

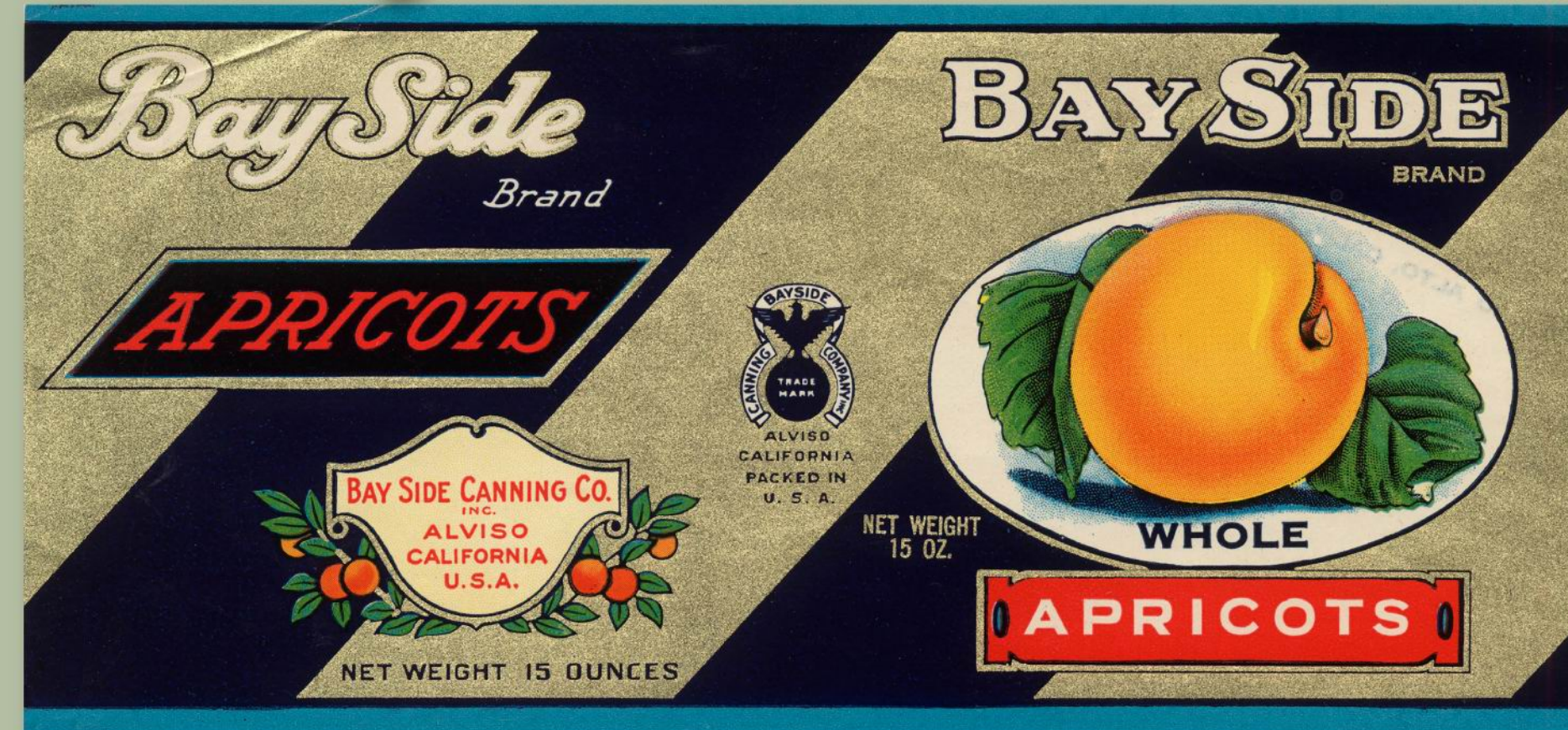
The Old Port Town of ALVISO

Sitting at the marshy mouth of the Guadalupe River, the community of Alviso — named after a Spanish ranch owner — served as the Port of San José in the mid-19th century. Crowded steamboats carried passengers, cowhides and lumber, mercury ore and sacks of grain, loaded at Alviso's hectic docks and destined for San Francisco.

A newly built railroad in 1864 bypassed Alviso, connecting San Jose to San Francisco. It curtailed Alviso's wharf activity, but local businesses still prospered near the river. Alviso Mills ground more than 250 barrels of flour a day in the 1870s. A variety of fruits, asparagus, spinach, tomato paste and fish sauce all were processed in Alviso. The Bayside Canning Company, known for hiring only Chinese workers at decent wages, grew into the nation's third largest cannery then went bankrupt in the 1930s. In the late 19th century, a number of notable citizens lived in Alviso. A.P. Giannini, the founder of Bank of America, attended Alviso's one-room schoolhouse.



PORT ALVISO, 1895. This postcard looks northwest at the seaport town of Alviso. The diagonal Alviso-Milpitas Road (today's First Street) turns right toward "Steamboat Slough." In the foreground on Catherine Street, horses pull buggies past the Ortman Store (left), and the Trevey store (center). Even though the New Chicago scheme had taken town funds, Alviso was a terminal for stage, steamboat and train. Passengers took the South Pacific Coast Railroad to Santa Cruz. (Courtesy History San José.)



Above: Bayside Canning Company apricot label. Bayside Canning Company in Alviso was once the nation's third largest cannery.



At Left: Duck hunters' display, 1903, at the Alviso Hotel.



ALVISO'S FIRST SCHOOLHOUSE, c. 1860. This school served farmers' children in the northern San José area, including Rancho Milpitas. Bank of Italy (later Bank of America) founder Amando Peter Giannini attended elementary school here.

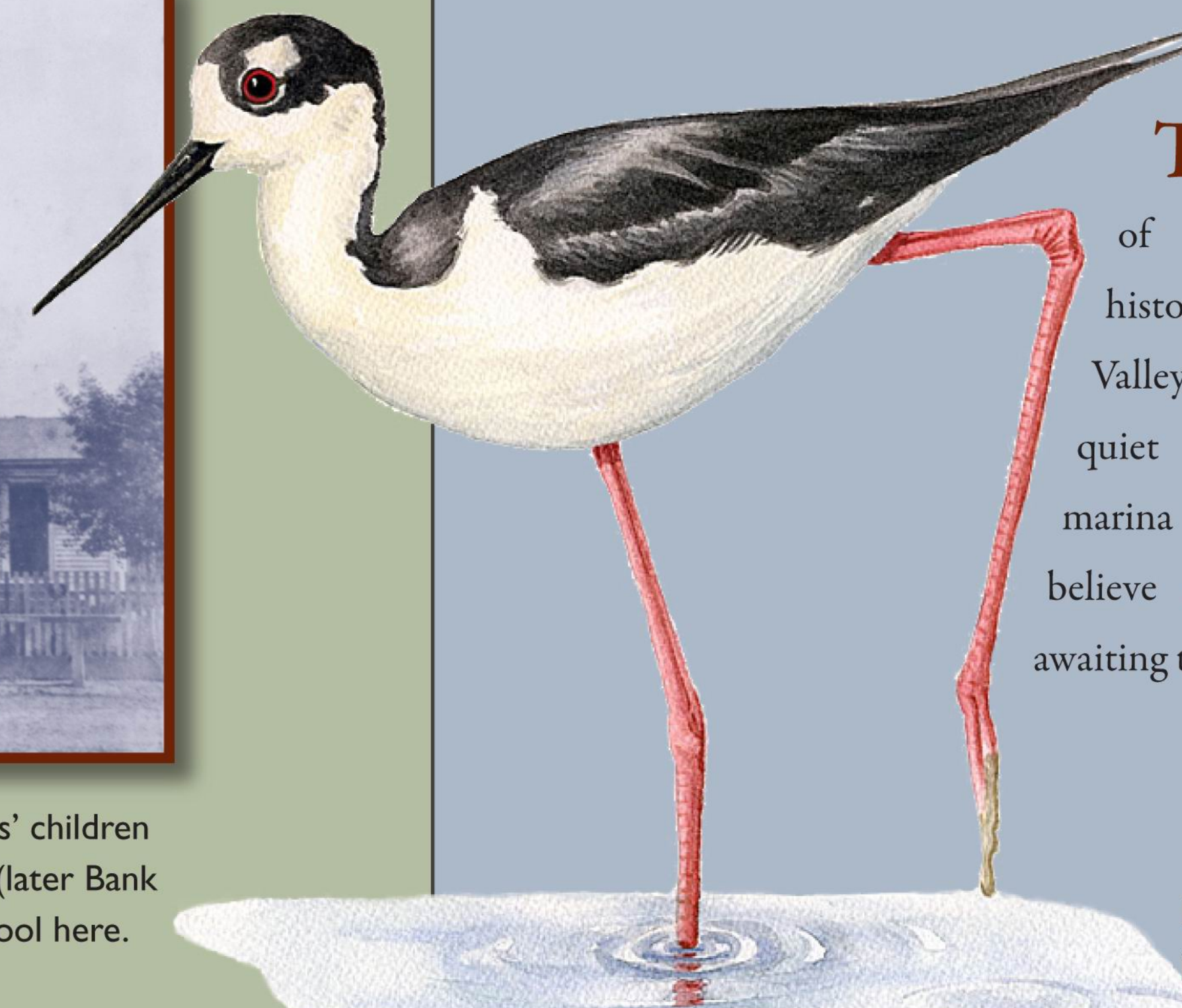


ROBERT TREVEY'S COMPANY STORE. The sign reads "Groceries, Hardware, Crockery." It was often said, "If you couldn't find it in San José you could always find it at the Trevey store." This photograph shows four types of transportation.

Marshland Chicago

During the Great Depression, Alviso gained a Wild West reputation. It sprouted slough-side saloons and casinos, dog tracks and Filipino dance halls. Some of Alviso's streets carry names of Chicago roadways, a testament to when watch-company superintendent P.H. Wheeler tried unsuccessfully in 1891 to transform the place into "New Chicago" by building the San Jose Watch Company and selling parcels of Alviso's marshland.

The community maintains a sense of rich history with its many historical structures. Although Silicon Valley's many companies are nearby, the quiet streets, charming homes and marina along the bay make it easy to believe you've stepped back in time awaiting the next steamboat.



Black-necked stilts congregate in flocks at the nearby estuary