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Sourisseau Academy

Smith-Layton Archive presents:

The Real Gilroy!

by Thomas Layton

Les Amis (The Friends)

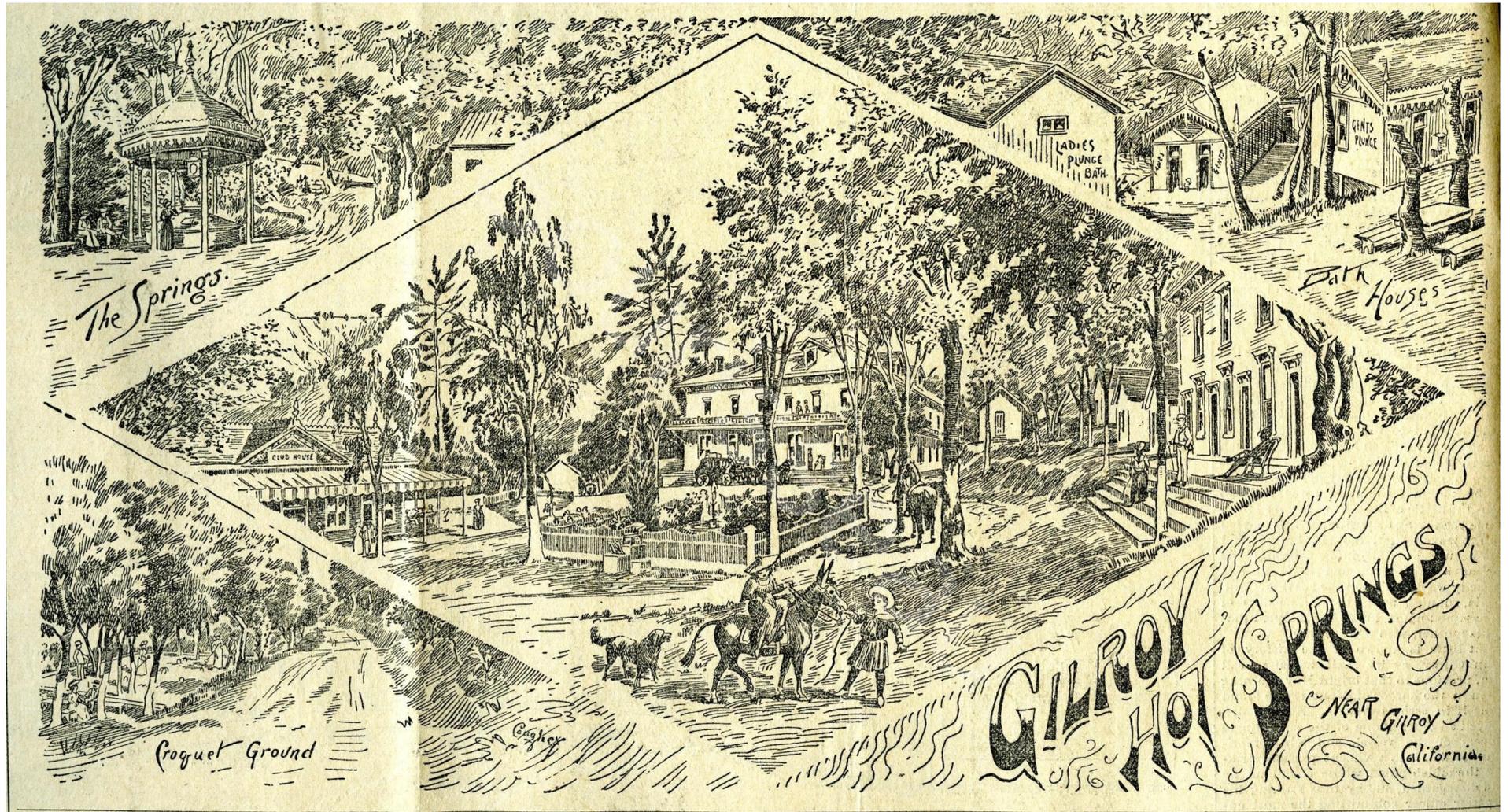
June 2016

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[70] **Will the Real Gilroy please stand up?** Most of us still think of Gilroy as "The Garlic Capitol of the World!" — Forget it! Gilroy's newest moniker, currently advertised on the city's webpage is "Community with a Spice for Life." But the real story, already evident in the San Jose Mercury 1892 "Special Edition" is that Gilroy's search for an identity has always been a moving target!



[71] **Hot water!** In that 1892 "Special Edition," the only actual destination among the images of orchards, vineyards, houses and small businesses was the Gilroy Hot Springs Resort!



[72] **A Moving Target?** Yes! In 1867, the Gilroy that we know today — then called "New" Gilroy — was a brand new development, established two miles west of "Old" Gilroy, in anticipation of a railroad line to San Jose. Here, small businesses like Robinson & Hitchcock's Hardware Store (left), next door to Cassidy and Wilson's Real Estate office, quickly coalesced into a commercial district, ready to serve a newly planned neighborhood district.



[73] **A Cattle Baron, next door!** But, Gilroy's real wealth was in agriculture, and just south of town was Bloomfield, built in 1886, the home ranch of "cattle baron" Henry Miller, of Miller and Lux, the largest private land-holder in California!

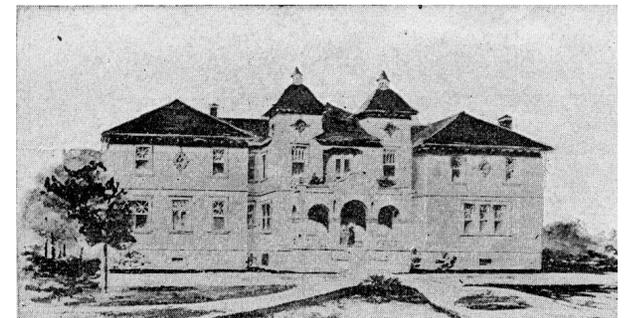
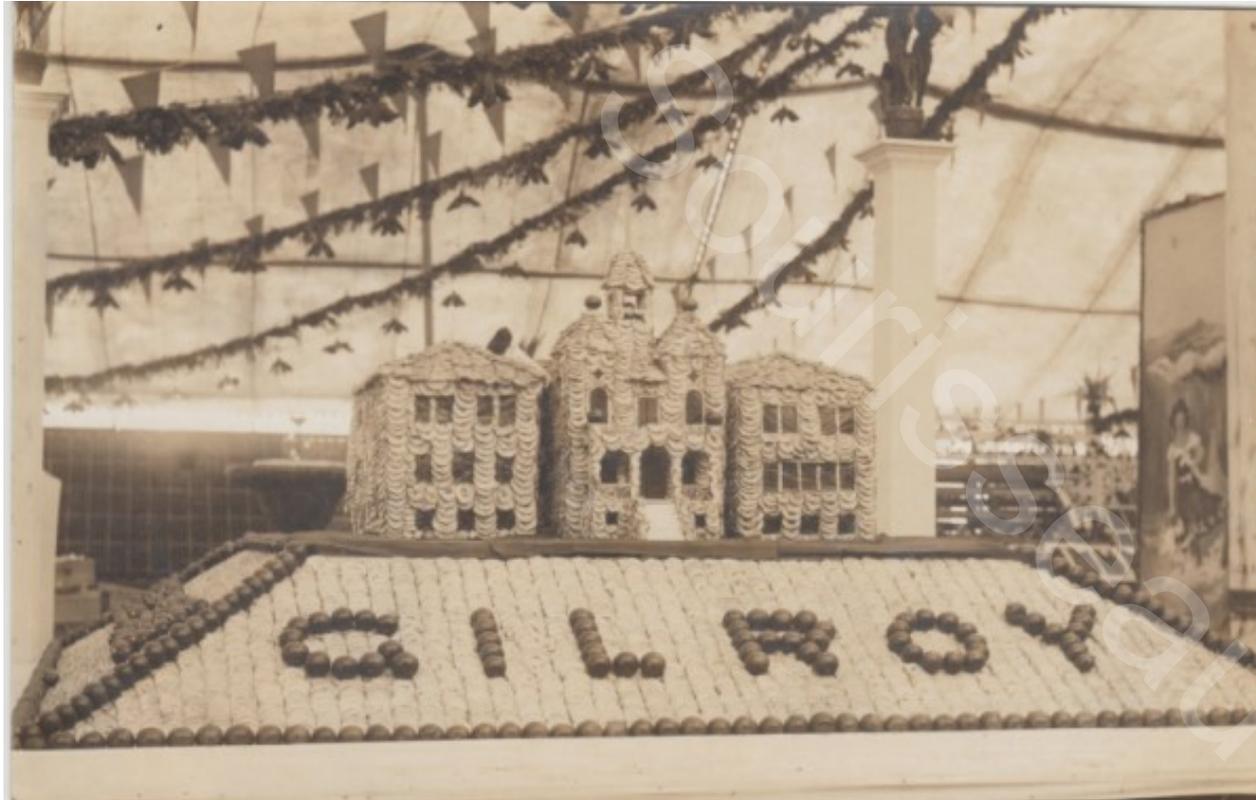


SECOND GATHERING IN A 640-ACRE ONION FIELD.

[74] **Agriculture was King!** In 1903, *Scientific American* reported that Gilroy had become one of the largest producers of agricultural seed in the United States. Here we see a crew of Chinese laborers harvesting onion seed.



[75] **Chinatown:** And where did those Chinese workmen purchase their favorite foods and supplies? Where else but in Gilroy's Chinatown!



[76] **An edible house!** By 1910, Gilroy's major product was fruit, and orchardists were designing elaborate displays of dried fruit, such as this facsimile of the Odd Fellows Orphans' Home, to be exhibited at the Watsonville Apple Festival.



[77] **Gilroy's "famous" Hot Springs.** Not to be outdone by seed growers and orchardists, Gilroy Hot Springs modestly advertized itself as "California's most famous resort!"



[78] **Billboards on the Highway!** By 1918, Gilroy was a thriving metropolis, a destination for automobilists, and worthy of its own billboard in one of America's first roadside advertising campaigns.



[79] **Expert auto repair!** And, if your 1918 Ford broke down on Monterey Road, Baker and Smith could fix it at their modern auto repair shop!



[80] **An upscale hotel!** Construction of the elegant Hotel Milias in 1922 — replete with fire escapes — provided a new level of refinement for businessmen and tourists, alike.



[81] "Home of the Prune!" In 1926, the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce proudly proclaimed Gilroy to be "The Home of the Prune!"

Images on file at the Smith-Layton Archive, Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History
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[82] **An easy commute!** With several passenger trains arriving and departing daily from the Southern Pacific Gilroy depot, travelers could easily commute to San Jose and on up to San Francisco.



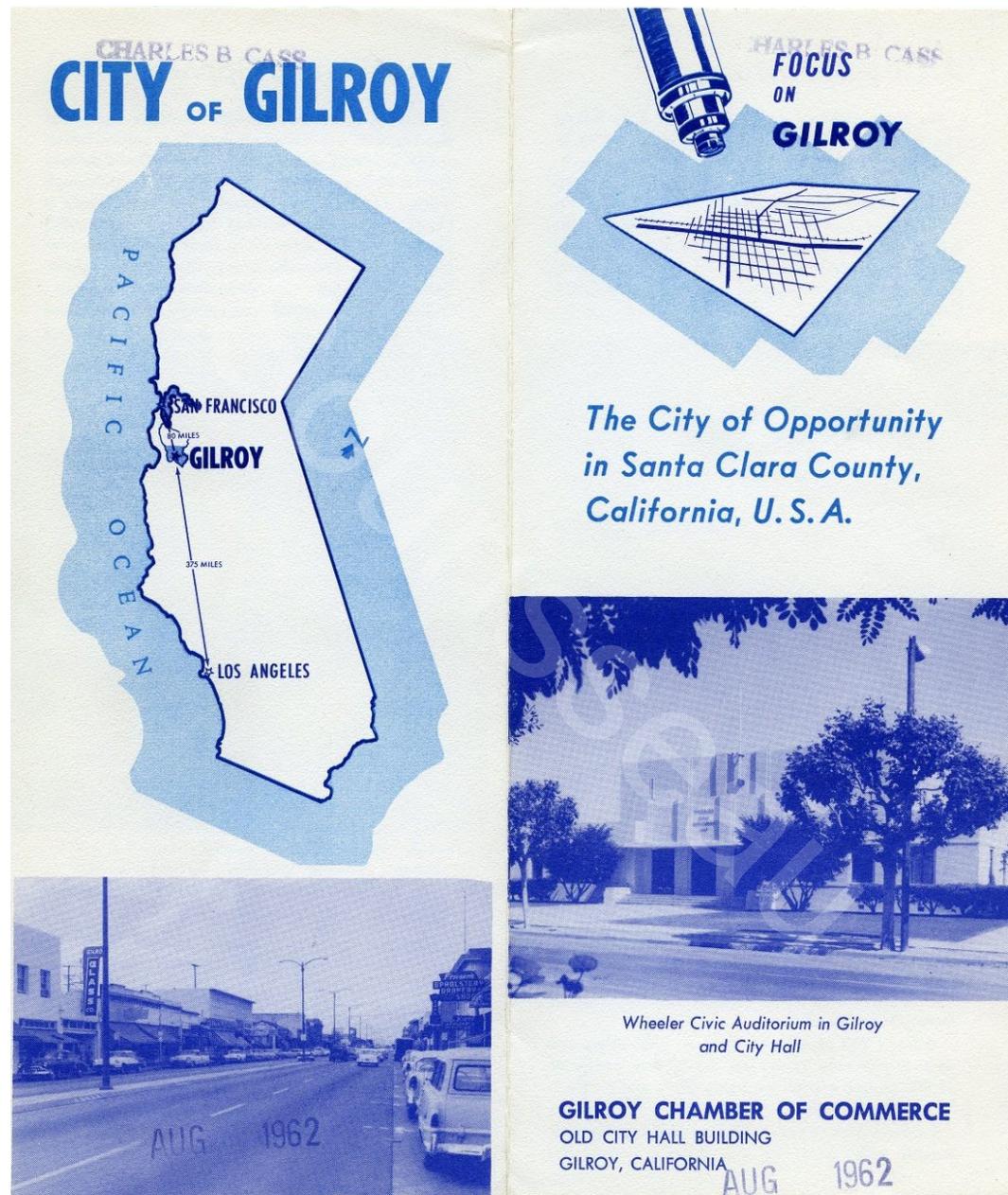
[83] **Ethnic diversity!** Dorothea Lange's 1938 view north along Monterey Road, showing the Mexico Cafe, Swiss Hotel, Lucca Cafe, and Italian-American Hotel, captured the flavor of Gilroy's ethnic diversity.



[84] **Main street: Pre-war!** This 1940 view north along Monterey Street captures downtown Gilroy at the end of the Great Depression, with two newly painted lanes in each direction!



[85] **Main street: Post-war!** In 1951, Caspar Laws aimed his camera north along Monterey Road to capture Gilroy in the midst of post-war growth, with spiffy Montgomery Ward and J.C. Penney Co. stores ready to meet every shopper's needs.



[86] "City of Opportunity!" In 1962, the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce published a brochure with a catchy new motto: "The City of Opportunity!"

Public Webcast Auction

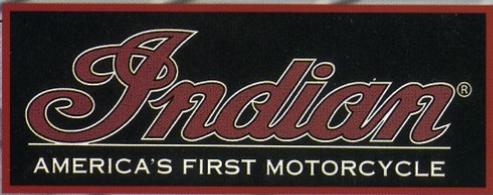
COMPLETE MODERN MOTORCYCLE MANUFACTURING FACILITY

IN THE MATTER OF

Thursday, March 18
Sale starts at 10:30 a.m.

Live Bidding Location:
200 East Tenth St., Gilroy, CA

Inspection: Tuesday & Wednesday, March 16 & 17,
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and morning of the sale



GREAT AMERICAN GROUP
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[87] **Thunder and Blunder!** In 1999, the century-old Indian Motorcycle Company moved its operations to Gilroy - for a fresh start! Four years later, everything in that venerable company's manufacturing facility was auctioned off to reimburse its creditors.



[88] **A wonderful place to live!** But, despite its long search for an identity, Gilroy has for a very long time been a Wonderful Place to Live — as proven by this 1917 photo, taken 98 years ago — and we eagerly await a celebration of that persistent fact in Gilroy's next motto!