

HISTORY OF  
ETERNAL VALLEY  
FROM 1769

## THE SACRED EXPEDITION

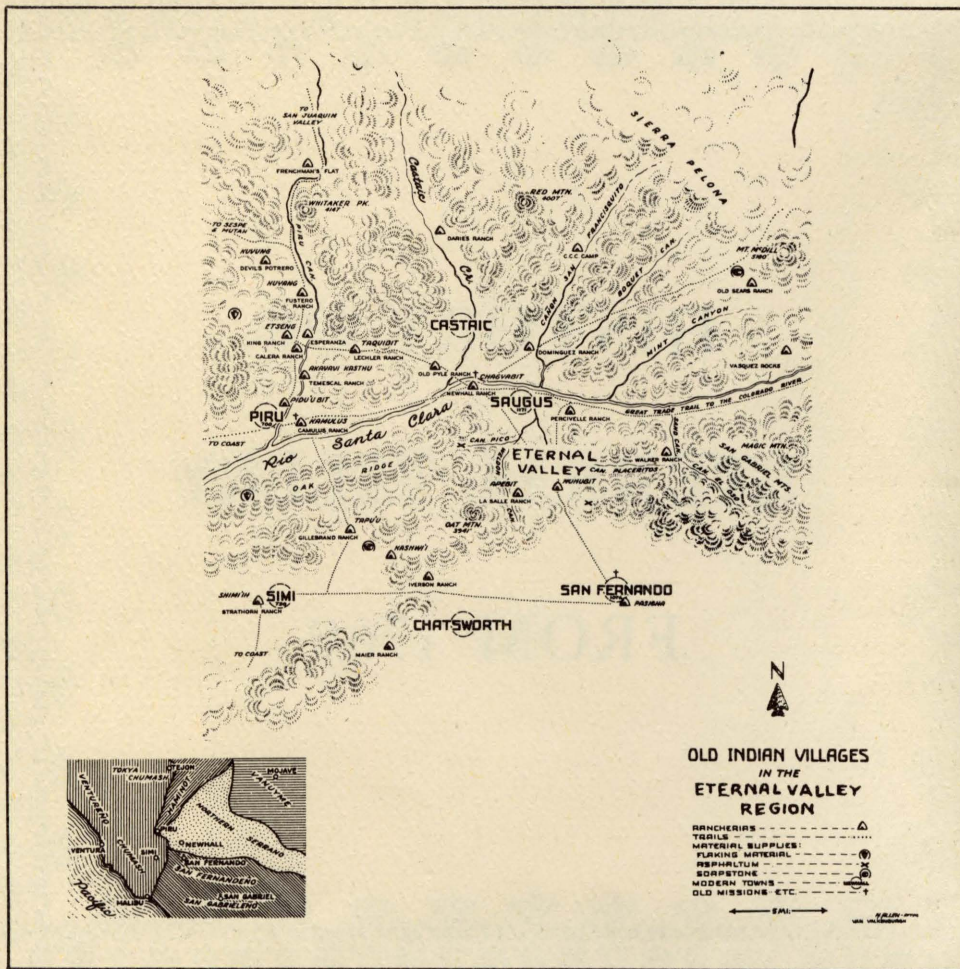
In 1769, Father Junipero Serra sent a Sacred Expedition north from San Diego to find the legendary Bay of Monterey. It was on this journey that the first recorded impressions of Eternal Valley and the surrounding vicinity were made.

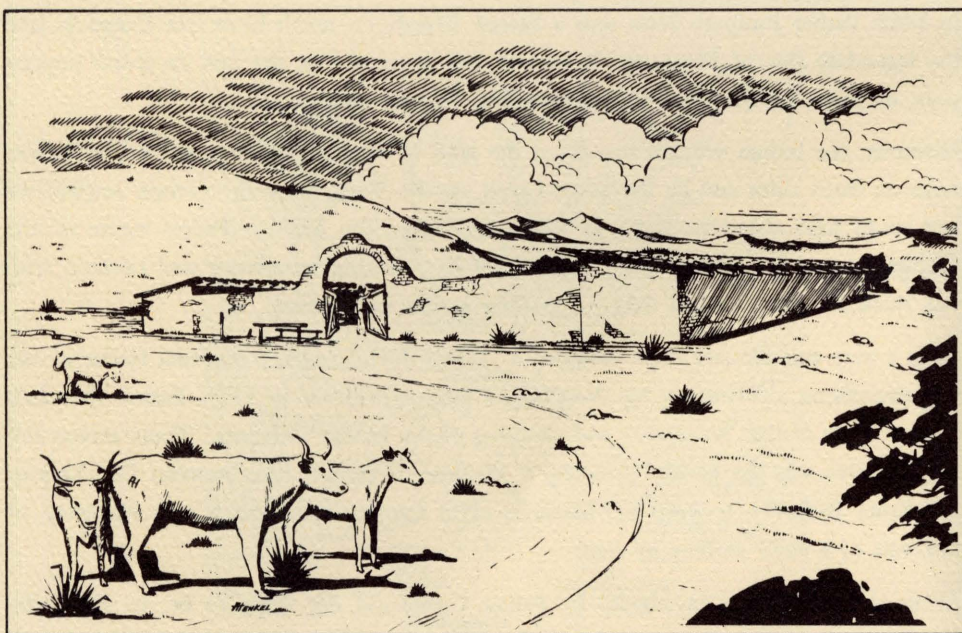
However, the Indian villages that laced the land of Eternal Valley, encircled by mountains on three sides and by the Sespe Creek on the West, were the earliest settlements and could have dated from 50 to 500 years before the Spanish Padres wrote of the "delightful and beautiful plain...surrounded by towering mountains and covered with tall, thick cottonwoods and oaks..." in their letters and diaries.

"It is a very suitable site for a mission..." Father Juan Crespi, a spiritual leader of the first expedition, declared in his diary. On a later expedition in 1776, Father Francisco Garces wrote of the "hospitality and affability of the Indian Villagers." These priests felt that the area was the perfect place for a Misión — a perfect link between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara — to keep the Missions of El Camino Real, the King's Highway, at intervals of a day's journey by foot.

Although the Mission envisioned by Father Crespi did not come to be, in 1804, the San Fernando Mission which had been established in 1797, built an Asistencia at the precise site he had originally recommended. It became the headquarters of local activities and a training school for local neophytes who furnished labor for the Mission's maintenance and operation. Mission San Fernando and the Asistencia, which was located on a vast acreage called "Rancho San Francisco," brought El Camino Real to the original path of Sacred Expedition, in spite of the steep mountain grades.

Spain was expelled from Mexico in 1821 and in 1824, to stimulate colonial development in the lands north of its present boundary, the Mexican Congress legislated encouragement for land settlement. All grants of national lands were limited to eleven square



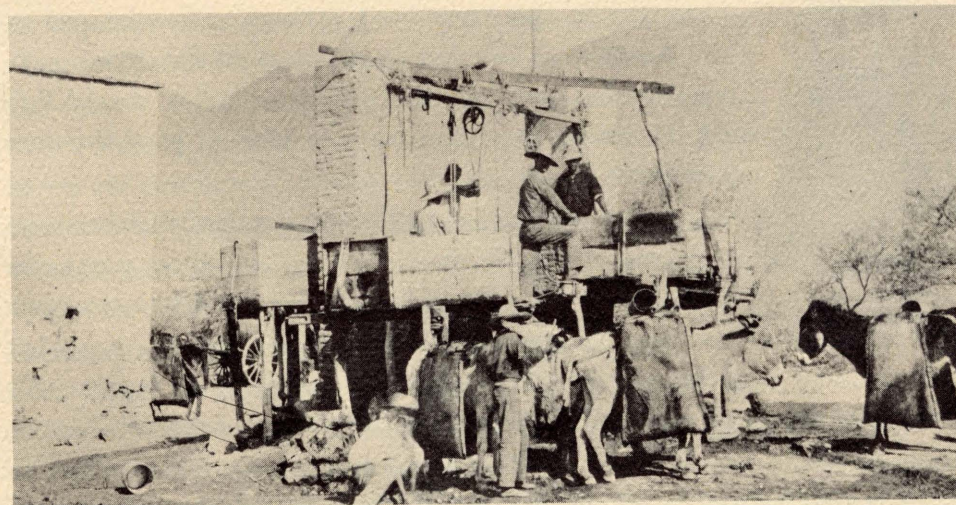


THE MISSION ASISTENCIA

leagues — 48,829 acres. There could be no absentee ownership, transference to any ecclesiastical body and veterans were given preference rights.

The term Mission, which once meant only the church town with gardens and orchards near it, had come to include extensive tracts over which cattle, horses and sheep, owned by the establishment, were allowed to roam at will. So, in effect, the Mexican government had set up methods for disposal of lands that did not exist if the mission claims were allowed.

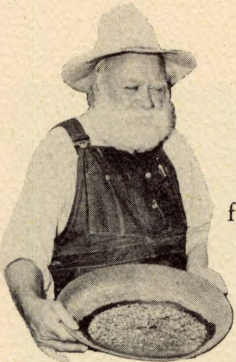
THE FIRST GOLD DISCOVERY IN THE WEST



Two generations of Californians by birth had developed, and there was a clash of interest between the rapidly growing population and the large holdings of the missions. It was resolved in 1833 when the Mexican Congress passed the bill for secularization of the missions.

## RANCHO SAN FRANCISCO AND THE DEL VALLE FAMILY

In October 1834, Lieutenant Antonio del Valle was commissioned to take over Mission San Fernando. As administrator of the Mission, del Valle traveled the entire length of Rancho San Francisco traveling between San Fernando and Santa Barbara. These long horseback rides first acquainted him with the possibilities of Rio Santa Clara and Rancho San Francisco.



ONE OF THE VALLEY'S  
FIRST PROSPECTORS

In 1837, he asked Don Pablo de la Guerra to draw a map of the Rancho from his verbal description. It is believed that at that time a portion of the Rancho was being utilized by the del Valle family for grazing purposes under some grant or permission from authority.

Don Antonio del Valle petitioned Governor Alvarado for the Rancho on January 22, 1839. The petition was granted and the Mission Asistencia became the first del Valle rancho home.

After del Valle's death in 1841, the rancho was partitioned and divided among his children. A portion of the Rancho called Camulos was always associated with Don Ygnacio del Valle, Antonio's oldest son.

However, tradition tells us that it was from the old Asistencia that Francisco Lopez, del Valle's cousin, and two friends, Manuel Cota and Domingo Bermudez, made the first authenticated gold discovery in California. It led to the settlement of the first mining camp in California at Placeritas Canyon.

In 1847, John C. Fremont and his party of 429 passed through the Rancho, traveling through the steep mountain ranges with covered wagons and a cannon, which had to be let down the southern slope with ropes. Today there is a plaque on Highway 6, near the place where the Fremont expedition encamped, calling attention to Fremont Pass. It gives the erroneous impression that the cut made by E. F. Beale in 1863 is Fremont's Pass.

Two years later, an exaggeratedly contrasting party of footsore pioneers stumbled out of the mouth of the Soledad Canyon. It was the "Jayhawker" party — what was left of them — ending their tragic trek through Death Valley to the gold fields. The party convalesced

for a few days in the old adobe milk house, which stood on the slope slightly above the cienega and below the rancho house.

The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, under which California passed into possession of the United States by purchase, went into effect February 2, 1848. It provided for the continuity and protection of existing land titles. Rancho San Francisco was only a cattle range and its isolation seemed to insure its protection as such.

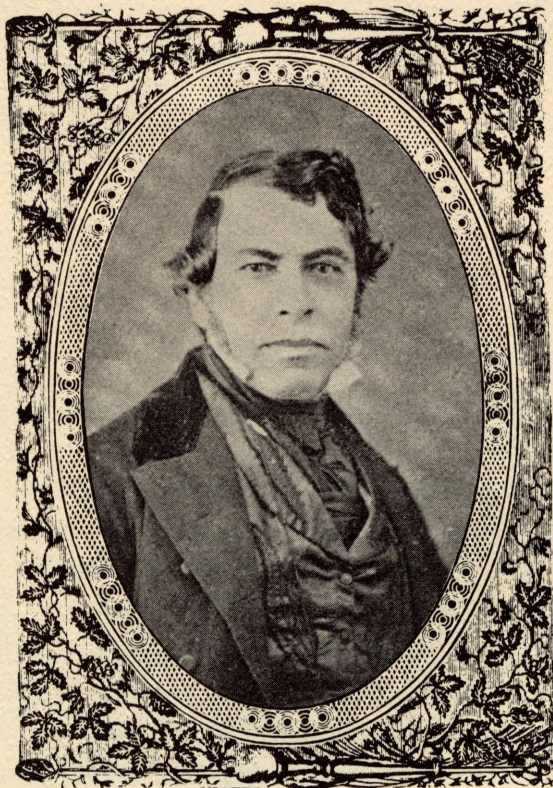
The Gold Rush in 1849 created unlimited money and business in the mining camps and cities of the north. There were pioneer merchants in the sleepy Pueblo de Los Angeles — the area that is today the Olvera Street Mission in downtown civic center — who were fully aware of the possibilities developing. Accustomed to surmounting handicaps, these rugged frontiersmen intended to get their full share of whatever development might take place elsewhere.

Los Angeles County Records show that at the time the appropriations, subscriptions and expenditures to get a passable road to and through Rancho San Francisco northward were more than all the money spent on other roads in the county combined.

The building of this road had a terrific impact on the Rancho, and in 1852, Antonio del Valle's widow, Don Ygnacio del Valle, who was elected County Recorder, and the other children, petitioned for confirmation of the title to Rancho San Francisco.

## LYON'S STATION OPENS AT ETERNAL VALLEY SITE

In about 1851 the necessity arose for a staging connection from the Pueblo inland and to the North. It is believed that Henry C. Wiley and Jose Ygnacio del Valle established the first station.



DON YGNACIO DEL VALLE

In 1853 the Pacific Railroad survey mapped a new route through Williamson's Pass, known today as Soledad Canyon. It seemed easier to travel than the older road and later became the most popular of the known routes. There was a great deal of development at Rancho San Francisco. In August Fort Tejon was established. Within two months a road district from Los Feliz Ranch to the Rancho was formed, and \$1,000 was appropriated by the County Board of Supervisors to improve the wagon road between Mission San Fernando and the Rancho. The Kern River gold rush really started traffic over the old road. An inland stage line was started from Los Angeles to the Kern County mines.

Staging was of great importance before the railroads came. Stage lines, dependent upon livestock and wagons, could not keep running without stations at short intervals. This explains the necessity for Lyon's Station—the first American settlement in the area—originally founded by del Valle and Wiley in 1851 and taken over by Sanford and Cyrus Lyon, 49'ers from Maine, in 1854.

Major Horace Bell, a friend of the Lyon brothers, wrote an exciting account of the first stage run over the San Fernando mountains to Rancho San Francisco:

*"...the trail over San Fernando Pass was a rocky acclivity...difficult even by pack mule...with a descent of equal abruptness.*

*"Standing on the summit...a precipice of many hundred feet lay before you...facing about dizzily you wonder how you reached the rocky summit.*

*"In December, '54, the driver sat on the box of his Concord Stage...reaching the summit...the question among his nine wondering passengers who had toiled up the mountain on foot, was how the Stage could descend..."*

*"The driver cracks his whip, tightens his lines, whistles to his trembling mustangs, urges them to the brink of the precipice and they are going down!!!...Racketty, clatter bang. Sometimes the horses ahead of the stage and sometimes the stage ahead of the horses, all, however, going down, down with a CRASH!*

*"Finally, the conglomeration of chains, harness, coach, mustangs and driver were found in an inextricable mass of confusion—contusions, cracks and breaks...piled in a thicket of chaparral at the foot of the mountain.*

*"Didn't I tell you?" said the driver, "a beautiful descent, far less difficult than I had anticipated."*

This marked the arrival of the first stage at Lyon's Station.

A description of a stay at the station was written by Harris Newmark in 1856. "The first stop out of Los Angeles was at Lyon's Station where we put up for the night. One of the brothers prepared supper. Having to draw some thick blackstrap from a keg, he used a pitcher to catch the treacle. The liquid ran slowly...steadily...overflowed and spread over the dirt floor. When Lyon finished chatting, he found a new job on his hands

—likely to keep him busy for some time.”

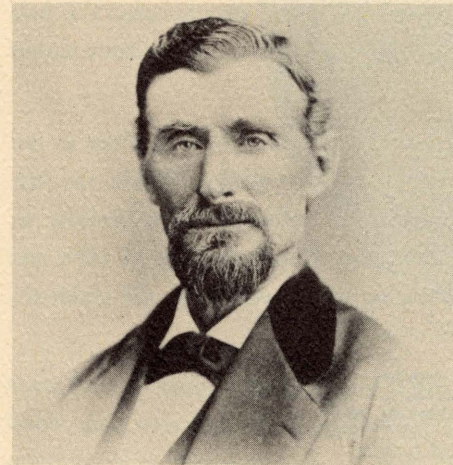
In 1862, a twenty-year franchise was granted for a turnpike from Mission San Fernando to the Arroyo de Santa Clara, under which E. F. Beale immediately began the deep cut through the crest of the San Fernando mountains. The following year, he began driving his camel drawn tandem buggy from Tejon to Los Angeles.



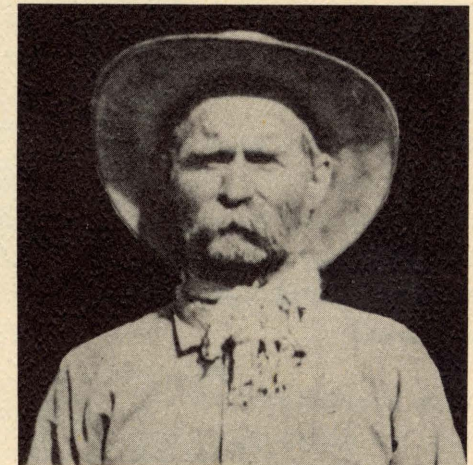
BEALE'S CUT

## PIONEER CEMETERY BEGINS IN 1860

SANFORD LYON, FIRST AMERICAN SETTLER



JAKE SWALL, SR., EARLY HARVESTER



Lyon's Station consisted of a well constructed frame building, which housed a store, post office, depot and tavern. There was also a large stable and a cottage half-hidden in the mountain oak. It is marked today only by the old graveyard.

This is the exact site where Eternal Valley Memorial Park is being developed today. The century-old family cemetery is being restored and will be called "The Garden of the Pioneers" in honor of the famous men who are buried there.

Some of the graves are no longer clearly marked, however all of them have been preserved, clearly indicated by fences, a silent memorial to the first settlers, who hallowed this ground and passed this sacred heritage on to future generations.

The gravestones that are still recognizable after almost a century bear the names of many well-known pioneer families who were prominent in the struggle to forge a civilization out of the primitive Indian Villages.

J. A. Swall, a rugged harvester, was buried there. Sanford Lyon who founded the first American settlement in the area and his son Frank, who died as a child, are both buried in "The Garden of the Pioneers."

J. H. Whitney, for whom Whitney Canyon was named, buried his three children in the cemetery one by one as they fell victim to the dread diphtheria plague. Willie, the first child of this early day homesteader and his wife, died just before his sixth birthday in 1881... then followed the tragic deaths of their daughters, Nettie at eight in 1884 and Mabel 10, in 1888. Visitors can still read the following tender eulogy on the children's gravestones:

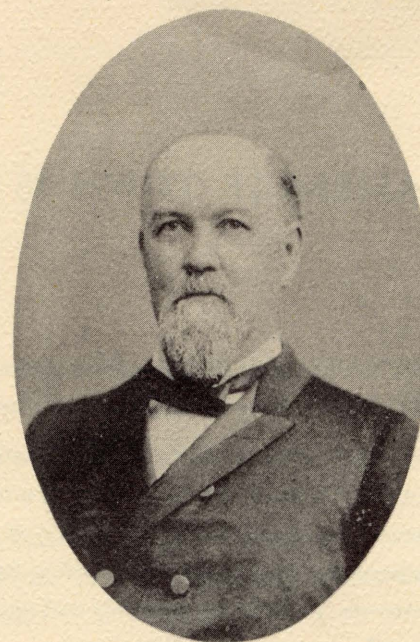
*"Beneath this stone in soft repose,  
I laid a Mother's dearest pride...  
A flower that scarce had walked to life  
and light and beauty 'ere it died."*

The Whitneys moved away to become one of the first families to purchase property on Signal Hill in Long Beach.

Reading like a "Who's Who" of Southern California's early history, the famous family names of Rivera, King, Stahl, Parish, Varner, Tibbetts, Aiken, Nelson, Overend, Quayle, Renne, Derrick, Barkis, Heinly, Lockard and Strecher are among those on the markers in "The Garden of the Pioneers."

## THE BEGINNING OF THE OIL ERA

Cyrus Lyon was typical of the reckless breed of men that built the West. Prominent among the Rangers — the only law enforcement body existing, he was not afraid of anybody or anything. Sanford Lyon was definitely *the* Pioneer of Pioneers. He was a typical advance



H. C. WILEY, PIONEER OILMAN

scout for the Eastern civilization to come. More conservative than his brother, he was a stable man who thrived on hard work, vibrating between live stock, mining and other sidelights that offered him a profitable return.

Known to his contemporaries throughout the entire County, Sanford Lyon was on the County Republican Central Committee in 1869 and in 1870 he was a candidate for County Supervisor.

Francisco Lopez told pioneers W. W. Jenkins, H. C. Wiley and Lyon of the Pico Canyon oil seepages, and in 1869 Lyon "spring poled" a 250 foot well in the Canyon good for ten barrels of oil a day. This was the first successful commercial oil well in the West!

During the Boom Days of the Soledad mining camp, Lyon was involved with George Clark, then Postmaster of Los Angeles, Christopher Leaming, the traditional mining district recorder, George Gleason, General Andres Pico, and Wiley. Active together in Soledad mining, livestock and politics, this group's personal holdings formed the nucleus of the California Star and Pacific Coast Oil Company's properties — known today as Standard Oil of California.

## NEWHALL'S NAMESAKE TOWN IS FOUNDED

At the time that Sanford Lyon was bringing eastern culture to the region surrounding Eternal Valley, Henry Newhall was becoming a financial tycoon in San Francisco.

Newhall's life was an Horatio Alger classic of rags to riches. One of eight children, he was raised on a farm in Saugus, Massachusetts. He shipped out as a cabin boy on a sailing vessel when he was thirteen years old, but he didn't like the life of a sailor so he settled in Philadelphia where he mastered the auctioneer's trade. Before he was twenty, he had his own firm in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1849, he profitably sold out that business to join the Gold Rush. The rest of his life was spent in California.

In 1857 he backed a friend with several thousand dollars — a transaction which ultimately involved him in the building of the San Francisco and San Jose railroad. This was California's second railroad and its tremendously profitable operation began in 1863. Its sale in 1868 reportedly returned Newhall a net profit of over half a million dollars.

Loaded with money and superb faith in California's future, Newhall bought several land grants including Rancho San Francisco — it was deeded to him for \$90,000 on Jan. 15, 1875.

At that time the Southern Pacific railhead was at Caliente, and construction had begun on the San Fernando railroad tunnel. As a railroad director, Newhall was fully aware of the railroad's plans, which included the development of a townsite at Rancho San Francisco.

Across the crest of the San Fernando mountains, a whittish line made of canvas and dust clouds developed. Three camps were established on the projected tunnel route. From each camp, an incline shaft was sunk to the tunnel level. Costing over three million dollars, the tunnel presented new problems each day which had to be solved with different techniques. Contemporary newspaper reports were punctuated with cave-ins, boiler explosions and mortality lists. A large number of the victims were buried in Lyon's Station Cemetery.

With a work force of 1,500, the railroad tunnel "holed through" on July 14, 1876, auto-

matically solving the very serious problem of working conditions that had arisen as the tunnel sections lengthened. The first train passed through on August 12th.

In September, Newhall deeded the land adjacent to the tracks to the Western Development Company, a real estate subsidiary of the railroad company.

The coming of the railroad made a great difference in the lives of the people at Rancho San Francisco. On October 18, 1876, the era of Rancho San Francisco came to an end with this announcement:

"A new town has been laid out by the Southern Pacific Railroad near the mouth of Soledad Canyon. The town is situated at the head of Santa Clara River and the object of its projectors is to tap the trade of our oil region and send it down the Santa Clara Valley to an ocean outlet.

"Within the past year, many successful developments have been made in that region. A character of oil far superior to that in the East is being refined from the flowing wells there.

"While Los Angeles has treated the enterprise of the men who have developed this important industry with neglect, the little town of Ventura has given them a cordial and liberal welcome and is now the center of refining works."

John T. Gifford, as Station Agent, opened the first "Newhall Depot" in one end of a box car, sidetracked for the purpose at the mouth of the Soledad Canyon. Later the railroad built a real depot, and Newhall hired George Campton to act as Ranch Superintendent and he advanced the money for the building of Campton's "General Merchandise Store." Just after the New Year, the Newhall Post Office with Campton as Postmaster opened inside his store.

The disappearance of the 1500 man work force at the railroad tunnel left an unfillable





THE MAIN STREET OF NEWHALL IN 1887

gap in the economy of the community. Many of the men drifted into nearby oil fields.

Intermittent stage coach hold-ups, the introduction of "iron safes" on the stages with two locks manufactured in such a way that "powder will not explode them," the organization of the Newhall School district and the opening of a boarding house and small saloon were events that characterized the year 1877.

The townsite did not prosper however, and in 1878 it was moved three miles south. Along with all the buildings, the name, too, moved. It became "Newhall" officially on February 5, 1878.

Henry Newhall was fifty-two years old. After working hard all his life and accumulating great wealth, he interested himself in his namesake town as a hobby. His first contribution was the building of the Southern Hotel. It was planned to be the finest between Los Angeles and San Jose. During its decade, it was the center of the social, religious and economic life of the community. It opened in February under the management of D. W. Fields. The hotel had a reading room, parlour, general store, large dining room — also used for Saturday night dances — and an unbroken view of the beautiful oak covered

rolling hills. Adjacent to the Hotel, carriage sheds, livery stables, corrals and planted parks were built.

Near the town, Sanford Lyon was farming 200 acres and John Mitchell had 600 colonies of bees in the Soledad Canyon. Most of the small local ranchers in the foothills and canyons nearby stuck closely to dry farming, grazing, live stock and bees.

In the town, J. O. Newhall, an eastern cousin of the city's founder, opened a general store across the street from the Southern Hotel. A new school district was established at Sulphur Springs in 1879 for the convenience of the growing population, and the Newhall Grammar School was built. A gift from H. M. Newhall to his town, it was a two story frame structure.

Outside of Newhall's payroll, oil in one phase or another was the major contributor to the town's support. A contemporary description called attention to the new townsite's "endless diversity of landscape, hill and dale constantly succeeding each other, the whole dotted with hundreds of venerable live oak trees as beautiful in foliage and as stately in growth as the leafy patriarchs of many an English Park...but it is to the new proprietor that the area owes its development..."

Daily monotony was broken by the arrival of the trains, and the Ventura Stage which left from the Southern Hotel. The Dances at the Southern on Saturday night highlighted each week's social activities. An entertaining account by Lou Ledger tells of the dances which brought together the township's ranchers, stockmen, miners and oil workers, where he at least once collected a knife in his back — the work of a lady who felt slighted.

Mr. and Mrs. Newhall, driving behind a matched team of faun colored Spanish mules, frequently rode to and from their ranch, in and around the town, investigating progress and planning new things that would make the town a pleasanter, better place to live.



THE FIRST  
HOUSE  
AT LYON'S  
STATION

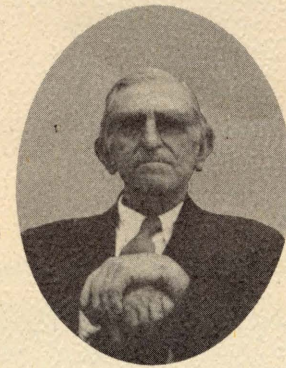
When Henry Newhall died in 1882, his heirs inherited a widespread, complicated one-man enterprise. Designed to be economically supported by planned natural development, the English Village ideal, without the enthusiasm and genius Newhall had given to his "town", became permanently derailed in favor of a typical California Mining Camp.

In 1886, the railroad started its long discussed branch line down the Santa Clara Valley to Ventura and Santa Barbara from a point "just north of the cattle pens" at Newhall. At that time there was an old adobe residence existing and it was feared that the vibration from the trains on the branch line spur might disintegrate the adobe bricks if the tracks were located too close to the building. To avoid this, the railroad junction point was placed down by the original townsite — today's Saugus — near the mouth of the Soledad Canyon. The branch line was opened to traffic, reaching Ventura on May 18, Carpinteria, July 1st and Santa Barbara on August 19, 1887. The adobe hacienda, responsible for the re-routing of the branch line, collapsed into dust.

## HENRY CLAY NEEDHAM AND ST. JOHN'S SUB-DIVISION

During the great boom of the Eighties, three men joined together for the purchase and sub-division of 10,000 acres of Rancho San Francisco for promotion and colonization as a Prohibitionist Colony. The men were ex-Governor John St. John of Kansas, the National Prohibitionist leader, Jesse Yarnell, a successful land operator in Los Angeles and San Fernando and an ardent prohibitionist, and George B. Katzenstein, a Capitalist from Sacramento.

To assure success of the project, St. John sent Henry Clay Needham West as "Superintendent of the St. John Sub-division of Rancho San Francisco" in 1889. Needham had



HENRY CLAY NEEDHAM, OWNER  
OF ETERNAL VALLEY SITE  
FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS

served as Mayor of Arcadia, Kansas, but he was probably best known to the St. John group as author of the Kansas "Dry" law. Very active among Prohibitionist circles, he established contacts with the movement immediately upon his arrival in the West.

He opened a lumber yard and hardware store and his local activities included charter membership in the Newhall Church. A candidate for President on the Prohibitionist ticket in California in 1920, Needham stood steadfastly behind any educational, ethical and cultural improvements. For over two decades this powerful, elderly man was the most outstanding personality in the community.

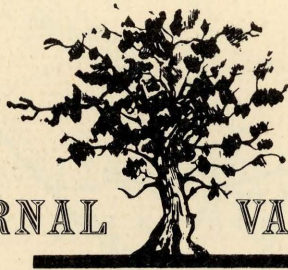
Only a few five or ten acre parcels in the St. John tract were sold — the boom of the Eighties had busted. At Newhall things were worse. The railroad had started a competitive town three miles away. The Southern Hotel had gone up in flames. Shortly afterward the grammar school burned down.

Beale's Cut, now a County road, was a very tough pull, even for mules, and train schedules were not set up for the convenience of the little mining camps.

Oil interests had moved to other parts of California . . . the gold fever had been exhausted . . . and the traffic barriers imposed by the Santa Clara Mountain range finally kept the isolated community from development. Beale's Cut, the life-saver of 1862, was throttling the area. The first decade of the new century was a trial and tribulation until the City of Los Angeles began construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1910.

In response to the shrieks from the growing number of anguished motorists, the County of Los Angeles replaced the road facilities of Beale's Cut with the Newhall Highway Tunnel. For the first time, it was possible to travel to the Valley comfortably.

The personalities, who added color to the region's history, had always emerged in times of stress. Newhall had gotten the town underway. Starting on a career which led to the



*California's  
Pioneer  
Cemetery*

ETERNAL VALLEY

MEMORIAL PARK

*At the junction of Route 6 and San Fernando Road  
where the San Fernando Valley meets the mountains.*

*In keeping with the pioneer tradition of family protection, Eternal Valley Memorial Park has a program of Planned Pre-Need Protection which will enable you to establish your family memorial — alongside those of California's famous Pioneers — before need. An experienced memorial counselor will be happy to give you complete information on this program in the privacy and convenience of your own home.*