

history

From Marlene's
Mountain History Archive
**Historic Photos of
Lexington and Alma**
Marlene Wiley

Two former mountain communities, Lexington and Alma, were demolished when the Lexington reservoir was created in the mid-1950s. They were founded earlier than the town of Los Gatos. Also, for a brief time, they were more famous than Los Gatos. They no longer exist, victims of a depleted lumber industry and the need to create water storage for the Santa Clara Valley.

Lexington was founded in 1857. John Pennell Henning, who purchased the land from Zachariah "Buffalo" Jones, named the community for Lexington, Missouri, where he once lived. Lexington became the largest settlement in the Redwood Township.

The Lexington post office was established in 1861. Lumbering was the chief business. The town once boasted a hotel, post office, livery stable, and blacksmith shop. In 1867, eight sawmills were in operation. There were lumber dealers, a redwood pipe factory, a wheelwright, and a grocer. A petroleum company and a stagecoach line claimed Lexington as home. The stage line existed until 1875, when ranchers and orchardists began shipping their



TREE SOLUTIONS
HEALTH CARE FOR TREES

- Sudden Oak Death treatment
- Tree Care Recommendations
- Tree Disease and Pest Experts
- Fruit tree pruning
- Soil management
- Soil Foodweb Advisor
- ISA Certified Arborist 6717A
- Licensed Pesticide Applicator 103251
- Licensed Tree Pruning Contractor #1033684

Family business since 1999

831-425-1833

www.treesolutions.com

jim@treesolutions.com



23123 Hwy 17, Los Gatos, CA 95033

For reservations, event booking or take-out
call 408-353-2700

Open Wed-Sat 11 am to Sundown
Sun 11 am-6 pm

Thursdays 6pm-8:30pm

Live-Local Bluegrass

Fridays 6pm-9pm

"Live Music" & Prime Rib Dinner

Sunday Karaoke (all ages) is back

2pm-5pm

Sunday May 8

Mothers Day Brunch 10am-1pm



The first school at Lexington, 1852

products to market on the narrow-gauge railroad.

The community that became known as **Alma** started when the Forest House Hotel was established in 1862. At about a mile south of Lexington, Alma officially became a community in 1873, when the Lexington post office was moved there. Alma was also given the less-flattering name of “mile of saloons.”

The dominant industry of lumbering appeared to make lumberjacks a thirsty bunch. At one time, 12 saloons dotted the roadside between Alma and Lexington.

The South Pacific Coast Railroad opened a station at Alma. Valley and Peninsula residents considered Alma a popular picnic destination that rivaled Sunset Park at Wright’s Station, located further south on the railroad line.

Like Wright’s Station, Alma was a shipping point for orchardists. While Lexington declined, Alma remained a community with a grocery store until the early 1950s, when it was demolished to make way for the reservoir. The Alma post office closed in 1952.



*From top:
Alma Store,
Alma Bridge,
and Alma Falls*

Left: Riding the rails

*Some original photos
have been refined
and colorized.*