

(c) 5716

Pioneer settlers in the Visalia section, uncertain of the reception to be expected from the Indians, gathered for a period in a stockade constructed on a portion of the block now surrounded by East School, North Bridge, North Garden and East Oak streets.

The defense was constructed of logs, placed side by side with the lower ends buried four feet deep in a ditch and standing about 14 feet high. Covered wagons, which served as temporary homes until cabins could be built, were drawn into this inclosure.

The stockade is described in the Visalia Daily Times of August 5, 1852, the authority being Ed Reynolds, ~~who~~ a pioneer of 1852, who aided in building the hold stockade and after living in the Visalia area for a number of years, returned to his old home in Tecumseh, Nebr. In 1915, at the age of 82 years, ~~the article in the Times~~ <sup>The article in</sup> ~~the Times~~ follows:

"It was in the fall (1852) when the party of which Mr. Reynolds was a member reached the site of the present city of Visalia. The sap in the trees was at the ebb and a stockade was erected directly ~~in~~ on the spot where the Southern Pacific tracks cross Bridge street at the present time. The lumber for this stockade was obtained by cutting down the mammoth oak trees which grew in great profusion, splitting them once in two and setting them on end, side by side, in a trench three feet deep.

"The curved sides of the logs were turned to the outside and the earth tramped in a round the bottom in such manner as to make them secure against a battering ram.

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ad one early Visalia

"At each corner of the stockade an extension of four feet was built out, across and back, to allow the settlers a chance to rake the whole side of the fort in case of an effort to scale the walls on the part of the Indians.

"This stockade was about 60 feet square and the tents of the party were pitched inside, and a tunnel dug underneath the wall, for admittance purposes. In this rude structure the first civilization was established, a dance floor was constructed from puncheon timbers and the settlers amused themselves in the evenings by dancing to the music of an old fiddle owned by a member of the party."

The stockade continued as quarters for the settlers for some time, even after the pioneers had started engaging in various pursuits to make a livelihood. With the arrival of new families, the cramped quarters became inadequate and construction of log cabin homes outside was started, S.C. Brown ~~was~~ claiming the distinction of building the first outside the enclosure, on the property now the northeast corner of the intersection of Court and Oak streets.

A bridge was constructed over Mill creek at a point south of the stockade and it was over this crossing that the first street in Visalia was surveyed later and designated Bridge street.

In the 1849 gold rush to California, many trains came by the southern route and ~~settlers~~ passed through the Four Creeks country, as this section then was called. Out of a desert they came and, pursuing their way northward, back into what was then almost a desert they went. Their delight at the sight of the vast oak-forested delta covered with knee-high grass may easily be imagined.

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ad two early visalia

Among the first to settle was a man named Woods who, with a party of about 15 men, arrived in December, 1850. Memers of this party came from Mariposa and were well equipped with saddle and pack animals, arms, building implements, etc. They located on the south bank of the Kaweah river, about seven miles east of Visalia, where they constructed a substantial log house.

Of the fate of this party, accounts vary. It generally is believed, however, that in the spring of 1851, an Indian named Francisco, speaking some Spanish and probably one of the renegades from the ranchos of the coast, with a number of Kaweahs, of whom he appeared to be chief, ordered the settlers to leave that section of the country within 10 days, threatening them with death if they failed to comply.

The settlers agreed to go and made preparations for their departure, burying the provisions and such farming implements as they possessed and proceeded to gather their stock. While thus engaged, the tenth day passed and the Indians returned to fulfill their threat. Ten of the settlers were killed while hunting their stock, two escaped and another was wounded.

The Indians then approached the house in which were Woods and another. They professed friendship and thus removed the apprehensions of their victims who did not know of the fate of their friends.

One of the whites was asked to hold up a target that the Indians might display their skill with the bow and arrow; he complied and was shot to death.

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ad three early visalia

Woods fled to the cabin and the Indians attacked and Woods attempted to defend himself with a meager supply of ammunition and his rifle. As opportunity offered, he fired through the apertures of the logs and is said to have killed seven of his foes.

At last the ammunition was exhausted and the Indians crashed through the cabin door. While it is well established that the Indians then killed Woods, the story that he was skinned alive is not considered to have any background of the truth.

Tulare county was chartered in 1852, as related in another article in the Anniversaries Edition and for a period Woodsville, scene of the Indian massacre, was the seat of county government.

Just how long the county officers and seat of government remained in Woodsville is problematical. The first minutes of the county court are dated Woodsville, July 5, 1853; the second session on September 5 is the same, and on November 7, 1853, the name of Visalia appears for the first time. The next date, February 7, 1854, notes the county seat as Buena Vista, but by the following meeting on September 4, 1854, the name Visalia was restored and has continued in force since.

The records of the court of sessions bear no date line until October 3, 1853, when Visalia appears. Judging from the designations in the minutes of other county groups, it may be inferred that this court, too, met in Woodsville during the early sessions, which leads to the conclusion that the seat of government may have continued in Woodsville up to September 7, 1853, when Visalia was designated the county seat.

In 1852, Nathaniel Vise had surveyed the ~~six~~ townsite of Visalia but the story that Visalia was named after him generally is discredited as related in another article in the Anniversaries Edition.



ad four early visalia

The first two causes tending toward increased population in Visalia were the discovery of gold as early as 1856 and the establishment of the Overland stage route through the town in 1859. For a number of years the town showed a rapid if somewhat hectic growth.

Those were the ~~easy-going~~ easy-going days of Visalia, the day of dollars easily acquired and easily spent. Between 1856 and 1860, it has been estimated, between ~~52220~~ 5000 and 6000 miners passed through the town, en route to the gold fields. Outfitting and freighting and the ~~accomodation~~ accomodation and transportation of travelers developed into a business of considerable consequence. The miners, whether going or coming, always were thirsty, and whether they had been lucky or unlucky, always were ready to take another chance.

Catering to these wants, saloons and gambling houses flourished; dance halls were enlarged and musicians imported. Faro, roulette, monte, poker and dice games all assisted in the general scheme of retaining a part of the travelers' cash.

When the lull in mining began to make itself felt, the Civil War, with its pay days for soldiers ~~and grazing~~ continued a form of ~~max~~ prosperity to which the discovery of new mines in the Owens river contributed.

The fact remained, however, that although situated in the midst of a most fertile section and being the only town within a score of miles, the community, while apparently prosperous, was not self-supporting. This was because of its location remote from markets and the lack of communication and transportation facilities. For a few years retrogression set in.

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ad five early visalia

Visalia was not selected as the county seat without a struggle. A set of county officers was chosen in an election held on September 7, 1853, votes being cast in three polling places, Precinct No. 1 in Woodville; Precinct No. 2 at Campbell's Ferry on Kings river, and Precinct No. 3, in Visalia.

Location of the county seat was the principal issue. Thomas Baker, candidate for county judge, championed the cause of Visalia and John Cutler, also a candidate for judge, defended the claims of Woodville. Baker carried the day in the selection of the county seat, a man named Sam Bryson having cast the deciding vote, but Cutler proved a more popular candidate and was chosen the second elected judge in Tulare county.

After the Civil War, the need for rail transportation facilities made itself clear and for a long period of years, untiring efforts were made by Visalia's leading citizens to obtain such service. The production of wool was becoming important, wheat farming offered prospects but excessive freight rates caused development to halt. It was remarked by one early settler that the only ~~was~~ paying product was one which would carry itself to market--meaning, of course, cattle production.

When it became known that the Southern Pacific definitely had decided to leave Visalia off the map by leaving it seven miles to the east, R.E. Hyde, leading ~~financiarz~~ financier, with the assistance of other enterprising citizens built the Visalia and Goshen railroad which was completed in 1875.

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ad six early visalia

In the meantime, Visalia had become incorporated. ~~An~~ An incorporation proposal had been defeated at an election held in 1860 and it was not until February 27, 1874, that the approval of the legislative act gave the rank of city to the town. The first officers were S.A. Sheppard, M. Mooney, I.A. Samstag, W.B. Bishop and W.G. Owen, trustees; J.C. Hoy, marshal and tax collector; Julius Levy, assessor; J.A. Nowell, school superintendent and city clerk; S.C. Brown, S.H. Collins, J.C. Ward and W.F. Thomas, school directors, and A. Elkins, recorder.

Arthur and James Growley established a water works system in 1875, gas works soon followed and electric lighting came in 1891.

Nathan Baker was the first merchant ~~in~~ in Visalia, establishing a general store soon after the location of the town in 1853, and also was the only storekeeper until 1855 when M. Mitchell engaged in the mercantile business. In 1857, Solomon Sweet purchased the interests of Nathan Baker and, associated with James L. Wells, began business as ~~Sam~~ Sweet and Wells, laying the foundation for the S. Sweet company which later became one of the largest department stores in the central San Joaquin valley. During this period, schools were established, churches were built and there was considerable activity in the construction of homes.

The Methodist church, South, was situated where the law firm of Bradley and Bradley now stands. Rev. E.B. Lockley was one of the earliest preachers. The Baptist group was organized at this time, but held services in the Methodist church when that structure was not otherwise in use. Rev. J. Webb was the pastor. The Christian church (Disciples), in 1859 worshipped in the old school house, Rev. W. Huggins being the pastor.

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ad seven early visalia

In 1859, W.A. Brown conducted a select school and later in the same year, Miss H.K. Clapp opened a high school in the Masonic hall where the higher branches of education were taught for a tuition of \$5 a month per pupil.

In 1859, the routing of the Overland Mail through Visalia brought the town into notice and numerous stage lines to surrounding points gave frequent communication with the outside world and fixed the future "metropolis of the country" as an important trading center. The telegraph arrived in 1860 and the celebration marking its arrival is described in an article appearing elsewhere in the Anniversaries Edition.

Visalia had its ups and downs but, generally speaking, the days of the 1850's were far from dull. The first firecrackers, imported in 1858, were hailed with delight by the fun-loving populace and sold readily at from \$1 to \$1.50 a package. Horse racing was a favorite sport. Local stock was used and a large portion of the available cash was in the hands of stake holders before the start was made. Sometimes the races were postponed until late in the day that visitors from a distance might have a chance to arrive and "get their money up." Some recreations were far more expensive than at the present time. Seven dollars was the usual price for a ball ticket and upon especially "swank" occasions, such as the opening of the St. Charles hotel, the charge was \$10.

~~Prior to 1880, principal improvements were of a minor nature.~~

Two items from the Delta in October, 1861, serve to give some idea of the physical appearance and comparative area covered by Visalia. The articles follow:

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ad eight early visalia

"This region ~~as~~ including the town is little more than a labyrinth of crooked ~~hitzer~~ creeks, ditches, fences, brush, weeds, etc. A quarter mile out of town and one is in wilderness to all intents and purposes. Streets are straight and square as far as they go, but they don't go far, 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 since, thinks about it, inquiring the way to Visalia at a house about a hundred yards from the Court street bridge."

"The land office has been removed to Court street, east side, two blocks from the telegraph office. Not a very central position (Corner of Mineral King avenue and South Court street), it being in the country. We suppose that the location was selected so that the recorder and receiver can dig about a patch for the raising of cabbages next spring if business is dull."

The first rude survey of the townsite of Visalia y ordered by the Tulare county board of supervisors on December 2 19, 1853, and executed by O.K. Smith so lots might be sold at public auction for the purpose of raising funds with which to construct public buildings, was supplemented in 1854 when D. Beaumont, government engineer, surveyed the section lines, the plat being approved on April 15, 1855. It later was filed in the Visalia land office on February 24, 1859, shortly after the office was established, having been cut off from the San Francisco district. Edmund P. Hart was the first register and Thomas Baker was receiver, the office first being located at the corner of South Court and Main streets.

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ad nine early visalia

The first map of the city was prepared by E.E. Calhoun who filed it in the office of the county clerk on November 5, 1858. Only two streets were marked, these being ~~Entry~~ Bridge, the first one originally designed, leading south from the stockade and from which all others were laid out irrespective of section lines and Mill street, now Main street. Mill creek was noted as the Tiber. A Masonic hall stood at the present corner of Main and Church streets on the site of the Jacob building.

A second map was prepared by A.J. Atwell in 1860 and shows two new streets, Sakie, now Acequia, and Cottonwood, now Encina avenue.

During the previous year, the townsite was noticeably increased by the addition of the northwest quarter of Section 29-18-25, lying immediately north of the original site, which Gideon Aughinbaugh filed as a military bounty land warrant on January 29, 1859. The northeast quarter, owned by William Pheasant, was added on January 22, 1859, and the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter, the property of Holland C. Sevier, was filed on February 4. The section was squared on December 14, 1859, when Reuben Matthews filed military bounty warrants for the remaining 120 acres in Section 29, this consisting of the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter and the west half of the southeast quarter.

On August 4, 1857, the supervisors, "wishing to procure title of said quarter section (the original 160 acres obtained from Nathaniel Vise for a townsite) the same not being subject to private entry, or offered for sale, and belonging to the United States of America," passed an order praying "the congress of the United States to donate the above described tract of land to the county of Tulare, state of California, or permit said county to purchase the same." The clerk was forthwith instructed to transmit



ad ten early visalia

An attempt in 1866 to enter the town to private entry and thus endanger if not invalidate scores of property titles was nipped in the bud as related in an article elsewhere in the Anniversaries Edition.

Prior to 1890, municipal improvements ~~as~~ were of a minor character.

The prevention of the flood waters of Mill creek from overflowing the town always had constituted a problem, and in 1891 the channel was deepened and straightened and confined to a plank-covered flume, which answered with more or less success until the flood of 1906. During two seasons of that year, the town was flooded and adequate protective measures became necessary.

For the purpose of obtaining immunity from this menace, bonds in the sum of ~~\$2~~ \$70,000 were voted and in 1910 was constructed, according to the design of City Engineer M.L. Weaver, a cement lined concret~~ex~~ ~~ac~~queduct over half a mile in length, the same being covered for most of the distance with a re-enforced concrete construction.

Prior to this, in 1902, a sewage system extending throughout the city had been built at a cost of about \$80,000.

Street paving started in 1895 with the laying down of 12 blocks in the business district.

Development of the educational system is dealt with in articles appearing elsewhere in the Anniversaries Edition.

Visalia has been more fortunate than many other cities in the valley and county in fire losses. Ever since 1869, when the Eureka Enging C<sup>o</sup> mpany was organized, there has been an efficient department.

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ad eleven early visalia

The new company owned its own apparatus, consisting of a hand engine and its own engine house, situated where the city hall is today, on property donated by D.R. Douglass, one of the most enterprising and public spirited citizens of the town.

In 1909, the present city hall, <sup>was</sup> built at a cost of \$30,000, and provides ample quarters for the firemen.

The first telephone installed in Visalia was a crude affair of the early 1880's, the property of S. Sweet Company as a means of communication between the down town store and the warehouse, a distance of several blocks. This first telephone was a primitive device, having no bells and the attention of the party desired was gained by tapping on the diaphragm of the receiver with a lead pencil.

On June 23, 1887, V.D. Knupp of Visalia and E.A. Braly <sup>of Tulare</sup> contracted with Wiseman Brothers and Johnson of San Francisco to build a telephone line between Visalia and Tulare, connecting the offices of Knupp and Anderson in the county seat and Braly and Blythe in Tulare. On July 10 the first call was made and ~~th~~ shortly thereafter the Visalia Times announced that the line had been taken over by the <sup>U</sup> S. Sunset Telegraph company, which would install a switchboard ~~taxtke~~ with offices in the Wells Fargo and Company building. On July 28, the Times announced subscriptions had been received for 20 connections in the city.

Story of the "wet and dry" fights in Visalia which really started in 1874 and culminated in final victory for the dries in 1912 is related elsewhere in the Anniversaries Edition.

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ad twelve early visalia.

When Visalia was incorporated on February 27, 1874, it was entered as a city of the sixth class by an act of the state legislature and this form of government remained in effect until 1923, when a charter form of government, including the city managerial plan, was adopted.

The city election under the new form of government was held on April 9, 1923, resulting in the election of Joseph R. Barboni, James M. Burke, Isaac Clark, Gilbert B. Furness and W.P. Willimott as members of the council. Barboni, having received the largest number of votes, was selected as mayor.

B.J. Pardee of Calinga was Visalia's first city manager, taking office on June 1. Other appointments by the council were: city attorney, E.I. Feemster; clerk, Miss Ida Markham; police judge, J.S. Clack; assessor, John F. Clark; controller, George C. Crotfelter; health officer, Dr. A.W. Preston.

Manager Pardee's first appointments included chief of police, Court Smith; fire chief, H.G. Williams, and city nurse, Miss Marion F. Horracks.

An article appearing in the last section of the Anniversaries Edition tells of the modern development of Visalia and the surrounding area.



edition

with old visalia

wet and dry

(C) 5/16

Controversies over the liquor question caused much bitterness in Visalia in the early part of the century and a historical edition without mention of the man contests would not be complete.

The issue first became before the voters in the last century--in 1874, when a proposed no-license measure was defeated by a vote of 178 to 120.

Many years passed before the issue again became a live one but the question again became a pressing one in about 1906 when most of the precincts outside of incorporated cities in the count had voted dry.

The anti-saloon forces, in 1911, succeeded in obtaining a test or straw vote, the sentiment of the voting public. Twelve hundred votes were cast, the drys winning by 141. At the city election in April, trustees favoring a dry Visalia were elected, the majority in their favor, however, being only about 80. An ordinance closing the saloons was passed speedily.

In the meantime, the state legislature had passed the Wyllie local option law, providing for submission of the question to the people upon the filing of a petition signed by 25 per cent of the voters. The advocates of the liquor cause, confident that sentiment was changing in their favor and that this would become more pronounced upon the falling off of business incident to the closing of the saloons, determined to avail themselves of the provisions of the new law.

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ad one wet and dry

A petition containing 304 signatures was filed and an election was held July 17, 1911. The wets obtained a majority of six votes in this election, there being 516 votes for license and 510 against, nine ballots being thrown out on account of being blank or incorrectly marked.

The city trustees decided that, as the saloon advocates had not received a clear majority of all ballots placed in the box, the drys had won, and refused to issue licenses. Intense bitterness was engendered and the case was carried into ~~the~~ court on mandamus proceedings. Superior Judge W.B. Wallace held that the election was carried by the wets but that as the Wylie local option law did not provide that the liq or traffic must be licensed following a majority vote, the writ of mandamus would not lie.

It was, in other words, optional with the city trustees, to follow the will of the people. The trustees, standing on their legal rights, and justifying their action by the contention that ~~ixixixix~~ illegal votes were cast, ~~man~~ maintained their position.

Liquor advocates gave up their fight for a time but in the spring of 1912 <sup>another</sup> ~~xxixixix~~ effort was made to obtain licenses. This took the form of ~~xx~~ initiative legislation. An ordinance providing for the licensing of saloons under regulations so strict it was thought they would meet with the less radical opposition element was prepared and the necessary number of signatures was obtained for a petition asking the trustees to call an election on whether the ordinance should go into effect.

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ad two wet and dry

Meanwhile, the wets felt their cause had been lost because in the first elections, they had been opposed both by the Visalia Times and the Visalia Delta, and a new morning paper, financed by the wets, entered the local field. This was the Tulare County Press. The Times, stating it believed the voters had had time after living under a dry regime, to decide for themselves what they wanted, remained neutral in the battle. The Delta, however, backed the cause of the drys.

The fight was a bitter one and there was a universal feeling that, whatever the outcome, the best interests of the city would be served by settling the issue once and for all.

At the election, held in April, 1912, women participated for the first time in municipal affairs. The liquor measure was defeated overwhelmingly and the Tulare County Press ceased publication a few days later.

Then came national prohibition with a war time dry law which was effective on July 1, 1919 and constitutional prohibition which went into effect in January, 1920. The Tulare county board of supervisors passed a "little Volstead" act and, thus city, county and federal forces joined to stamp out the illegal sale of liquor.

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ad three wet and dry

After many years of national prohibition, however, local sentiment changed and voters of Visalia and Tulare county joined with the overwhelming majority in the remainder of the state in approving a state law providing for the sale of liquor under the State Board of Equalization if national prohibition should be repealed.

The National Act was repealed and liquor was returned to the city and county under the state board, a portion of the license fund going to the state and the remainder to the area where ~~xx~~ licenses are issued.

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edition

with early visalia

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naming of visalia

Origina of the name "Visalia" has been, and probably will continue to be, a disputed question. Persons interested in the historical background of the city have spent much time in research in an effort to establish definitely whence came the name but always someone or some incident arises in dispute.

The A<sub>n</sub>niversaries Edition editor does not pretend to have found the solution but gives versions which have been accepted and refuted by a number of investigators.

The most popular version, although derided by most authorities, is that Visalia was named for Nathaniel Vise who first surveyed the townsite, and his wife Sallie, ~~Sally~~ Celia or Salia Vise.

Promptly, however, comes the assertion from other sources that Mrs. Vise's name was Lucinda and not Sallie or Salia.

Another source is just as emphatic in declaring that Vise never had a wife here.

Still another authority clings partly to the Vise version, stating, however, that Visalia is a combination of the name Vise and the Indian word sa-ha-la, meaning sweat house, one of which was situated near the location of Vise's first cabin.

Another school of thought backs the theory that the ~~city~~ settlement was named for Vise and that the termination, "alia," was added because of its euphonious sound as the cases of Vandalia, Centralia, etc.

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ad one naming of visalia

It also has been asserted that Visalia, Calif., was named for Visalia, Ky., the postmaster of the latter city stating in a communication of 1904 that his own city had been naed in the 1830's for a Nathaniel Vise, ~~max~~ members of whose family had moved westward in the 1840's.

A new theory was introduced recently when a radio program referred to ~~the~~ the chimes of St. Mary's church in V, salia. Upon investigation, Rev. Father Geo. D. Doyle of St. Mary's church in this city was informed that the reference was to a "St. Mary's Church in Visalia, Spain." Inasmuch as the Spanish influence was strong here in the early days, this theory might well be considered.

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