Lacey Milling Co. closes — Hanford, Kings County, 2023

Lacey Milling Co., a flour mill at Fifth and Redington Streets in Hanford, shut down in October 2023 after 136 years — the longest continuous operating run of any commodity-processing facility this project has documented, founded before Hanford itself was incorporated as a city.

136

Years in operation, 1887 to 2023 — longer than any other closure in this project's record.

5

Generations of the same family — Lacey, then Lendrum by marriage — ran the mill from founding to closure.

What happened

Horatio G. Lacey, a Massachusetts native who learned the grist-mill trade in Fort Scott, Kansas before moving west, was hired to manage Hanford's existing flour mill in 1887 — four years before Hanford itself incorporated as a city. He and his sons bought the mill outright in 1892. The original wooden building burned down in April 1916; a new brick mill — the one that stood until 2023 — opened that November under the name H.G. Lacey Milling Co. By 1953, it was "the only flour mill left in the Valley," having outlasted every other small Central Valley mill through decades of industry consolidation into larger processors.

The mill survived by staying small and specific rather than competing with the giants: it found a lasting niche supplying low-protein, locally grown wheat flour to tortilla bakeries in Fresno, and added dairy and livestock feed production in 1961. Ownership passed to Charles Lendrum in 1969 after the death of his brother-in-law, Leland Lacey; Charles's son Scott later joined as the firm's accountant, carrying the business into its fifth generation. As of a 1987 feature marking the mill's 100th anniversary, it employed 15 people and milled 2,000 100-pound bags of flour a day. It was still operating in 2004, the most recent year this project's source archive reaches.

Charles Lendrum died in 2022. Milling operations ceased in October 2023, and the business wound down administratively by the start of 2024. The closure was not announced by the company — it surfaced publicly through an informal Facebook post from a Lendrum family member. Hanford City Councilmember Lou Martinez acknowledged it at a City Council meeting: "I don't know if the Council's aware that Lacey Milling closed after over 100 years — it's sad... I grew up walking around there; I guess it served its purpose." The historic mill building has since faced demolition.

Impact — what we know, and what we don't

- **Why it closed:** The Hanford Sentinel's own closure coverage gives no reason — no company statement, no cited cause. A secondary source, a local podcast published more than a year after the closure, attributes it to "unexpected factors like drought" and the decline of local wheat farming. This project has not found a second, independent source confirming that explanation, and is not treating it as established fact — but if it holds up, it would be the clearest single example in this project's entire record of water scarcity directly closing a plant, rather than sitting in the background as structural pressure.
- **Jobs:** Not documented at closure. The mill employed 15 people in 1987; no source found gives a current count as of 2023.
- **The building:** Faced demolition after the closure, per Hanford Sentinel reporting this project has not yet been able to read in full (repeated access errors on a second article). What, if anything, is planned for the site is not yet known.
- **How this was found:** Not through a WARN filing (a 15-employee operation falls well under the Act's threshold, and none was found in this project's WARN-PDF archive) and not through news search — through direct full-text search of the Hanford Sentinel's own historical archive, which is how this project also learned the mill existed at all and traced its full history back to 1887.

Part of a larger pattern

This closure sits inside the same Kings County cluster this project already documents compounding on Hanford and Lemoore — **Olam's Lemoore tomato plant** (2020), **Del Monte's Hanford tomato plant** (2024), and **Leprino Foods' Lemoore East plant** (2025–26) — landing a year before the most recent wave of that cluster began. It's also direct evidence that Hanford's commodity-processing base goes back much further than this project's other research had reached: the same 1990 newspaper article that first led here also named a flour

mill, a winery, three creameries, two cheese factories, and four dried-fruit and raisin packing houses clustered around Hanford's rail lines in the early 1900s — a fuller account of what was built in this town, and what's left of it, than any source found before.

Sources

- Hanford Sentinel, 17 December 1987, "Lacey Milling celebrates 100" (100th-anniversary feature, company history). Access: offline-archival — holding: newspaper microfilm, repository not yet confirmed; locate the reel through the California Newspaper Project catalogue (see **Data**).
- Hanford Sentinel, 23 April 1953, "Hanford's Lacey Milling Company Only Flour Mill Left in Valley." Access: offline-archival — holding: newspaper microfilm, repository not yet confirmed; locate the reel through the California Newspaper Project catalogue (see **Data**).
- Hanford Sentinel, 20 May 2001, Hanford Lifetime Business Achievement Award coverage. Access: offline-archival — holding: newspaper microfilm, repository not yet confirmed; locate the reel through the California Newspaper Project catalogue (see **Data**).
- Hanford Sentinel, 21 December 2023, "Lacey Milling Co. is shutting down operations after a century of commerce." Access: paywalled — read in the print edition; the publisher's online copy sits behind a subscription.
- Hanford Sentinel, "Historic Lacey Milling building faces destruction" (headline confirmed; full article not yet read). Access: not-captured — a public URL exists for this source and this project has not recorded it.
- Hanford Insider, "The Lacey Milling Legacy" (podcast/blog, ~14 January 2025) — source of the unconfirmed drought/water explanation, flagged above as not independently verified. Access: not-captured — a public URL exists for this source and this project has not recorded it.
- California EDD WARN report, checked directly: no filing found for Lacey Milling Co. in this project's local archive. Access: obtained — taken directly from the agency's own filings rather than from a web page.

Full citation detail and source archive: **Data**. Back to **all case studies**.