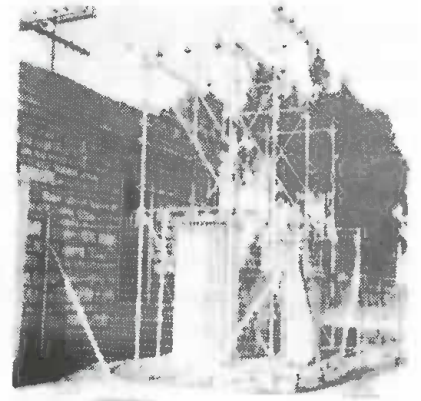


Lompoc Legacy



Lompoc Valley Historical Society, Inc.

Founded September 5, 1964 at Lompoc, California

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

No. 81

LET THERE BE LIGHTS

AUGUST 1999

LOMPOC LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY AND SUPERINTENDENT'S 1918 DIARY PART I

PRELUDE TO ELECTRICITY

Before the Lompoc Light and Power Company brought a generator system to Lompoc, there was a telephone system, and there were coal oil lights on some street corners, which later were replaced by a gas light system. This Legacy No. 81 and following Legacies will trace some of the obscure notes in historical documents providing some "light" on the development of the electrical distribution system.

The First Telephone System

Sept. 16, 1885

The first telephone line in Santa Barbara County of importance connected Lompoc with the Lompoc wharf at Lompoc Landing (Purissima Point on what is now Vandenberg AFB). (The Lompoc phone was in the Post Office and Telegraph office. In 1887, the Post Office was next door to Dinwiddie Hall - east side of South H street between Ocean and Cypress avenues.)

Diatomaceous Earth as Building Blocks

April 1889

A.R. Harris found a vast ledge or mountain of detached rock of chalk species which he believes

can be utilized for building purposes. It can be sawed or planed like wood. (it is) Soft at first but hardens with exposure. One of the first uses of this material (diatomaceous earth) for building was the structure on North E St. between Chestnut and Laurel Avenues which became the electrical substation, housing generators in late 1906 or early 1907.

Coal Oil Street Lights

"To California and Lompoc" is a collection of memories of Presley Bascom (Back) Barker. His son, Frank Barker, sketched a picture of the S.E. corner of H and Ocean from his father's memories. There was a lamp stand on that corner in the scene depicting the 1890's era. In Lompoc Legacy No. 26, Oscar Fabing tells how King Jackson, who lived on the corner of Walnut and J, would light the coal oil lamps located on the corners of the streets at the business intersections down town. "He would light these few lamps early in the evening and would be on duty during the evening as 'night watchman'. In the morning he would make the rounds and turn off the lights, refill each lamp with coal oil and clean each chimney. He

Phone Company Competition Lompoc Style - 1908

1908

The Lompoc Record quoted R. B. Cleveland, Home Telephone manager, "Home and Sunset Telephone Co's attitude toward each other must change." (These two telephone companies had no interconnect. Customers of one line could not talk to customers on the other line!)

A Look Back on Accomplishments

March 27, 1908

T. L. Harris, retiring owner and editor of Lompoc Record looks back over three plus years of accomplishments in Lompoc since his arrival:

-Streets were then lighted by coal oil lamps set atop posts on the street corners. Next was gas light followed by electricity.

-Then there was one bank, today there are two.
-100 modern and comfortable homes have been built.

-The little frame Odd Fellows hall on the corner of Ocean and H has given place to a splendid structure of brick that cost \$20,000.

-The three churches have been enlarged and improved.

-Warehouses have been enlarged.

-Post Office has been advanced in classification.

-Several blocks of cement sidewalks have taken place of the old cow trails and wooden walks.

-Grammar school has been compelled to add another teacher.

-Three years ago only one small auto in the valley, today there are several fine machines.

-A public library has been established with free reading room. Several hundred books, many leading magazines and newspapers.

-The oil industry has made great strides in advance with splendid implications the near future will see greater development along that line.

The paper goes on to tell of the coming April 25, 1908 excursion to Santa Barbara to see the "Great White Fleet" of 35 ships (sent by Pres. Teddy Roosevelt to the Pacific Ocean as a show of strength).

One advertisement of note:

-Lompoc Light and Power Co. Electric supplies of all kinds.

E. H. King became the Editor and Proprietor of the Lompoc Record at the end of March, 1908.



This 1937 photo of the E Street Substation shows the old "Chalk Rock" building which housed the original steam generators. The structure can still be seen on North E St. between Chestnut and Laurel Ave.

Second Generator Installed

The Lompoc Light and Power Company added a 150 horsepower Hamilton-Corliss engine and made other intensive improvements to the electrical distribution in Lompoc at the end of 1909. (*Lompoc Legacy No. 45 - Opera House*) (*The "Chalk Rock" building on North E St., apparently constructed in 1906 for the Lompoc light and Power Company, housed two steam powered generators. The historic building still stands, but the equipment was disposed of perhaps as late as the 1950's.*)

1911 Power Company Ledger

The Lompoc Valley Historical Society has in its collection the Lompoc Light and Power Company Ledger for the year of May 1911 to April 1912. There are approximately 240 pages, each page representing a business or residence. The customers for electricity were 90% businesses. Electricity was being distributed on Ocean, Cypress, Hickory, Olive, Locust, Walnut and Chestnut Avenues and E through L Streets with two users on B street.

A Kilowatt hour cost 15 cents with a minimum charge of \$1.00 per month. Electricity usage was almost exclusively lighting. A typical usage was 50 to 70 k.w. for about \$7.50 per month. Residential lights were under 10 k.w. and hardly ever went over the \$1.00 minimum. The Opera House was the big user running as high as 228 k.w. paying as much as \$25.65 for one month.

A list of customers include: Harry Angler, Anglo Cal. Oil Co., Hotel Arthur, Arthur stable, Bailey Brothers, Bailey

carried a one gallon can of coal oil and a small ladder to reach the lamp which was in a glass enclosure."

Proposed Generator on Miguelito Creek

March 26, 1892

W. W. Broughton proposed to the town board meeting that Miguelito creek at the Malone farm could be used to generate electricity. (This proposal was probably not an engineering feasibility.)

Telephone System

December 18, 1892.

Western Union withdrew telephone service to Lompoc. William Barker came to the rescue having contacts with telephone service connections in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. "Eight business houses have signed up for phones."

May 13, 1893

Telephone system being installed with much rapidity.

May 27, 1893

23 telephones now in place.

June 3, 1893

Telephone System now complete.

June 24, 1893

By July 1st, Lompoc telephone should connect us with Santa Ynez, Los Alamos, Los Olivos and Santa Maria.

Sept. 8, 1894

Telephone connections between San Francisco and Los Angeles were completed last week.

Moonlight Lighting System

May 30, 1901

"F and AM Lompoc Lodge No. 262 convenes monthly on Friday before full moon." (*Night meetings needed moonlight!*)

Oil Boom!

(Dec. 7, 1902 Oil discovered on Purisima - 72,000 acres)

(1903 - Lompoc Oil Crazy) (After May, 1922, all but 25 wells were abandoned.)

Gas Lights

July 28, 1905

"We will have new lights in a week. McAdam and Smith have contracted to put in the city gas plant."

Later 1905

"The gas mains have now been extended north on H St. to Laurel and that street is well lighted to the depot. Coal Oil lamps set atop street corner posts were the city lights until the gas plant was established."

ELECTRICITY COMES TO LOMPOC

Lompoc Light and Power Company

Electricity was on its way to Lompoc in 1906. George Roberts, who had been the secretary of the Lompoc Valley Land Company when Lompoc became a colony, owned the building on the southwest corner of H and Ocean. His huge ledger shows that he rented "Room No. 3", facing South H Street, to the Lompoc Light and Power Company, beginning October 1, 1906. Roberts paid the power company \$140.00 to wire the building, known as the "Post Office Block". He also paid the power company \$80.00 to wire his bank building diagonally across H and Ocean on the Northwest corner. Payment for the wiring was made June 5, 1907. Electricity was being generated at the "substation" on North E Street between Chestnut and Laurel Avenues and was distributed to businesses in the center of town. Then in 1907 or 1908 the recently installed gas lights were replaced by electric lights. (*See Lompoc Legacy No. 50*)



February 17, 1918 About one inch of rain

Called on Alta at hospital. She and baby getting along nicely.

February 18, 1918 Clear, cloudy 42-60 Rain and snow north side of city.

Put on set of oilers, repaired a starting motor, on Hopkins (car) rest of day.

February 19 through 22 (worked on cars) "Jack asked me about going to Frisco on factory work."

February 23 Wire from Frisco, packed, paid Hospital bill. Left on "SP Lark" 8:05 p.m.

February 24 2 1/2 hours late to Watsonville Junction. 3 1/2 hours late to Frisco.

Worked on cars (In San Francisco)

February 27 38 years old (b. 1880)

Worked on cars (In San Francisco)

March 10 Home to L.A. - rain at Santa Barbara - 45 minutes late 10:30 a.m. Heavy rain all day.

March and April Diary noted heavy fighting and Allied gains in France

April 21 Earthquake shock felt in So Cal. San Juacinto and Hemet partly wrecked. Some damage in L.A.

April 26 German gain on west front

May 14 Hit by car (while on motorbike) at Pico and Westmorland.

June 19 Up town in morning to U.S. Civil Service office, to Public Employment Bureau...

A Job In Lompoc

July 8 Clear 51-87 (degrees) Worked on second hand motor job all day. J. A. Payton of Westinghouse Co. called this evening. Gave me the name of Mr. Moore of Continental securities Co. prospect of electrical job.

July 9 Fog - Clear 52-88 Worked on sec. hand motor until 2:30. Sherwood motor rest of the day. Talked to Mr. Moore about light plant job at Lompoc, Cal...

July 16 Fog-clouds-clear 52-82 (worked on motors all day) then wrote letter to Mr. Moore about job at Lompoc.

July 17 Fog-clear 53-82 (worked on cars all day) Mr. Moore called at 11:15 p.m. to talk about job at Lompoc. Decided to go up and look over job.

July 18 Fog-clear 51-86 (worked all day) left shop at 5:00 with tools, packed, prepared for trip to Lompoc to investigate job in lighting plant. Mr. Moore in shop... Packing up in evening.

Sisters, Dr. Baker, G. W. Ballentine, Bank of Lompoc, Baptist Church, A. Barker, J. F. Barker, N. J. Barker, Frank Barker, R. Batkins, L. F. Bell, Chas Bennett, R. Bennett, J. Beyerholm, W. Bissenger, J. D. Black (shop and Res.), W. S. Bland, M. B. Blane, Dr. Brown, F. M. Burham, F. Callis (store and Res.), W. A. Calvert, P. A. Campbell, Al Canfield, W. A. Canfield, Catholic Church, H. S. Cherry, Christian Church, J. O. Cline, Coay Chong, I Colcord, Commercial Hotel, C. Corning, H. Cooley, O. N. Cooper, A. B. Coppage, E. J. Couch, E. J. Cox, W. W. Crawford, J. A. Day, J. M. Day, S. P. Depot, J. DeVaul, J. Dimock, Dr. Dimock, Dixon and Watson, Chas. Dougherty, A. Douglass, G. L. Douglass, H. Dyer, F.O.E. Lodge, E. Eddington, E. Edmonds, C. B. Elliott, O. S. Evans, F. J. Fehrensen, F. of A. Social, F. of A. Hall, B. L. Fortney, F. J. Frick (Office and Res.), H. C. Glidden, C. Godet, Graham Drug Co., V. Graham, Geo. Groton, J. A. Gragg, Lovell Gragg, M. Gregg, S. S. Hardenbrook, C. K. Hardenbrook, Mrs. P. Harmon, Chas. Harris, George Harris, S. Hebert, H. Henning, Mrs. Hepner, Mrs. Higbee Jewelry Store, A. J. Hildebrand, J. P. Hildebrand, Home Tel and Tel Co., F. Hobson, H. Holland, B. B. Hoover, D. J. Horn, The Hub, E. R. Hubbard, E. L. Hudson, C. L. Huyck, I.O.O.F. Hall, L. Jennings (Shop and Res.), Dr. M. S. Kelliher, E. Klein, J. Kirkpatrick, K. of P. Hall, Paul Langawsky, Dr. L. Larsen, R. A. Lazier, Haldor Lillanas, J. C. Lind Bakery, C. Lindsay, Lompoc Bicycle Shop, City of Lompoc (46 street lights), Lompoc Com'l. Co., Lompoc Grammar School, Lompoc High School, Lompoc Laundry, Lompoc Library, Lompoc Millinary Co., Lompoc P and E Co. Warehouse, Lompoc Planing Mill, Lompoc Transfer Co., Lompoc Valley Bank, E. M. Long, L. Loynachan, C. P. Lowry, Mrs. Maut, G. W. Meals, Mercantile Union, J.F. Miller, Mrs. E. J. Miller, E. L. Mitchell, M.E. Parsonage, M. E. Church, Fred Moore, F. B. Moore, Frank Mura, H. S. Murray, Walter Murray, H. E. McCabe, J. D. McCabe, G. W. McClendon, J. F. McClure, Mrs. McKay, F. H. McKelvey, A. McLean, A.

McClure, Nazarene Church, A. J. Negus, Mrs. Nicoles, A. H. Nichols, W. Oats, Mrs. W. H. Oboy, W. H. Oboy, Opera House, W. Owens, Miss H. D. Phoenix, H. Ploof, H. Poland, Pool Room (A. Short), U. S. Post Office (Bank of Lompoc), P. Poulsen, A. H. Pratt Jewelry Store, Presbyterian Parsonage, Presbyterian Church, Mrs. E. Quimby, Record Office, A. M. Reed, C. Reed, C. E. Reed, J. Reed, Rex Cafe, C. L. Rios Shop (Barber), Miss E. Robinson, W. H. Robinson, A. Rudolph, Rudolph's Store, H. S. Rudolph, J. F. Rudolph, E. E. Rudolph, W. Saladin, Saladin Music Co., Sam Toy Kee Rest., M. Santor, Sato, G. W. Saunders, Carl Saunders, Mrs. Saunders, A. Saylor, Jack Schaw, Schuyler, Harry Shanklin, Sherman House, A. Short, Mrs. Short, Jim Sing Rest., J. Sloan, H. Sloan, L. L. Smith, W. R. Smith, Smith and Kirkpatrick, Smith's Garage, R. W. Smith, J. M. Smith, S. P. Milling Co., G. Spanne, J. Spanne, Al Sperber, R. Sresovich, E. B. Starr, C. P. Steele, Straussel and Gallagher, O.M. Stewart, W. A. Steward, Dr. Stuart, Mrs. Sudden, R. Sudden, H. Sweeney, M. Sweeney, Dr. Talbott, W. L. Talbott Stable, B. A. Thomas, Mrs. Tolbert, R. E. Triplett, D. T. Truitt, M. C. Tucker, E. S. Wait, W. Walley, L. Walley, J. O. Walling, A. C. Warwick, Wells Fargo Ex. Co., S. B. Westrope, R. M. White, J. Winkler, W. Withrow, I Wright, and Y. Yamanoka.

Daytime Power – Twice a Week!

A headline in the Dec. 18, 1911 Lompoc Record read: "Will furnish Day Power Twice Weekly." Starting Jan. 3, 1912, electricity would be turned on Wed. and Sat. afternoon so ladies could do their ironing with new electric irons.

Wireless

Sept. 10, 1913

First wireless telephone message to Lompoc.

1918 DIARY Of E. A. Vaughan *Superintendent of the Lompoc light and Power Company* (See July 19, 1918)

January 1, 1918 E. A. Vaughan was working on automobiles while apparently searching for a position in the electrical field in which he had previously worked and for which he had been trained.

February 16, 1918 Clear 34–78 (low and high degrees)

Alta had childbirth labor pains start about 12:30. A neighbor took us to Methodist Hospital, Hope near 28th Sts. Arrived there about 3:45, to a bed in the Maternity Ward. Up to Birth Room about 7:00 a.m. Baby girl born 11:40 a.m., 7 1/4 lbs. named Eleanor Alta. I called at Hospital 7:00 p.m. During P.M. went up town bought stork cards, cigars, and went to show. Supper up town.

August 18 Sunday Fog-clear-wind Down to Doc and Bill's to get car. Took folks to M E Church. Office part of PM and evening, planning lines.

August 19 Fog-clear Worked on maps and bills, talked to Cambot at Laundry, also had a talk with Moore about boiler settings and roof also looked at smoke stacks and flashings. Flashings improperly put on, stacks not guyed. Out on line with Adair estimating new building. Rented box at P.O. Talked with Boggs about stoves. Wrote Express and Ins. people. Gazo found brush holders disarranged on exciter and generator. On job one month today.

August 20, 21 and 22 No entry

August 23 Center plunger on water pump for small engine slipped cross-head. Doc and Bill's man made two shots at fixing it. Neither held. Left Ford at Everett Lbr Co. to have box put on. Got car again at 4:30. Took Alta up canyon to Baptist Picnic. Off road into loose gravel.

August 24 Fog-clear Worked on maps, Adair and I on street light circuits, getting list of brackets needed. Doc and Bill finally fixed up pump plunger to hold. Wrote Moore about stove rates. Talked with Sorenson about oil. Stove pipe changed at Smith Hdw. Co. Mr. Meals gave us City Warrant for street light bill.

August 25 Sunday Fog-clear Talked with Compton about hauling in poles from Packard Ranch. Also talked with Moore at Power House about a different system for heating oil for burners and about oil on water in sump hole. At home PM working on circuit map. Office evening.

August 26 Fog-clear Read meters all day, except short time P.M. I walked business district and Adair used machine outside. GE salesman and contractor from Santa Maria called. Miss Schuck working on new meter books. Alta and I picked peaches tonight. Worked on meter books evening.

August 27 Fog-clear-fog Read meters part of A.M. Looked over Arkely house, Ocean and Dst, want service for sander. Worked on meter book and service ledger P.M. Mr. Moore sent notice of a RR Commission hearing to be held in City Hall, Lompoc, Sept. 18 to raise rates. Talked with Becker about stoves and Mr. Newhouse about service on county line. Ordered load of wood through Adair.

August 28 Fog-clear-very warm Worked on books and bills. Talked with Mr. A. C. Cooper about complaint to R.R. Commission, and we both sent letters to them. Adjusted bill with Mr. Inman. Talked to Chief Moore about oil. Took Alta and Eleanor for a little ride and to Power House. Posted up meter readings evening. Made out requisitions for a Tungar Rectifier for Ziesche.

August 29 Fog-clear Worked on bills and books. Car of oil came today. In plant while Moore and Adair connect up car. Oil much better this load.

August 30 Fog-clear Worked on books and bills. Car of oil out at 10:30 A.M. Disconnected after lunch. Lodge in evening. 2d D. and a banquet in honor of Mr. Tucker, a Past Master. Gazo tells me he intends to leave job.

July 19 Met R.M. Moore of Continental Securities Co. and Lompoc Lt. and Power Co. at Hayward Hotel. We picked up Sam DeCorse and his wife and drove to Lompoc, stopping at Santa Barbara for breakfast at 9:00 O'Clock, Lompoc at 1:00. Lunch at hotel Arthur, went to office of Lompoc Lt. and Power Co. Met Adair and H. O. Wilson, Supt. Down to inspect station. After talk with Mr. Moore, Wilson quit. Job of Supt. turned over to me. Mrs. DeCorse checked up books in evening. Drove Wilson to Lompoc Jct. after 11:30.

July 20 Fog-clear Up at 6:00, looked over main leads up town. In office at 7:30. Started new cash book. DeCorse and I looked over lines. With Moore to bank for check signatures. Drove out to country lines for inspection in Packard. Mr. Moore left at 4:15 leaving me in charge. Went down to plant at 5:15 talked with Goza, watch engineer. Cleaning up in office until 10:00. Down to plant again, bed 11:00. Engaged board by week at Hotel Arthur.

July 21 Sunday Down to plant, had talk with J. V. Moore, Chief Engineer. Looked at a house which is for rent on K St.

July 22, 23 and 24 No entry

July 25 Fog-clear Adair and I started reading meters today. Co. Ford started leaking oil, used Adair's car. Bank presented check signed by H. O. Wilson with company name for \$95.00. Refused payment on it. New belt lacing on drive belt.

July 26 Fog-clear We finished first reading of meters today. Started posting to Service Ledger. Adair cut over line on H street to phase out motor circuit in north alley. Been on job one week today.

July 27 Fog-clear Working on books all day. Talked with Chief Moore about oil. Received letter from Alta about moving to Lompoc. Had bad time getting books in shape, and meters located. Paid weeks bill at hotel Arthur.

July 28, 29, 30, 31, and August 1 No entry

August 2 Worked on line rebuilding estimates

August 3 Adair and I went out to near Packard estate to find some poles. Didn't find them but got stuck in river. Rancher with team towed us out. Received card from Alta, coming on noon train. Borrowed Adair's car, met her at depot. Room for them at Hotel Arthur. Co. Ford went on the bum with Adair's transmission stuck, towed to Lompoc Garage. Alta, mother B and I dinner at Hotel. Rented couch from Long Furniture.

August 4 Fog-clear After breakfast went up to house on H St. Took up Hot Plate and connected up. Went over to Power House and talked with Moore about repairs. Shut down plant from 12 N to 4 PM, clean out suction line to pumps. Gazo helping overtime. Up at house with Alta after plant was nearly ready to run. Dinner at hotel, and office evening. Wrote to Motor Vehicle about Byke. (wrecked bike?)

August 5-16 No entry

August 17 Paying up bills with checks from LA office. Ford repairs finished at Garage, took car out P.M. Looked over on East Ocean Ave and prospect of line to Standard Oil Station. In office until 10:30 in evening.

August 31 Fog-clear Finished bills A.M. except a few to adjust. Made out and sent in payroll, helped Adair with Police Signal light. Tried to find an engineer in evening. Voltage low on H St. caused by opera House load. Met Mrs. Moore at plant. Pioneer Garage kicked about Adair wiring bill.

Sept. 1 Fog-clear-warm Down to plant, talked to Moore, to office. Home most of P.M. Took Alta and Baby Eleanor out for a little ride. Made pencil sketch of pole corner to send to Commission. Moore brought Parberry over to house, an applicant for engineer's job.

Sept. 2 Fog-clear Worked on line rebuilding estimates, etc. Labor Day, Adair and Miss Schuck off P.M. I stayed in office, money coming in fast. Talked to an engineer about job in Power House. He decided to take job night shift. Mr. Way called in office this evening.

Sept. 3 Fog-clear-warm Helped Adair with Sorenson motor, key out of motor gear. Looked over line. Talked with Whittemore about oil. Lompoc Laundry left tank for oil but no money. Worked on map for secondaries. Yesterday and today we cleaned up house flat rates. Painting floor at home.

Sept. 4 Fog-clouds-clear Bob and I replaced burned out 3KW Trans. street lights with a 5 KW. Pulled up pig with the Ford. Miss Schuck and I sent in vouchers for local bills. Worked on estimates of material for rebuilding line.

Painting floor, picking peaches at home.

E. A. Vaughan's 1918 diary will be continued in Lompoc Legacy No. 82. Mr. R. M. Moore of Continental Securities Co. and Lompoc Light and Power Co. in Los Angeles put a lot of trust in this 38-year-old man in July, 1918. From July 8, 1918 when Vaughan heard of the job, to July 19, when his predecessor was fired and Vaughan was hired on his first day in Lompoc, only 11 days had transpired! He remained Superintendent of the Lompoc light and Power Company until his death in the 1940's.

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