

THE FUGITT'S

THE TOWN OF LIBERTY

By Lonnie J. Rueb, (descendant)

A collection of family history and other publications.

In the year of 1850 the Fugitt Family, consisting of Sarchal C. Fugitt, Chism Cooper Fugitt, their children and several brothers, sisters, and cousins. Set out from Liberty Missouri for California. Their journey across the plains and deserts was hard and arduous, but was made with everyone intact, no worse for the wear. They settled in Stockton, three miles northeast along the Calaveras River. In 1852, several of the family moved north to Dry Creek near present day Galt. They prospered in the stock business, and became farmers and ranchers.

In 1852, Sarschal and Chism began building a new township, called Fugitt, and Chism became the Postmaster. The Town grew rapidly, and is believed to have been one of the first towns in California that used pre-fabricated buildings built in Boston and New York, and shipped around the Horn to San Francisco, up the Sacramento River to the Mokelumne River to Woodbridge, the major landing on the river. The Mokelumne River was established as a major avenue of commerce. Goods and supplies made their way to Liberty Township, and as far east as Mackville crossing above present day Clements.

The town of Liberty began to flourish; by 1858 there were three merchandise stores, a shoemaker, a dentist, a livery stable, two blacksmiths, a wagon maker, and Chism C. Fugitt's Hotel. Liberty became the hub for commerce and the major provider for goods and services for the travelers in route to Sacramento to the north, Stockton to the south, and the gold and copper mines to the east, as well as supplying the ranchers and farmers in the surrounding areas.

In 1869 the Central Pacific Railroad established the town of Galt, one mile north of Liberty as its stop. The town of Liberty suddenly became un-necessary. By 1870 the site had become a ghost town. The buildings were dismantled and moved to Galt and the surrounding communities.

Chism C. Fugitt moved to Galt to become the town Constable, and deputy Assessor. At 6ft 7ins. tall, Chism C. Fugitt was an imposing figure of a man. He was well respected and rarely had to use force to settle disputes.

Chism's nephew, John L. Fugitt, (my Great-Grand Father on my mother's side), was on fire watch with his cousin William one cold night on March 3, 1895, when he accidentally discharged his Navy Colt pistol, and killed himself instantly. The town and the community were shocked and dismayed. John left behind his wife, Ida C. (Tallmadge), Fugitt, and five children. The eldest child was Ada Edna Fugitt, (my grandmother), James Roy, Isla F., Hertel E., and Granville Irwin, a baby at the time.

Unable to provide for her children in Galt, Ida packed up the kids, and moved to Farmington, to open and run a boarding house for workers in the area.