



Historic Bakersfield & Kern County, California
www.gilbertgia.com

History in Bakersfield Sidewalks, 1893-2011

Ver 9
by Gilbert P. Gia

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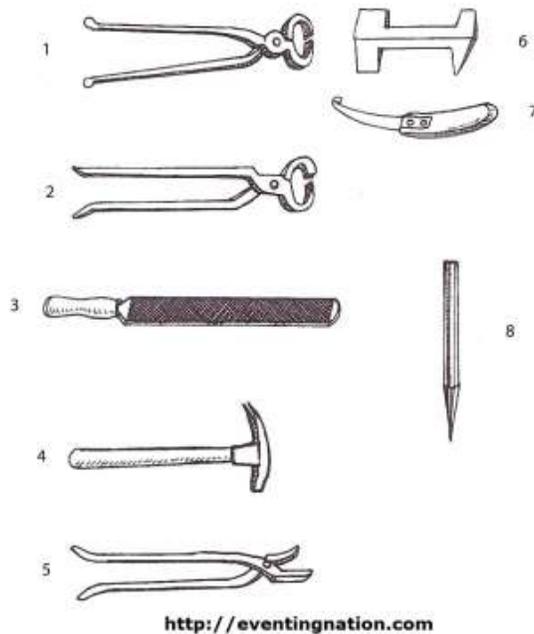
A stunning panel of horse shoes and ghostly impressions of farrier tools fill a sidewalk in front of 1000 18th Street where C.N. Johnston once owned a blacksmith shop.¹ The mule shoe just above the hammer below is stamped June 1917, which suggests that these outlines have withstood the impact of shoe leather for 94 years.



Sidewalk at 1000 18th (2011)²

¹ In 1893 Charles N. Johnston partnered in a blacksmith business at 1301 19th Street with a Mr. Wear. Bakersfield Californian, April 24, 1893

² The images in this document are the property of Gilbert Gia, unless otherwise indicated.



Farrier tools from a modern sales catalog



Daily Californian, April 22, 1907

The Klingenberg concrete stamp among the tool impressions helps bracket the date that this concrete was poured. Klingenberg was among the first of local sidewalk contractors and was in business from about 1915 to 1920. The stamp also suggests who paid for the work. If it was a city-paid job, would Klingenberg have allowed C.N. Johnston's employees to decorate the concrete with their tools?

Early Uses of Cement Around Bakersfield



Daily Californian, April 20, 1893

The small print above reads "Will deliver brick at Bakersfield or Sumner in quantities over 10,000 for \$6 per thousand. Lime, cement and plaster for sale." The Patent Brick Company was at San Pablo Bay in Marin County,³ and its delivery to Bakersfield was via the Southern Pacific line that passes just south of the Kern County Museum. Sumner, mentioned in the ad, was the location of the SP depot at today's East Bakersfield.

Granite was used in the construction of the Kern County Land Company Building in 1893,⁴ and the same material was used as curbing on nearby streets two years later. The Californian wrote in 1915, "[T]he granite curbing about the Kern County Land Company's property on Nineteenth, Twentieth and H streets came from the Keene quarry. It was placed twenty years ago this year [1895]. At the alley at H street between Nineteenth and Twentieth streets, the curbing has stood the scraping of wheels of all sort of conveyances for two decades, and it remained unimpaired to this day."⁵ Stephen Montgomery of Bakersfield identified portions of granite curbing on the

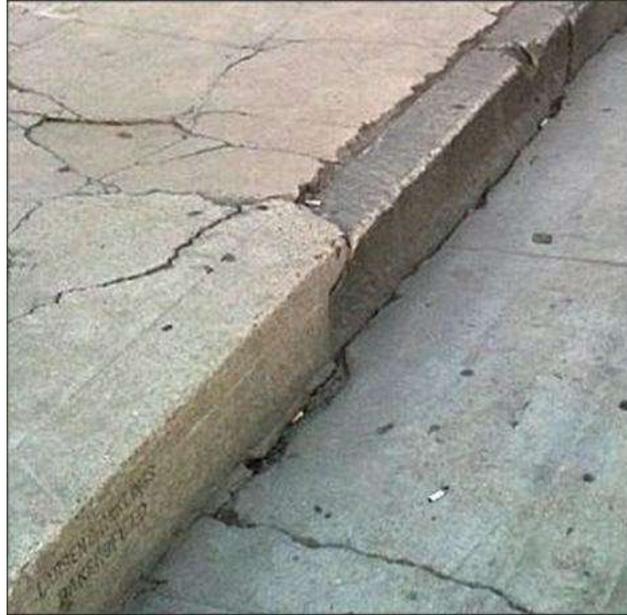
³ California Journal of Mines and Geology, vol 12-13, p 614. State Printing Office, Sacramento, 1894.

Google Books

⁴ 1712 19th St

⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 29, 1915

south side of 20th Street near the Fox Theater Building, Henley's Photo, and the American Legion Hall.⁶



Granite curbing, upper right (photo credit: Stephen Montgomery)

Concrete sidewalks came into use here at the turn of the century.⁷ In late 1898 the city board of trustees accepted proposals for installation of "artificial stone" curbs and sidewalks along Chester Avenue between 17th and Eighteenth streets, "where not already laid." At the same time, similar work was underway between 16th and 17th Streets.⁸

The late 1890s also marked the transition from gravel to concrete for sidewalks. In 1899 the city agreed to allow property owners between Chester and F and Railroad Avenue and 15th⁹ to construct six-foot, gravel sidewalks if they were contained by redwood curbs. That board action was the first that authorized sidewalks in residential

⁶ Jul 2011 email to the author

⁷ The California Portland Cement Company plant founded in 1891 at Colton, California also must have supplied cement to Bakersfield.

⁸ Daily Californian, Sep 23, 1898

⁹ Now Truxtun Ave

neighborhoods. However, not everyone favored gravel. "It is said that the people on H Street want to build a six-foot artificial stone walk."¹⁰ Notably, owners paid for the cost of their sidewalks, although in 1916 the city absorbed the surveying costs associated with grading for new curbing and sidewalks.¹¹

In 1903 a concrete sidewalk in downtown replaced a canal after the needs of Bakersfield pedestrians trumped those of the Kern Island Irrigating Company. The canal on Chester Avenue was an old one, which probably helped the city in getting it filled and covered over with sidewalk.¹²

Board of Trustees Resolution No 71, of 1902, authorized cement sidewalks along Eye Street from 8th to 15th. The curbs were wood timber in accordance with specifications for cross-walks adopted by the board.¹³ In 1909 redwood timber curbing was again an alternative to concrete when it was installed along C Street between 19th and Truxtun. For the sidewalks, though, concrete, was the material of choice on 24th Street between K and L and on 25th between Chester and L.¹⁴ Use of redwood timber for city curbing seems to have disappeared after 1909. City Resolution 168, of 1910, called for the "petrolithic paving and curbing" of cement curbs and sidewalks on K Street from 20th to 13th.¹⁵

¹⁰ Daily Californian, Feb 28, 1899

¹¹ Bakersfield Californian, Feb 16, 1916

¹² Morning Echo, Dec 24, 1903. Judge Mahon granted a temporary injunction in favor of the company.

¹³ Daily Californian Mar 20, 1902. Adopted Oct 28, 1901

¹⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Nov 23, 1909

¹⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Oct 13, 1910

Monolith and the Proliferation of Bakersfield Sidewalks

Concrete sidewalk construction increased after completion of the Owens River aqueduct project. In the beginning, project superintendent William Mulholland had but three major sources of cement: The Southern California Cement Company at a North Riverside, California Portland Cement Company at Colton, and the Western Building Material Company at Napa.¹⁶ None was economical for his needs; in 1907 Mulholland recommended that Los Angeles build a cement plant near Tehachapi, and Monolith Plant production started in 1909. The aqueduct construction was completed in 1913, but cement production continued.¹⁷



Bakersfield Californian, June 26, 1915

¹⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 20, 1907

¹⁷ Judy Barras, *The Long Road to Tehachapi*. Sierra Printers, Inc., Bakersfield, CA (2nd edition), 1976, p 59

In 1917 the Bakersfield city council called for additional street paving, additional shade trees, a downtown comfort station, public drinking fountains, and a clubhouse for the unemployed -- to be used in connection with an employment bureau. Sidewalks construction was included.¹⁸

Contractor Stamps



F. Osburn stamp, 1900?-1903? (Oldest stamp)

This impression was discovered one block east of 1200 Truxtun Ave, the Bell Tower Club parking lot. It has not been found elsewhere in downtown Bakersfield. In 1902, Fredrick W. Osburn, then 42, was a Bakersfield cement contractor.¹⁹ The W.H. Worswick Company bought the Osburn's company in 1903.²⁰

¹⁸ Pacific municipalities and counties (1917), League of California Municipalities, v.33 (1919), San Francisco

[http://www.archive.org/stream/pacificmunicipal331919leag/pacificmunicipal331919leag_djvu.txt]

¹⁹ Directory of American Cement Industries and Hand-book For Cement Users, 1902. The US Censuses of 1910 and 1920 show, respectively, that Osburn was in the paving business in Fresno and Los Angeles.

²⁰ www.asphaltmagazine.com/Archives/2001/Spring_Summer/Asphalt_Thru_The_Ages_Spring_Summer_2001.pdf

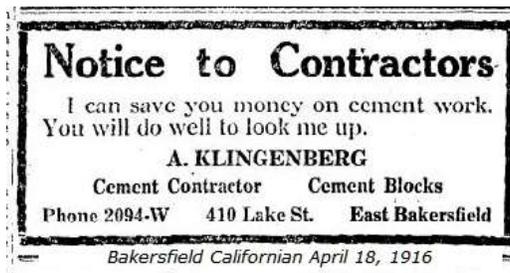


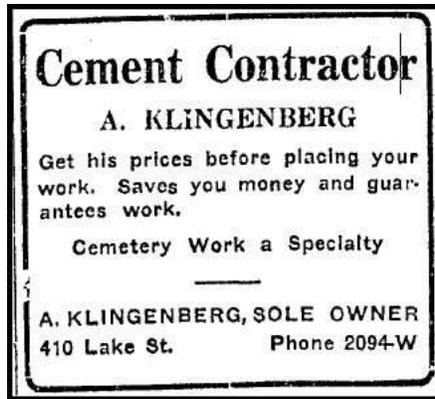
Worswick Street Paving Company, c1903-1918

Before the 1920s, Worswick Company of Fresno had installed asphalt streets and reinforced concrete sidewalks in several central and southern San Joaquin Valley towns. A few Worswick marks are on Eighteenth Street curbs just east of Chester.



A. Klingenberg, c1915-c1920





Bakersfield Californian, July 6, 1918²¹



Curb street-name stamps at Eighteenth and N are unique in Bakersfield

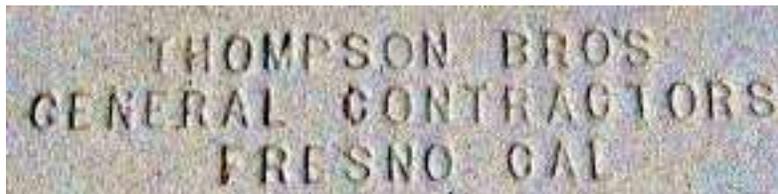


²¹ Cemetery work refers to the concrete curbing that Klingenberg installed around family plots at Union Cemetery. The ad suggests that Klingenberg had won city jobs by that date.



Cotton Brothers 1912 stamp at 1300 Baker Street, BCSD²²

Cotton Brothers was involved in construction projects throughout the San Joaquin Valley,²³ and in 1911 the Oakland company graded and improved Baker Street.²⁴ The same year it also graded, tamped, and oiled K Street between 13th and 20th and installed concrete curbs and “sidewalk approaches” where none before had existed.²⁵



Thompson Brothers, c1912

Bakersfield’s population in 1890 was 9,800, by 1913 it had reached nearly 20,000,²⁶ and Bakersfield had been busy paving its dirt streets. In 1912 the town awarded Thompson Brothers Construction a contract to install asphalt streets and concrete curbs, gutters and sidewalks in

²² This is the earliest dated stamp the author found.

²³ San Francisco Call, Sep 29, 1910

²⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 20, 1912

²⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 11, 1911

²⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Feb 15, 1913

the vicinity of 16th and C streets.²⁷ The Californian noted in 1917 that C.M. Thompson of Thompson Brothers, Fresno, "has had most of the paving contract of this city in recent years."²⁸



Federal Construction Company, c1915 - 1925

Federal Construction of San Francisco was the sole bidder on a Bakersfield street paving job in 1913 (the city rejected its bid),²⁹ but within five years the city was receiving multiple bids for curb and

²⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Oct 24, 1912. Found north of old Santa Fe Station by Bakersfield High School.

²⁸ Bakersfield Californian, May 21, 1917

²⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Feb 25, 1913

sidewalk work. In 1918 Federal Construction paved streets in Calexico, California³⁰ but it also won bids in Bakersfield.



Corfield & Davis, 1916-1917

This stamp is at the northwest corner of H and 22 Streets. All of the company's business in Bakersfield was done in those two years.



Fairchild-Gilmore-Wilton, c 1916 -1921

Fairchild-Gilmore-Wilton Company was founded in 1902. From 1916 to 1919 its home office was at Anaheim, California, and it was doing a high volume of work throughout southern California. George Perry

³⁰ Contractors' and Dealers' Association of California, Building & Engineering News (1914). v.18, pt.2 (Jul-Dec. 1918)

Griffith (b 1868) was its vice-president. About 1921 it became Griffith Company.



Valley Construction Company, c1920-1925

Around 1920 Valley Construction Company of Bakersfield installed cement sidewalks from Eye to L and from 19th to 20th.³¹ In 1920 Weitzel & Larsen lost a bid to Valley Construction to install three miles of concrete curbs and sidewalks along Niles, Oregon, Pacific, Quincy, and Beale Streets in East Bakersfield. Nearly four miles of similar work in the area had already been completed by then.³²

In 1920 the city ordered curbs and sidewalks to be installed in the first alley south of Twentieth Street between Eye and L.³³

³¹ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 23, 1920

³² Bakersfield Californian Nov 9, 1920

³³ Bakersfield City Council resolution March 1, 1920

F.W. Nighbert stamp (no example found), c1920-c1930

In 1924 F.W. Nighbert Company graded and oiled two blocks on Lincoln Street, one on Beale Avenue, and installed curbs and gutters on the same path.³⁴ About 1932 Nighbert served as Bakersfield city manager.



Dean & Stroble, c1920-c1930

On March 16, 1923 the city council hired Dean & Stroble to build a swimming plunge at East Side Park.³⁵ In 1925 the company oiled streets and graded sidewalk on Thirteenth Street between M and N and did similar work on Grace, Lincoln, Jefferson and Bernard streets in East Bakersfield.³⁶ In 1927 the company installed curbs and sidewalks on King Street and on Beale between Sumner and Eureka.³⁷

³⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 11, 1924

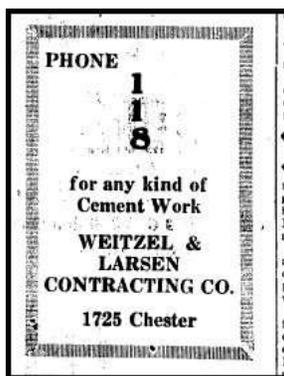
³⁵ Now Jefferson Park. Res No 3-23. Bakersfield Californian, Mar 13, 1923. The company installed new sewer lines and manholes for Bakersfield through the 1920s.

³⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 8, 1925; Feb 2, 1925

³⁷ Minutes of the City Council, 1927, p 240. Bakersfield Californian, Nov 21, 1927



Weitzel and Larsen, c1910-1940



Weitzel and Larsen ad from the Bakersfield Californian, August 31, 1916

Christian Peter Larsen, a native of Denmark, moved to California in 1886 and worked as a brick maker for James Curran and Henry A. Jastro. Larson went into the cement contracting business about 1900, and he probably joined Weitzel shortly after that.³⁸ In early 1910 Weitzel & Larson won the contract to install concrete sidewalks and curbs on the west side of Chester Avenue near Nineteenth.³⁹ That year they also installed concrete curbing on Eighteenth between F and O.⁴⁰

³⁸ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 20, 1941.

³⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 17, 1910. Six of the lots were in Blk 422D which is bounded by 17th and Truxtun and A and B St, and two were in Blk 455, which is between B and C and 20th and 21st. Weitzel and Larsen's sidewalk work covered the part of the Panama Slough that ran through this area. Filling of the slough started in 1900, but there is still evidence of its existence today as dips or low spots on 21st east of M and around 20th and B streets. (Village News, Bakersfield, Mar 1998)

⁴⁰ Bakersfield Californian, Nov 12, 1910

In 1918 stockholders of Weitzel & Larson filed for dissolution of the company,⁴¹ but in 1922 the company was in business: The city hired Weitzel & Larson to pour a five-inch-thick concrete alley between 20th and 23rd at K.⁴² In 1927 the company lost the bid for curbs and sidewalks on Beale Avenue, and in 1928 it lost the bid to install curbs, gutters and sidewalks along H street between Brundage and Fourth.⁴³ Weitzel & Larson was probably out of business just after 1929.⁴⁴



Larsen and Rawlings, c1929-1950



Bakersfield Californian, May 24, 1940

⁴¹ Bakersfield California, Oct 8, 1918

⁴² Bakersfield Californian, Mar 17, 1922. Nineteenth Street, once the town's main thoroughfare, is one of the few streets paved in concrete.

⁴³ Bakersfield Californian Nov 27, 1928

⁴⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Nov 21, 1927

The Rawlings name became associated with Larsen in 1925 when C.E. Rawlings married Olean Larsen, daughter of C.P. and Emma Larsen.⁴⁵ By 1950 Rawlings was owner of Larsen and Rawlings.⁴⁶

[James E. Burke Company, no stamp found]

In January 1925 James E. Burke Company installed 31,000 feet of curbing and 22,000 square feet of sidewalk around Lincoln and Jefferson streets.⁴⁷ The company must have been a major player in sidewalk construction, but this author found no other information.



Griffith Company

In 1921 Fairchild-Gilmore-Wilton changed its name to Griffith Company and continued under family management until 1983.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 24, 1950. Olean Larsen and opera baritone Lawrence Tibbet were cousins

⁴⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 24, 1950. Larsen had been in the concrete business for four decades.

⁴⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 8, 1925. Recent installation of sidewalk access for the handicapped has removed the contractor's stamp, if he used one.

⁴⁸ [<http://www.sfgenealogy.com/calwatanook/tagdata/5-who/162.htm>] [<http://www.roadsbridges.com/Their-name-in-pavement-article4463>]

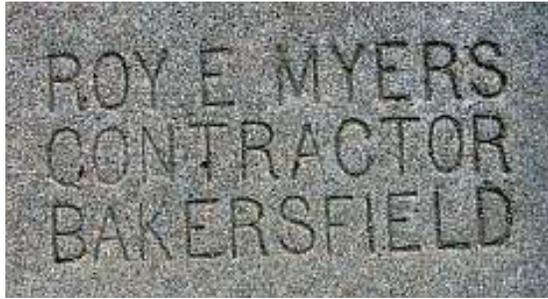
Sidewalk dating is often a matter of guesstimation, but a possible exception is the sidewalk fronting Sinaloa Restaurant at 910 20th Street just east of Downtown School.⁴⁹ The two-story restaurant was constructed in 1910 as the Kern County Children’s Shelter, and it remained as that until 1929. In 1928 several local construction firms coordinated their resources to lay a half-block of sidewalk in front of the shelter. Those companies were the Yosemite-Portland Cement Company, Bakersfield Sandstone Brick Company, Moron, Hayward and King Lumber Company, Bakersfield Rock & Gravel Company, and the C.W. Hartman Company (that provided grading). Concrete and finishing work was by Weitzel & Larsen, Dean & Stroble, and Roy Myers.⁵⁰ The little handprints seen in the concrete by the entrance steps might have been made at the time the new sidewalk was poured.



Children’s Shelter steps, 920 20th Street (Photo, 2011)

⁴⁹ Now Sinaloa Restaurant

⁵⁰ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 6, 1928, p 1



Roy E. Myers



V.J. Stoll

Myers & Stoll (Stamp not found)

In 1924 the County of Kern awarded Myers & Stoll the contract to build a cement culvert bridge over the James Canal,⁵¹ and in 1925 the same company won the City of Bakersfield contract to build a concrete syphon at the intersection of Kern Island Canal and Eighteenth Street.⁵²

⁵¹ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 28, 1924

⁵² Bakersfield Californian, Apr 13, 1925. The syphon under 18th Street obviated the need for a bridge.



Clark C. Dresser

This stamp appears on concrete curbing and drainage work around Alturas Street east of Garces High School. The company's period of business was probably in the two or three years just before 1942.

CONTRACT for construction of curbs and gutters in street improvement district No. 12, which includes tracts 1088 and 1094 in the Loma Linda Drive district, was awarded yesterday by the Board of Supervisors to Clark C. Dresser on a bid of \$12,110.80. Dresser was the only bidder. **Bakersfield Californian, Aug 20, 1940**



Stamps near Oleander Avenue



Works Progress Administration

WPA was a Depression-era, federal make-work program that employed experienced foreman and inexperienced labor at the local level. The stamp above is at Hart Park, but several similar ones appear around Bakersfield.



Ted Alfter, c1948 - 1965

Ted Alfter probably started in cement finishing in 1948.⁵³ By 1959 the company won a contract to install a six-foot sidewalk facing Panorama Drive at Bakersfield College.⁵⁴ The stamp is found in many sidewalks

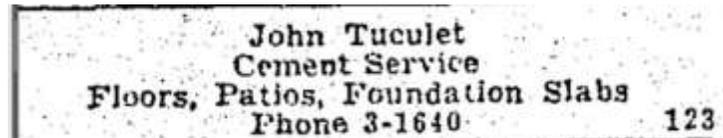
⁵³ Bakersfield Californian, Dec 18, 1948

⁵⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Nov 26, 1959. Work was paid by Kern County Union High School and Junior College District

around town. Sometime around 1968 Ted Alfter's interests shifted to activities of the Camellia Society of Kern County.⁵⁵



John Tuculet stamp, c1946- 1960



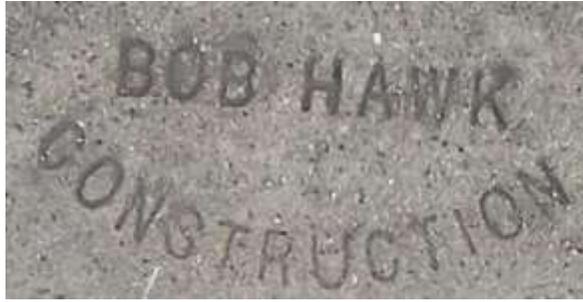
Bakersfield Californian, December 3, 1946

John Tuculet started in business shortly after WWII. In 1958 he was awarded a contract to install sewers, curbs, and gutters in Delano.⁵⁶ In 1959 the company installed curbs and gutters at Kernville's Circle Park.⁵⁷ Tuculet stamps are uncommon in Bakersfield.

⁵⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Nov 9, 1968

⁵⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Dec 5, 1958

⁵⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 14, 1959

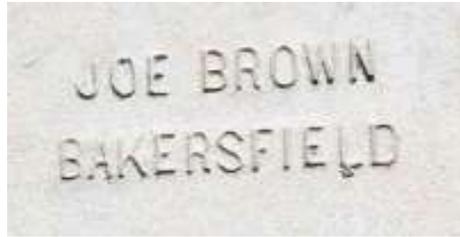


Bob Hawk Construction did business in Bakersfield between 1948 and 1953. The shop was east across Chester from the Kern County Museum and near Wayne's Dairy. This stamp is at the SW corner 19th and Q Streets.



Dicco Inc., c 1950-1980 (21st and F Streets)

Dicco won municipal sidewalk contracts in Bakersfield, Shafter, and McFarland. In the early 1950s it was involved in paving Mt. Vernon Avenue north from East Bakersfield High School. Sometime before 1977 the company became a division of Granite Construction Company.



Joe Brown, 1960-1970

In 1961 Joe Brown Company poured sidewalks along Bank Street between Beech and A in the vicinity of Lindsey and Wilson Road.⁵⁸ In 1970 the company installed curbs, gutters and sidewalks in the area of Owens, Murdock, and Robinson Streets and Virginia Avenue.⁵⁹



Willie J. Frink, southeast of Bakersfield College Outdoor Theater

This Willie J. Frink stamp is of unknown date. Willie Frink, Jr. was credited in 1976 for "site concrete" in the construction of the Bakersfield Police Department's building.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Bakersfield Californian, April 28; Dec 12, 1961

⁵⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Dec 5, 1970; Dec 12, 1961, Bakersfield Californian, Dec 5, 1970

⁶⁰ Bakersfield Californian, Apr 22, 1976, A5

Other Sidewalk Features

Basement Doors and Lights



Service door in north sidewalk at old Brock's Building⁶¹



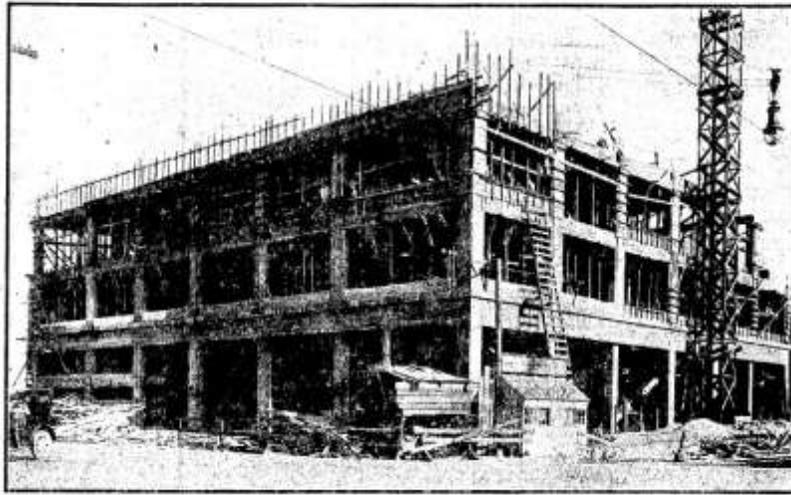
Shield on door



In the same sidewalk is a P.H. Jackson patented glass basement light panel.

⁶¹ A biography of PH Jackson is in Sara E. Wermiel, "Concrete, 1876-1906: Jackson, Percy, and the Beginnings of Reinforced Concrete Construction in the United States." Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Construction History at Cottbus, Germany, May 2009. The Jackson Company also supplied the patented glass lights.

Hochheimers to Be in New Home August 1 Ambitious Plans for Store Are Outlined



Work on Building Being Rushed; Declaration of Homer Brothers at Time of Disastrous Fire Will be Made Good; Fine Bakery Planned

Bakersfield Californian, May 12, 1920

The sidewalk doors and lights at the old Brocks Building were probably installed during construction of Hochheimer's new building following the downtown fire of August 22, 1919. Before that, Hochheimer's store had occupied the old Conklin-Brodek building on that site.⁶² The Hochheimer building later became Brock's Department Store.

Hitching Posts

In 1901 a newspaper reader wrote, "Mr. Editor, in Tuesday's issue you have a notice that Marshal Packard intends to enforce the law in regard to hitching horses. This is all right, but what I wish to know is where the horses are to be hitched? Since the streets have been paved there are no hitching posts or rings to be found, and the merchants are evidently in with the livery stable men to force country people to pay a charge to put up their horse for a short time. We should be only

⁶² Bakersfield Californian, Aug 22, 1919, May 12, 1920.

too glad to hitch our horses if we could find a post. If we go to the bank, post office, library, or store, there is no place to hitch that terrible runaway horse. Let the city trustees pass an ordinance compelling these businessmen to have some hitching posts and then enforce both ordinances. I intend to trade with merchants that have the hitching posts."⁶³

In 1899 August Kratzmer's Kern County Foundry and Machine Works had installed hitching posts in front of the courthouse,⁶⁴ although at Kern City (now East Bakersfield) shoppers had to tie their horses to telegraph poles or to awning posts --which was illegal in one case and unsafe in the other.⁶⁵ By 1905 Kratzmer was still manufacturing hitching posts,⁶⁶ but the need for them was tapering off since horses were less frequently seen around town. In 1919 the city bought two new horses for the road department,⁶⁷ but in 1920 they considered removing all hitching posts from town streets.⁶⁸

Horses that were hitched to trees often gnawed the bark. Perhaps that was why City Code Section 32, of 1922, made it illegal to hitch horses to trees on city streets or in city parks.⁶⁹ Where could one tie a horse when most of the hitching posts were gone and hitching a horse to a tree was illegal? One morning someone hitched a nice-looking, brown saddle horse to an open door at the Bakersfield Californian.⁷⁰

⁶³ Daily Californian, April 10, 1901. The letter was reprinted the next day in the Los Angeles Times.

⁶⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Apr 4, 1899. April 13, 1899.

⁶⁵ Jun 10, 1899, from Bakersfield Californian, Jun 10, 1929, "Thirty Years Ago"

⁶⁶ Daily Californian, Jan 5, 1900

⁶⁷ City minutes, May 24, 1919. On Jun 16, 1919 the city purchased three horses for the streets department.

⁶⁸ City minutes, Feb 9, 1920

⁶⁹ City minutes, Mar 20, 1922

⁷⁰ Bakersfield Californian, May 22, 1922



Four hitching posts in front of City Hall, January 1938 ⁷¹

In the late 1940s Paul Hornung still had two hitching posts in front of his harness shop at 1601 Nineteenth Street,⁷² and a few more were still in front of City Hall. The 1952 earthquake ruined City Hall --it had been the county's court house until 1911-- and at request of the Kern County Historical Society the decorative posts, metal columns, and chain (shown in the image above) were removed to Kern County Museum.⁷³ Today some are in storage at Pioneer Village at 3801 Chester Ave, and some front the east side of the Kern County Museum.

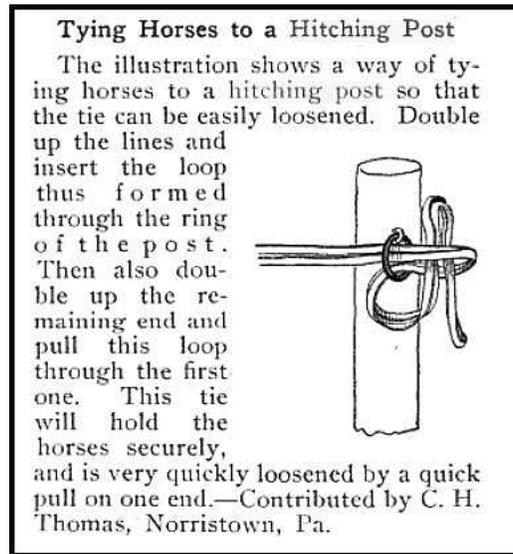


⁷¹ Photo © Kern County Museum. Use of image's detail by permission. Today the site is occupied by the Bakersfield Police Department and new City Hall buildings.

⁷² Author's interview with Don Suverkrop, Jul 24, 2011

⁷³ City council minutes, July 7, 1952. "Upon a motion.... communication from the Kern County Historical Society regarding the preservation of the chain link fence and hitching posts around the City Hall, was received and order placed on file."

Hitching post detail from a 1920 City Hall photograph⁷⁴



Popular Mechanics, April 1914



Hitching post at Pioneer Village, Bakersfield, California

⁷⁴ Photo © Kern County Museum. Use of image's detail by permission.



The last downtown hitching ring, Twentieth and N Streets. (see appendix)



Parking Meters



By the time of the 1952 earthquakes the hitching posts were mostly gone, but they had been replaced by parking meters. In 1936 Bakersfield learned that Toledo, Ohio installed 1,000 of them to swell city coffers and control downtown parking.⁷⁵ Bakersfield city council favored the installation of meters, and most Bakersfield merchants supported them, too,⁷⁶ and in March 1937 Bakersfield became the

⁷⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Oct 22, 1936

⁷⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 9, 1937

second city in California to charge for parking downtown.⁷⁷ However when City Auditor Vance Van Riper was instructed to pay the bill of the Oklahoma company that supplied them, he refused.⁷⁸ His denial went to court, but Kern County Superior Court Judge Erwin W. Owen declared parking meters constitutional and ordered Van Riper to pay the bill.⁷⁹ Today, concrete patches mark sidewalks where the meters once stood.



Parking-meter patch downtown (Photo, 2011)

⁷⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 12, 1937. Long Beach was the first city to install the meters. Bakersfield bought 200 of them from the Dual Parking Meter Co of Oklahoma City. Less than a year later, merchants decided they did not like them. Bakersfield Californian, May 19, 1938

⁷⁸ In 1892 County Auditor William Howell refused to pay a banquet bill for wealthy bankers. He was verbally abused but succeeded. See “A Protest Newspaper,” http://www.gilbertgia.com/hist_articles/civRights/truth.civ.pdf

⁷⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 25, 1937



Metal Protected Curbing

Southwest corner of 20th and Chester Avenue

The old Bank of America, now Stars Theater, adjoins this metal-protected curbing on 20th Street. In spring 1902 ground was broken here for the Bank of Bakersfield and was completed by September 1903,⁸⁰ but the appearance of the concrete is not that old. Rather, the

⁸⁰ Daily [Bakersfield] Californian, Mar 5, 1902, Sep 19, 1903

curb and iron edging was probably installed in 1928 when Bank of America of California raised much of the Bank of Bakersfield and expanded and modernized the corner.⁸¹ This curb is unique to town. The imbedded, metal button shown next to the sunglasses in the image above can be found about 50 feet west of the corner. Marked "KERN RIVER FOUNDRY BKSFLD CAL," it might have been installed to advertise who made the iron edging.

Kern River Foundry manufactured items for the city. The image below is of an iron storm-drain cover found near Oleander Avenue just south of Bakersfield High School.



⁸¹ Bakersfield Californian, Feb 20, 1929

Miscellaneous Sidewalk Features



Ed Schweitzer immortalized his name in this Sumner Street sidewalk (Photo, 2011)



Entrance at Baker and Sumner, SE corner(Photo, 2011) ⁸²



This ad says Kern Drug was once in a two-story building.
Bakersfield Californian, Jan 10, 1920

⁸² On May 20, 1901 Kern Drug Company opened a new soda fountain. The author remembers it there in the mid-1960s. The Dr. O'Reilly ad indicates that the building was once two stories.



An entrance in same building a few doors south of Kern Drug (Photo 2011)



Memorial bricks at Robobank Plaza on Truxtun Avenue



Sidewalk patch east of 19th and Chester. Dog prints appear under the happy face and tiny crucifix. The child whose handprint is here might have had two Chihuahuas, one named Pulga (flea in Spanish) and another name Chica. Did the cookie cutter impressions (a Santa Claus and a bell) come from mama's kitchen?



No longer a house but Pulga and Chica's play yard



A horse stood here at Panorama and Boise Streets around 1968

The Future of Old Concrete Sidewalks



The pattern of small grids in this Bakersfield sidewalk dates it between 1910 and 1925. Although many old sidewalks remain serviceable, those next to trees have not fared so well.

Street and sidewalk improvements on either side of Chester Avenue have destroyed old sidewalk stamps. The old sidewalks continue to serve the public, but their installers' names are gone.

Level, serviceable sidewalks otherwise cracked need not be removed. As monuments to our local past they might be inscribed with the periods of their installation showing evidence of past expenditure of tax dollars.

Afterward

The hitching ring shown on page 28 was removed in February 2012 during an updating of concrete; however the ring was not discarded (*Bakersfield Californian* 12 Mar 2012).

On March 13, 2012 Pyrenees Bakery owner Marianne Laxague showed Bakersfield Californian reporter Antonie Boessenkool a horse-hitching ring embedded in the sidewalk near her bakery's parking lot on East 21st near Baker Street. Boessenkool wrote, "So if you want to see what the curbs looked like in the era of horse transportation, you still have your chance."

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