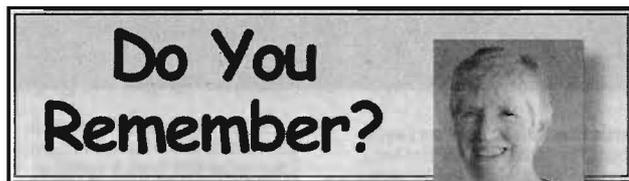


In 1913 all the streets in Livermore were dirt. In the dry season the town council hired someone to drive around with a water sprinkler wagon to cut down on the dust. You can imagine what it was like in the rainy season. New cars were such a major event in town that almost every week the *Herald* listed their owners and the make of their cars. Many automobiles, like the Kisselkar, I did not recognize. In July the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, alarmed at the speeding of cars and motorcycles, adopted a new policy that ordered strict observance of the 20-mile-per-hour speed limit in the county. Constable Wright, who patrolled the district from Livermore to the San Joaquin County line, arrested 20 speeders in just two days. All speeders were fined \$25.

The Coast Manufacturing and Supply Company, better known to locals as the "Fuse Works," was built in Livermore in 1913 and 1914. The site had many buildings, including the fuse houses, each 16 feet square, made of corrugated iron with hollow tile



By Anne Homan
Livermore City Historian

One Hundred Years Ago (Continued)



1382 Sweeney Opera House, Livermore, Cal.

chiefs," according to the *Herald*. The rebels attacked the ranch for the second time in September. Hayes, despite many pleas from friends and family, returned to Mexico in

McLeod and First Streets, had a seating capacity of 800. It was used by many organizations. The state paid \$80 per month rent for

the National Guard, Company I to use the building as an armory. The basement housed their equipment. When the weather was bad, the unit used the interior for its exercises. The National Guard was a wonderful organization for the town's young men. From its beginning in 1900 until 1917, a total of 414 men were members of the company. They used the Opera House to stage their dramatic presentation to raise money. Each year they went on a camping expedition. They organized a basketball team. In July 1913 they were called to help fight a forest fire on Mt. Tam for four days.

St. Michael's Academy was dedicated in 1913. Dinner was served outdoors for about 500 guests at noon; the actual dedication took place at two p.m. There was a dance in the evening. Oil well officials decided to redrill the Independence Well, one of the first in Livermore. C.P. Lefever was chosen as the new driller. Eighteen boys from Livermore High

participated in the Portola Relay Race. The race went from Sacramento to San Francisco, with the last leg of the race a swim across the Bay. Livermore High runners racing from Livermore to Hayward included Norman Sangmaster, Kenneth Henry, Gatz Wagoner, Fred Winegar, Jens Fryden-dahl, Percy Groth, and Martin Poco. On Thanksgiving Eve, Company I held its annual Military Ball at the Sweeney Opera House. It was always a handsome affair, with the guardsmen in their dress uniforms. Tickets were \$1.00 per couple.

The federal postmaster notified our postmaster, Thomas E. Knox, that he must house our post office in a fireproof building. A site was selected that today abuts the Independent Building to the north on Livermore Avenue. The new one-story concrete building was divided into four compartments of equal size; the one closest to the Independent Building was the post office. This building still stands—the

new French bakery is one of the stores. In December 1913, the U.S. Congress passed the Hetch Hetchy Bill to bring water from the mountains to San Francisco. This was not important to us yet, but it would eventually be a major source of employment for Livermore workers in the 1930s during the depths of the Depression.

An electric car came through town. Its owner waited about an hour and a half while his battery was recharged at the Livermore Garage. The owner was enthusiastic and believed it would not be long before electric machines would be as common on the road as the gasoline variety. Although many parts of it had not been completed, the Lincoln Highway, which would eventually come through Livermore, was dedicated on 31 October 1913, the first coast-to-coast highway.

The bra, the zipper, and crossword puzzles were all invented in 1913.

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

brick for fire walls. They were built on supports so that their floors were six feet above the ground, away from any dampness. The company made its first shipment of fuses in early November. At the time the business was running at about a quarter of capacity.

Meanwhile, rebels in Mexico were fighting against the government. The Hearst family owned a large ranch in Chihuahua; a number of people from the Tri-Valley worked there. One of them from Livermore was John C. Hayes, superintendent of the ranch. He escaped to El Paso in 1913 with 150 horses to keep them out of the rebels' hands. "He had been threatened time and again by revolutionary leaders and bandit

October.

A major accomplishment of our supervisor on the Alameda County Board, D.J. Murphy, was to convince the other board members to purchase \$500,000 worth of state highway bonds in November. The purchase itself was not as important as the fact that with this purchase, it was settled that the main arterial highways between San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, and the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys would run through the Livermore Valley. Essentially, today that would mean the I-580 and I-680 corridors. Perhaps to celebrate, Murphy bought a new Chalmers automobile.

The Sweeney Opera House, built in 1904 at the southwest corner of