

Do You Remember?



By Anne Homan
Livermore City Historian

The Lutz Hotel

Moritz Hupers, a native of Oldenburg, Germany, came to Livermore and built the Farmers' Exchange Hotel in 1873 on the east side of L Street; the KFC that recently went out of business was built on part of the same site. The Farmers' Exchange was a two-story wooden building in the Italianate style. An advertisement in the *Livermore Enterprise* newspaper boasted in May 1874 that the hotel was "furnished throughout in first class style. The beds are especially comfortable, and the restaurant and culinary department well supplied with everything the taste or wish of the traveler could desire." Attached to the hotel saloon was a bowling alley, "where the boarders and those who are lovers of good quality amusement can

wile away a leisure hour." Hupers sold the hotel to Max Berlin in 1899, a few months before his death in December.

Berlin soon sold it, and the building had many different owners and managers. By the time Mrs. Catherine McCreary took over the operation from Paul Opperman in June 1929, it included not only the hotel, but also the Greyhound Bus Depot and was called the Travelers' Hotel. Opperman retained ownership of the property at this time, and perhaps it was Opperman who covered the entire building with stucco and changed its name. The bus depot office was at the north of the hotel, with a separate outer door.

On 18 March 1938, a special event was held at the flagpole at noon. The Livermore High School band played, and local

students had been given a half-day holiday to attend. According to the *Herald*, a large crowd gathered. Lois Mulqueeney, queen of the 1937 rodeo, christened a new 37-passenger Greyhound "cruiser" with Concannon wine. Named "City of Livermore," it had the familiar Greyhound colors of blue and white, with chrome trim. Designers had created a streamlined look by putting the engine at the rear of the bus and eliminating the familiar hood. Mayor George F. Tubbs officiated and Councilman Sam Bothwell was there along with members of the Chamber of Commerce and Greyhound representatives. At the time Mrs. McCreary was still manager of the hotel and bus depot.

She sold the business to A.W. Schmitt in October 1938. Schmitt opened

History Lecture to Focus on 'The Curse of Dead Cow Curve'

Livermore Heritage Guild will host guest speaker Alan Frank for the August history lecture on Wed., Aug. 15.

He will tell the story of "The Curse of Dead Cow Curve."

Old-timers tell the story that deep in Niles Canyon there is a place where cows regularly fall off the cliff to their death onto the railroad tracks. Railroad workers

call it "The Curse of Dead Cow Curve." Uncovering the history reveals something sinister may be going on. The events tied to this area have shaped much local history.

Frank retired as a project leader and senior physicist from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. He is currently an engineer and curator for the Pacific Locomotive Association, op-

erators of the Niles Canyon Railway. He is also president of the Livermore-Amador Symphony.

The lecture will be held at the Civic Center Library, 1188 So. Livermore Ave. Doors open at 7 p.m. The lecture begins at 7:30 p.m. Come early for conversation and refreshments. The talk is open to all. A \$2 donation is suggested. For more information, call 443-9740.



Greyhound Depot

Livermore, Calif.

The Traveler's Hotel in the 1940s

a restaurant in the old hotel dining area and called it the Traveler's Café. He hired someone to run the café, but Schmitt himself ran the hotel and the depot with the help of his wife. The Schmitts sold out in 1945, and then followed more years of new owners and managers until the Lutz family came to Livermore from South Dakota and took over the management of the bus depot in 1956 and then the hotel in July 1957. They renamed the building the Lutz Hotel.

Mike Lutz remembers that the upper floor held a hall with the rooms for boarders on either side. Rooms 4, 5, and 8 were rented by permanent boarders. Rooms 14 and 15 were at the north end and had their own showers; these boarders paid more rent. Room 11 was incredibly narrow, and it rented in 1958 for only 75¢ a night. There was no room 13. There were separate shower rooms and toilets. The front door opened into the café and onto the steps to the second floor. To the right as you came in was the door to the Lutz fam-

ily living quarters, which included three bedrooms, a great room, and a dining room. Also downstairs was the café kitchen, and a men's and ladies' restroom. In these days before air conditioning, the upstairs was extremely hot in the Livermore summers. Mike's father, Arnold Lutz, put a swamp cooler in the café. The front door, the three windows at the front of the café, the door to the bus depot and the bus depot windows all had striped cloth awnings.

Arnold Lutz was about 5'8" and "a little chunky," according to his son. Sometimes, his parents would have "little discussions" in German so that Mike and his siblings could not understand. In April 1959 the city condemned the hotel and ordered its evacuation. Lutz and the owner, Adele Kreuger, appealed the order. Lutz said, "The courts will have to determine whether or not the city can just arbitrarily step in and close up my business and force me to lose approximately \$20,000."

The city relented and said the lower floor could remain open, but the upper

floor was closed. Soon after this, Arnold Lutz had a heart attack but soon recovered. The city and the landlord agreed that if certain repairs were made, the upper floor could reopen. The repairs were done, and the hotel opened again for business. Arnold Lutz died on 1 June 1960. Mike was surprised at the large number of people at his father's funeral—they had not lived in Livermore very long, but he knew how his father had gone out of his way to help people in need. Once he had driven an amputee vet who had been staying at the hotel all the way to Southern California.

Mike's mother was unable to keep up the business very long, and the family had to move out of the hotel. Mike remembers that the building was quickly condemned and torn down shortly afterward, probably in 1962. "I couldn't go down there to watch the demolition. It had been my home, and as cold as it was in winter and stifling hot in August, it was still my home."

(Readers can reach me at am50homan@yahoo.com.)