A correspondent, writing of Visalia in the 1890's, speaks as follows of the engine that hauled passengers from Visalia to Coshen:

"The engine doing service on the Visalia railroad is one of the most novel arrangements we recollect to have seen in railroading. It has engine, tender and car all aggregated together, will carry 10 or 15 passengers and baggage, and can doubtless be run at half the cost of an ordinary stage coach.

"We place no high estimate on its speed, but the engineer tells us that it has the power to move any train likely to be loaded at any point in the valley."
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Many tales are told of the "devil may care" spirit that animated Visalia during the mining days. Gambling, drinking, fighting and frolicking were the occupations of many of the miners, especially as happened in the fall of 1856 and 1857, when their pockets were full of dust and they were off for San Francisco to spend the winter --and their cash.

Visalia often offered such attractions that they go no further. At one time about 25 of these miners practically took possession of the town. Wide open and in full blast, the attractions were kept going, night and day.

This crowd had among them a tall and lanky Missourian named Biggs Ben who could play the fiddle and, that his talents might be exercised in a manner calculated to attract the most attention they purchased a jackass for him to ride and were accustomed to march around the town, halting in front of the different saloons, treating all bystanders while the fiddler played lustily. The musician was paid $60 a month by the miners.
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Tulare county's first cemetery was started in Visalia in 1857, near where the City library now stands. The first occupant was a Dutchman who was drowned in Mill creek and whose only known name was Pete. On the rough pine box containing the remains was duly inscribed "Pete in the Box," the same inscription being placed on the head board.

Among others whose bodies were laid to rest here and later removed to the new cemetery were Jack Lorenz, Mrs. Thomas Baker, Mrs. Nathan Baker and a man called Salty.
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There was for years a cloud upon the titles to lots in Visalia and at one time serious trouble was feared. It appears that after Nat Vise gave up his preempt in favor of the on-coming city, nothing was done to comply with legal forms necessary to perfect a title.

On August 9, 1857, the board of supervisors passed an order asking Congress to grant the board the right to preempt the town site of Visalia, and the clerk was ordered to file in the land office, then situated in San Francisco, the necessary application.

The application was not received, the land office claiming there was no evidence that the supervisors were the agents of Tulare county. The matter was dropped until 1867. The Visalia Land District had been formed and one George Garish appointed receiver. Discovering the lack of title on the town site, he made applications for the lands. This aroused the people and steps were taken to perfect the title to the county for the lands. The issue had to be taken before the land commissioner at Washington but it finally was adjusted to the satisfaction of the people.
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Visalia wasn't always the city beautiful of which citizens today are so proud. In the spring of 1860 a correspondent wrote as follows to the Delta:

"This region, including the town, is little more than a labyrinth of crooked creeks, ditches, fences, brush, weeds, etc. A quarter of a mile out of town is the wilderness to all intents and purposes.

"Streets are straight and square as far as they go but they don't go and it takes a very uncommon owl to get to his regular roost in the burg after dark. Wonder what the 'Beau Brummel' of the Mariposa Gazette, who was here about two weeks ago, thinks of it, inquiring the way to Visalia about a hundred yards from the Court street bridge."
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An ousted official in the early days in Visalia was not at all inclined to take his beating without protest, an old file of the Times reveals.

Dr. Webb was ousted from his $500 a year position as county physician and manager of the county hospital in 1871 and was replaced by a man to whom the supervisors voted an annual salary of $2000.

The following card appeared in the Times of November 11, 1871:

"Rev. James A. Webb to the perjured supervisors of Tulare county:

'Rev. Webb to the perjured supervisors of Tulare county; Perjured villains, rebel devils and fools:

"While unscrupulous and perjured rebel devils hold political sway in our demented rebel county no honest man or Christian can expect any favors from their nefarious hands.

"I would be glad to keep the county hospital for $500 a year, but because I am a union man, and not a perjured rebel devil, you will rob me of my only means of support and give my hospital to rebel traitors of your own kind for four times the price for which I offer to keep it.

"Therefore, I, the only true physician in Tulare county, California, and the only true Gospel minister in Tulare county, and the only Bible poet in Tulare county, and the only Advent prophet in Tulare county, and the only Christian patriarch in Tulare county; therefore, in the name of and service of the Great Jehovah, I offer my services to God and Him only to continue my 50 years Bible task.

"What is your oath of office? Oh, yet perjured democratic demons. Where is your conscience, you ungodly devils? Have you any reason why I should not damn you all together?"
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W. J. Ellis, county assessor of Tulare county in 1870, submitted, as was the custom in those days, a statistical report to the state surveyor general showing the numbers of live stock, areas devoted to different cultures, quantity of different productions, etc.

In that year there were 103 orange trees in the county, butter production was 8150 pounds, there were 28,604 head of stock cattle and 158,631 head of sheep.

In all, there were but 30,000 acres of enclosed land, 20,000 of which was cultivated.

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Precautions not necessary in these days were taken in the pioneer days of Visalia to keep prisoners secure against their day in court, it would seem from the following orders issued by the Tulare county board of supervisors, the first on February 4, 1868, and the second on September 8, 1869:

"The following claims were audited and the auditor directed to draw warrants on the county treasurer for the respective amounts payable to the parties out of the funds indicated: Thomas and Hedges, services for cutting off and putting irons on prisoners, §14."

"The following claim being on file and examined and allowed, the auditor is directed to draw his warrants on the county treasurer for the same in favor of the following person and out of the funds indicated: J.N. Thomas for services putting on and removing shackles from prisoners at the county jail."
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Newspapers of early days did their bit for civic progress even as they strive for improvements today.

The following article appeared in the Visalia Weekly Delta of December 3, 1859:

"Our streets are in a bad condition this rainy season, having no drainage whatever; consequently the water is standing in great pools around the artesian well and in the middle of the street. Central between three of the principal stores is a large log lying across the center of the street, making it dangerous for stages coming in in the night. Whose business is it to move it, Wells and Sweet, Mitchell and Co., or Jordan and Co.?"

In the Delta of March 31, 1864, the following appeared:

"Our streets, in many instances, present the appearance of what, in the western states, is called a "clearing." The trees have been felled and the logs and brush impede the progress of travel, and in many instances are a nuisance, especially to the fair sex, with their 'sweeping trails,' which follow their footsteps.

"We earnestly invoke the aid of our friend Greely in having these obstructions removed so that our town may present the appearance to visitors that it is inhabited by a civilized and not a savage race."
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