

There were very large ranches surrounding the town with grain, chiefly wheat, being a leading crop so the coming of freight service was welcomed. There were also some fruit trees and vineyards.

The railroad laid out the town, subdividing the tract west of the railroad into sixteen oblong blocks. An impressive terminal building was erected. A railroad hotel was built and opened to the public in 1871 with a grand ball and sumptuous supper. It was one of the largest hotels in this part of the state and was built at a cost of \$50,000. They hired Frederick Henry Harvey, founder of restaurants and dining service for Sante Fe, to design the structure and train the restaurant personnel. For this reason, it was commonly called the "Harvey House".

All passenger trains made twenty minute meal stops so that people could eat at the hotel. Rival restaurants opened, but the railroad company forbade solicitation on its property and finally resorted to running a long line of freight cars onto the side track just before arrival of a passenger train thus cutting off all the town except the hotel by the depot. Then a tight high board fence was built to cut off the town. The first hotel keeper was H. A. Bloss.

In the first ten years the little town grew and prospered. A 1879 County history says that in that year Lathrop "has about twenty-four buildings, of which one is a hotel or railroad eating house, kept by J. A. Shephard....two stores, and one large school building where the Dunkards, German Baptists, and Methodists hold their services". Another county history, published in 1890, says that at that time there were five hotels and restaurants, two general stores kept by Joseph Geraty and by a Mr. Sanguinetti, and that Scar and Howland were principal grocers. This same history claims that at that time there were "twelve passenger trains and forty-four freight trains arriving or passing through this point daily"! (This sounds like an exaggeration, maybe,)

The hotel and railroad terminal burned in 1886. At that time the company began to think of moving the roundhouse and shops to Tracy, a new town founded in 1878, about fifteen miles to the southwest and on the main line to San Francisco. Stanford also had named this town for a relative, Lathrop J. Tracy. When this move was made further growth of Lathrop was squelched, but it had become well established as a thriving country town.

A group of Mormons had come into the area south of Lathrop in the 1840's looking for agricultural opportunity. John Doak and Jacob Bonsell established a ferry for crossing the San Joaquin River at what is now known as Mossdale, south of Lathrop. They built the ferry in Marin County and brought it up the river. This crossing was on the direct route from Sutter's Fort in Sacramento to San Jose and they did a thriving business charging \$1 for a footman, \$3 for a man on horseback, and \$8 for a wagon and horses. In 1856, it was sold to William Moss, who later started the San Francisco Examiner, hence the name Mossdale.

A group of Progressive Brethren, commonly called Dunkards, came in 1860. They first organized as a group in 1862 with George Wolfe as Elder, Felix Senger as minister, and Jacob Wolfe and Henry Haines as deacons. There were fourteen other members. As noted above there was also a German Baptist and a Methodist group, and in May 1887, a Catholic congregation was established.

The first school in the area was in the Tulare School District, 1865, with a school house on Howland Road south of Louise Avenue, with A. H. Randall as first teacher, followed by Mrs. E. P. Foltz, Wesley Winter, Mr. Bagley and A. H. Stone. In 1875, during the term of Mr. Stone, the school was moved into the town of Lathrop and located on the block where the present fire house stands. It was in this building that several denominations held their church services, not every

Sunday but on a turnabout basis. The school was maintained there until 1916 when it was moved to its present location, with a new building being erected in 1952.

Early newspapers were "Lathrop Junction" and "The Railroad Journal".

Among the old families of the area are such names as Meyers, Salmon, Thompson, Howard, Litchfield, Shedd, Houser, and other pioneers as well as those listed in some of the above activities.

REFERENCES:

- Gudde, - California Place Names, rev. ed., 1960
- Tinkham, - History of San Joaquin County, 1923
- History of San Joaquin County, California, Thompson & West, publishers 1879.
- An Illustrated History of San Joaquin County, Lewis Publishing Company, 1890.
- Stockton Record, - March 28, 1963 and March 29, 1963.
- A talk by Robert Allen of Lathrop

SOCIETY NEWS

June meeting of San Joaquin County Historical Society, the final one for the summer, is held in the Community Center in Ripon, a 7 p.m. pot-luck supper, Mrs. Ralph Gardner in charge of arrangements and program. Naomi Carey and Medora Johnson will report on the annual meeting of the Conference of California Historical Societies held in Oroville, June 15-17.

The pamphlet on the history of Woods School is still available.

ORGANIZATION

San Joaquin County Historical Society meets on the fourth Monday of each month, except July and August, at Micke County Park, at 8 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

The Society is organized to discover, preserve, and spread the knowledge of historical records and events, particularly those involving the history of San Joaquin County and the State of California. Anyone interested in the activities of the Society is invited to join. Dues are \$3.00 a year. Contributions to the Society are deductible for income tax purposes.