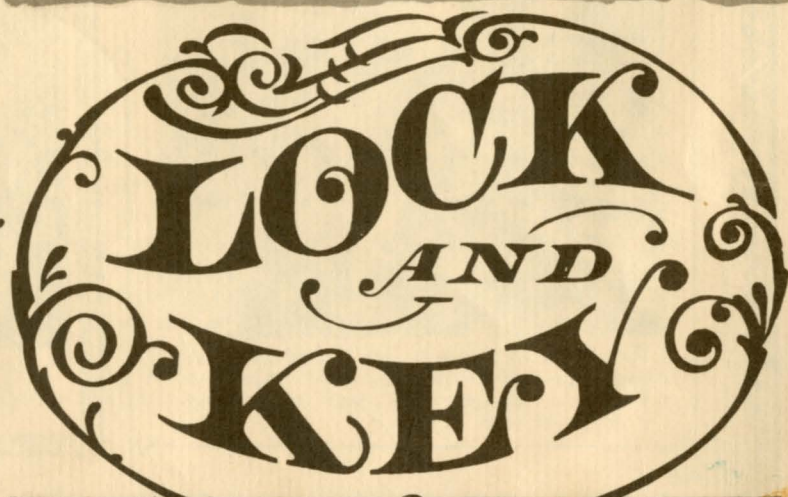


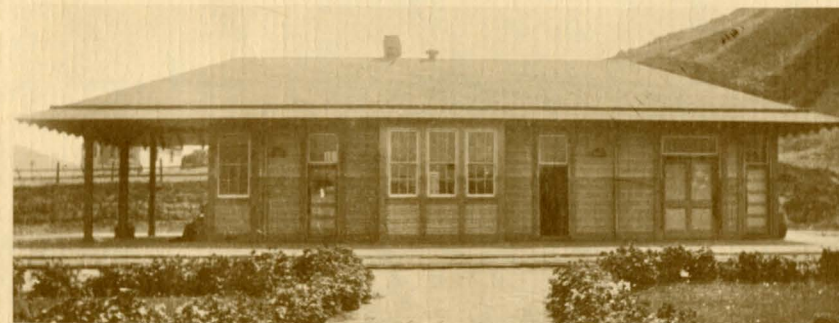
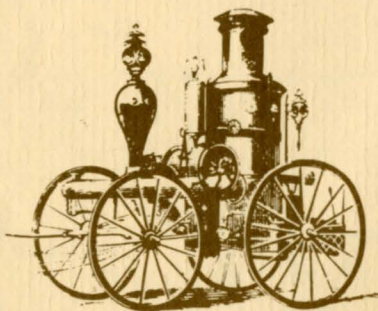


*Schlage's
Home Country...
Visitacion Valley
San Francisco*



January-February-March, 1967

OLD VISITACION VALLEY



Southern Pacific provided a commuter service to Visitacion Valley on the line known as the Bayshore cutoff. The old depot was given the name of "Bay Shore Park."



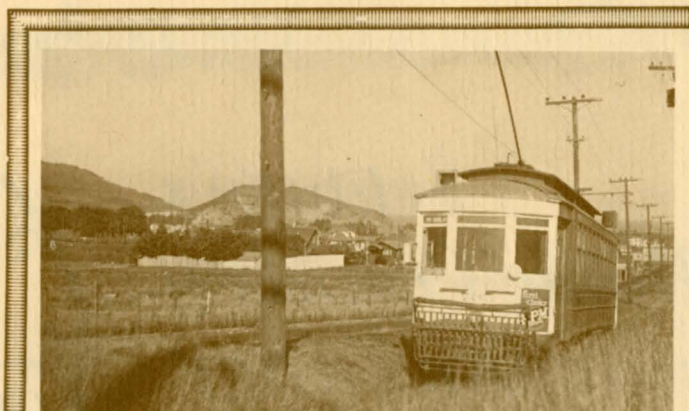
About 50 years ago, a Gospel Mission was held in one of the store buildings on Leland, which became part of the popular Leonarda's Restaurant.



In the early 1900s, there was a smoke shop and restaurant in the old Bay Shore Hotel; the building is still in use at Leland and Bayshore Boulevard.



Proprietor of the first Dry Goods store at 7 and 9 Leland Avenue was Mrs. Charles A. Louis . . . American trading stamps were given with each purchase.



Track ran through deep grass in the days when a streetcar line provided transportation between Bayshore Boulevard and Mission Street.

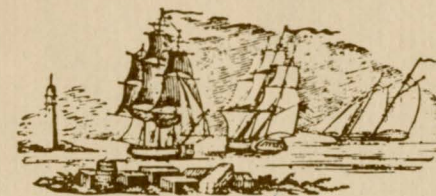
SCHLAGE'S HOME COUNTRY... VISITACION VALLEY, SAN FRANCISCO



hat has gone before . . . who were the early settlers . . . when did Visitacion Valley start to develop and set the scene for the beginning of a very young Schlage Lock Company—back in 1925?

In history, it was "only a moment ago" in 1775 when the first white men rowed a longboat from the Spanish ship SAN CARLOS into Seashell Point (now known as Hunters' Point) and set foot on the beach along the bay shore. This first report of the area stated that the only settlers the Spanish explorers met were a few Indians from villages to the south in locations that are now Visitacion Valley and Brisbane. These early inhabitants fished in the bay and hunted game in the hills . . . and today an occasional Indian artifact can be found—generally in the area of the two quarries that were later excavated in the Valley.

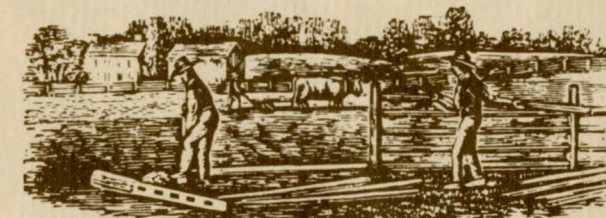
A year later, in 1776, Juan Bautista de Anza was probably the first white man to walk along the shore in Visitacion Valley. Under order of the Viceroy of Spain, he was on his way from the Mission at Monterey to select a location for the little settlement that was to become San Francisco . . . a map of the route of his journey shows that he turned inland from the ocean and traveled along the west shore of the bay as he came up the peninsula.



The official date of the discovery of Visitacion Valley was July 2, 1777. According to tradition, a number of soldiers and grey-robed Franciscan Friars were traveling along the King's Highway from San Diego to the Presidio in San Francisco when they became lost in a heavy fog and wandered into the hills east of the highway where they spent the night. In the morning when the fog had cleared, they gazed down upon a beautiful valley with the bay at its feet and called the locality "Visitacion Valley"—as this was the date the Church celebrates the anniversary of the great feast of the Visitation. . . . From that time on—to 1835—the Valley was used as a pasture for longhorn cattle, horses, mules, sheep, pigs, and goats belonging to the Mission Dolores and the Presidio.

The next event of great importance to the Valley—during the Mexican period—was the re-

lease of Mission controlled territory for private enterprise; now people could apply for grants of land . . . In 1839, Jacob Primer Leese, an American from Ohio, applied for some 9,500 acres that approximated the area of Brisbane and Visitacion Valley (as shown on the front cover). He named his grant the Rancho Cañada Guadalupe, La Visitación y Rodeo Viejo; he took possession by putting cattle on the land and building two houses—one of which was located in Visitacion Valley where his mayordomo and Indian herders lived. Several years later when the United States government had become established in California, this land title was confirmed. However, during this period, the acreage had been divided and acquired by others.



Names that are familiar today in Visitacion Valley now entered into the historical record. To mention a few of them: Henry Schwerin, a German baker, arrived in 1850 and bought several hundred acres just below the San Francisco-San Mateo county line, south of Geneva Avenue as we know it today. He had a herd of dairy cows on the side hills, and—in the area that is now the parking lot of the Cow Palace—he started a horticultural nursery and sold cut flowers and shrubs to the San Francisco flower market. About this time, a number of early settlers began to farm the fertile soil, which was the start of the Valley's large truck gardens; for irrigation they used picturesque windmills to pump the water.

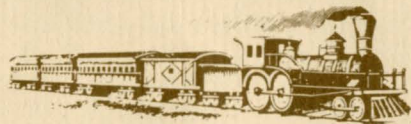
One of the holders of a large tract in this area was the distinguished financier, Francis L. A. Pioche, who is credited with getting San Francisco off to its start "as a happy hunting ground for epicures by importing 40 Parisian chefs and a boatload of French wines so San Franciscans could find out for themselves what frog's legs à la poulette tasted like, so they would know what vintage champagne was, and how to recognize the fragrance of Sazerac brandy . . ." Monsieur Pioche brought French interests into the Valley when he borrowed six million francs from friends in Paris to finance several enterprises in California, including the purchase of land that became known as the "French Gardens" . . .

Today, Schwerin Street is in the general location of Henry Schwerin's original holdings, and Pioche Street is just outside Visitation Valley.

In the mid-1850s, the Valley acquired its most illustrious citizen. Shortly after completing his term of office as First Governor of the State of California (1849-1851), Peter H. Burnett built a large home on Sunnysdale Avenue where the present Catholic Church of the Visitation is located.

Just after the Civil War, relatives of Virginio Rossi (now owner of the Visitation Valley Pharmacy on Leland Avenue) moved into the area and acquired a number of acres of rich farming land. They were joined by John Rossi, Virginio's father, who—in 1880—came to California by way of Panama and then up the coast on a train operated by the French . . . The Rossi family developed their property by hand labor into large vegetable gardens; later they formed an association with other landowners and hired farm hands to do the heavy work for them . . . The property owned by the Rossi family was a part of the first section in the Valley to be divided into residential lots in the early 1900s. The hills continued to be used as grazing land for cattle and horses for some 20 years longer.

By 1860, the ancestor of the present Bayshore Boulevard came into existence as the "San Bruno toll road"; it connected with El Camino Real at San Bruno. At that time the toll gate was at the Seven-Mile House, which continues to be a landmark just south of Geneva Avenue. However, the main traffic consisted of milkers who worked on dairy farms in Brisbane and South San Francisco; the vehicles were horses and wagons, and the road was so narrow that a driver had to pull his wagon into the deep grass to let another wagon pass.



Industry came into the Valley in 1876 when the fabulous investor W. C. Ralston organized the Union Pacific Silk Manufacturing Company with a capital of \$250,000. Every week this factory turned out about \$6,000 worth of silk ribbons. A few years later the company moved into larger facilities in South San Francisco; by the mid-1880s it was out of business . . . By 1890, the Pacific Coal and Fertilizer Company was in operation close to the water's edge and was called "the bone yard" by the local residents . . . Also, there was a brewery selling pitchers of beer for five cents—right across the road from the present location of Schlage's Plant 2.

About this time, cattlemen were ordered to remove a number of fences that blocked roads used by residents; and as streets opened up the Valley acquired several restaurants, roadhouses, and saloons. The Five-Mile House (Taco Inn

today, at Wilde and San Bruno Avenues) will be remembered as the start of the streetcar line to Market Street . . . "Pop" Blanken's Six-Mile House was a popular meeting place for politicians, business men, and professional people. This establishment was a resort, offering hotel accommodations, a restaurant and bar, a livery stable, and recreation—such as trap and rifle shooting, shuffleboard, and bowling. However, its particular claim to fame was its operation as training headquarters for prize fighters; among these famous sports figures were Jim Jeffries, Jack Johnson, "Gentleman Jim" Corbett, and Sam Langford. The original building stood until about 1938 when it was razed to make way for garages and service stations on Bayshore Boulevard; Bill Nutter's Garage now occupies the north end of the property, and George Zucca's Phillips 66 station is at the south boundary.



Eisele's Restaurant, on the lot of the present Tower Inn, was famous for its free steamed clams, served with beer. Clam beds were staked out and worked in the area that is now Schlage's Building 1-X. Later, when the Southern Pacific Railroad laid track east of the road, the land gradually dried out and filled in . . . There were several saloons at the county line; it was said that you could stand in one county and play the slot machine in the other . . . and for gamblers, money could be won—and lost—on cock fights at "Beefsteak Bill's."

The two inns in the area—in addition to the Six-Mile House—were the Visitation Valley Hotel at the county line and the Bay Shore Hotel, at Leland and Bayshore, which continues to lease its stores to merchants.

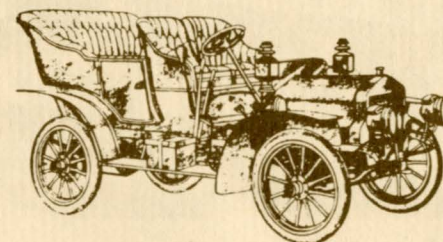
The first school in the Sunny Vale Public School District opened in September, 1896; a few years later it was given the name of Visitation Valley School—after a session in court when it was decided that the Valley should retain its old Spanish name of "Visitation." But—to everyone's amusement, when the new sign for the school was delivered, it was discovered that the Board of Education had misspelled the name, calling it "Visitation."

By 1905, "the finest building sites" could be purchased for as little as \$125.00—\$1.00 down and \$1.00 a week. Charles A. Louis was the sales agent for this property, known as the Reis Tract, which was the largest housing development in the Valley at that time. He maintained an office on Leland Avenue and later in his home until his death in 1961. His daughter, Florence Louis, has continued in the real estate and insurance business, with office headquarters adjoining the Bank of America on Bayshore Boulevard.

The building program gained momentum fol-

lowing the great fire and earthquake of April 18, 1906. Damage was minor in the Valley, and refugees from the center of San Francisco crowded into the small houses of relatives and friends or lived in shacks in the area until they could build new homes . . . The oldtimers recall that the butcher shop served as the distribution point for food and clothing for these homeless people . . . Two or three years later the Valley had lost a number of its temporary residents who returned to their former neighborhoods; yet other families remained, and there was a slow but steady gain in population as newcomers discovered the charm of this small-town community within 11 minutes of downtown San Francisco . . . Those were the years that the local lumber yard thrived; it supplied the building needs in the Valley, and provided enough sawdust to "pave" Sunnysdale Avenue from the present Bayshore Boulevard to Mission Street.

In those days, roads were sandy in the summertime and muddy in the winter, as very few streets had any kind of surfacing . . . So—to accommodate the housewife, the local grocery store had its own delivery service . . . and there were two house-to-house vendors of fresh fruits and vegetables: Joe Marsala (whose son Vincent owns the Barber Shop in the Bay Shore Hotel building) and the father-son team of Steve and George Zucca (now manager of the Phillips 66 service station on Bayshore Boulevard).



During the next 15 to 20 years, Visitation Valley as we know it today was developing its taproot . . . Truck gardens were giving way to modern housing . . . the pattern of the neighborhood had become established . . . the business section, along Leland Avenue, was taking shape . . . roads were macadamized . . . the Valley had its own Volunteer Hose Company and a Fireman's Hall, which, for a period, housed the Golden Gate kindergarten . . . Electricity was beginning to replace coal oil lamps and gasoline lanterns. In 1906, the St. James Presbyterian Church was built on Leland Avenue, followed in 1907 by the Catholic Church of the Visitation.

The "water works" for the community had its pumping station and office on Leland Avenue adjacent to the Bay Shore Hotel . . . By 1910 the Valley was serviced by two streetcar lines that soon acquired the assorted nicknames of "Toonerville Trolley," the "Gallopig Goose," the "Molasses Special," and "The Dinky." And the Valley was called "Hesitation Valley," because of the long wait while streetcars were switched

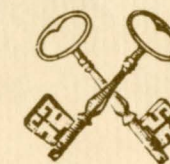
on the single track—as well as long delays at transfer points . . . the fares were five cents.

Starting on May 18, 1905, the Visitation Valley Improvement Club made a name for itself with its many community projects, and it is continuing to promote programs for improvement . . . Another old-time service organization is the Visitation Valley Community Center, which has been in existence since 1918 . . . Formerly a teacher in the Valley, Florence Friedman became the first director of the Center and served for 41 years, until her retirement in 1959; she continues to live in the Valley.

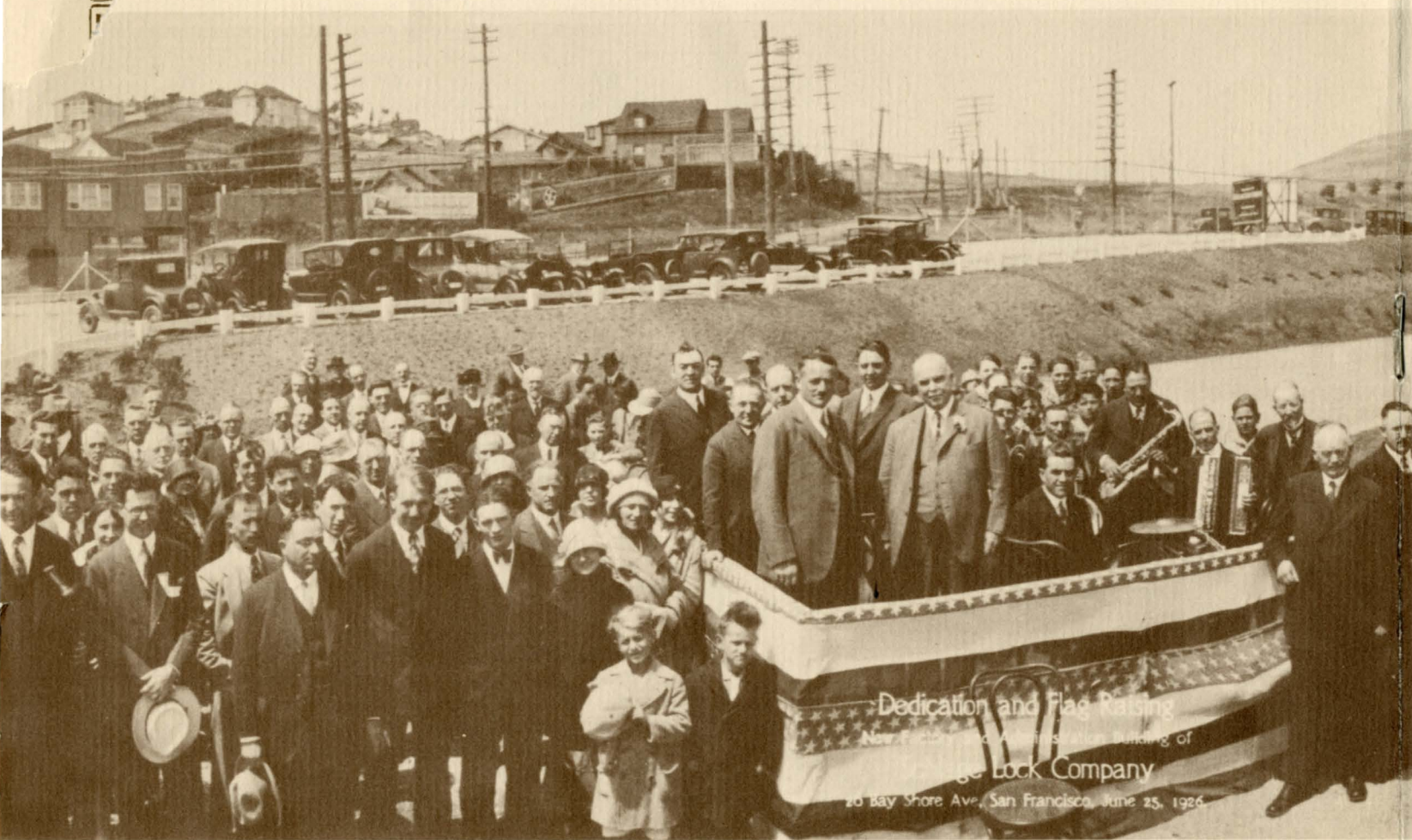
First motel in the city was the San Francisco Auto Camp which was developed on the old Burnett place on Sunnysdale Avenue. Located in a grove of trees with a garden setting, it soon became a tourist headquarters and could accommodate 250 to 300 cars. There were 40 cabins and plenty of tent space.

For entertainment, the various clubs and service organizations had whist parties, dances, minstrel shows, bazaars, and an occasional "high jinks"—held at the Bay Shore Hall above Anderson's Coal Yard on Leland, at the Fireman's Hall on Wilde, at the Alpine Hall on Raymond, and in the Six-Mile House gymnasium . . . There were "flickers" at five cents a show at the Nickelodeon on Raymond Avenue. The old movie theater was constructed of sheet metal with fireproof walls embossed with designs. There was a player piano . . . and a blue mercury lamp out front to attract attention! A major feature was Amateur Night, and a favorite serial was Slippery Slim who could squeeze through door jams and through key holes . . . of course, that was before Schlage locks were invented.

Children hiked through the hills and picnicked on all the scenic ridges . . . and it was always great sport in the spring to slide down hill over the slippery grass in a large cardboard carton . . . They waded and swam in the bay, watched the dismantling of old ships from the "ships' graveyard" at the Johnson-Brown wharf, and took pride in showing off the local curiosity—a private home called "the boathouse," as its paneled walls were made of doors salvaged from ships . . . They earned extra spending money by catching frogs and gathering watercress which they sold to the local restaurants and by peddling bouquets of wild flowers from door-to-door . . . their bank accounts also grew steadily as they made weekly deposits through the school savings program, with Bank of Italy sponsorship . . . Parents also took advantage of this accommodation by adding to their children's deposits, for at that time there was no other banking service in the Valley.



Please turn to page 11



The new factory and administration buildings of Schlage Lock Company were dedicated on Friday, June 25, 1926. The program for the day included addresses by Joseph B. Ruegg, President; James Rolph, Jr., Mayor of San Francisco; E. W. Milburn, President of the Downtown Association, and George Gay of the Chamber of Commerce. Southern Pacific provided a special train from Third and Townsend for guests attending the ceremonies.



Charles A. Louis, Sales Agent for the Reis Tract, envisioned the development of the Valley into a modern urban community.



First Church — in 1906 The St. James Presbyterian Church was built on Leland Avenue — at the location of today's modern building.

View of Visitation Valley in 1905

from the east side of the Southern Pacific tracks. In the photograph are the Six-Mile House with its extensive grounds (at left), the old Bay Shore Hotel (where it is presently located at Leland and Bay-shore Boulevard), and the area of Schlage Lock Company, starting close to the tunnel (at right) and extending through the large field to Sunnydale—marked by the corner of the white fence at the far left.



Dairy ranches were usually built on the side hills of the Valley. The old Kennell ranch house, in the center of the buildings above, dates back to 1880 and is standing today—south of the present P.G.&E. power station.



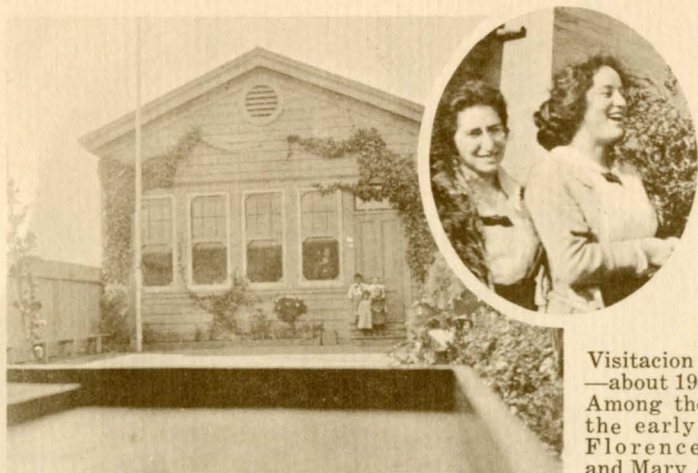
Dedication and Flag Raising
SCHLAGE LOCK COMPANY
 20 Bay Shore Avenue, San Francisco
 June 25, 1926

At the left in the photograph are neighborhood people and other San Franciscans; Joseph B. Ruegg, President, and Mayor James Rolph, Jr., are in the speakers' stand (in foreground); at the left are Schlage employees. If you look carefully, you will recognize Axel Tornoe, Ernest Eberitch, Rose Donovan, Luigi D'Elia and Ferd Ferrarini. Others you may remember are Bruno Minotto, brother of John, and Charles Kollerer, father of Fred.



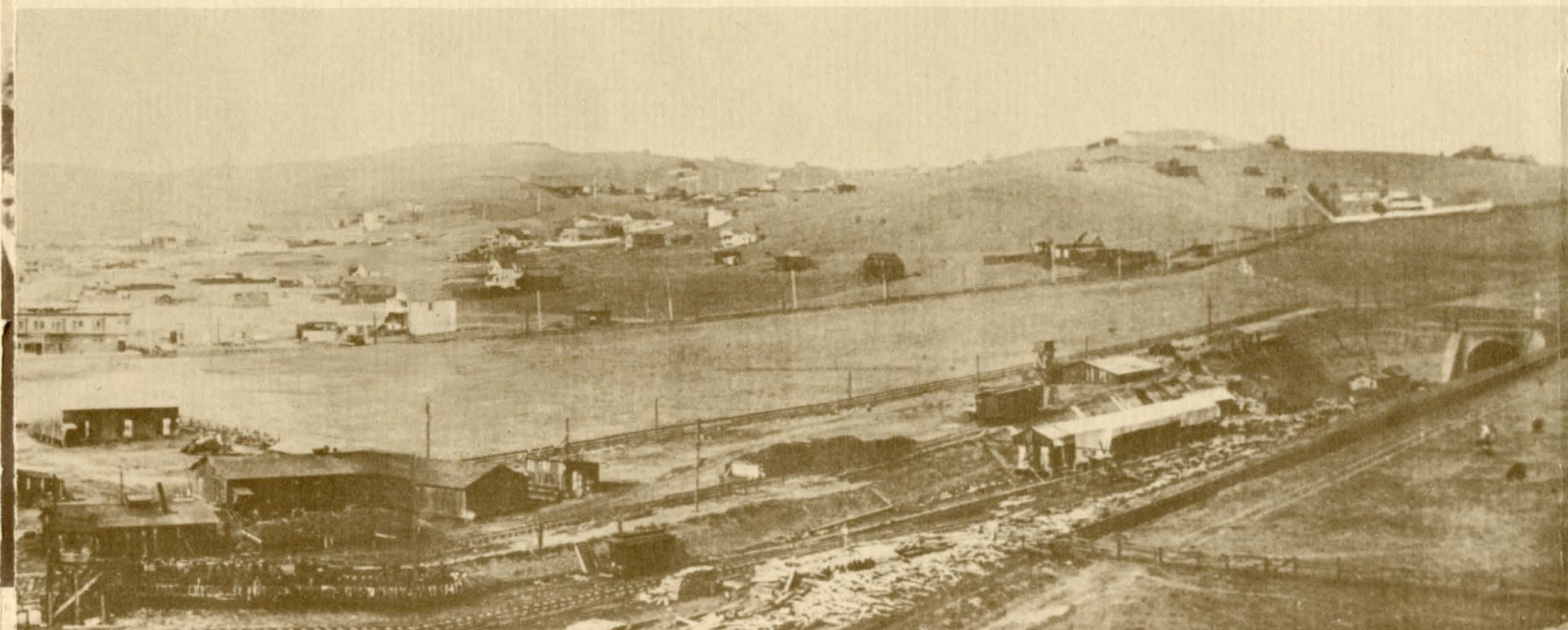
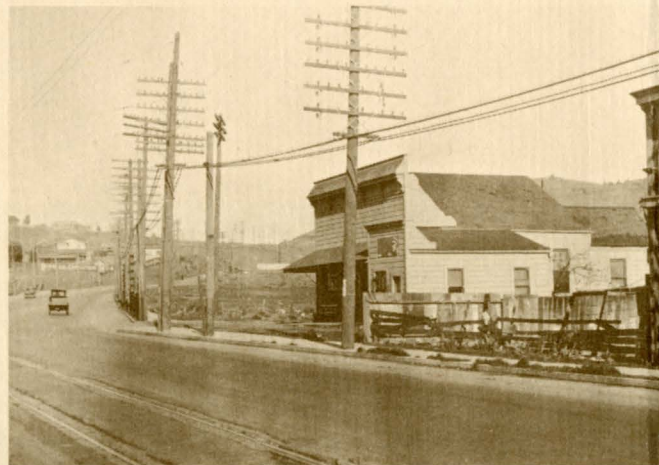
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Dedication and Flag Raising
SCHLAGE LOCK COMPANY
 20 Bay Shore Avenue, San Francisco
 June 25, 1926



Eisele's Restaurant was famous for its free steamed clams served with beer.

Visitacion Valley School—about 1905
Among the teachers in the early 1900s were Florence Friedman and Mary A. Nolan.



These men are representative of some 35 milkers hired by the Johnson-Brown Dairy, whose pastureland was along Blanken Avenue and up into the hills. The woman was the cook for the ranch hands.



The Bay Shore team played baseball on land that was to become Schlage Lock Company property. Among present-day Valley personalities on this team are Virginio Rossi and Bill Nutter, Sr.

Sports activities were basketball in the gymnasium of the Presbyterian Church and baseball on a diamond at the north end of the property that was soon to be the site of Schlage Lock Company . . . Lefty O'Doul was one of the early ball players . . . there were many home runs made at the location of our present Press Room, with fans cheering from bleachers built up the side of the hill backing onto the present Blanken Avenue . . . the southern area was used to raise feed for dairy herds, and occasionally a band of gypsies made camp and set up their tents on the former Bodinson property that is now the location of Building 1-X and Plant 2.

The entrance of the major companies and public utilities into Visitacion Valley was a long slow process. In 1905, the Southern Pacific Company started to build the tunnel and to fill in the land along the Bay. The first track of the Bay-shore cutoff was laid in 1906-07. The roundhouse was built in 1916-17, and the various buildings were constructed and additional track was laid over a period of years . . . The gas plant in the Valley—later to be known as the Pacific Gas and Electric Company—was built around 1905; it is still in the same location, at the corner of Geneva and Schwerin, but with very much enlarged facilities . . . The Bodinson Manufacturing Com-

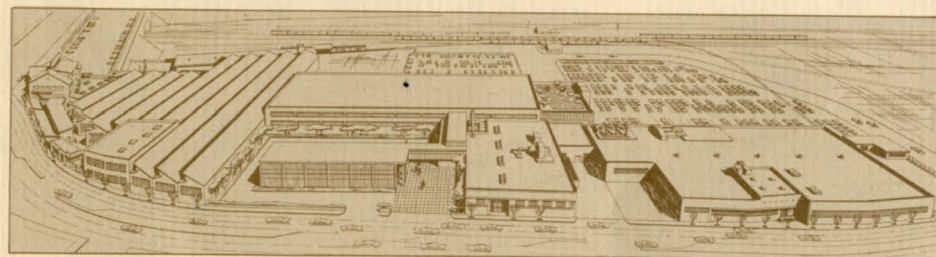
pany bought its first property in the area in 1924 and started to manufacture custom mining machinery and material handling equipment the following year.

When the Schlage Company selected its new factory site in 1925, Visitacion Valley was the last pastoral outpost in San Francisco . . . there was plenty of property in the area . . . it was not too expensive . . . there was local transportation . . . and it was anticipated that a major highway would be built within the next few years and that the proposed Schlage factory and office building would face it.

Schlage's first piece of property—21½ acres—was purchased from the Bodinson Manufacturing Company. The first unit, the factory building, was completed by June, 1925, followed shortly by completion of the administrative headquarters . . . A year later, the company's name was changed from "The Schlage Company" to "Schlage Lock Company," and the formal dedication and flag raising ceremonies were held at the factory on Friday, June 25, 1926.

In the words of an oldtimer in the Valley: "Everybody was happy to see Schlage come in; that was a great day for all of us!"

We repeat: That was a great day . . . a very great day for Schlage Lock Company!



This Special Issue of the LOCK AND KEY

is dedicated to our neighbors in Visitacion Valley in appreciation of their friendship and services through the years. We are especially indebted to the following for their assistance in locating old photographs for our use, in supplying us with personal recollections of the Valley and with a number of facts never before published:

Florence Friedman
Mrs. Anny Livingston

Florence Louis
Virginio Rossi
George Zucca

Joseph B. Ruegg
Mrs. Ann Snyder

Bodinson Manufacturing Company
Burlingame Public Library
California Historical Society
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

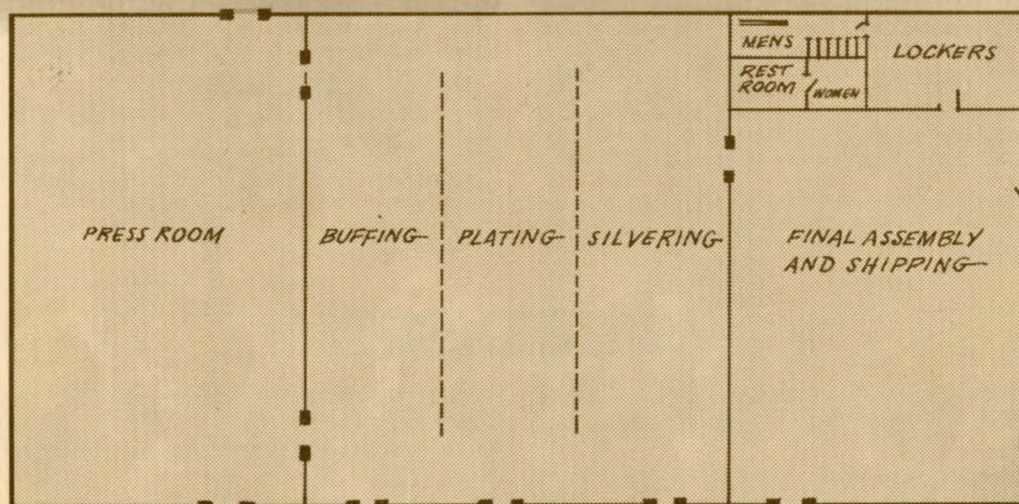
San Francisco Municipal Railway
San Francisco Public Library
Society of California Pioneers
Southern Pacific Company

Research Division, Historical Archives, Schlage Lock Company



Schlage Lock Company

1925



When The Schlage Company started the production of Schlage locks in its new plant in Visitation Valley, the San Francisco EXAMINER reported the news, as follows—in part:

Release: June 27, 1925

With the completion of the first unit of The Schlage Company's new plant on Bay Shore Highway, another step is taken in the rapid march of events that seems destined to make San Francisco an important national factor in the manufacture of builders' hardware . . . The new factory unit is 100 feet by 210 feet in size; it was designed and constructed especially for its purpose by The Austin Company of California, nationally known engineers and builders, and will enable the company to produce 2,500 locks each 8-hour day or 62,500 locks per month.

The machinery and equipment throughout is entirely modern, and Austin special sawtooth construction facilitates lighting and ventilating to make working conditions ideal and to put production on the most efficient basis . . .

A few months later, on August 31, 1925, its name was changed to "Schlage Lock Company." Also, the administration building was completed; it was designed by Henry C. Smith, Architect; the contractor and builder was Leo Ruegg.

The buildings, as shown above in a late 1926 photograph, continue to be in use. However, the factory unit is completely surrounded by additions that have preserved the original architecture so that the sawtoothed roof line remains a distinctive landmark in Visitation Valley.

LOCK and KEY®
SCHLAGE LOCK COMPANY
 P.O. BOX 3324
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