



LIVERMORE HERITAGE GUILD

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THE LIVERMORE VALLEY HISTORY CENTER

Chapters of Livermore History

The Incorporation of the Town of Livermore

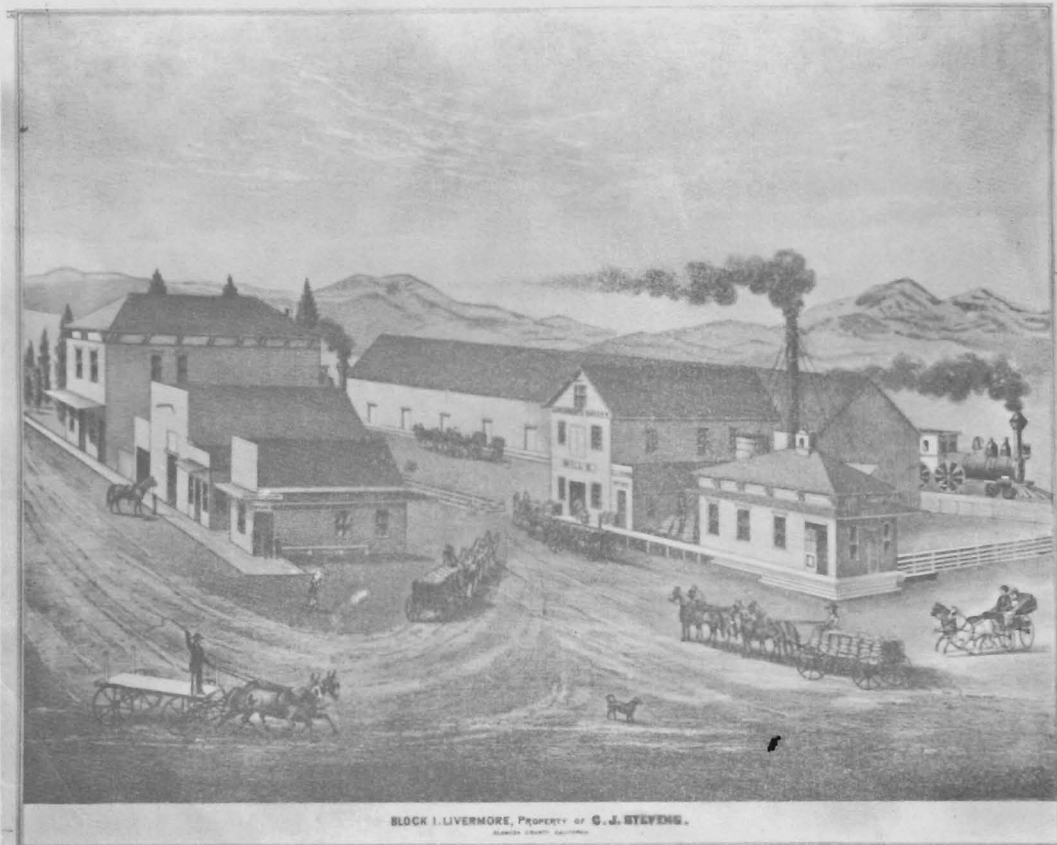


Illustration from New Historical Atlas of Alameda County Thompson & West, Oakland, 1878. View of Mill Square looking north-west. Note the Oddfellows building that is still standing.

In the December 4, 1875, issue of The Livermore Enterprise there is an item: "INCORPORATE - We understand quite an interest is manifested in trying to incorporate the town again...Property owners should see that those who are not hardly entitled to even

a burial plot keep away from the meeting, and not be allowed to vote down so important a matter..." and on December 11 the paper wrote that a large number of citizens met in Justice Church's office and after much discussion about the question of incorporation, a vote was taken on the subject. Twenty six were for and twenty two were against incorporation. A boundary committee was appointed and the meeting adjourned to December 18.

In the December 18 issue the paper says "This incorporation business has created quite a stir." And on December 25 (so the paper says) the boundaries were chosen. This time the vote was 38 for and 25 against. A committee was appointed to draft a special charter to be submitted to a vote of the people to be taken at a special meeting on January 3rd.

The paper of Jan. 8 says that at the meeting (with J.F. Meyers in the chair) the charter of San Leandro was read and it was decided that with some changes it was what was wanted. The most important point, the paper says, was leaving all matters of taxation entirely with the voters of the town and that the Trustees were so curtailed in their power that the great bug-bear of increasing the licenses was completely laid in the shade.

A committee was formed for the purpose of collecting a sufficient sum to have 100 copies of the proposed charter printed and circulated freely. A meeting was called for in the next week and notices of it posted. Every citizen was called upon to vote.

On Jan. 15, the Enterprise published an INCORPORATION EXTRA. We do not have a copy of it. But in the regular issue it says "It is the duty of all parties, owning property or not, to see this matter properly tested and put together before going to the legislature to become law, and not to hang back like jackasses until it is returned and then curse the matter."

Senator James Beazell, a blacksmith of Livermore, was in town over the week end, interviewing his constituents upon the all-absorbing topic of incorporation. " 'To be or not to be' an exemplar village or remain the 'bucolic precinct' that brother Halley of the Home Journal stigmatises us..." was the question.

By Jan. 26, Senator Beazell had introduced the bill in the legislature. The paper says "Should it pass within the next two months, we will have our town officers and less of the drunken rowdyism of which we have been accused. Advancement will be ours... Let every person look upon the future as just and agreeable and rejoice that God has found us in the Centennial year of our existence."

Later the paper had an indignant item about "Uncle Jim" neglecting his home town and attending to the incorporation of other towns first - for example the town of Alameda.

But on April 15, 1876, there was joy in the town. A heading in the Enterprise read: (they did not use headlines in those days)

LIVERMORE IS INCORPORATED. "The act incorporating this place as a Town has properly passed both houses of the legislature, and has been signed by Governor Irwin. All that is now required is the election of local officers."

An election was called for May 8th to elect five Trustees, an Assessor and a Marshal. The boundaries were described in detail. The polling place was the Livermore Truck and Ladder Company's Truck House on Second Street.

The "Regular Ticket" was: Trustees, A.J.McLeod, Moritz Hupers, P.Anspacher, R.M.Caughell, N.B.Holmes; for Marshal: R.B.Campbell; for Assessor, Hiram Bailey.

The "Tax Payers Town Ticket" was: Trustees, J.L.Mitchel, Jessie Bowles, John Mc Cullough, Charles Whitmore, Simon Weterau; for Marshal, R.W. Graham; for Assessor, Thos. Glaskin.

On May 13 the results were announced as follows: "THE MAIDEN ELECTION These country elections are funny things - queer excitements - pistols and coffee - disputes and whisky. Who invented elections?" The successful candidates were: Trustees: A.J.McLeod, Jessie Bowles, N.B.Holmes, Moritz Hupers, R.M.Caughell. For Marshal, R.B.Campbell; for Assessor, Hiram Bailey.

"Livermore is now a town and has her officers. Livermore so far is fashionable with one exception, she is without debt." It was noted that the Assessor was to be paid \$50 a year and the Marshal \$100 a month. The paper also remarked "The Assessment Roll is not in as correct condition as desired."

In Centennial Yearbook of Alameda County, published by Wm.Halley in Oakland in 1876, it says that the population of Livermore in 1876 was, by census, 830 and the number of buildings, 234.

The first meeting of Town Trustees was called at 8.30 a.m. in Exchange Hall (in the Famers Exchange Hotel which was on the east side of L Street to the south of the railroad tracks). It was for the purpose of electing temporary officers so that there could be an adjourned meeting at 7.30 p.m. that evening, when A.J McLeod was elected the "Permanent President of the Trustees".

One of the earliest illustrations of Livermore, published about the time of the first election of Town Trustees, shows the intersection of First Street and Lizzie Street (now called South Livermore Avenue). This area was called Mill Square for the flour mill of Calvin J. Stevens near the railroad tracks. As can be seen in the picture at the beginning of this article, Mill Square was a big open space. It is a pleasure to see that at this date, April, 1976, the open space is being restored and we will soon have a landscaped area around the old flagpole.

Sidelights in the papers of 1876 include an item about a big party held at the May District School. They danced until daybreak the next day and the supper they had could not have been excelled

even by the Palace Hotel, the paper said.

The June 3rd paper had a long account of the Commencement Exercises at the Palace Hall for the Livermore College. Each item on the long program was commented on. For example: "Song, Mary Harlan, (really fine), Recitation, Wallace Mendenhall, (applauded), Recitation, C.B.Marsh, (fair)..."

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References: Issues of The Livermore Enterprise on microfilms from The Bancroft Library, Univ. of Calif. In the Livermore Library.

Minute books of the City of Livermore, through the courtesy of the City Clerk, Dorothy Hock.

Photocopies of pages of the Act of Incorporation of the Town of Livermore, through the courtesy of State of California Archives.

Centennial Yearbook of Alameda County, Wm. Halley, Oakland, 1876.

M.W.Wood, History of Alameda County, Oakland, 1883.

Photocopies of many of the pages of the above documents are in the files of The Livermore Heritage Guild.

It is intended that these pages be kept in a loose-leaf binder.

Printed in Livermore, April, 1976.