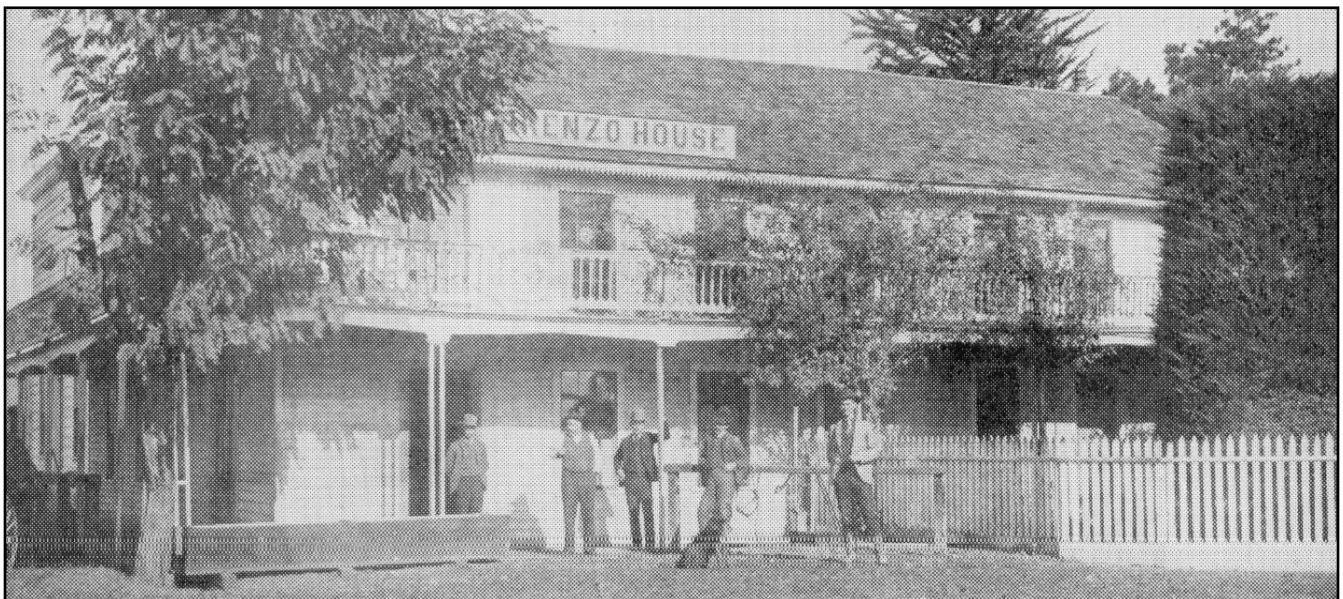


Early Businesses in San Lorenzo

“The Four Corners”

The original town of San Lorenzo was at Hesperian (then called Telegraph) and Lewelling (then called Main). This intersection was called "The Four Corners." The 1878 Atlas of Alameda County says: "At San Lorenzo there is a railroad station, two hotels, post-office, store, a few shops, excellent school, and a neat church, in which are held union services."



Many of the early settlers and squatters who came to San Lorenzo built small homes on their farm land. These homes were often miles from town, and were isolated from each other. Elise Bockman LaFleur remembers her grandfather Bockman's home: "Oh, it was a marvelous place for a city child to spend a summer. We lived in San Francisco, but I spent part of each summer there. (...) There were walnut trees and wisteria vines, and I remember a huge magnolia tree in back of the house. I was always outside playing." (Quote from "Brightside," Dec. 16, 1979, *The Daily Review*, "Memories of a Bygone Era" by Sally Prince.)

The Village Blacksmith

A blacksmith was essential to the community, because he did more than just shoe horses. The smith repaired and made almost anything metal - wagon, harness buckles, plows and other farm equipment. The first business in the village of San Lorenzo was Boyle's blacksmith shop, built in 1853. Boyle died after a few years and his shop was taken over by Henry Smyth. According to the Historical Atlas of 1878, "Henry Smyth, who had been employed by Boyle and started the first forge-fire in San Lorenzo, succeeded to his business, which has grown into an establishment for repairing and manufacturing farm machinery, employing from fifteen to twenty men."



Smyth Blacksmith Shop, ca. 1900

Shiman's Store

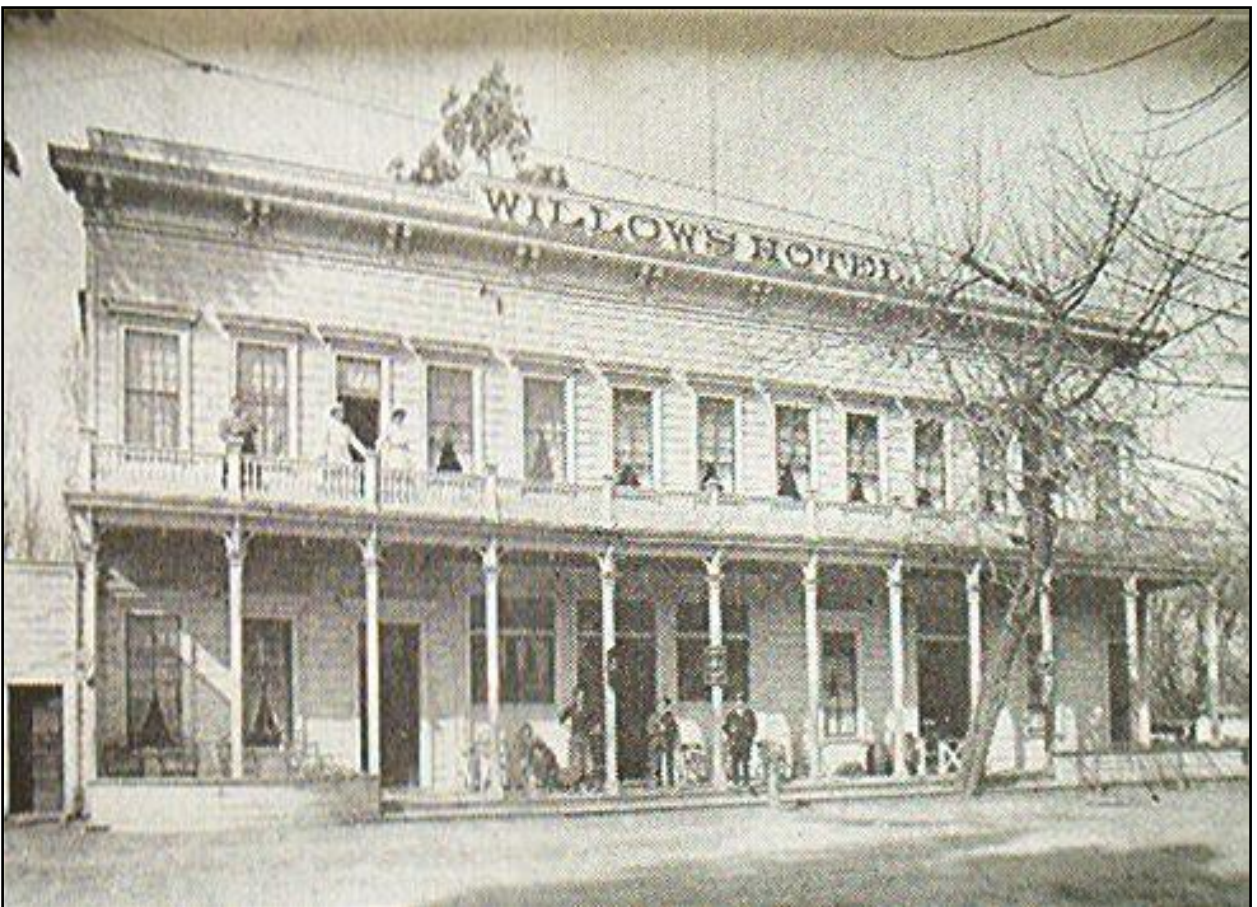
John L. Shiman opened his store in San Lorenzo in the 1860s. It was situated along the San Lorenzo Creek. Shiman and most of the businesses in San Lorenzo served the local farmers. The large number of farms and farm workers affected the businesses in the area. Farmers only got paid once a year when they harvested their crops. So businesses let farmers charge their purchases all year then pay them off when the crop money came in. All the rest of the year, farmers would keep their debt down by trading eggs and butter for goods. The first store in San Lorenzo was opened in 1854 by Daniel Olds.



Shiman's Store, ca. 1880

Willows Hotel, 1875

The trip from San Jose to Oakland was long enough that people often wanted to stop overnight. The Willows Hotel was run by Ezra Livingston to accommodate travelers along this dusty route. It was located across from the Henry Smyth Blacksmith Shop facing Telegraph Road (now Hesperian Blvd).



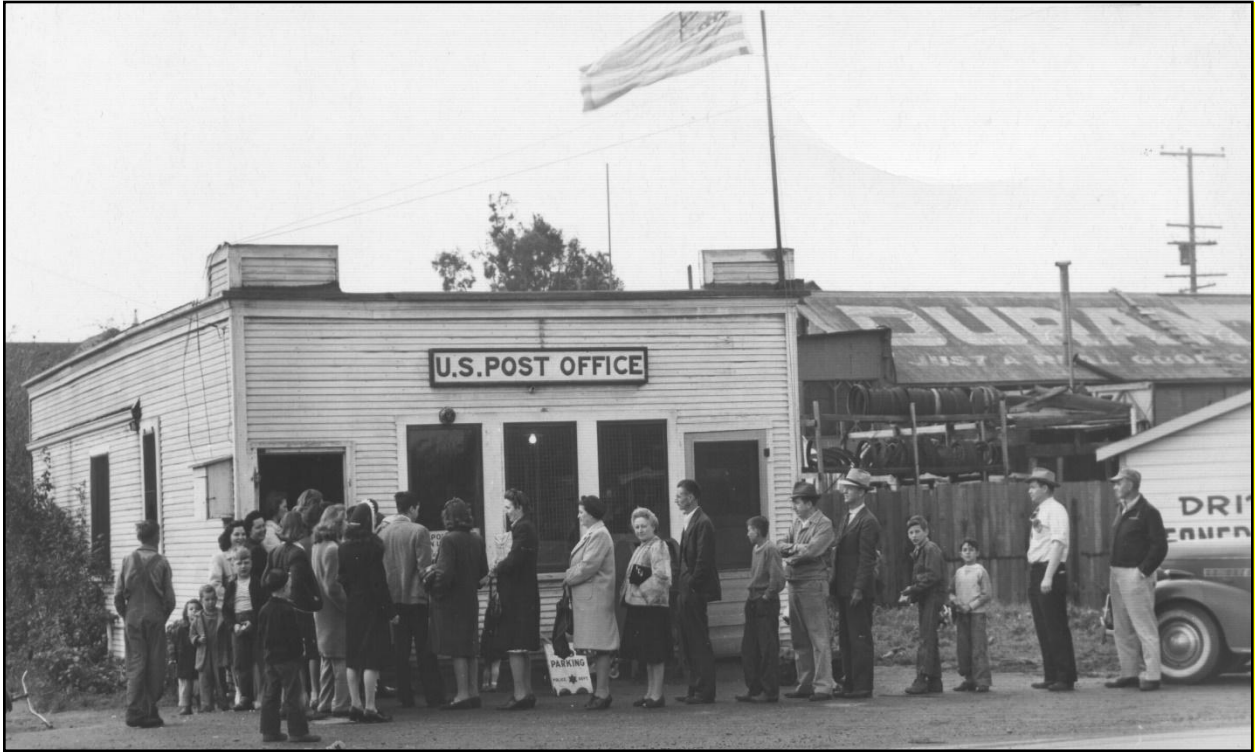
Willows Hotel, ca. 1880

San Lorenzo House, 1853, hotel and post office



A second hotel, called the San Lorenzo House, was located at Lewelling and Hesperian. The hotel was a stagecoach stop, and mail was left there for local residents. The first San Lorenzo Postmaster was hotel owner Albert E. Crane. San Lorenzo's first Post Office was dedicated on April 4, 1854. Crane had to select a name for the Post Office, as "Squattersville" didn't seem like a good permanent name, so he selected the name of the old Mexican rancho, "San Lorenzo."

The mail was received in Shiman's store starting in 1859. The first free-standing San Lorenzo post office opened in 1893. The building had previously been a barber shop, and was located on Lewelling Boulevard and Usher Street. Residents had to come to the Post Office to pick up their mail until 1904 when Joe Correa began to deliver mail to homes. He used a wagon pulled by a horse named "Babe." Joe replaced Babe with the area's first car in 1918. He continued to be San Lorenzo's letter carrier until he retired in 1934.



Standing in line, the residents of San Lorenzo wait to receive their mail and buy stamps from the post office on Lewelling Blvd., ca. 1940