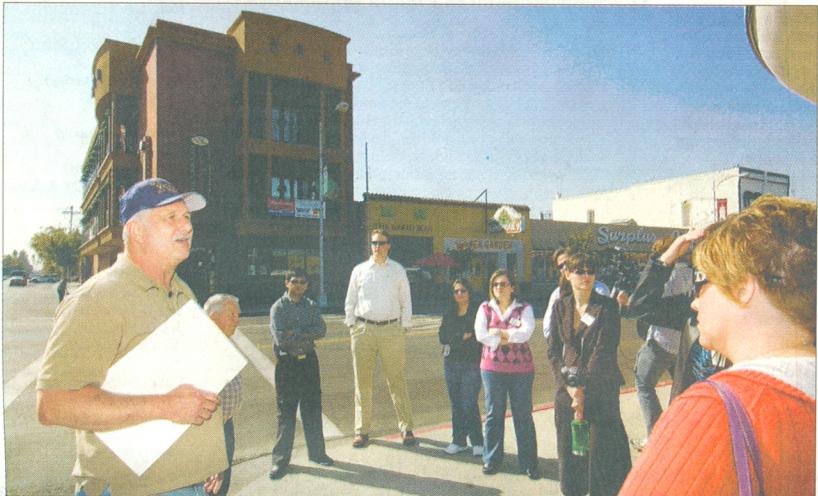


DESTINATION: DOWNTOWN VISALIA

Take a stroll through

Visalia history



Steve R. Fujimoto

Terry Ommen, left, takes an interested party from the Sequoia Regional Leadership Group on the history tour of downtown Visalia. Through narration and historical photos, he takes them through some of Visalia's history.

Local historian shares history on special tours

By Nick McClellan

nmcclell@visalia.gannett.com

Historian Terry Ommen has a thirst for local history.

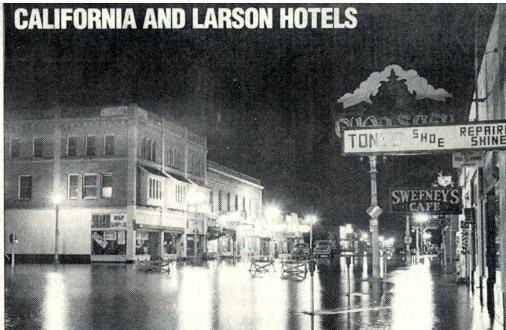
VIDEO ONLINE

Watch Ommen share Visalia history online at www.VisaliaTimesDelta.com/Video.

Luckily for visitors and residents, he also likes to share what he's learned. While giving one of his personalized history tours of downtown Visalia, Ommen shared much of the rich history of the city that has been either scrapped from building facades, demolished or simply left to drift.

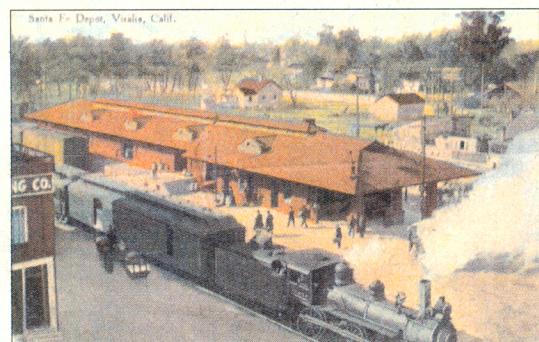
Story historical vignettes on 8A

CALIFORNIA AND LARSON HOTELS



Submitted by Terry Ommen

A view of Main Street looking east during a mid-20th century flood, where the California Hotel and Larson hotels are visible on the left at the corner of Bridge Street.



THE SANTA FE RAILROAD DEPOT

Once located at the southwest corner of Santa Fe and Main streets, The Santa Fe depot and railroad were welcomed by Visalia residents and Tulare County farmers which had for years relied solely on the Southern Pacific Railroad, which could charge whatever price it found to be reasonable.

The Santa Fe was a welcome competitor to the Southern Pacific railroad. The two rails intersected at the present day intersection of Oak Avenue and Santa Fe Street.

Photos submitted by Terry Ommen

DESTINATION: DOWNTOWN VISALIA



Submitted by Terry Ommen
A photo of the Visalia Fox Theatre during construction. The Fox was built by the William Fox Organization. It is one of the most iconic buildings in Visalia to this day.



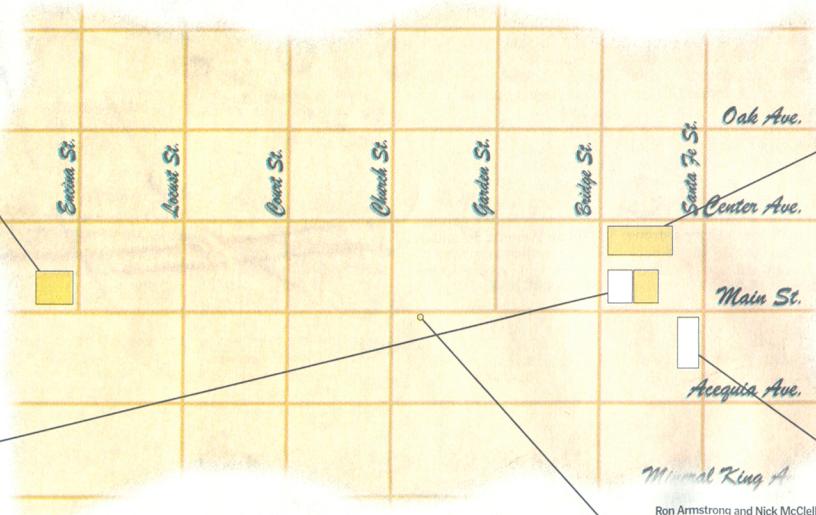
Submitted by Terry Ommen
Looking eastbound at the intersection of Center Avenue and Bridge Street, a truck pulls a U-turn. Depicting part of Visalia's Chinatown, the photo includes the building where present-day Lum Lums is located.

VISALIA FOX THEATRE

The Fox Theatre was a welcomed attraction in Visalia when it opened in 1930. The theater was host to many productions and moving pictures in its hey day. On its opening night in 1930, there were two films: "Lonestar Ranger," a Western based on a novel by Zane Grey, and the Laurel and Hardy film "Night Owls." Also playing was a contemporary Mickey Mouse cartoon and a MovieTone News reel.

CALIFORNIA AND LARSON HOTELS

See 1A

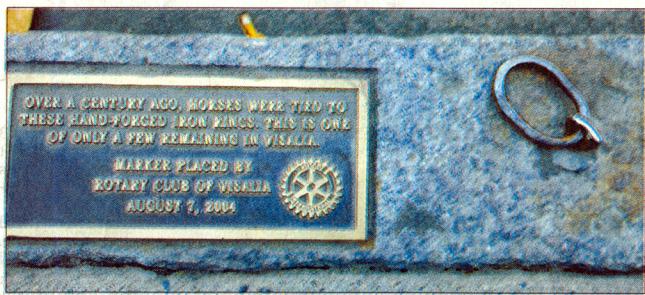


VISALIA'S CHINATOWN

Like many cities in the West, Visalia was host to its very own Chinatown (and Japantown alongside). Local historian Terry Ommen said that many of the stories about this section of Visalia should be taken with a grain of salt as there was much prejudice prevalent at the time. The building, which is home to the present-day Lum Lums, was built in 1894 and replaced many of the shanty structures that burned down in a fire in 1993.

SANTE FE DEPOT

See 1A



Steve R. Fujimoto

VISALIA'S HORSE RINGS

Ommen said that there are 12 horse rings that remain in Visalia in the present day, though there used to be many more. Thanks to the Visalia Rotary Club, they are marked in an effort to preserve them.

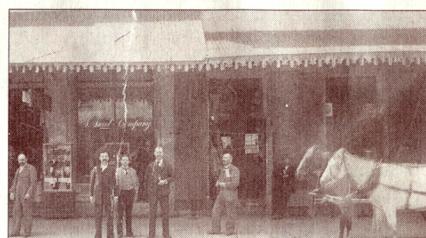


Photo submitted by Terry Ommen

Horse rings were once in use in Visalia.