an extension of cultural conflict.

2) researched the demographics and economics of the situation much more deeply. I would have looked at land values, zoning ordinances, housing prices and locations, business profits and locations, etc.

3) done more library work - newspapers, magazines, letters, etc.

4) interviewed in much more depth all the groups I will mention in my paper - labbers, businessmen, ranchers, minorities, women, high school teachers and students, administrators, etc.

The cultures of the Laboratory and the ranch were in juxtaposition in many ways - economically, educationally, and culturally. The general response varied with each individual person - some of the native Livermorons were very happy to have the lab here and thought that no conflict existed. Others hated the labbies and make fun of them to this day. The overall mean response, however, was one of mistrust and misunderstanding.

A caveat must be placed here: the cultural collision was not the only factor in Livermore's development - the suburbanization process was

influenced by many other factors as well. It is not the purpose of this paper to analyze all the factors and decide which were most important - rather, all I wish to do is to analyze the cultural aspect. Demographics, national trends, Lab policy, state tax funding, economic situations, all these are ignored for this paper. Regardless of those other factors, however, the cultural clash was the most important determinant of future decisions and without that clash Livermore would not be the same today.

DIFFERENT CULTURES

With the lab came a tremendous opportunity for the Livermore natives to grow financially. Yet most of the natives, being settled and satisfied with their old ways, were not open to the newcomer "invasion". Last summer I hypothesized that the one group of Livermore natives who would be pleased that the lab came in would be those in the lower-income brackets. My reasoning was that these natives had the most to gain from the lab. They either had the opportunity for employment at the lab in some blue-collar fashion, or the lab produced a job for them in some indirect way, for example by stimulating the need for housing. In that sense I guessed these people would be receptive to the presence of the Livermore lab.

My findings were not quite so clear. I talked to as many low-income people as I could, and the results of my findings are interesting. I talked at various different times with working-class people; for example, a carpenter, a road-construction worker, and a winery worker. I began the conversation with the road-construction worker by asking him how he liked Livermore currently, and he responded: "Well, hell. The city's grown a lot, and there's no stopping it. And I am grateful to the lab. They gave my brother a job, and they gave my cousin a job. Sure am glad they came here." But as I continued the conversation, his tone changed.

"I really wish the lab had never come here at all. Now there's so many people that you don't know who's who. I used to be able to stand on the street corner and wave to everybody. Now I don't know anybody at all. I don't even know my next-door neighbors very well."

Other natives gave me similar responses. "I used to be able to walk

around without worrying. Now I lock my doors. It was easier back then, and better."

"I was employed for 22 years because of the lab. I built houses every day. So I can't complain. The only thing that bothers me is that the places where I grew up are now lost." Thus began my search for the causes of this conflict - why had these people who should have loved the lab regretted it?

CENTRIFUGAL AND CENTRIPETAL: CAUSES OF CONFLICT

The causes of conflict were differing world outlooks between the natives and the newcomers - a labber cultural system that was different from that of the natives. The oldtimers' culture pulled one in and settled him down and conserved the way things were. The labbers essentially had a goal-oriented world-view consistent with colonising and conquering - one that spun people away from the center to go off and do things. These two opposite cultural views, centrifugal and centripetal, came into proximity with the establishment of the laboratory in 1953, and were the cause of major tensions and policy disputes during the decade of the fifties. Many of the policy questions have continued on into the eighties, a manifestation of the essentially intractable nature of the conflict.

The establishment of the lab and the culture of the labbers had a profound impact on Livermore. The labbers' culture had two major aspects to it: it was the dominant culture and it was the intrusive culture. In every aspect the labbers were dominant - in the national arena they were economically, politically, and educationally superior to the native culture of Livermore; on the local scene they would soon be dominant economically and politically. Additionally they were the intrusive culture, the culture that

came and forced its way into an already established and functioning society. This also had a profound effect upon the rhetoric and content of the conflict. The oldtimers reacted in some ways against the form of the intrusion, rather than the content. As will become evident later, the reaction of the natives was a backlash to the labbers' aggressive intrusion.

Opposite to the newcomers were the natives - the established culture of Livermore. They had a much more insular culture, one in which people generally were confined to Livermore or its surrounding areas. There was no great push outward for these people, there was no great goal orientation. In fact they pulled inwards, and kept people in Livermore. The natives had been the only culture, and thus by default the dominant culture for years.

In this paper I will show the facets of this cultural conflict between the oldtimers and the newcomers, show how and where they conflicted, and what occurred. The dimensions of conflict are deep-rooted, and can be traced back to the differing cultures within which people moved. The overt manifestations of the conflict show up well in a few areas - their outlook on growth, their feelings about rural-urban differences, their feelings about education, and their attitudes towards fiscal policy and politics.

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE

One prime area in which world-outlook differences led to a policy dispute was in the conception of open space and recreation - the uses and the means for parks, the desirability of certain functions. The natives used open space as a preserve, a place to slow down, and a way to force obligations that pulled one closer into the web of Livermore. Conversely, the labbers perceived space as a place in which to put new things, a place

that represented the potential for more progress and advancement.

Before the laboratory, in the late 1940's, the city of Livermore had one park in town - the Recreation Center between Seventh and Eighth Streets. Later on, in the late fifties they expanded, opening May Nissen and Arroyo Mocho. After the lab moved in and Livermore's population began rising, the cry for parks became more strident. One newcomer lamented to me: "It was a very wholesome place to bring your kid up in. There was nothing to do. No trouble to get into. The labbers often said to one another: "If you want fun, you have to make it yourself." They saw Livermore as being a somnolent rural town, content to doze forever. In some ways this attracted them to the town, because it was a good place in which to bring up children. At the same time they chafed at the slow pace, and wondered why they had left the city. The newcomers wanted those activities which they had enjoyed as children. As one former mayor told me, "Parks were a major issue. You had the Rec. Center and that was it. The problem was that the Rec. district was separate from the city of Livermore, so that all the farmland around the city was included in the Rec. district's control. Their tax base was larger, but they also had to answer to a larger electorate." Problems occurred then, because the number of people voting on park issues was far greater than the number of people who would use those parks. Thus some situations occurred in which certain people did not wish to be taxed for something they would very rarely use. At the same time, these people wanted parks that would be compatible with their interests and lifestyle. The oldtimers who lived in town itself saw no real need for a tennis court or swimming pool. The newcomers, on the other hand, more used to an urban lifestyle, wanted those activities which they had previously enjoyed -

tennis, swimming.

The desire to have more parks prompted a major polemic in Livermore about what kind of parks and how many they should have. The oldtimers were against any kind of park that would use a lot of money for tennis courts or swimming pools, things of limited value to them. The newcomers were adamant that those elements were essential to any kind of parks system and only a backward city would be without them.

Eventually the city of Livermore got more parks, some of which were purely riding/walking parks, like Sycamore Grove, and others that were fairly "urban", like May Nissen, which had two baseball diamonds and a swimming pool. The controversy over the form of these parks clearly shows a distinction between the two cultures.

NATIVES: PRESERVATION AND OBLIGATION

The oldtimers' culture was one that used open space as a way of pulling the person in closer to the town. This was achieved in a number of ways. One way was through the feeling that Livermore consisted of farmland and pasture which surrounded it as well, and when a person is in the valley he is in Livermore. "I grew up swimming in the Arroyo, and I used to ride my horse all over these hills. Livermore is a fine town, and she takes good care of her hills." Anything beyond these hills is not Livermore, is not its people nor its comfortable affability, and it is thus very important to preserve either the farmland, the grazing land, or just the countryside for others who would desire the same things. "Dan Lee (the city planner) wanted to cement Arroyo Mocho all the way through town. We (the L.A.R.P.D.) bought it and now it's got a nice walking path and such along the

Arroyo. It's so much nicer than if it had been cemented over." - an oldtimer who had been on the rec board

Livermore native culture also had a second way of making open space an obligation to other Livermore residents. "We used to hike all over these hills out back here. People always had cabins up here in helpful places, and if you ever were tired or hungry, you could just use their cabin. Nobody ever minded, and of course they didn't lock the doors on their cabins. When you got back into town you'd replace their food for them." The ethic of obligations was that if someone needed something, he could help himself to anything around. But at the same time that forces a reciprocal obligation from him to replace the items he borrowed. This obligation pulls people into the town, makes them feel more like a responsible member of the community, and creates mutual ties.

The oldtimers' conception of open space was inward-pulling because it was unnecessary to lock the doors or fences. It was regularly told me that during the 1940's in Livermore "we never used to fence our land or lock our gates at night. It was only after the labbers came and they started ruining our land that we had to lock our gates." The implication was that the oldtimers never worried about their neighbors stealing their land, and were thus much more comfortable with each other. "We never stole from each other - we all knew each other!" Said one oldtimer when I asked him how much crime there had been back then. By not feeling the need to lock doors and by not feeling the fear of theft, the natives had a stronger concept of community - a community in which everyone had obligations to each other, and in which they trusted on another.

Finally, farming pulls one back into the land. One native told me:

"You've got to understand that in Livermore there weren't just five or ten farmers, there were hundreds of them. This was a farm town." Farming brings the natives close together and pulls them in because mutual obligations are built up during the continuing course of business with neighbors and fellow townspeople. "These people used to have credit accounts at stores for the whole year, and then when their crops came in they would pay everyone. It was really a lot of faith the shopkeepers had in their farmers." The ties are thick, and require that people preserve and nurture the land, both as farmland and as a part of the Livermore community.

Thus the natives wanted the space and parks to remain open and quiet, without bringing a whole deluge of other, more urban, factors into their town. Parks for riding horses and open space was fine with them. It was part of the way they conceived of Livermore.

NEWCOMERS: PROGRESS AND ACTION

In direct contrast to the oldtimers were the feelings of the newcomers. Their cultural outlook in space and land was much more "progressive" and active. Primarily the labbers associated function with space - that is, they associated space with the possibility for progression and improvement. This shows up best with the parks issue. The type of parks that the newcomers wanted were parks that used and altered space - swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, and baseball diamonds. This was necessary because open space left to itself was considered static by the labbers. Newcomers' values included open space as something in which they should get things done. One spritely woman recounted to me the time when she had been lobbying for a downtown park. "These members of the

Rec board, all oldtimers, sat there jut-jawed and ham-fisted and asked why we needed a tennis court and why we couldn't just go horse-riding. I told them because I like to play tennis and I don't like to ride horses. I don't think they knew what I was talking about." What she meant was that the labber lifestyle included this option - of building more houses and making swimming pools and covering up the Arroyo Mocho to increase water-flow through the town.

Secondly, the labbers used space to expand in because of the nature of their community. Young urban professionals come to Livermore and want the best for their children. The labbers were the intrusive culture, coming to Livermore because it was best for them. Being intrusive requires having a modicum of goal-orientation. Labbers knew what they wanted in their careers and their community, and they had the means and the drive to pursue those goals. So when labbers decided that they needed parks, they lost no time in pushing for parks. They went to Rec. board meetings, they collected signatures to put a bond issue on the city ballots, and they ran for office. It was all part of their outward expanding cultural theme - aggressive and certainly goal-oriented.

Why did the newcomers want all these urban (tennis courts, etc.) things? Because they were urban, and it was in their culture. They were used to having a swimming pool and a basketball court. The oldtimers weren't.

In the case of the parks, the newcomers were the intrusive and aggressive party. They had the advantage in terms of desire and need, but the oldtimers were sufficiently aware to keep their advantage in that 1) they owned much of the land, which gave them significant leverage, and 2)

they were initially the majority in town in terms of votes. Thus the direction the LA.R.P.D. took was for a long time a middle-road, in which they satisfied both groups.

Recreation also had a great deal to do with the mindset of the natives. Because they were inward pulling, their desires and needs were not nearly as extravagant or complicated. When I asked natives what they had done for recreation back then, they replied "Oh - we had so much to do. We always had a dance or a barbecue to go to, and the I.D.E.S. always had their carnival every year. And then the rodeo...." Yet all of these activities can be viewed as rather parochial, rural activities. They required no real driving, no movement, just interaction with the folks in town. This shows how the oldtimers were able to remain in close contact - by activities only involving the folks in town, they strengthened the ties between those people. "I remember when one of my friends was drunk after the street dance, and the cop was going to give him a ticket for parking his horse in a car place. Well, I knew the cop, too, and so I persuaded him to let me take my friend home." (an oldtimer, telling me about the street dance.)

In this way, the oldtimers took care of each other, and were able to remain in close contact. While the newcomers wanted to go to San Francisco and have nice parks here, the oldtimers didn't need or desire any of that. The old recreation had been good enough for a town of a few thousand. The controversy over the form and content of the parks shows the differing cultural outlooks the two groups had. The oldtimers were pulled inward by their conceptions of space and relationships, the newcomers were pushed outward by them. Naturally these two cultural themes came in conflict.

RURAL AND URBAN CONCEPTIONS

"You used to be able to do all your shopping right along First street. You could get almost anything - clothes, hardware - everything. Now I have to drive an hour to buy anything at all."

- an oldtimer, telling me about the downtown area

Another difference between the oldtimers and the newcomers lies in how they perceived rural and urban differences and their attendant policies. One of the most obvious areas where cultural tension has paralysed the city regards the business district. Livermore has had a problem with its "business district" (sometimes referred to here as the "C.B.D.") - the center of town between North Livermore and O streets, from 1st to 2nd streets - for the last forty years. A swirl of controversy has followed that area of town for the last 30 years. Today Livermore faces the same questions it faced thirty years ago. The only change that actually occurred was the gradual diffusion of the businesses. A few local shopping centers opened up near the new subdivisions, to which shops moved. In other cases the shopping went to Dublin or Pleasanton. Most evidently, the shopping nexuses of the valley moved away from Livermore to other towns, both by physical relocation of companies to Dublin, and by the other towns adding more and more businesses while Livermore's businesses remained constant in number.

In this aspect, neither of the cultures was the dominant culture. The oldtimers owned most of the shops and the businesses in town, and thus had some control over what went on and how their town grew. On the other hand, the labbers voted with their feet, and took their business elsewhere, thus influencing with their economic power the future of the town. The

labbers, by their sheer size, would eventually become the dominant group in the town.

RURALITY AS A SOURCE OF PRIDE

The natives' culture contained elements in its makeup that pulled the townspeople inward - their concept of rurality was one of those aspects. The focus of the town was small and rural. When I asked one man how much the Korean war affected the town, he said not much at all, "because I don't think people knew where Korea was and what was happening. I was drafted, so I got a little more aware. (Laughs.) World War II was important, because we had the naval air station here." Other people told me how they might "Go once a year to San Francisco - it was a big deal."

This is also evidenced by a newspaper editorial of 1954, in which editor A. J. Henry writes: "There might well be some suspicion about the Veteran's Day parade in Oakland. Oakland stores published big ads Wednesday offering Veterans Day specials. Was it an effort to get country people to the city in the hope that they would arrive early and remain late to spend their money? This happened once before, until the country people put a stop to it..." (*Livermore Herald*, November 12, 1954) That Livermore was a farm town with a rodeo was a source of pride - not shame.

In a similar way, one of the most striking ways in which Livermore natives expressed their memories of the time was through their emphasis on "thick" ties. "Back then it was more close knit." Or, "I wish there hadn't been the lab - now you don't know anybody and they all live in these houses with big fences. Back then I knew everybody." These close-knit ties are associated with the small town, in which it was possible to know all the

people, not just your neighbor, but your shopkeeper as well.

The people at that time had a positive assessment about what the "First street area" had to offer. One oldtimer complained that "I don't understand what all the fuss was about. That shopping district worked well enough for us for years and years - then all of a sudden people come in and complain that it's not good enough and that there's no variety. Well, I'm sorry, that just wasn't the case." Another oldtimer told me that: "Those new people used to run off to San Francisco and buy fancy clothes and then come back here and parade around. We had no need for that - Baughman's was good enough for us." The ethic of practicality, coupled with the ethic of non - extravagance, made the shopping area sufficient for people of a small town whose needs were more functional than aesthetic.

In many ways the oldtimers were much more resistant to change than the labbers were. This was conditioned in part by their position in the town, and in part because of what they stood to lose. They were more willing to sit back and wait a while to see what was going on, rather than jumping on the first horse that came along. "We didn't even know the lab would be here in five years - hell, it could have gone anywhere." "It doesn't hurt to wait and see", another native told me. In a similar way, one retired rancher told me: "Sure, I sold my land and have a lot of money. But my whole way of life had to change. I'd much rather still be ranching." The rural farm life that the oldtimers were accustomed to worked well for them, and seeing no great reason to change, they were unwilling to follow the newcomers on their change and progress-oriented crusades.

I talked with some of the local businessmen who had been in business during the fifties, and were still in business. It is significant that those

who survived were those who had been able to progress and keep up with the times. The owner of a flower store told me: "Back then the businesses used to close down [before the lab] during the summer. We didn't do enough business. When the lab came in it was great for business, but there were some people who ended up being left behind. There were some businessmen who did not want the lab, or the growth, and they refused to modify and upgrade their stores, and as a result eventually were driven out of business. Many of the people also were successful in changing with the times, though. On the whole, I guess the town hasn't had that much success with shopping. But it allows someone like me, a small businessman, to stay in business and do fairly well."

I also talked with the long-time owner of a furniture store. He told me that the lab had been great for business, but that some of the new people had wanted really "super, stuff that was extravagant. They could be pushy at times..."

A man who has owned a drug store for the last forty years told me that the biggest problem with the First Street area was the lack of parking.

No longer could the street accommodate all the people who might wander downtown on a Saturday. No longer could people just stop and park their car wherever. Many of the shoppers were driven out of the town by the inconvenience of First Street.

These businessmen, all Livermore natives, illustrate the problems that had to be encountered and faced. Many businessmen did not want to grow with the times. Many oldtimers were repelled by the labbers. And then there were physical constraints to shopping in Livermore. The businessmen that changed with the times were merely modifying their

outlook, and trying to become more "modern" with the labbers. At the same time, there was some resentment over the criticism these local businessmen faced. Those native businessmen who changed survived, but many did not, and impeded change in Livermore. *g*

These feelings all helped to pull the Livermore native back into the town, and condition his outlook at that level. The ethic against shopping extravagantly, the desire wariness against radical change, and comfortable, established businesses, all pulled one back into the town. The small focus and thick ties also helped to cement him in the town, because if that is where the native's roots are, he knows of nothing else. This also blocks any real change in the C.B.D., because if there is pressure by the labbers to change, there comes a reaction that "we didn't want or need that stuff. We'd gotten along fine without it for years." The businessmen's response to the lab also is indicative. A number of oldtimer businessmen were not going to modify their business for the labbers, and thus helped to induce some paralysis into the shopping area. The ones that did so did so out of an economic need, and were not enamored with the labbers. *River*

Some of the cultural problems with the re-development of the C.B.D. involved mutual misperceptions by both cultures. What in one group's eyes was seen as a positive action was given nefarious motives by the other group. For example, the oldtimers perceived the labbers as having a more standoffish attitude. "These people move here and then complain about everything. I heard this one woman downtown complaining to the clerk that there was nothing in his store worth buying, and it wasn't like this where she was from." I walked over to her and said "Why don't you go back where you came from, then, because we don't want you here." Most of what

bothered the oldtimers was the labbers' complaints about the town. The oldtimers felt insulted when the new people walked in and began to say that everything was bad. At the same time, no one felt any desire to be included in the labbers' social circle. "As soon as they got here they used to have parties and stuff, but we never even went, because we were too busy with our own lives. They didn't have much else to do except be with the people they worked with, but we always had a wedding or a barbecue, or something to do." This exemplifies how the two groups just could not get along, and that the inward pull of the oldtimers gave them a group mentality that did not allow for criticism of their town by the newcomers. Any criticism was seen as a direct insult to the community rather than as an honest and helpful appraisal of the situation.

On the other side, many of the stories told to me by newcomers were about the oldtimers not accepting the newcomers, or acting defensive when they first came in contact with a labber. "I remember the first time I went into a hardware store right after we moved here. The owner ignored me and wouldn't help me. I was really frustrated - he acted like he didn't see me. A couple other times, when you went into a shop, the store-owners would just ignore you like you weren't there. Finally, this one man came up to me and welcomed me and said he was glad we had moved here. I am very grateful to that man who first talked to me."

In this way the oldtimers received the reputation of being defensive and standoffish. By ignoring the newcomers and relegating them to a position of "outsider" the natives set up a dichotomy. They were seen to be unwilling to accept the newcomers, and afraid to accept progress. While the natives did not ever talk to me about having consciously ignored or slighted

the newcomers, they were perceived by the other as having done so. This only led to a greater misunderstanding. The oldtimers' natural reticence and their "wait and see" attitude were perceived by newcomers as deliberate meanness.

Sometimes these views were justified, at other times not. The difference between the two cultures was great enough to necessarily lead to misperceptions and conflicts. In this case both groups are seeing different sides of the same coin. The oldtimers are insulted because the newcomers deprecate their town. The newcomers are insulted because the oldtimers are ignoring them and slighting them. Both sides are mutually offending the other and feeling insulted by the other at the same time. In this way much of the mistrust and misperceptions about the differing cultures were built up, expanded upon, and sharpened.

RURALITY AS THE FIRST STEP TO URBANIZATION

In contrast to the oldtimers, the labbers saw rurality as space to be filled in. They had differing conceptions about what should be done with open space and businesses. The labbers wanted to fill up the space, to make rural into urban. They wanted better shopping, more stores, better access, and more activities. Often they would lament: "If you wanted any excitement in this town you had to make it yourself, because it was soo booring here." They saw Livermore as a small, boring town.

A labber from that era told me: "You had no selection here at all, and the businessmen were not responsive to what you wanted. To get any kind of selection or something you had to go to Sun Valley or Hayward. The shopping here was terrible." This was the core of the initial problem:

Oldtimers thought the shopping was fine, the labbers believed it was terrible.

As the scale and workforce of the lab kept increasing, the population of Livermore also increased. Thus, by the end of the fifties the shopping area that had been good enough during the 40's was no longer adequate and was encountering criticisms from a bustling town of some 15,000. Once problems with the shopping area became obvious, criticism and solutions were freely offered.

People told me that A.J. Henry, editor of the *Livermore Herald* at that time, was free with his criticism of the downtown shopping area, and in many ways contributed to its demise.

"Income for Livermore residents is at least that of the average for the county, and we figured accordingly....\$1,573,250 per quarter are being spent away from Livermore by local residents. We find that local people spend \$20,649,000 per year, 43.8% of which goes elsewhere. That is far too much for local residents to spend elsewhere....." (editorial, Augst 15, 1957)

Most of the criticism, however, came from the newcomers. Here is a portion of a letter written to the *Livermore Herald* in 1957. (Aug 29, 1957)

"The front page of the Advertiser this week carried an ad which undoubtedly was meant to encourage the people of our community which they are (sic) at present not doing - shopping in Livermore.

After four and a half years of trying to "buy at home" this statement is more disgusting than amusing. It seems to me that it can only be obvious by this time that the adverse attitude expressed so clearly by our planning commission in refusing to recommend permits; our local "old-timer" merchants in fighting progress by others and refusing to progress themselves....- all combine to cause the condition that exists today.

Can't our local independent business people realize that they are contributing more to forcing business transactions *from* Livermore rather than

to it? "

The letter was signed " a shopper" and is only indicative of the kind of controversey the shopping area was causing, only four years after the inception of the lab.

Newcomers, being economnically dominant, were able to influence what happened in town. Regarding the central business district, this again shows the labbers' goal-oriented, almost aggressive culture. "progress, change, do", could have been their motto. When the labbers decided shopping was poor, they both took their money elsewhere and tried to change the businesses as they were in Livermore. They ran for office in the sixties with porposals to revitalize the shopping district, and generally were vocal and active with their opinions. They in many instances ran roughshod over native sentiment, causing a great deal of backlash at their insensitivity.

By the early 60's enough money and businesses were dispersing so rapidly that everyone knew it was a problem caused in large part by cultural differences. The town became paralysed by the cultural differences - a problem not found in towns with smaller influx of outsiders. Dublin and Pleasanton were probably able to develop their business district much more quickly because they did not face the tremendous clash that Livermore did - a clash that paralysed the town and halted any solutions. Shopping that was adequate for rural 1940's Livermore was not adequate for fifteen thousand people during the fifties. The town needed to do something, but some oldtimers did not change, which hurt the C.B.D. Some newcomers, being elitist, shopped elsewhere, which also hurt the shopping area. It became clear by late 50's that money was going elsewhere and the C.B.D. was

stagnant, and thus the problem became what to do. The problems almost became a cycle: labbers did not like Livermore shopping, and thus shopped elsewhere. Natives became angry at the arrogance of the newcomers and were not willing to change. With out the support of the labbers, the C.B.D. lost its vitality and began to stagnate.

A CULTURAL CONTRADICTION

The labber's world-view was conditioned by the locale from which they came. While many of them came from urban cultures, there was a strong contradiction in the labbers' cultural make-up. The labbers were strong urban growth-oriented people. Yet while they were the ones that took Livermore from the rural community into the urban, they were also the people that voted against growth in the sixties and wanted to keep Livermore a small town.

Urban: When the newcomers and labbers arrived in Livermore and found it a small, rural town, they regretted missing the aspects of urban life that they enjoyed - tennis courts, night-life, and shopping, to name a few. Most of the labbers and newcomers were urban and "modern" - in the sense that they came from universities, had obviously seen more than just Livermore, and were respected scientists doing vital work. They were used to that lifestyle, and used to the idea of progress for progress' sake. Coming to Livermore put them in the middle of a small quiet town, which only helped define their attitudes as "urban elites". They may not necessarily have been urban elites, but to the Livermore natives and certainly to themselves they were more urban than anyone else in Livermore.

Small town: At the same time another factor pulled them - the "cultural value" that Americans place upon rural and farmhouse communities. The farmer has always been revered in America, and the small town is still considered to contain some of the essential "American" traits - honesty, hard work, and clean living. Many of the labbers thought of Livermore as idyllic, the essence of a rural farm community. This shows up more clearly in the sixties, when Livermore overwhelmingly voted to keep growth down, in an effort to retain the "small-town flavor".

Growth: Herein lies the the labbers' paradox: they were the element that represented progress, the element of the future, of the urban educated middle class. Yet the labbers also are the ones who gave great value to the small town, who would vote in the sixties against growth, and who would soon want to preserve the vineyards as "quaint". On the one hand the labbers were urban oriented and were actively fomenting for an increase of those activities that would make Livermore more urban and progressive. On the other hand they wanted to preserve what small town flavor they had, and desired to keep Livermore small. When push came to shove, the labbers voted for their culture, and voted for those things that increased Livermore's urban nature. Yet this indecision has lead to a real pendulum-like effect on Livermore in the sixties and seventies, where public sentiment would swing back and forth between active acceptance of growth and a rejection of growth.

These urban, middle class, goal-oriented and actively involved traits, coupled with the feeling that Livermore has positive value as a small town and yet it needs to grow up, have affected the relations between Livermore residents and the labbers that relocated there

At last the debate turned from whether or not a problem existed, to what could be done about it. During the sixties, many proposals to "revitalize" Livermore shopping were proposed. Among them were the creation of a "Superblock" behind First street, the closing of various streets to traffic altogether, and the demolition of some of the older and more cumbersome buildings in order to create better facilities. As of 1986, hardly any of these solutions have been implemented. Why? Because the paralysis of the shopping district occurred when the two cultures were unable to come to a consensus about what should be done. When businesses began moving and changing, the damage was done. No longer was Livermore perceived to be the center of the valley. Pleasanton and Dublin, Hayward and Walnut Creek were more than happy to take over that appellation.

To conclude this section, the beliefs and feelings about cities and farms of the two cultures were radically different. This served to make the problems with shopping that much more basic, and hence that much more intractable. When natives perceive space and rurality as positive values, and labbers perceive them as negative, collision and conflict are bound to occur.

HIGH SCHOOL: LAUNCHING PAD OR MAGNET?

Education in Livermore was a major battleground upon which the oldtimers and the newcomers clashed. Education has had an element of controversy in Livermore since the founding of the lab, and during that time, the focus of education in Livermore has changed significantly. The Livermore schools have been shaped by the differing functions the school played in society for the different cultures. The natives' culture used the school as a mechanism to hold people in Livermore, and the newcomers used the school as a launching pad to go out into the world.

The Livermore schools during the early fifties were not spectacular high-pressure prep schools, but rather small country schools that accented vocational and agricultural teaching. Lists of the students that went on to colleges were occasionally published in the local newspaper, with the majority of these students (a few a year) attending San Jose State or nearby colleges. The lab came in in the early fifties, and with it a flood of Ph.D.s. In that year the educational mean for Livermore residents shot up, and men with doctorates were neither willing nor pleased that their daughters and sons had a "poor" (i.e. vocational) education. They wanted college preparatory education. The mere numbers are indicative of the stress that the school system was facing: A.D.A. (average daily attendance) for 1950 and 1954 was 871.262 and 1,668.434, respectively. Over that same time enrollment at Livermore Joint Union High School doubled. (Source: Report of Citizen's Committee to Study Sewer Problems of Livermore) This influx of

students caused great rifts in the school system, most notably regarding the basic philosophy of the schools themselves. With the increase of students came a need for more schools, for new teachers, new methods, and new ideas about what to do with all the kids. The labbers wanted a completely different education than that of the natives, in which they could better prepare their children to go to college. Essentially, the labbers wanted their own school, separate from the natives. This clash was inevitable, because the schools performed different functions for each culture.

HIGH SCHOOL: PERPETUATING RURAL LIVERMORE

I heard the natives' opinion about education from the ranchers and other oldtimers. "All this big college-prep stuff is fine, as long as you don't take away the other programs that also make up a high school. Not everyone wants to or needs to go to college. What happens if you don't have the vocational teaching, and then you go to college and decide it's not for you? You need to be educating those kids that don't want to go to college." Many other natives gave me the same opinion. By preparing children for vocational and farm work, the High School prepared students for life in Livermore. The cultural ethic to stay in Livermore existed, and the means existed. The pressure was against going to college, and for settling in Livermore with a local job. While none of the natives would agree that the purpose of the high school was to keep children in Livermore, that is what the school ultimately did. In addition, there was a definite cultural ethic against education among the native Livermore populace.

"There was this one labber and his car was stuck in the mud. He kept

revving the engine to try and get it out of the mud, but it got stuck in there deeper. His neighbor came out of the house and told him to put sticks under the tires, but the labber kept trying it his way. Finally he put sticks under the wheels and got the car out of the mud, but then he stood there trying to figure out why it had worked. All labbers always had their slide-rule calculators with them, and he pulled his out and stood there trying to figure out why it worked. In the rain! (Dumb eggheads.)"

- an old timer telling me what labbers were like

The most obvious and expected way in which the oldtimers perceived the labbers was that of an egg-head. Many people mentioned that they were bothered by the labbers and their degrees. As one lady told me "I call them 'foeey doctors' because they're not really doctors." The dimensions of this perception go quite deep. Part of the reason this was a problem was the great difference in educational levels. Many old timers felt insecure or awed by the difference in education, and as a result reacted to that feeling by forming negative images of the "eggheads". As one old timer told me: "Ph.D means "piled high and deep."

The story quoted above is a prime example of such a feat. The story is quite humorous, but what it points out is that the oldtimers saw the labbers as having a lot of book knowledge, but not much practical sense. First, the labber gets his car stuck in the mud - stupid to begin with. Then, convinced that he knows best, the labber refuses help from a neighbor, and only succeeds in sticking his car in deeper - stupid twice. Finally, the labber gets out his obviously useless slide-rule and stands in the rain trying

to understand what happened - won't this guy ever learn?

Some of the oldtimers wanted to remain out of the contest, saying "We don't want to go to college anyway. These people, who I call non-productive because they don't really produce anything, aren't helpful to our society." as one rancher told me. The implication is that people who "worked with their hands" were the real, essential, and productive members of society. Once again, the root causes for this mistrust lie in the natives' inward culture. Because they had no need of education, and because education is a threat to their solidarity by spinning its members away, education is given the social stigma of "egghead" or "frivolous".

In addition, the culture of the oldtimers was one of vocational jobs and settling down in the town. The high school was generally seen as the last stop before settling down, and graduation from high school was made into a symbolic "rite of passage", after which one joins the adult world and settles down. The courses taught in the school prepared one for life in the town. The culture of the high school, with its over-emphasis on this being the last chance at adolescence, mentally prepared the students to graduate and then marry. The majority of native Livermore people whom I interviewed had married their high school sweethearts. As one oldtimer told me, "Most of us just got married and settled down after high school. The vague rewards of a college education were not as strong a pull as the immediate need to get a job and settle down."

In a similar way, the oldtimers were resistant to change. They did not want to change, and in fact were reactive against those who did. "We liked it the old way, why should we have done it their new way?"

I asked one native teacher about the honors programs and tracking cores, and he answered me this way. "We tried a tracking system here in the sixties against my wishes. We had three tracks - x, y, and z. The smartest kids were in x, the slowest kids in z. We used to call z track the "zoo" track, because it was impossible to teach in there. No, the best way to teach is to put all the kids together - that way you don't elevate one group of kids over another." The norm of traditional education held strong among the natives. Many of them told me that the honors systems were needlessly praising the few smart kids, and that this was not the way it should happen. The natives were naturally reticent to change. The high school had served its function admirably for them.

The high school principals of the middle sixties were a good example of this contrast in viewpoints: the principal at Granada highlighted college preparatory courses, and with a novel class structure was written up in *Time* magazine. The Livermore principal, a rancher-type, was committed to vocational and occupational programs. While much controversy surrounded the creation of the other high school in terms of both methods and results, at the very minimum a perceived dichotomy did exist.

All of these "cultural themes" served to make the high school an institution that prepared students for life in Livermore after they graduated. Vocational training, the acceptance by most that this was the "last stage", the ethic denigrating higher education, and their reticence to change their traditional ways of teaching was an attempt to remain in that cultural mode.

THE FIRST STEP AWAY

On the opposite side of the coin were the newcomers. The newcomers used the High School as a launching pad into life and college. Melvin Sweet was a principal of Junction Avenue middle school at that time. He picks up the account in 1954: "Well, on the whole they were just much more concerned about the educational processes than the Livermore people were - but they weren't really very difficult. They just wanted us to teach their sons well." There was an attempt to set up a gifted program in the early sixties, but it failed after a while. It was set up by the the labbers as an after-school program, and the replace the dearth of honors teaching that did not exist in the schools. It failed, and was not replaced by any tangible organization until the seventies. As one woman mentioned to me: "Even now it's like pulling teeth to get any kind of gifted program at all." The mere fact that they pull so hard as to "pull teeth" shows how aggressive and goal-oriented the labbers were. Accustomed to solving problems and getting results, it bothered them when people could not accept their point of view.

The labbers typically saw the natives as being unschooled country folk. In that sense, the labbers were disappointed because the oldtimers had a more (in their opinion) ignorant and narrowminded view of life. "When we first got to Livermore the librarian wouldn't give us library passes because we didn't own our own home - and she was stubborn about it. One day I asked her why she had that rule and "You can't just let any Okie have a library card" was her response. I thought of all these "Okies" with Ph.D.s and laughed." The newcomers were amazed by the seeming lack of education in

the town.

In other ways the labbers were disappointed at the achievement that went on in the schools. They were much more aggressive in their desire for a better school system. They would take much more care in making sure teachers were teaching correctly, they ran for Board of Directors, they wanted to be involved in the teaching processes. The labbers wanted "Our children to be able to go to any college in the country. I think it's fine if my son wants to go be a rancher, but he's going to have the opportunity to go to college if he wants to." That really meant "He's going to go to a good school or else." The labbers' outward oriented culture spun children off into the world - away from High School.

The two most obvious points about the way the labbers interacted with education is that they 1) were much more concerned about education and hence were much more aggressive than the oldtimers, and 2) they saw the school as a way out of Livermore, as a launching pad to college and life later on.

Another cultural aspect of education was the difference in attitude and outlook between the newcomers teachers and the oldtimers. According to a newcomer teacher: "They were real stick in the mud. If you wanted to do the carnival in November rather than in May they would ask "Why? We've always done it in May." I heard that phrase "we've always done it that way" so often.....Trying to get them to change their textbooks or anything was incredibly difficult.

"We got a new principal early in the fifties and this guy was a newcomer. He had big ideas for what he wanted to accomplish, and he yet he

went ~~somewhere else~~ after a couple years because he was just too frustrated."

Here ~~again the~~ differences show up remarkably well. The oldtimers are indisposed ~~to changing~~ what has worked well for their whole lives. Thus they attempt ~~to keep the~~ status quo. On the other hand, the labbers want the school to ~~perform different~~ functions, and are more aggressive about changing things. ~~Thus they~~ in a sense cause a reaction by the oldtimers.

An interesting aspect of the educational tension is the scope of after-school ~~activities and~~ what form they took. It is interesting to note the differences ~~in high~~ school extracurricular activities, and the change, from 1950 to 1960.

1950

Student Council
Torch (newspaper)
CSF
Drama club
Girls Athletic Assoc
Glee Club
FFA
Band
Jr. Statesmen
Red Cross

1960

Student Council
El Vaquerito, newspaper
CSF
Drama Club
Girls Athletic Assoc
Girls Glee
FFA
Band
Jr. Statesmen
Science Club
Math Club
Spanish Club
Future bus. leaders America
Thespians
Teen Canteen
Tri-hi-y
Latin Club
Rally Club Board
Majorettes
Dance Band

Orchestra
Mixed Chorus
Madrigals
FHA
Block L
Aquacade Board
Future Teachers Club
Art Club
Electronics Club
Am. Field Club

The **number of after-school** clubs and activities in 1960 is more than double the **number in 1950**. It is very possible that this amount of clubs, especially **Electronics Club**, Latin club, Thespians, Science Club, Madrigals, and "Future **Business** leaders of America" were promoted by the newer people and **their more "urban and educated"** interests. None of those are a part of the **rural/vocational** mindset - rather they are clubs devoted to high education and to **preparing** one for future "successful" life in the college and city.

Another **good example** of this trend can be seen by looking at three Livermore High School yearbooks - from 1929, 1950, and 1960. The 1929 yearbook has no **activity** photo of a group called F.F.A. (Future Farmers of America) - **because: "There was no need for an F.F.A. back then because that's what everyone would do anyway."** In the 1950 yearbook, the F.F.A. is given the largest section in the yearbook - three pages devoted to its activities during the year. By 1960, the F.F.A. has been reduced to equal status (1/2 page) next to other clubs. This accurately reflects the focus of the Livermore schools at various times: the implied vocational nature of the schools at the beginning of the century, the stated vocational nature of the

school before ~~the war~~, and the diversification of the school afterwards. The whole ~~point~~ is that the oldtimer culture pulled everyone in - so much before ~~the war~~ that there was no need to even explicitly state that fact.

ANOTHER GENERAL CONTRADICTION

With respect to education and town life, one large exception to the inward-pulling ~~culture~~ of Livermore natives arises. The best of the natives would go to college, generally the upper-class ones, the ones in power. "I remember, Karl Wente got his master's in Chemistry from Stanford, and the Wente girl - ~~what's her name?~~ - got her master's in History from Stanford. Yeah, they ~~were~~ bright people all right." (an oldtimer). This is where the inward-pulling aspect of Livermore does not hold true. Those rich people were not restricted with the same ties and obligations with which the rest of the Livermore residents were restricted. For them it was possible to go to college, and expected. The richer people were expected to be the patriarchs of the town. Another aspect of this "class system" occurs with religion. At that time there were a number of churches in town during the fifties, but: "It wasn't that important. It made a really big difference what church you went to back in the 20s, but not any more. We married who we liked." I asked about the importance of belonging to a church in doing business, and most people were surprised. "What do you mean? The people in power weren't the religious ones - they were the oldtime *hoi polloi* - the Wente's, the people who owned the brickyard.

"You could always tell the successful people in town, because they

wore ~~the same~~. And they didn't act any different to you." Thus, although people ~~made a big deal~~ about telling me how egalitarian it was, you knew that a ~~class structure~~ existed, and people knew who the upperclass people were ~~and the lower class~~ people were. Thus, the inward pulling segment of the ~~town applied mainly~~ to the lowerclass people, although those in power also ~~tended to come back~~ to Livermore and work later on. The Wente's still own ~~their winery~~, fourth generation. Concannon's just sold their winery, after ~~three generations~~. Class consciousness exists, and helps to shape the feeling ~~that "we didn't go to college because only people like the Wente's go."~~

To ~~sum up this~~ section, the area of education was a major battleground ~~for the differing~~ cultures. While the high school served to pull the ~~students into the town~~ for the natives, it served as a launching pad outward ~~for the newcomers~~. Thus they came into direct conflict over what purpose ~~the school should~~ serve. The natives, with their rite of passage ethic ~~and their need for~~ vocational people, had irreconcilable differences with the ~~labbers, whose~~ need for honors programs and varied education was tantamount. ~~For thirty~~ years the confusion has raged in Livermore schools between ~~what they should~~ do. What seeds were sown so long ago!

MONEY AND POLITICS

A final way in which the two cultures pulled at different ends is their conception of **friendships and money**. The labbers were more dominant economically and **were more willing** to spend money, either theirs or the government's. **The natives, on the other hand**, were much more inclined to be frugal and to **have strong, obligatory** friendships. The polemic over the sewers highlights **these differences** in cultural orientation.

"I began **my involvement** in local politics by chairing a committee to study why a **bond issue for a new** sewage treatment plant was defeated. I guess you could **say I started** my political career in the sewers."

- John Shirley

In the **early 1920's** a sewer was built with the capacity for 8 - 10,000 people. By **November of 1954** the sewer had become over-used, was running at capacity, and **was in fact** having problems handling the influx of people. In November 1954, **the people** of Livermore passed a bond issue for \$500,000 in order to finance **an addition** to the existing sewer system. In April 1956 the city again **asked the people** of Livermore to pass a bond issue, this time for one million **dollars**. It was surprisingly defeated. During the preceding month, A.J. Henry, **editor** of the Livermore Herald, had rigorously promoted the need for a **new sewer** in his paper. (*Livermore Herald*, various dates, 1954-56) The land for the new sewer had already been bought. So why did the bond issue fail?

After the defeat of the bond, a citizen's committee was formed to investigate why the bond failed. I was able to get a copy of that report, submitted to the city council in June of 1956. The report never analyzed why the last bond issue failed, but merely made clear the need for a new sewer. I called up John Shirley, the chairman for that committee, and talked with him about the whole sewer issue and why the bond failed. He told me "I know some of the old timers felt the issue was too expensive and asked for too much money, but on the whole, I guess that people thought some funny business went on in the purchasing of the plant site and voted against it because of that." That was interesting, so I followed that lead and went and asked some other people what they thought. I asked first an ex-politician and he said "I think something fishy happened in the purchase of the land."

I asked some businessmen and they said the taxes would have been too high for so few people, and that they didn't like how the city council acquired the land. Intrigued, I sought the owner of the sewer site. I located him without difficulty, and one day drove to his house.

He lives in the same house he was brought up in - a small farmhouse that used to lie far outside of town. It is now in the middle of a large subdivision - an anachronism in the middle of a city. The grounds are still fairly large. The barn, the large oak trees, and the tractors still exist, looking more like a museum than a current residence. Herb had previously owned much of the land that is now full of churches and houses, and most significantly, he had owned the land upon which the current sewer plant resides.

I talked to ~~Hub~~ about many things. He is a soft-spoken chain-smoker. He talked with me freely, but when the subject of the sewer came up, his manner hardened.

"Of course I remember the sewer. Back in the early fifties the city decided my land was the most suitable for the new sewer. One day while I was out in the fields the city council came up to the house. My Dad, who was old and blind by that time, was at the house. They got him to sign a paper selling the land for about half (\$40,000) of what they had thought the land was worth (\$70,000). Now the money was not a big deal to me - but the fact that the city council had swindled us was. I didn't want to take the issue to court, because then my Dad would have had to go, and he was too old to be put through that. I also really didn't desire to drag the name of Livermore through the mud. So I went and talked to the newspaper a little bit - A.J. Henry was the editor back then - and word got around about what had happened. Two of the councilmen ended up resigning, and one didn't run for re-election. I wasn't proud that that had happened, but it was their own doing. The sentiment ran against them. We could have had a big settlement, but it was enough that they were not on the city council any more. "

In fact, City of Livermore records do indicate that two councilmen did resign - William R. Dear, Sr. in 1955, and Stephen G. Palmer, in 1956. I was unable, however, to actually find out their stated reasons for resigning. They may have resigned for the reasons suggested here, they may not have. I could not locate William Dear or Stephen Palmer. The new elections in 1956 were the first time that a newcomer had held a position in the city council. In the 1956 edition of the newspaper, mention is made of the Hagemann's

property ~~and~~ aspects of the sale. In attempting to promote the new bond ~~and~~ and answers are given in the paper, and once again the issue ~~and~~ proposition was mentioned.

"4. ~~and~~ rumors about the method of acquiring the land. Ans.: the land ~~was~~ purchased at the cheapest possible price." (*Livermore Herald*, ~~and~~)

In ~~the~~ passed a 1.3 million dollar bond issue.

FRUGALITY

The ~~main~~ conclusion from the debates over the sewer is that the natives' ~~and~~ and "thick" ties matter a great deal to them. Elsewhere ~~in~~ I have gone into detail about the strength of strong bonds ~~between~~ oldtimers, and how the current lack of these ties in Livermore ~~was~~ the most common laments told to me. These bonds pulled the ~~neighbors~~ closer, and strengthened the centripetal force of Livermore ~~and~~ culture. In part these bonds developed because of the proximity ~~and~~ of their friendships, those of many-stranded ties and the need to help each other out, especially during the Great Depression or when a bad harvest occurred. Their ties pulled them inwards and gave them reciprocal obligations. In this case, the oldtimers outrage and indignation at Herb being ~~swindled~~ was more important than the need for a new sewer. The city of Livermore had to wait two years before they could get a new sewer. Public sentiment turned against the city when the people found out what had happened.

The oldtimers were also frugal. "You've got to remember that

Livermore ~~was different~~. Look at the old houses in Pleasanton (the town next to Livermore) ~~and compare~~ their houses to ours. Livermore has decent houses, ~~but the old ones~~ just weren't extravagant like they were in Pleasanton. ~~The people~~ that lived here were ranchers and small businessmen ~~and making more.~~ Much of "pre-lab" Livermore was conditioned by a sense of ~~frugality~~. There were no large projects and no real pressure to spend ~~money on the city~~. This came from the lack of money in the town. A concerned ~~old-timer~~, Greg Jopson, led the argument against the sewer on fiscal grounds. ~~He argued~~ against the large tax increase, asking: "Do you really ~~think the city should~~ spend half its tax revenue on sewers?" (*Livermore Herald*, 1956) One reason the second bond issue was defeated was that ~~the tax rate would~~ increase. Many of the oldtimers did not believe a need for a ~~new sewer~~ existed, especially when the funding would come out of their ~~pocketbooks~~. The taxes definitely had an effect on the decision, because ~~the oldtimers~~ were much more careful with their money. I asked one rancher ~~if the oldtimers~~ were frugal on political grounds, i.e. because they did ~~not believe in~~ a big government. He responded: "No, I don't think it was ~~anything as well-thought out as that~~. It's just that when you don't have a lot of ~~money, you don't~~ spend a lot of money."

Because ~~the natives~~ were less willing to take risks and throw money around, ~~they were~~ shocked when the newcomers were more than willing to spend money. I called a rancher one Saturday and had a good talk with him. This particular rancher lives out of Livermore proper, on land back in the valley almost on the Central valley side. Back in the late fifties, a couple thousand of his acres were requisitioned by the government in order to make

"Site 300" - ~~existing~~ facility for weapons and other instruments. I talked with him about the effect the lab has had on his property and his life, and he gave me an interesting viewpoint.

"Well, there's no stopping progress. But these people, who I call "non-productive people" because they don't really help us at all by doing anything, are really a burden rather than an asset. I got paid well for my land, and that doesn't really bother me too much. They stay on their side and I stay on mine. We don't bother each other and they're pretty good at keeping the fences fixed so my cows don't wander through.

"But all these labbers - they really have only hurt our economy. They come and take from us, but we get nothing back in terms of taxes or any benefits. (I cut him off - "they don't pay taxes?") Have you ever heard of the government paying taxes to itself? (I had to admit I hadn't.) Well, they have ten thousand workers driving our streets every day, people half of whom don't live here. They wear our stuff out, use our facilities, and don't give us anything back. They haven't brought in any businesses that help the town at all. In fact, we get stuck paying more taxes to help keep their roads and stuff up."

Another rancher added to that perspective when I talked to him later in the summer. "Sure, I sold my land twenty years ago and now have a lot of money. But the point is that my whole way of life had to change. I don't complain about having lots of money, but I still would rather be a rancher. That's what I like to do, and now I don't do it any more." Fiscally the oldtimers were more conservative, less willing to charge out and spend money on an issue that was not obviously necessary.

The new comers were a very diverse lot, but had one aspect in common - they were attracted to Livermore by the potential for prosperity, and usually had already been successful somewhere else, i.e. they were talented businessmen and scientists with a bright future, not blue-collar workers brought in by the establishment of an industrial factory in Livermore. In fact, most of the blue-collar work was done by native people in the town.

Many of the oldtimers resented the labbers 'attitude that "we deserve the best, and we are going to pay for it." Many oldtimers commented on the disparity between the frugality and general "poor" nature of the oldtimers, and the prosperity and spending of the newcomers. "We weren't frugal or anything, but we believed in taking better care of our money than they did. They wanted to spend money for anything - new parks, new schools, new sewers."

This frugality served to make Livermore residents 1) much less willing to take risks and change things all around, and 2) much more inward-oriented. Without the means to go places and do things, people make do with what they have. The Livermore residents took part in local activities, but had no desire or means to move beyond it. There was no great push to develop their downtown area or to create an environment conducive to large growth. After the second bond issue was defeated, it took two years for the government to be able to pass a bond for the sewer.

One more indicative response by Jopson occurs in the Livermore Herald where he is quoted as saying "Why don't we wait and see if the growth continues? It never hurts to wait a little bit." (*Livermore Herald*,

August 15, 1956) This shows accurately the world view of the oldtimers. Many of them, as I have written in the section on values, were more conservative, more willing to wait and see what will happen. Because the natives did not have a great deal of money to throw around in fiscal and political projects, they were much more concerned that these projects were absolutely what they needed. The oldtimers had no room for error.

The natives resisted the construction of the sewer in part because they were reacting against the aggressiveness of the labbers. The newcomers and their outward-expanding culture collided with natives, producing a reaction. One aspect of the oldtimers' misperceptions is the way that they saw the labbers attempting to "take over" and garner all the power for themselves. The labbers did become involved in the political process fairly quickly, and as a result were perceived to be "power-grubbing". "These Rad-labbers show up here and tried to take all the power into their own hands. We've had a hundred years' experience running the town, and they wanted to take over right away. They thought they knew so much more than we did." The oldtimers' opinion as expressed to me was that the labbers and newcomers wanting everything to be new and to change everything. It is indicative that the oldtimers' complaints were more about the form, rather than the content, of the labber's take-over.

"We couldn't just take off from the ranch to go running into a board meeting, and these guys could do it whenever they wanted. Sometimes I wondered if they even worked. And they acted as if they knew everything and we didn't know diddly."

PROGRESS AND ACTION - AGAIN

Yet opposite in view to the oldtimers were the labbers. One of the most common perceptions the labbers had of the oldtimers was one of inertia. "It was so hard to get anything done! Nobody was willing to vote for a bond issue even for a new sewer, and there was sometimes backup into the street." The labbers were convinced that a sewer was imminently necessary. The oldtimers were more willing to wait and see what would happen, to be a little behind rather than too far ahead. "Some of the teachers at our school really got frustrated at them - you couldn't change anything." The inward-pulling, static culture of Livermore was seen by the labbers as needlessly hurting itself by being too staid and protectionist.

In direct contrast to that is the labbers feelings about themselves. Labbers saw themselves as being better equipped to deal with situations - any situation. One schoolteacher from that time, whose husband had worked at the lab from its inception, told me "You could really tell the difference between the labbers and the oldtimers. These parents from the lab would come into my classroom and because they were world class physicists they thought they knew how to run an elementary school. They were always telling you what to do." This carried over into other aspects - how the town should be run politically, what type of sewer should be built, and how the shopping district should change. As one labber told me: "Many of the early Rad-labbers had these high ideals and the attitude that "we are better educated than you so we know what's best for you." " Regarding the sewers, this meant that the labbers were determined to get a new sewer because it was (in their minds) obviously the best thing for the city.

At the same time, most of those labbers who got involved in politics saw their situation as completely different from the way it was ascribed to them by the oldtimers. Where natives thought the labbers were being pushy and aggressive, the labbers responded: "We were really concerned. We really had efforts. This town hadn't done anything in so long, so we wanted to help." They were definitely more progressive, wanting to change things, trying new things, and willing to put the time and effort into that. "We didn't have the time to go to the political meetings during the week and at lunchtime that these labbers did. We had real jobs we had to hold down. We just couldn't keep up with them," one oldtimer lamented to me. The labbers did not see their efforts as being "pushy and aggressive", rather they were concerned about the future of the town, and their perception was that any concerned citizen is an active citizen.

The newcomers saw the natives as quaint and different. Frugal to the point of miserliness, old-fashioned and backward, the oldtimers were just getting in the newcomers' way. "There was this man who had owned the land our houses now stood on, named Bonnie. He used to live in this run-down shack and didn't have any running water or electricity. He used to dry farm, because he was too cheap to pay for the water. He used to run a hose out from our house to his vegetable patch when we weren't looking, although nobody on the street minded, because water was so cheap back then. They also used to come and take the scrap lumber from our yards for their stove. One time Bonnie's wife came out with a broom, yelling in a thick Portuguese accent, and chased my son and his friends away from a fort they had made with some of the scrap lumber. I had to explain to them that some people

weren't as **lucky as we were**. They used to say he went over to San Francisco and **came back** with only as much money as he needed for that month in a **paper sack**."

- a **labber's wife**, talking about oldtimers

The **labbers' perceptions** of the oldtimers were based on stereotypes in much **the same way** as the oldtimers warped their images of the labbers. The labbers **saw the oldtimers** as typical country hicks, and much of the content **of their stories** to me dealt with their "quaint" or "singular" habits.

The **woman's story** at the top of this page is a good example of that. While **she obviously did** not think or portray all oldtimers like Bonnie, he was **the one she chose** to tell me about. An examination of the story shows much **about how the** labbers saw the oldtimers. They are portrayed as old-fashioned, **quaint**, and frugal. They are also portrayed as using the **technology of today** in an attempt to keep the old ways the same. In many ways, **the woman who** told me this story was not a prejudiced or ignorant woman. **It was just** that the dealings she had with the initial oldtimers involved **Bonnie and** some other "characters". In various ways other people have **described for me** oldtimer cowboys and businessmen who were just as interesting. **This** also heightened the labbers' feeling that they knew best and **were the ones** that should be running the town. The labbers were **perceiving some** real cultural differences, but they were also missing much of **what drove the** oldtimers.

Neither side could really be as their perceptions made them. The **attitudes the oldtimers** formed towards the newcomers - eggheads, stuck

up, power grabbing, doubtful patriotism, wasting our money - are in many ways contradictory. The labbers could hardly all be spies working at a top-flight research lab. They could hardly be dumb absent-minded professors and at the same time be the cool paragons of style and high society that they were also made out to be. The oldtimers could not be country hicks who were against any progress, and yet who also lived in an ideal, rural community.

There is also convergence in the cultural perceptions. In many ways the labbers were determined to effect change, and thus they were willing to do whatever was necessary to accomplish that - even if it meant being aggressive. The labbers were not the followers. They were dominant, economically and politically. On the other hand, the natives were much more reticent to change, resisting the labbers' pushiness. The labbers saw themselves in much different terms than the oldtimers saw them, albeit much more sympathetic terms. Where the oldtimers saw busybodies and power grabbing people, many labbers saw a "socially conscious and better - prepared person doing the right thing."

In some ways, the labbers and the oldtimers saw completely different things. The oldtimers thought the newcomers were "stuck up", the labbers saw themselves as merely continuing in the tradition to which they were accustomed. An urban class has very different needs and perceptions than a rural class, and the labbers that moved into Livermore perceived different needs. The shopping was essential. The tennis courts and swimming pools were all the natural progression of events. The oldtimers, on the other hand, saw outlandish requests and snobby attitudes. One of the largest

barriers to communication between these two groups of people was the difference in background. While they both spoke English, they both spoke a symbolically very different language. Behavior of one group is perceived by the other group in its own terms, rather than for its own merits.

The labbers' "outward-bound" cultural ethic shows up particularly well here. The labbers' dynamic and goal-oriented culture, coupled with their belief that they knew better than the natives, served to make them very insistent that a new sewer was necessary, that the shopping area should be changed, and that the schools should be modified to suit their interests. In this way the labbers' rapidly expanded to fill all segments of Livermore life - political, economic, and cultural. They formed orchestras, committees, and campaigned for office. Conversely for the oldtimers, the sewer was a great expense and not in their best interests. The cultural outrage that one of their friends had been cheated also bothered them, prompting them to vote against the sewer.

CONCLUSION

Seven years after beginning this interest in Livermore, I've had the opportunity to complete a segment of research. As a fourteen-year old I never expected that my interest would take me to this exact place of research about Livermore. I've learned much, much more than I ever expected. Livermore in the 1950's was a bi-cultural town, a contrast between the inward-pulling native culture and the goal-oriented newcomer culture. These differing cultures collided, conflicted, and eventually began

to slowly converge. The form and content of Livermore has been influenced by the public and private confrontations that began thirty years ago.

"Back then Livermore was just grapes, grain, and gravel," one oldtimer told me. Add a research laboratory to that town and everything changes. Progress? Perhaps. Conflict? Without question. Potential? Of course - this is Livermore!