

Title: My Family History at Cienega Valley

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Abstract: My great, great, great grandfather came to this country very early on and created a name for himself. He became involved greatly in his community and this tradition of becoming involved carried on for several generations. Not only did he become involved, he created a pathway and knowledge that I carry as a part of myself.

My Family History at Cienega Valley

My great, great, great grandfather Alex was born October 3, 1842. He was born in the North of Ireland near Belfast. My great, great, great grandfather married a woman named Sarah. They married in Ireland before coming to the United States.

In 1869, both my great, great, great grandparents came to the United States from Ireland with nine carloads of purebred arylshire cattle from Aryshire Scotland. They brought the cattle to a man from Paicines. He was one of their friends from Belfast. My great, great, great grandfather worked for this man for five years. In return, the man rented out land to my grandparents.

The land rented out was in Cienega Valley. When my grandparents went to their rented land, Native Americans were still living there. At first, my great, great, great grandmother was afraid of the Native Americans. She soon became friends with them and would barter different goods. They would trade flower and sugar for jerky.

My great, great, great grandparents ended up having six children. My grandfather decided to build the first school in Cienega and formed the School District. He was the Trustee of the School Board. He was apart of this for many years before he had died. He died June 7, 1913.

Once my great, great, great, grandfather died, his son bought the seventy-five acres of land that his family rented for years and started growing vineyards, orchards, and other crops. He would sell grapes to wineries and crops to markets. He also took on the role of Trustee for the School District just like his father. He ended up getting married and having two children, my great grandmother and a son. His son passed away at a young age. When my great grandma's father and mother passed, she inherited the property and continued to work with the vineyards and agriculture. She also became involved in the School District. She later married and had my grandfather. He grew up on the property too.

My grandpa married my grandma and had my mom and aunt. They all lived on the property together. My great grandma also lived on the property, but was just down the hill. Eventually, property was sold and only ten acres remained. My grandpa worked at a nearby winery and for the San Benito County Water District. My grandma got involved with the School District and became a Trustee. She was apart of the School District for twelve years. My grandpa passed away, but my grandma continued to live on the property in Cienega. Once I was born, I lived on the property for a short amount of time. I was the sixth generation to live in Cienega Valley. Within the last five years, the rest of the ten acre property has been sold.

Even though I only lived on my family's property in Cienega for a short amount of time, I find it interesting how multiple generations of my family have lived there. I think that having

my family living and working in Hollister for hundreds of years has helped shaped me into the person I am today.

My family has taught me to appreciate where I come from and to always go after what I want. Education has always been a huge part of my family's values. I have always been told to work hard and take school seriously. I am not the first one to continue my education after high school and go to college. Most of my family has furthered their education. I do not think that if my great, great, great grandfather had the idea of building the first school in Cienega, my other family members would have been involved in the School District. If they were not involved, I do not think education would be taken as seriously as it is in my family. I am glad they were because they have pushed me to better myself and to better my future.

I also think that having family in Hollister for generations has created connections with other families that have been here for just as long. Even though my family name is not as known as other names in this town, there are still people in this town who know my family and have good things to say. When I hear people speak highly of my family, it encourages me to be like them. I hear from others that I come from a generous and caring family. I think this also helps shape me into the person I am today.