

Placer County, 1890

Editors Press:—Placer county lies in the north-central portion of the State, with a length of 95 miles and a width of .8 to 25 miles, the western or Sacramento basin part containing 675,000 acres, while the mountain or Tahoe basin contains 170,000 acres. The adjoining counties on the north are Yuba and Nevada; south, EL Dorado and Sacramento; west, Sutter, while the eastern boundary forms the State line.

The topography is varied, not only in the county as a whole, but on single holdings as well. The level alluvial plains of the Sacramento valley and the rugged mountains are repeated, though on a smaller scale, in almost every mountain ranch, thus making the county not alone picturesque but affording beautiful and healthful sites for homes, while the elevation secures exemption from damaging frosts and by reason of the greater degree of warmth, produces not alone earlier but much finer fruit.

Products.

By reason of the large fruit shipments the impression is given that fruit alone is grown in the county, and that fruit is the only product. In the old river channels, now sealed up and almost aa effectually closed as though buried thousands of feet, are looked up millions of dollars in gold. These are slowly being reopened and worked by drift-mining, and promise in the coming century to produce many millions. The quartz mines are being developed and proving very profitable. In the valleys the cereals are grown extensively. The lower foothills produce the small fruits, cherries, apricots, peaches and the citrus fruits; the middle foothills, the grape, olive and fig, while in the higher elevations, the apple and the pear do best. The fruits are not confined to any one locality or altitude. The peach is a success from Roseville in the plains, to Auburn, while the Aloha, the largest northern citrus nursery in the State, is located at Auburn and with its 120,000 of most thrifty, acclimated orange trees shows how well the elevated portions of each fruit ranch can be made to produce exceptionally fine oranges.

Towns.

The stranger entering the county from Sacramento finds the beauty and thrift of the county growing as he advances. At Roseville the principal product is grain, though there are some fine fruit ranches on the byroads. The town is similar to those of the plains and is not apt to impress the stranger favorably.

Rocklin shows more thrift and business; her large granite quarries employ a large force of men, while the fruit interests begin to show in occasional citrus and fruit orchards.

Loomis is fast crowding ahead; the thick underbrush is fast being cleared away and innumerable orchards taking the place.

Penryn, though quiet, is home-like. Her granite interests are quiet, owing to the death of Mr. Griffith, the owner; but not so her fruit interests. His shipments have gone on increasing, while Strong & Co. have put in a fruit shipping house where carload after carload of fine fruit is shipped throughout the season. Mr. Butler's famous peach orchard is half-way between Penryn and Loomis, while there is acre after acre of all varieties of fruits in every direction.

Newcastle claims the distinction of being the fruit center, and from this point the greater portion of the county's fruits is shipped. It would be less difficult to state what will not grow, and is not grown, in this section than to give a correct list of all the fruits and vegetables grown.

Auburn is the county seat and business center of the county. While the fruit shipments do not equal Newcastle, the volume of business in other channels will exceed. Fruit, however, is not neglected. On every side can be seen row after row of trees standing like plumes against the hillside. It is the town itself that impresses the stranger most favorably. The succession of fine homes with beautiful yards surrounding them, elegant hotels filled with seekers after health and pleasure and the general courtesy of the citizens toward the visitor make Auburn the most desirable place of residence in the county. Within the past two years the improvements have been most marked, as is evinced in the large number of fine homes and business buildings erected and in the course of erection. The fact is, the people are prospering and that as never before.

Applegate, Weimer and Colfax are but railroad stations, Colfax being the larger town and having a few stores. While the county claims the belt as a peach center, other fruits do equally well and none more so than the fig. In fig culture and curing, Placer has made a success.

Soils and Health,

In the matter of soils, the county is as varied as are the opinions of the citizens in regard to their merits. From Roseville up to Newcastle the soil may be said to be granitic. This soil produces fine fruit, but should be irrigated liberally to yield the greatest profit. From Auburn to Colfax the soil is slate and clay. With thorough cultivation, trees and vines can be grown successfully without irrigation, though it is generally admitted that "it pays to irrigate."

As in soils, so in health; each location claims exemption from all malarial influences. By carefully selecting the site for the house, and placing it on the highest knoll, comparative exemption from malaria can be secured. Low situations in irrigated districts are to be avoided, not only in Placer but in all parts of the State. The people living on the slate soils claim exemption from malaria, and charge it to the granite soil. This matter can best be tested by a personal visit in midsummer's irrigating season. I believe that the low lands and gulches are not desirable, in point of health, but I am confident that owing to the variety of the topography, a home site, free from malaria, can be secured on every 160 acres of land.

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